



STRATEGIC OUTCOMES REPORT



GLOBAL ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION SUMMIT 2026

Edmonton Convention Centre
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada
May 14–15, 2026

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

On behalf of the Global Economic Diversification Council (GED Council), it is my privilege to present the Strategic Outcomes Report of the Global Economic Diversification Summit (GED Summit) 2026.

At a time when economies around the world are confronting unprecedented technological disruption, geopolitical uncertainty, shifting trade dynamics, workforce transformation, and increasing pressure to build resilient and inclusive growth models, the need for meaningful dialogue and collaborative action has never been greater.

At the same time, the geography of economic opportunity is evolving. Africa, with the world's youngest and fastest-growing population, is emerging as a significant driver of future growth. South Asia and Southeast Asia continue to strengthen their positions as global hubs for technology, manufacturing, and entrepreneurship, while the Middle East is accelerating ambitious economic diversification strategies. These developments reinforce an important reality: economic diversification is no longer simply a strategy for growth, it is a strategy for resilience.

GED Summit 2026 was convened under the theme **"Building Resilient Economies Together."** Over two days, the Summit brought together policymakers, economic development professionals, investors, entrepreneurs, academics, youth leaders, and private-sector executives from Canada and around the world to explore practical pathways toward economic diversification and long-term prosperity.

Participants engaged in substantive discussions on entrepreneurship, artificial intelligence, investment attraction, trade diversification, economic resilience, workforce transformation, and public-private collaboration. More importantly, the Summit moved beyond dialogue by fostering new partnerships, strengthening international relationships, and identifying actionable recommendations for governments, businesses, and communities.

Throughout these conversations, a clear message emerged: economies that embrace innovation, invest in talent, support entrepreneurship, and build strategic partnerships will be better positioned to navigate uncertainty and seize future opportunities.

This principle lies at the heart of the GED Council's mission. We believe resilient economies are built by connecting people, opportunities, and ecosystems. Yet many entrepreneurs, small and medium-sized enterprises, youth, and underserved



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

communities continue to face barriers to capital, markets, networks, and skills development. Addressing these gaps requires intentional collaboration and long-term commitment.

Our work therefore focuses on two foundational priorities. The first is **building meaningful networks**, because opportunity grows through relationships. The second is **strengthening capacity**, because sustainable growth depends upon equipping individuals, businesses, and institutions with the knowledge, skills, and systems required to succeed in an increasingly complex economy.

These priorities were reflected in several important outcomes of GED Summit 2026. Among them was the launch of a free Artificial Intelligence adoption initiative designed to help SMEs and economic development professionals build practical capabilities for a rapidly evolving digital economy. The Summit also marked the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Global Economic Diversification Council and Ghana's National Youth Authority, creating a framework for collaboration in youth entrepreneurship, AI literacy, workforce development, investment readiness, and market access between Africa and North America.

This report captures the key insights, findings, and recommendations that emerged from GED Summit 2026. It is intended not only as a record of the event, but as a roadmap for continued collaboration, innovation, and action.

As we look ahead to GED Summit 2027, we remain committed to advancing inclusive economic development, supporting entrepreneurs, strengthening international partnerships, and helping communities build resilient and future-ready economies. The opportunities before us are significant. Realizing them will require leadership, partnership, and a shared commitment to turning ideas into outcomes. Together, we can build stronger, more inclusive, and more prosperous economies for generations to come.

Dr. Hilda Fankah-Arthur

President & Founder

Global Economic Diversification Council



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2026 Global Economic Diversification Summit (GED Summit), held in Edmonton, Alberta, brought together policymakers, economic development leaders, investors, entrepreneurs, academics, youth advocates, and private-sector executives to explore practical strategies for building resilient, inclusive, and future-ready economies.

Convened under the theme “**Building Resilient Economies Together,**” the Summit took place against a backdrop of technological disruption, geopolitical uncertainty, workforce transformation, and shifting global trade dynamics. A central message emerged throughout the discussions: **economic diversification is no longer simply a strategy for growth—it is a strategy for resilience.** Economies that invest in innovation, entrepreneurship, talent development, and strategic partnerships are better positioned to navigate uncertainty and capitalize on emerging opportunities.

