

EAST AFRICA DATA GOVERNANCE **CONFERENCE**

2026

Summary Report





Abbreviations

AI: Artificial Intelligence

AIK: Amnesty International Kenya

CIPIT: Centre for Intellectual Property and Information Technology (Strathmore University)

DPI: Digital Public Infrastructure

DPIA: Data Protection Impact Assessment

DPO: Data Protection Officer

DPA: Data Protection Authority (or Data Protection Act)

EAC: East African Community

ICT: Information and Communications Technology

IPRS: Integrated Population Registration System (Kenya)

KCB: Kenya Commercial Bank

NIRA: National Identification and Registration Authority (Uganda)

ODPC: Office of the Data Protection Commissioner (Kenya)

OI: Open Institute

PDPC: Personal Data Protection Commission (Tanzania)

STEM: Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics

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Introduction

Amnesty International Kenya (AIK) and Open Institute (OI) have collaborated since 2020 to advance data governance, data protection, and privacy rights across Kenya and the wider region. In 2025, the two organizations collaborated to bring the first East Africa Data Governance Conference, gathering policymakers, regulators, technologists, civil society leaders, academics, journalists, and development partners from across East Africa and beyond. Attended by over 150 participants from Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Nigeria, USA and Senegal, we explored pressing challenges and opportunities in data governance, emphasizing people-centred, inclusive and collaborative approaches in the region.

The 2nd East Africa Data Governance Conference, held from March 10-11, 2026, in Nairobi, Kenya, addressed the rapidly evolving digital landscape of the region. Organized under the theme "Navigating Duality in Data Governance: Innovation and Accountability in East Africa," the convening brought together policymakers, regulators, civil society, private sector actors, and technologists to explore how to foster digital innovation while safeguarding human rights and public trust. The conference provided a timely platform to examine the rapidly evolving data governance landscape in East Africa, at a time when digital transformation is accelerating across sectors such as healthcare, finance, governance, and urban development. As governments expand digital public infrastructure and private sector actors increasingly rely on data-driven technologies, the role of data as both a governance tool and an economic asset continues to grow. However, this transformation is accompanied by complex challenges related to privacy, accountability, equity, and trust. The conference was therefore convened to explore how East African countries can navigate these tensions and build data governance systems that are both enabling and protective.



Guided by the theme "Navigating Duality in Data Governance: Innovation and Accountability," the conference examined the perceived tension between technological advancement and regulatory oversight. Across discussions, participants challenged the notion that these are competing priorities, instead emphasizing that effective governance is a prerequisite for sustainable innovation.

The conference was structured around five thematic pillars:

- Data ownership and custodianship
- Sovereignty and cross-border data governance
- Data infrastructure, interoperability, and standards
- Ethics, algorithms, and accountability
- Economics and value of data

These pillars provided a comprehensive framework for analyzing the opportunities and risks shaping the region's digital future.

Conference Background and Context

Over the past decade, East Africa has experienced rapid expansion in the adoption of digital technologies across both public and private sectors. Governments are increasingly investing in digital public infrastructure to improve service delivery, expand financial inclusion, and strengthen administrative efficiency. Digital platforms are now widely used in sectors such as healthcare, agriculture, education, and financial services, while innovations in fintech, mobile money, and data analytics have positioned the region as one of Africa's most dynamic digital ecosystems. At the center of this transformation lies data. Data increasingly informs public policy decisions, powers digital services, supports innovation, and drives economic activity. However, as the collection and use of data expands, so too do the governance challenges associated with managing it responsibly. Questions around privacy, digital surveillance, algorithmic bias, cross-border data flows, and unequal access to digital opportunities are becoming increasingly prominent in policy and governance discussions across the region.

