

KZN AI FOUNDATION NPC

KZN AI Summit 2026

Building Africa's Most Connected Artificial Intelligence Ecosystem

OFFICIAL PROGRAMME OF THE DAY



21

SPEAKERS

4

LIVE DEMOS

4

PANEL DISCUSSIONS

1

CLOSING KEYNOTE

9.5h

DURATION

DATE	Thursday, 22 October 2026
VENUE	Alpvest Conference Centre: Royal Palm Hotel No. 4–9 Palm Boulevard, Umhlanga, KwaZulu-Natal · Opposite Gateway Theatre of Shopping
DAY THEME	Connecting the Brightest Minds of AI in KZN
KEY TOPICS	Policy, Governance, Sustainable Mobility, Enterprise AI & Youth Ecosystem
GALA DINNER	22 October 2026, entrance from 18:30, programme from 19:00
HOST	KZN Artificial Intelligence Foundation NPC
AUDIENCE	Government, Corporate Sponsors, Academia, Development Partners, SADC Delegates

DAY THEME

Policy, Governance, Sustainable Mobility, Enterprise AI & Youth Ecosystem

A single-day, four-block structure grouping speakers by theme, with four integrated live demos, four panel discussions, and a closing keynote — speaker slots set at 15 minutes, panels at 30 minutes and live demos at 10 minutes.

THURSDAY • 22 OCTOBER 2026**1-Day Programme — Speakers 20 Min • Panels 30 Min • Live Demos 10 Min***Theme: Policy, Governance, Sustainable Mobility, Enterprise AI & Youth Ecosystem*

TIME	SESSION / TOPIC	SPEAKER & ORGANISATION
OPENING CEREMONY AND PLENARY SESSION – AUDITORIUMS 101 & 102 - ROYAL PALM BUILDING		
07:30 – 08:30	Registration, Welcome Tea & Exhibition Floor Opening	KZN AI Foundation Secretariat
08:30 – 08:35	Programme Director's Welcome & Bio Reading	Ms Elihle Lombe — KZN AI Foundation
08:35 – 08:50	Programme Director Opening Address	Prof. Pfano Mashau — Programme Director / Director, DUT Business School
08:50 – 09:00	Vision & Strategic Objectives of the KZN AI Foundation NPC	Mr Thulasizwe Mthwa — Chairperson, KZN AI Foundation NPC
09:00 – 09:15	Where Future Technologies, Innovation, and Opportunities come together to create global leaders	Mr Jay Ramnundlall – Group CEO – Alpvest Institute for FutureTech
BLOCK 1 — POLICY, GOVERNANCE & SOVEREIGN AI – PROF LOUIS FOURIE – CHIEF FACILITATOR (AIFT) Venue – Alpvest Conference Centre/L'Aperitivo, Aurora Building		
09:20 – 09:40	Foundational Digital Capabilities Research Platform	Mr Zamokwakhe Dlamini — Deputy Director, Foundational Digital Capabilities Research, DSTI
09:40 – 10:00	Sovereign AI: Keeping South Africa's Data in South Africa	Mr Chris Ainslie — General Manager, First Core.AI (FirstTech)
10:00 – 10:20	Securing Africa's AI Future: Building Cyber Resilience in the Age of AI	Mr Mathakha Ramabulana — Director, Destiny Global Technology
10:20 – 10:40	Ethical AI Frameworks for Human Development	Prof. Job Dubihlela — Head of Postgraduate Studies, UKZN Business School