Participants identified four strategic pillars as critical to future economic success. First, **entrepreneurship must be treated as economic infrastructure**, supported through improved access to capital, skills development, mentorship, and market connections. Second, **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** was recognized as foundational infrastructure for modern economies, requiring responsible governance, practical adoption strategies, and investment in human-centered innovation. Third, the Summit highlighted the need to **modernize workforce development** by moving toward competency-based talent pipelines, lifelong learning, and stronger integration of skilled trades into economic growth strategies. Fourth, participants emphasized that **inclusive investment and economic participation** are essential to unlocking the full potential of women, youth, newcomers, Indigenous communities, and underserved entrepreneurs.

The Summit also explored opportunities for strengthening regional competitiveness and international trade. Alberta was highlighted for its leadership in artificial intelligence, clean technology, hydrogen development, and innovation-driven growth. Discussions further emphasized the importance of transitioning from transactional trade relationships to long-term, relationship-based partnerships that leverage diaspora networks, newcomer communities, and emerging markets across Africa, Asia, and the Middle East.

A significant outcome of GED Summit 2026 was the signing of a **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)** between the Global Economic Diversification Council and Ghana’s National Youth Authority. The partnership establishes a framework for collaboration in youth entrepreneurship, AI literacy, workforce development, investment readiness, market access, and cross-border economic cooperation between North America and African growth regions. The Summit also launched a practical AI adoption initiative to support SMEs and economic development professionals in building digital capabilities and improving competitiveness.

Ultimately, GED Summit 2026 demonstrated that the future belongs to jurisdictions capable of moving beyond traditional economic development approaches toward ecosystem-based models that connect talent, technology, capital, markets, and partnerships. The recommendations outlined in this report challenge governments, businesses, educational institutions, investors, and community organizations to move beyond dialogue and toward implementation. By institutionalizing entrepreneurship, accelerating responsible AI adoption, strengthening workforce readiness, and expanding global partnerships, communities can build economies that are more resilient, inclusive, and prepared for the opportunities of the future.

SUMMIT AT A GLANCE

Theme: Building Resilient Economies Together

Date: May 14–15, 2026

Location: Edmonton Convention Centre Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

Participating Regions: • North America • Africa • Europe • Middle East • Asia

Program Highlights: • Keynote presentations • International panel discussions • Investment attraction sessions • Entrepreneurship and innovation forums • AI and workforce transformation discussions • Trade and market access discussions • MOU signing ceremony • Asamoah Gyan Leadership

The **2026 Global Economic Diversification (GED) Summit**, held in Edmonton, Alberta, served as a pivotal gathering for global leaders, policymakers, and innovators to redefine economic development in a rapidly changing world.

OVERVIEW

➔ **Mission:**

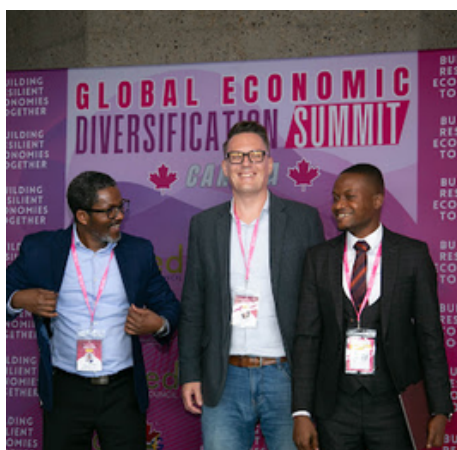
To connect people, opportunities, and ecosystems across North America, Africa, and emerging growth regions to drive inclusive and resilient economic growth.

➔ **Leadership:**

- Hosted by the GED Council, led by Dr. Hilda Fankah-Arthur — framing economic diversification as a "strategy for survival" rather than just a policy choice.

➔ **Global Ambassador:**

The summit officially welcomed legendary African footballer and entrepreneur Asamoah Gyan as the Council's Global Goodwill Ambassador to build international trust and engage youth and diaspora networks.



