

Soraya M Hakuziyaremye: Africa's next-gen digital payment infrastructure P54

Speech by Ms. Soraya M Hakuziyaremye, Governor of the National Bank of Rwanda, at the Inclusive FinTech Forum 2026 Session on "Africa's next-gen digital payment infrastructure P54", Kigali, 12 March 2026.

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- Fellow Governors and Deputy Governors of Central Banks,
- Deputy CEO, PAPSS,
- Development Partners,
- Financial Sector Players,
- Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good afternoon,

Welcome to the Africa Next- Gen Digital Payment Infrastructure this is one of the most ambitious initiatives to be undertaken in Africa's payment systems landscape.

This initiative began during the 3i Africa Summit in Ghana in May 2024. When Central Bank Governors gathered for a closed-door roundtable to discuss the state of cross-border payments across the continent. While we all recognized the progress that has already been made, especially through initiatives like the Pan-African Payment and Settlement System, we also agreed that there is still a lot more to do to make cross-border payments in Africa truly seamless, trusted, and efficient.

Out of those discussions came a shared commitment. The Governors of the Bank of Ghana and the National Bank of Rwanda agreed to lead a project aimed at building a comprehensive payment infrastructure grounded in a strong digital public infrastructure framework.

This is certainly an ambitious goal, but the good news is that Africa already has some important building blocks in place. Regional systems such as the East African Payment Systems(EAPS), the COMESA Regional Payment and Settlement System,(REPS) and the ECOWAS Payments and Settlement System provide a strong foundation that we can build upon as we move forward.

The project itself will be rolled out in phases, each lasting roughly six to twelve months, and it will be funded through a public-private partnership. Its success will depend heavily on broader collaboration, bringing together central banks, government institutions, mobile money and fintech ecosystems, private sector operators, and international development partners. The initiative is structured around three core frameworks:

- First, interoperable payment systems: ensuring that digital payments can move smoothly across banks and non-bank providers by addressing regulatory barriers, infrastructure gaps, and differences in technology adoption.

- Second, efficient clearing and settlement systems: developing a clear roadmap for payments to be cleared and settled safely, quickly, and seamlessly across borders.
- Third, digital currencies and tokenized assets: exploring practical use cases and providing guidance on how digital currencies and tokenization could be integrated into Africa's payment networks.

Through this work, the project will support several important use cases, including instant cross-border person-to-person payments, SME trade settlements, cross-border merchant payments for e-commerce, government-to-person disbursements, regulatory data exchange, AML and CFT enforcement, CBDC interoperability, and even the creation of a Pan-African Fintech Licensing Registry.

Participation in the NextGen DPI Project will take place at three levels: participant central banks, observer central banks, and technical partners. The Bank of Ghana and the National Bank of Rwanda will jointly co-chair the Steering Committee. GFTN will provide technical project management and secretariat support, while Afrexim bank, through PAPSS, will provide its platform and technology advisory.

This project is much more than technical exercise. It represents a transformational effort to connect Africa through efficient, secure, and inclusive digital payments and I am confident that with your expertise, collaboration, and commitment, we will set a new benchmark for cross-border payment infrastructure on the continent.

Thank you once again for being here. I look forward to a productive and engaging session as we move from planning into implementation.

Thank you.