TIME	SESSION / TOPIC	SPEAKER & ORGANISATION
10:40 – 11:10	Panel of Discussion / Q&A	Prof Louis Fourie – Moderator, AIFT Senate Chairperson, Prof. Job Dubihlela — Head of Postgraduate Studies, UKZN Business School, Ms Andiswa Khumalo (SITA), Mr Chris Ainslie(FirstTech), Mr Zamokwakhe Dlamini(DSTI)
BLOCK 2 — SMART MOBILITY, INFRASTRUCTURE & INDUSTRIAL AI – PROF MUGISHA STEPHEN AKANDWANAHU – MODERATOR, PROFESSOR OF AI, NORTH WEST UNIVERSITY/ MS ELISHA RAMNUNDALL, CHIEF STRATEGY OFFICER AIFT Venue – Auditorium AAA, First Floor Royal Palm		
09:20 – 09:45	Building Africa's Smart Mobility Future: KZN's AI Strategy for Transport, Infrastructure and Inclusive Growth	MEC Siboniso Duma — KZN Transport / Human Settlements, Leader of Government Business
09:45 – 10:05	The "AI Data Centres Opportunities in KZN": Scaling Enterprise Infrastructure	Mr Clive Groeneveld - HP
10:05 – 10:25	How Digital Twins and Geospatial Intelligence Transform Infrastructure Planning in KZN-SA	Mr Matthew Strydom — Drones & GIS Specialist, Geo-Afrika Technologies
10:25 – 10:45	Connecting Government, Industry and AI Startups: Building Digital Infrastructure for AI Innovation and Industrial Transformation	Wandile Zulu — Senior Specialist: Key Account Manager, Cassava – Liquid Intelligent Technologies
10:45 – 11:15	Panel of Discussion – Q&A	Prof Akandwanaho – Moderator, Professor Of AI, North West university/ Ms Elisha Ramnundall, Chief Strategy Officer AIFT, Lwazi Tshabalala — (Accenture), Clive Groeneveld (HP), MEC Duma, Wandile Zulu (Cassava - Liquid Tech)
11:35 – 12:00	Networking Session & Exhibition Stands Visit- African Palm Courtyard AIFT FutureTech and Cloud Labs, 2 ND FLOOR WEST PALM BUILDING	
12:05 – 13:20	Executive Networking Lunch- Auditoriums 101 & 102 – African Palm Building	Butcher Block Chefs / Main Dining Hall / Exhibitions

TIME	SESSION / TOPIC	SPEAKER & ORGANISATION
BLOCK 3 — ENTERPRISE AI, HEALTH & CREATIVE INDUSTRIES – DR ASHNA SIVAI- MODERATOR (AIFT DEAN: FACULTY OF COMMERCE AND DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY) Venue – AIFT Lecture Hall 201, 2nd Floor African Palm Building		
13:40 – 14:00	Building AI-Ready Organisations: Strategy, Skills and Enterprise Innovation	<i>Mr Senzosenkosi Ngidi — Executive Delivery, TechnoLibra Solutions</i>
14:00 – 14:20	Empowering Workforces with AI Agents & Automation	<i>Mr Deneshin Pillay — Head of Operations, BET Software Group</i>
14:20 – 14:40	Using Chat Generative Pre-Trained Transformer for Teaching and Learning – a survey among health professions educators in a hospital setting	<i>Prof. Ray Maharaj — Head of Obstetrics & Gynaecology, UFS Health Sciences</i>
14:40 – 15:20	Panel of Discussion / Q&A	<i>DR Ashna Sivai- Moderator (AIFT Dean: Faculty Of Commerce And Digital Technology), Prof. Ray Maharaj — Head of Obstetrics & Gynaecology, UFS Health Sciences, Mr Senzosenkosi Ngidi — Executive Delivery, TechnoLibra Solutions, Mr Deneshin Pillay — Head of AI Operations, BET Software Group</i>
BLOCK 4 — YOUTH, WOMEN, STARTUPS & ECOSYSTEM – DR. PRAVEEN VASALA – MODERATOR (CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICER AIFT) Venue – Auditorium AAA, First Floor, Royal Palm Building		
13:40 – 14:00	The Durban Chamber's Role in Building the Next Generation of ICT Startups	<i>Adv Anastasia Mashobane — ICT Compact Lead, Durban Chamber of Commerce & Industries</i>
14:00 – 14:20	How AI Start-ups Can Leverage the Special Economic Zone for Industrial Development	<i>Ms Winile Dlamini Senior ICT Manager, Richards Bay Industrial Development Zone (RBIDZ)</i>
14:20 – 14:40	From AI Literacy to AI Opportunity: Empowering Youth and Women to Participate in Africa's AI Economy	<i>Nandisa Ngubelanga — CEO / AI Engineer, InnoHance Digital</i>