The 2nd East Africa Data Governance Conference 2026 was convened against a backdrop of unprecedented digital acceleration across the region. Over the past decade, East African nations have shifted from basic ICT adoption to a deep integration of digital systems within the core functions of the state and the economy. This evolution is characterized by a "duality" where the rapid drive for innovation frequently outpaces the development of robust accountability mechanisms. The conference was held as East African nations are undergoing profound digital transformations, with governments adopting Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) and emerging technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI) influencing decision-making. While these advancements offer economic opportunities, they present complex challenges regarding privacy, algorithmic accountability, and cross-border data flows. Despite legal frameworks in countries like Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania, practical implementation remains hindered by capacity constraints and limited public awareness.



Context setting

In his introductory remarks, Mr. Phillip Kisaka, the Master of Ceremony, highlighted that East Africa is undergoing a major technological transition, with digital platforms, data analytics, and AI increasingly integrated into public and private sectors. However, he noted that this rapid development has outpaced the creation of robust governance frameworks.

The summary of his context-setting includes:

- **The Regulatory Dilemma:** Policymakers are struggling to regulate emerging systems, such as cross-border data flows and digital identity, without stifling innovation.
- **Stakeholder Collaboration:** The conference serves as a vital space for diverse stakeholders to deliberate on these complex regional issues.
- **Increased Engagement:** The presence of high-level officials, including the Director General of Tanzania's Personal Data Protection Commission, signals growing government commitment to regional data governance.



The Digital Landscape of East Africa

The regional context is defined by several transformative shifts in how data is perceived and utilized:



Expansion of Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI):

Governments are heavily investing in foundational systems such as national digital identity (e.g., Kenya's IPRS or Uganda's NIRA), digital payment ecosystems, and integrated service platforms to improve administrative efficiency and financial inclusion.



Data as a Strategic Asset:

Data has moved to the center of public policy, powering everything from healthcare logistics and agricultural analytics to urban planning in emerging "smart cities" like Jinja and Fort Portal.



The Rise of AI and Automation

Artificial Intelligence is beginning to influence decision-making in both the public and private sectors, offering efficiency gains while introducing new risks regarding transparency and bias.



Proliferation of Fintech and Mobile Money

Innovations in mobile money have positioned the region as one of the most dynamic digital ecosystems on the continent, making personal financial data a primary target for governance.

OPENING REMARKS

The opening remarks and reflections of the 2nd East Africa Data Governance Conference 2026 centered on the intersection of technological innovation, human rights, and the urgent need for regional collaboration. Leaders emphasized that while digital transformation offers economic growth, it must be anchored in robust accountability frameworks to protect citizens.

The opening session established that while East Africa is a leader in digital innovation, it faces a "critical juncture", as noted by Victor Ndede, Head of Programs at Amnesty International, where governance must catch up to technological expansion to protect human rights and economic stability. The 2nd East African Data Governance Conference (2026) featured high-level addresses and interactive sessions focused on the balance between technological advancement and human rights.

Keynote Addresses

Ms. Immaculate Kassait (Data Commissioner, Kenya)

- Emphasized that digitization is no longer optional for public or private sectors.
- Argued that strong data governance is not a barrier but a foundation for innovation by fostering trust.

Dr. Melissa Omino (CIPIT, Strathmore University)

- Delivered the Day Two keynote, "Before the Dataset: The Human Story behind Governance". She challenged participants to move beyond technical compliance and prioritize the lived experiences, cultures, and languages of African communities.

Dr. Emmanuel Mkilia (DG, Personal Data Protection Commission(PDPC), Tanzania)

- Framed the duality of technology as a drive for innovation versus the human beings at the center, asserting that people must never be treated as mere products in the digital ecosystem

1. Civil Society and Policy Perspectives

Victor Ndede (Head of Programs, Amnesty International Kenya)

- Emphasized that the conference is a platform to identify practical strategies for strengthening frameworks as governments increasingly digitize public services.

Al Kags (Founder and Executive Director, Open Institute)

- Observed that while many policies exist, implementation remains the primary failure.
- Stressed the need to bridge the gap between legal "paper" frameworks and the practical realities of how institutions handle data.
- Highlighted a major public awareness gap, citing a case where a healthcare worker publicly disclosed a patient's condition, proving that even with policies in place, basic digital literacy and responsibility are often lacking.

