

UK Launch Event

The Academy was delighted when the Prime Minister of the Republic of Kenya, Rt Hon Raila Odinga MP, agreed to officially launch the Partnership at The Royal Academy of Engineering on 28 May 2010.

During his keynote address at the UK launch, the Kenyan premier, who trained originally as a mechanical engineer, spoke passionately about the importance of supporting engineering in Africa. He told the capacity audience that “It is self-evident that the social and economic transformation in Africa that we all long for cannot be attained without effective application of science and technology in general and engineering in particular”. He warmly welcomed the establishment of the Partnership, calling it a “most valuable initiative” which was “poised to help Africa meet the challenges of scientific transformation.”



Raila Odinga at the UK launch of the Partnership

Prime Minister Odinga, whose visit to London also included a meeting with David Cameron at 10 Downing Street, described himself as an “Afro-optimist” but said that in order for Africa to reap the benefits of its rich endowment of natural resources, it needed to tackle corruption and improve value addition within the continent. The Prime Minister also pointed out that investment in regional infrastructure was vital, as evidenced by the fact that it takes just as long to transport a car from Japan to Mombasa in Kenya as to transport it from Mombasa to Kampala in neighbouring Uganda.

To do this successfully, the Prime Minister said, would take leadership, vision and ambition, along with “a critical mass of skilled and educated people”.

This process will be aided by the Partnership through its efforts to promote links between engineers and decision-makers at the policy, business and community level and emphasizing the imperative of skills development in key areas.

It is worth noting that Prime Minister Odinga came to London for the express purpose of participating in the Partnership’s launch and brought with him a large delegation of Ministers, MPs and senior officials, reflecting the importance that he places on engineering and infrastructure for Kenya’s development.

- [View video from the launch](#)
- [View photos from the launch](#)