TIME	SESSION / TOPIC	SPEAKER & ORGANISATION
14:40 – 15:20	Panel of Discussion – Q&A	DR. Praveen Vasala – Moderator (Chief Academic Officer AIFT), Nandisa Ngubelanga (CEO / AI Engineer, InnoHance Digital) Nozibusiso Gumede (CEO, ScienceCEO Academy), Zama Khumalo(Canva Africa), Adv Anastasia Mashobane(DCCI), Winile Dlamini(RBIDZ)
CLOSING SESSION, LIVE DEMOS, LAUNCH OF THE HUMAN ADVANTAGE BOOK AND VOTE OF THANKS		
15:25 – 16:05	[LIVE DEMO] Live Demonstration – by AI Startups (40 mins) LIVE DEMO/ AI Start-Up Showcase Applied AI in Practice Autonomous Enterprise Agents AI Start-Up Showcase Smart Education Solutions	Applied AI in Practice — DUT Developers Team (10 mins) Autonomous Enterprise Agents: Digital Health Platform — Ms Sajana Bidesi, CEO, Evra Technologies (10 mins) AI Start-Up Showcase — Selected AI Start-Ups (10 mins) Smart Education Solutions — Thuli Ramurembiwa, ZuseTech (10 mins)
16:05 – 16:30	Breakaway Session Report and Recommendations: Block 1 Block 2 Block 3 Block 4	POLICY, GOVERNANCE & SOVEREIGN AI SMART MOBILITY, INFRASTRUCTURE & INDUSTRIAL AI ENTERPRISE AI, HEALTH & CREATIVE INDUSTRIES YOUTH, WOMEN, STARTUPS & ECOSYSTEM
16:30 – 16:45	Launch of The Human Advantage, Judgement, Responsibility, Leadership in the Age of Artificial intelligence	Mr Jay Ramnundlall – Group CEO – Alpvest Institute for FutureTech
16:25 – 16:50	Closing Keynote: The Future of AI — The Next 10 Years & Vote of Thanks	Dr Vusi Mvelase — Strategic AI Advisor, AI Author & Researcher
16:55 – 17:00	Vote of Thanks	Prof Job Dubihlela – Board Member (KZN AI Foundation)

SESSION LEGEND

CEREMONIAL	GENERAL TALK	LIVE DEMO	PANEL	KEYNOTE	BREAK
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GALA DINNER CEREMONY**Thursday, 22 October 2026 • Entrance from 18:30 • Programme from 19:00 till Late**

- *Dress Code: Formal / Black Tie*

TIME	SESSION / TOPIC	SPEAKER & ORGANISATION
18:30 – 19:00	Guest Entrance & Arrival	<i>VIP Delegates, Sponsors & Government Leadership</i>
19:00 – 19:30	VIP Networking Cocktail & Live Music	<i>VIP Delegates, Sponsors & Government Leadership</i>
19:30 – 20:00	Welcome Address, Gala Opening Remarks & Book Launch	<i>KZN AI Foundation Board & Dignitaries</i>
20:00 – 20:30	Gala Dinner Service	<i>Butcher Block Chefs</i>
20:30 – 21:45	Recognition Ceremony – Vote of Thanks	<i>KZN AI Foundation Board • Sponsors • Government Leadership</i>
21:45 – Late	Formal Networking Session & Executive Social	<i>VIP Delegates, Sponsors, Government Leadership</i>

NOTES FOR THE DELEGATES AND SPEAKERS

- Speaker slots are set at 20 minutes, panel discussions at 30 minutes and live demos at 10 minutes, to enforce pace and executive attention across the day.