Davis Adieno (Board Chair, Open Institute)

- Traced the conference's evolution from a "modest experiment" into a significant regional forum for diverse stakeholders.
- Argued that data governance must be grounded in the lived experiences of citizens, ensuring they have a voice in how their data is produced and applied.

Lady Marième Jamme (Founder, lamtheCODE):

- Warned of an inequality gap in the data economy, noting that women, youth, and marginalized groups often lack the skills to participate meaningfully.
- Used examples from refugee communities (Kakuma and Dadaab) to show that with access to coding and data skills, these populations can shape their own futures.



Al-Kags-Founder and Executive Director-Open Institute



Adieno-Board Chair-Open Institute



Marième Jamme-lamtheCODE

2. Regulatory and Professional Leadership

Dr. Laibuta Mugambi (Data Privacy and Governance Society of Kenya):

- Identified a severe shortage of skilled professionals with interdisciplinary expertise (tech, law, and policy).
- Advocated for breaking down institutional silos, requiring "coordinated engagement" between those who design systems and those who regulate them.

Edna Kasozi (Personal Data Protection Office, Uganda):

- Discussed the "Value and Vulnerability" of DPI, noting that while Uganda's national ID and digital payment systems improve efficiency, privacy must be embedded from the design stage, not added as an afterthought.
- Stressed that no country can govern data in isolation; regional cooperation is essential for trusted cross-border data flows and cybersecurity.

Dr. Emmanuel Mkilia (Personal Data Protection Commission(PDPC), Tanzania):

- Shared Tanzania's 100-day institutional plan to strengthen its data protection authority through awareness, compliance, and internal capacity building.
- Asserted that technology has two dimensions: innovation and the human dimension. People must never be reduced to "mere products" within a digital ecosystem.

Immaculate Kassait (Data Protection Commissioner, Kenya):

- Declared that digitization is no longer optional for service delivery and economic growth.
- Promoted a multi-stakeholder approach to broaden the dialogue beyond data protection to include ownership, sovereignty, and the economics of data.
- Suggested rotating the conference location (to Uganda or Tanzania) to strengthen regional ownership.

The speakers highlighted several critical areas for the region's digital future:

- **Human-Centered Governance:** Technology must serve people without compromising their dignity. Dr. Emmanuel Mkilia stressed that individuals should never be reduced to mere components in a digital ecosystem.
- **The Policy-Practice Gap:** While many countries have adopted data protection legislation, actual implementation remains a major hurdle. Al Kags noted that institutions often lack a clear understanding of their responsibilities in handling sensitive data.
- **Digital Skills and Inclusion:** Access to the data economy is currently unequal. Lady Marième Jamme and Davis Adieno emphasized that equipping marginalized groups, especially women and girls, with STEM and digital literacy is essential for freedom and participation.
- **Regional Collaboration:** Data flows across borders, necessitating harmonized regulatory frameworks to provide certainty for businesses and collective security for citizens.
- **Governing in the Grey:** This session explored the blurred boundaries between tech growth and rights. Panelists discussed the evolving nature of digital identity and the need for a multi-stakeholder approach to prevent digital authoritarianism.
- **The Value and Vulnerability of DPI:** The session examined Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) as an enabler of transformation that also risks public mistrust if it enables surveillance or lacks inclusive design.
- **Building Trust (Private Sector):** This session had a panel comprising of leaders from Safaricom, Google, and KCB discussed "shifting privacy and security left"—integrating governance safeguards early in the product design phase to build citizen confidence.

The Imperative for Regional Dialogue

The conference serves as a critical regional platform because digital systems are inherently transnational. Data flows seamlessly across borders, yet regulations remain largely fragmented by national boundaries. The 2026 convening sought to move the conversation from "why" we need data governance to "how" the region can harmonise standards to support a unified, trusted digital economy. The regional action plan developed during the 2026 conference shifted the focus from high-level policy dialogue to a structured, multi-sectoral approach for operationalizing data governance across East Africa. This plan addresses the "governing gap" by emphasizing regional alignment, infrastructure sovereignty, and ethical oversight.

