

Meeting with Mrs. Irene Ochem
29th of March 2022

EBA has held a meeting with Mrs. Irene Ochem Founder & CEO of AWIEF Forum. The meeting was headed by Dr. Nevine Abbel Khalek EBA board member and Chairperson of Sustainable Development Committee and attended by Mr. Mohamed Youssef the Executive Director of EBA and Mrs. Dalia Youssef Division Director of International Relations and Membership Affairs, to invite EBA as an organizing partner for the 8th Africa Women Innovation and Entrepreneurship Forum that will be hosted in Egypt.

Mrs. Irene Ochem gave a brief on the Africa Women Innovation and Entrepreneurship Forum (AWIEF) as it is a pan-African and not-for-profit women economic empowerment organization that promotes and supports female innovation, technology and entrepreneurship across Africa through a portfolio of high impact programs (<https://www.awieforum.org/>).

Since its launch in 2015 in Lagos, AWIEF has lived true of its mission of fostering the economic inclusion, advancement and empowerment of women in Africa through entrepreneurship support and development. The organization has achieved wide recognition as a key African entrepreneurship ecosystem player adept at creating and implementing bespoke and impactful women entrepreneurship programs. Our year-round activities culminate in convening and hosting the popular and widely attended annual, international and multi-stakeholder AWIEF conference, exhibition and awards event.

The AWIEF event is an international and multi-stakeholder two-day platform that brings together under one roof, the entire African entrepreneurship ecosystem including female entrepreneurs and business leaders from across the continent, corporate sector, policymakers, investors, development organizations, NGOs, individuals and the media, to dialogue on entrepreneurship trends, and connect, network, transact, learn and share experiences, best practices and thought leadership, on issues that relate to entrepreneurship in general (and women's economic empowerment and entrepreneurship in particular), trade, investment and finance in Africa.

The AWIEF event is an excellent opportunity to make plans about how we can invest in, grow, develop, showcase and celebrate African women-owned/led businesses in various sectors to fast-track Africa's transformation and sustainable economic growth. It offers a platform for thought-provoking, high-level content and knowledge exchange as well as for connecting and engaging with pan-African and global stakeholders for access to viable markets, finance, and business partnerships with African women owned businesses.

The event promotes intra-Africa trade especially in view of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA), a monumental milestone on Africa's developmental roadmap that could have far-reaching implications for women economic empowerment in Africa. A key outcome of the AWIEF2019 conference was the adoption of a resolution that called for the inclusion of women in the AfCFTA process and which was sent to the Chairperson of the African Union (AU) in December 2019.

Previous editions of AWIEF conferences have been held in Lagos, Nigeria (2015 and 2016) and Cape Town, South Africa (2017, 2018, and 2019), each year hosting up to 1,200 participants in attendee numbers. AWIEF2020 proposed for hosting in Egypt will leverage on the success of these past editions.