◆ Regional Harmonization of Frameworks

The plan prioritizes the alignment of fragmented national data protection regimes to support a unified digital economy.

- Cross-Border Data Flows: Establishing common regional mechanisms and mutual recognition of regulatory standards to allow data to move securely across jurisdictions.
- Regulatory Coordination: Formalizing regular meetings between regional data protection authorities to ensure consistency in enforcement and build investor trust.
- Shared Infrastructure: Exploring the use of shared regional resources, such as data centers, to reduce costs and prevent the duplication of investments in every country.

◆ Strengthening Digital Sovereignty

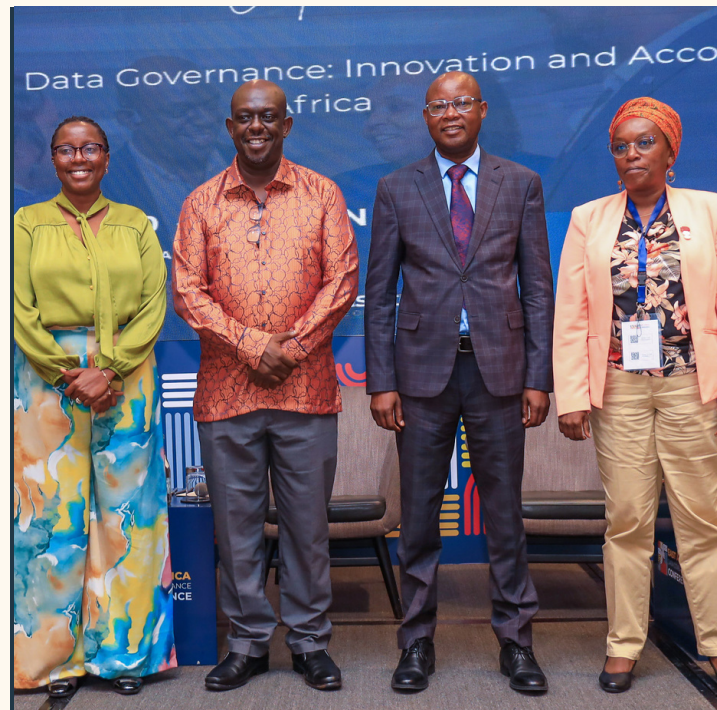
To reduce heavy reliance on foreign technology providers, the action plan calls for strategic investments in local capacity.

- Infrastructure Investment: Moving beyond policy development toward tangible investments in national and regional digital infrastructure.
- Research and Skills: Prioritizing education and support for local universities and research institutions to develop technologies relevant to the African context.
- Startup Empowerment: Creating transparent data-sharing standards to provide local entrepreneurs with the reliable datasets needed for innovation in health, agriculture, and green tech.

◆ Specialized Governance for Sensitive Sectors

The plan recognizes that "one-size-fits-all" governance is insufficient for justice and protection agencies.

- "Data Justice": Integrating safeguards specifically for witness protection and criminal justice, such as the "right to be forgotten" and secure identity modification.
- Confidential Partnerships: Encouraging collaboration between justice institutions and tech developers to design digital tools with built-in security for sensitive operations.



◆ Ethical Oversight and Accountability

To address the "black box" problem of automated systems, the plan mandates proactive ethical measures.

- Privacy-by-Design: Requiring that privacy and security considerations be integrated during the initial design of digital systems rather than being retrofitted later.
- Meaningful Impact Assessments: Ensuring that Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIAs) function as genuine safeguards for rights rather than mere procedural checkboxes.
- Inclusive Participation: Strengthening the role of civil society and marginalized communities in the design of digital policies to ensure transformation advances equity for all.

◆ Continuous Engagement and Scaling

The plan concludes that regional ownership is best achieved through a rotational model.

- Action-Oriented Platform: Maintaining the conference as a sustained convening to track progress on these goals.
- Rotational Hosting: Plans are already underway to host the 2027 edition in either Dodoma, Tanzania, or Entebbe, Uganda, to deepen regional commitment.

Insights from discussions arising from the key themes

a.Reframing the “Duality”: Innovation and Accountability as Complementary

A central outcome of the conference was the reframing of the so-called “duality” between innovation and accountability. Participants emphasized that this framing is often misleading. Rather than being in tension, innovation and accountability are mutually reinforcing.

Strong data governance systems:

- Build trust among users and institutions
- Enable responsible data sharing and innovation
- Reduce risks associated with misuse and harm

Conversely, weak governance undermines public confidence and can slow adoption of digital systems. The conference therefore reinforced the principle that trust is the currency of digital transformation, and that trust is built through robust governance frameworks.

b.From Policy development to implementation: The Critical Gap

Across countries in East Africa, there has been notable progress in developing legal and policy frameworks for data protection and digital governance. However, a consistent theme across sessions was the gap between policy commitments and real-world implementation.

Key challenges identified include:

- Limited institutional and technical capacity within regulatory bodies
- Weak enforcement mechanisms and compliance monitoring
- Fragmented institutional mandates and coordination gaps
- Lack of operational guidelines for emerging technologies such as AI.

Participants agreed that the region has reached a point where the priority must shift from legislation to operationalization. This includes translating legal frameworks into practical tools, systems, and enforcement actions that can guide both public and private sector actors.

Key Pillars and Themes

- ➡ Data Ownership and Custodianship: Exploring rights over citizen-generated data and the responsibilities of stewards.
- ➡ Sovereignty and Cross-Border Governance: Navigating national control while supporting regional integration.
- ➡ Infrastructure, Interoperability, and Standards: Designing secure foundational systems for data exchange.
- ➡ Ethics, Algorithms, and Accountability: Ensuring fairness and transparency in automated and AI systems.
- ➡ Economics and Value of Data: Examining how data value is generated and distributed equitably.

c. Human-Centered data governance and digital dignity

The importance of placing people at the center of data governance systems emerged as a strong cross-cutting theme. Panelists emphasized that data governance must be grounded in:

- Respect for human dignity
- Protection of privacy and individual rights
- Inclusion and equity

Several discussions highlighted the risks associated with data-driven decision-making systems that operate without sufficient transparency or accountability. The example of algorithmic systems used to determine eligibility for health services illustrated how poorly governed data systems can lead to:

- Exclusion of vulnerable populations
- Misclassification of individuals
- Limited avenues for redress

In humanitarian and development contexts, the concept of “data custodianship” rather than ownership was emphasized, particularly in relation to sensitive personal data. Organizations were urged to adopt practices such as data minimization, purpose limitation, and secure data handling to safeguard affected populations.

d. Algorithmic governance and the rise of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

The increasing use of artificial intelligence and automated systems in decision-making processes was identified as both an opportunity and a significant governance challenge. While AI offers potential benefits in efficiency, scalability, and predictive analytics, it also introduces risks related to:

- Algorithmic bias and discrimination
- Lack of transparency (“black box” systems)
- Weak accountability for automated decisions
- Limited regulatory and technical capacity to audit AI systems

It was noted that many current governance frameworks are not fully equipped to address these emerging challenges. There is therefore a growing need for:

- Clear AI governance frameworks and ethical guidelines
- Mechanisms for algorithmic transparency and explainability
- Strengthened regulatory capacity to oversee AI deployment.

e. Data ownership, participation and power

Discussions on data ownership and custodianship raised fundamental questions about who controls data and who benefits from it. Participants noted that in many cases, decisions about what data is collected and how it is used are made by institutions with technical and financial power, often excluding the communities represented in the data.

This imbalance can lead to:

- Misrepresentation of community realities
- Reinforcement of existing inequalities
- Limited accountability to data subjects

To address this, participants emphasized the need to embed participation and co-creation into data governance systems. This includes:

- Engaging communities in data collection and system design
- Creating feedback and accountability mechanisms
- Strengthening citizen agency in how their data is used

The principle that “those who collect data hold power” was widely acknowledged, alongside calls to redistribute this power more equitably.

f. Regional integration and cross-border data governance

Given the transnational nature of digital systems, participants emphasized that data governance cannot be effectively addressed at the national level alone. Cross-border data flows are central to trade, innovation, and regional integration, but they also introduce regulatory complexity.

Key issues identified include:

- Divergent national legal frameworks
- Challenges in cross-border enforcement
- Regulatory uncertainty for businesses operating regionally

Participants called for stronger regional collaboration through:

- Harmonization of data protection frameworks
- Development of interoperable regulatory standards
- Strengthening cooperation among data protection authorities

Such efforts would not only enhance rights protection but also create a more enabling environment for regional digital economies.

g. Data infrastructure, systems and practical implementation

Beyond policy, the conference highlighted the importance of practical, system-level implementation of data governance principles. Discussions on digital public infrastructure and urban data systems demonstrated how governance can be embedded into operational platforms.

Key lessons included:

- Governance frameworks should move beyond compliance to enable data use for development
- Systems should incorporate clear data ownership, access controls, and accountability mechanisms
- Real-world use cases (e.g., urban data platforms) can demonstrate how governance works in practice

Participants emphasized that effective governance requires integration into everyday systems, rather than existing only as abstract policy frameworks.

h. Data as an Economic Asset and Questions of Value Distribution

The conference explored the growing recognition of data as a key economic resource. While data-driven innovation is creating new economic opportunities, concerns were raised about who benefits from the value generated by data.

Key issues include:

- Unequal distribution of benefits from the data economy
- Limited participation of marginalized groups
- Lack of clear frameworks for data monetization and benefit-sharing

Participants highlighted emerging global debates on:

- Compensation for personal data use
- Data ownership models
- Inclusive digital economies

There was a strong call to ensure that data governance frameworks support equitable value distribution and inclusive growth.

i. Digital inclusion, skills and public awareness

Digital inclusion was identified as a foundational requirement for effective data governance. Despite increasing digital adoption, significant gaps remain in:

- Digital literacy and skills
- Public awareness of data rights
- Access to digital infrastructure

Youth, women, persons with disabilities, and rural populations were identified as particularly vulnerable to exclusion. Participants emphasized that without deliberate efforts to address these gaps, digital transformation risks deepening existing inequalities.

Investments in digital skills development, public awareness campaigns and community engagement were identified as critical to building an inclusive digital ecosystem.

EMERGING ISSUES AND CRITICAL DISCUSSIONS

1 THE "HUMAN STORY" OF DATA

A central theme emphasized that data governance is fundamentally about people, not just technical systems. Keynote speaker Dr. Melissa Omino challenged the audience to consider the human story before the dataset



2 AI AND SYNTHETIC MEDIA

Discussions highlighted the regulatory "grey areas" created by AI data scraping and the risks of deepfakes for misinformation and political manipulation

3 DPI VALUE AND VULNERABILITY

While DPI enables efficient service delivery, it can also create vulnerabilities if implemented without transparent governance and meaningful citizen participation.

4 DATA VULNERABILITY FOR DEFENDERS

Emerging systems were scrutinized for their potential to profile or restrict human rights defenders and journalists without adequate safeguards.

5 SUBNATIONAL COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE

Breakout sessions highlighted the disconnect between county governments and civil society datasets, calling for standardized frameworks to integrate community-generated data into official planning.

Notable Quotes

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Technology has two dimensions: the drive for innovation and digital advancement, and the human beings at the center of it. While technology continues to evolve rapidly, people—with their dignity, rights, emotions, and experiences—must never be treated as mere products within the digital ecosystem- **Dr. Emmanuel Mkilia, DG-Personal Data Protection Commission(PDPC), Tanzania**

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The best approach to balancing innovation and accountability in data governance is a multistakeholder approach. To broaden the regional dialogue beyond data protection to issues of ownership, sovereignty, ethics, interoperability, and the economics of data, all actors must be involved.- **Ms. Immaculate Kassait, Data Commissioner, Office of the Data Protection Commissioner, Kenya**

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Data governance cannot be done in silos. It requires collaboration between regulators, practitioners, technologists, academics, and citizens. Only through working together can we create systems that are both innovative and accountable- **Dr. Mugambi Laibuta, Data Privacy and Governance Society of Kenya**

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Data is the currency of the future, but if that currency is not distributed equally, many people will be left behind. Women and girls must be part of the data economy—not as subjects of data, but as creators and leaders within it- **Marième Jamme, Founder- lamtheCODE**

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Innovation grows where trust is built. Data protection is not a barrier to innovation, it is the foundation that allows people and institutions to trust digital systems.- **Ms. Immaculate Kassait, Office of the Data Protection Commissioner, Kenya**

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We are collecting enormous amounts of personal data, yet many people still do not understand how that data is used or how it should be handled. Awareness remains one of the biggest gaps in responsible data governance.- **Al Kags, Founder and Executive Director, Open Institute**

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Regulators and practitioners must learn to speak with each other, not at each other. Dialogue between those building systems and those regulating them is essential if we are to achieve balance.- **Dr. Mugambi Laibuta, Data Privacy and Governance Society of Kenya**

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The conversation should not only focus on risks. Data also creates opportunities for better services, financial inclusion, and innovation that responds to our local realities.- **Rosemary Koech, Kenya Commercial Bank**

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Skills equal freedom. If people know how to collect data, analyze it, visualize it, and share it responsibly, they gain the power to shape their own future in the digital world- **Marième Jamme, Founder- lamtheCODE**

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Across East Africa we have laws, policies, and frameworks for data governance. The real challenge now is implementation, turning these frameworks into everyday practice.- **Al Kags, Founder and Executive Director, Open Institute**

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Digital identity is no longer just a passport or a national ID. It is also the trail of data we generate every day online—data that increasingly influences decisions about our lives.- **Panel Discussion Reflection**

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Technology makes our lives easier, but the same technology can also expose us to risks. As individuals, we must also take responsibility for protecting our own data.- **Joshua (Smart Applications Group)**

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Feedback from Participants

Throughout the two-day conference, participants were actively engaged in interactive Mentimeter exercises that provided a platform for real-time reflections, feedback, and ideas on strengthening data governance in the region. The responses highlighted a strong call for enhanced collaboration among stakeholders, including governments, civil society organizations, academia, and the private sector. Participants emphasized the importance of forming working groups, creating platforms for continuous engagement, and establishing shared databases to facilitate knowledge exchange and coordination beyond the conference.

Several participants also underscored the need to expand stakeholder participation, particularly by involving additional government institutions and sector actors to strengthen accountability and policy harmonization across the East African Community. Others pointed to the importance of raising public awareness on data governance, ethics, digital rights, and data protection, while promoting citizen participation in the design, implementation, and monitoring of data governance structures.

Overall, the interactive discussions reflected a shared commitment to sustaining momentum beyond the conference through regional networking, joint initiatives, and follow-up actions that translate dialogue into concrete implementation.

● To keep the conversations going, what activities should we have between now and the next conference ? 11 / 29 ● 12

Let's seek collaboration opportunities amongst ourselves because I realize there's a wealth of knowledge, opportunities and grants here that we could all tap on.	Engage different actors of data governance across the EAC region on issues to consider to support harmonization of data governance policies and strategies in the region.
Focus on key issues discussed Implement them Analyse the importance in the near future	It is very impressive that Open Institute and Amnesty International have modelled collaboration for this conference , bringing us together. May we all take that example and collaborate.
The office of the ombudsman should have been invited	
See how the people in the room can collaborate in one way or the way to push the agenda in their line of work.	1. Awareness creation on data governance, ethics, citizens rights, data protection etc 2. Citizen participation in design, implementation and monitoring of data governance structures

See how the people in the room can collaborate in one way or the way to push the agenda in their line of work.	1. Awareness creation on data governance, ethics, citizens rights, data protection etc 2. Citizen participation in design, implementation and monitoring of data governance structures
Lets invite more government offices - agriculture, ministry of health, from the three countries as well. Lets have more CSOs and businesses. Maybe an Business Data Governance Forum 2026.	Create a database of attendees of this where we can collaborate and share information
Continue with building regional network to ensure the collaboration between the CSOs and the government on data issues and accountability.	Let's keep talking, engage, collaborate and scale up they innovation, best practises and learnings
	I think you should make a follow up on the participant institutions to see what they are doing to actualize the themes discussed

● From an individual and organization perspective , what does collaboration look like ? 3 / 29 ● 5

Collaboration is all about working towards a shared vision. Bringing in different expertise lightens the burden and makes the work attainable	Teaming up with others to ensure the work is fully realized
Not duplicating efforts, complementing work done by others	Presenting ideas and seeing how we can together work to achieve the objectives with shared knowledge and human resources or funds.
Forming working groups	

Key Recommendations

- ✓ Strengthen Implementation and Institutional Capacity
 - Invest in capacity building for regulators and institutions
 - Move beyond policy development to practical enforcement through stronger institutional capacity and regulatory clarity.
 - Develop practical implementation guidelines for data governance frameworks
 - Enhance enforcement and compliance mechanisms
- ✓ Advance Regional Harmonization and Collaboration
 - Promote alignment of data protection laws across East Africa
 - Strengthen cooperation among East Africa regulatory authorities to facilitate trusted cross-border data flows and reduce infrastructure costs
 - Develop shared standards for cross-border data governance
- ✓ Embed Human-Centered and Rights-Based Approaches
 - Institutionalize privacy-by-design and ethics-by-design into digital systems from the earliest development stages.
 - Ensure meaningful participation of communities in data systems
 - Establish accessible grievance and redress mechanisms
- ✓ Develop and Strengthen AI Governance Frameworks
 - Establish clear ethical and regulatory guidelines for AI
 - Build capacity for auditing and monitoring algorithmic systems
 - Promote transparency and explainability in automated decision-making
- ✓ Promote Inclusive Digital Transformation
 - Address barriers to digital access and participation
 - Target interventions for marginalized populations
 - Ensure representation in data collection and governance processes
 - Investing in digital literacy through capacity building, particularly for youth, women and rural populations, to ensure the data economy benefits all.
- ✓ Enhance Data Accountability and Transparency
 - Adopt reproducible and transparent data practices
 - Strengthen documentation and auditability of data processes
 - Promote open and responsible data sharing
 - Encourage public interest litigation and independent oversight mechanisms for surveillance and biometric systems to strengthen accountability
- ✓ Invest in Digital Literacy and Public Awareness
 - Scale up public education on data rights
 - Integrate digital literacy into education systems
 - Support community-level awareness initiatives
- ✓ Leverage Data for Development While Ensuring Equity
 - Promote data use for improved service delivery and planning
 - Develop frameworks for equitable data value distribution
 - Encourage innovation that responds to local contexts

Way Forward

The 2nd East Africa Data Governance Conference underscored that the region is at a pivotal moment in its digital transformation journey. While significant progress has been made in establishing data governance frameworks, the path forward will require a stronger focus on implementation, inclusion, and accountability.

The conference highlighted that the future of data governance in East Africa must be:

- Collaborative, through multi-stakeholder engagement
- Human-centered, grounded in rights and dignity
- Practical and action-oriented, focused on real-world impact

Ultimately, achieving a balance between innovation and accountability will depend on the region's ability to build trusted data ecosystems that serve people, protect rights, and enable sustainable development. Participants reached a strong consensus that the conference should remain a rotational regional platform to ensure diverse contextual learning. The next edition is planned for late February or early March 2027, with Dodoma, Tanzania, or Entebbe, Uganda, proposed as future host locations.