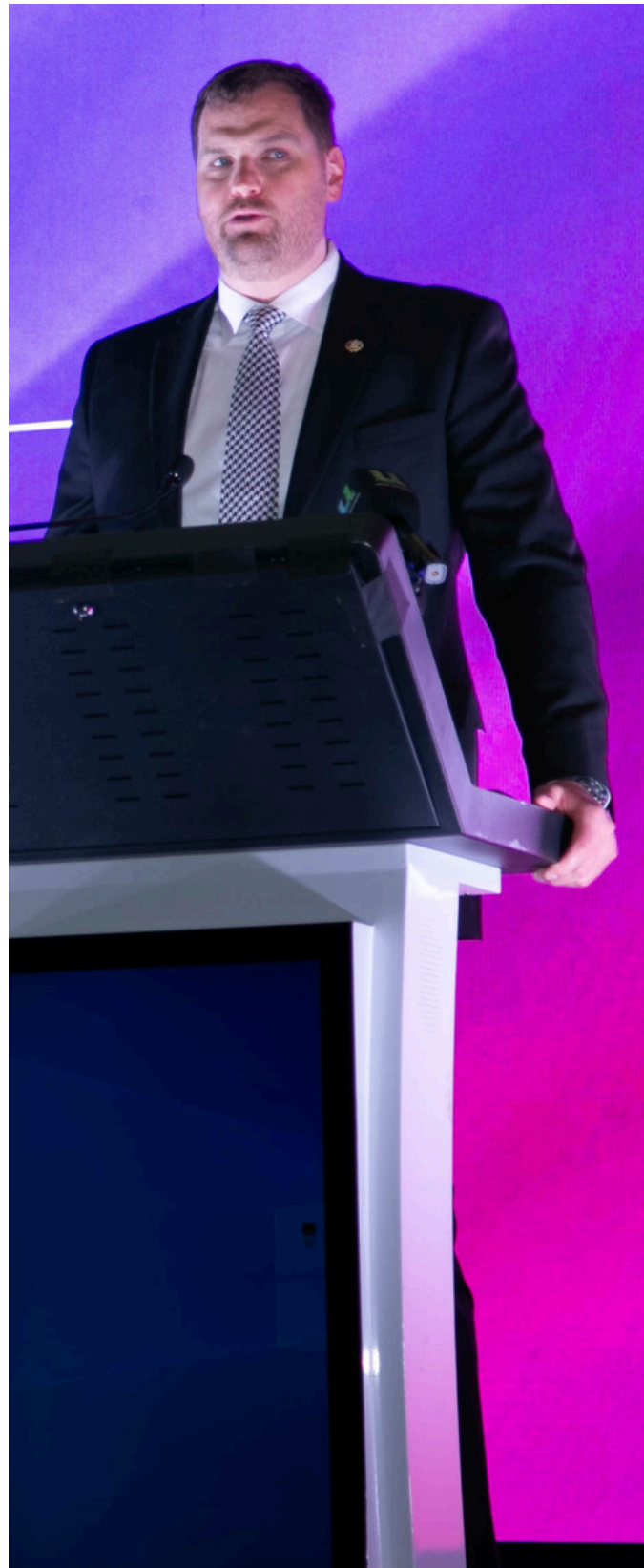
REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

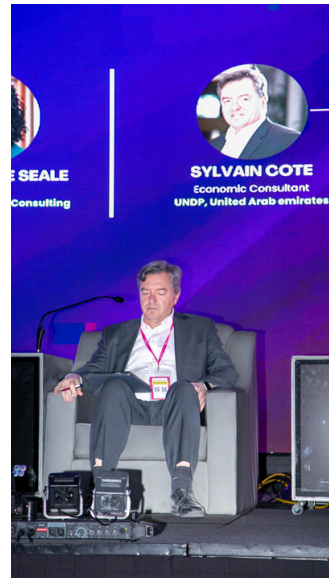
- ➔ **Alberta's Advantage:** Highlighted as a global leader in net-zero hydrogen energy (producing 80% of Canada's supply) and home to world-class AI research (University of Alberta ranked #5 globally).
- ➔ **The Edmonton Model:** Recognized as a premier investment destination due to its \$3 billion reduction in regulatory "red tape" and a competitive, no-provincial-sales-tax environment.
- ➔ **Francophone Trade:** Manitoba's use of bilingual assets to connect local markets to Europe and West Africa was presented as a specialized model for investment attraction.

KEY EMERGING OUTCOMES & CALL TO ACTION

- ➔ **Landmark MOU:** A formal agreement between the GED Council and the National Youth Authority of Ghana to bridge gaps in capital and capacity building.
- ➔ **AI Adoption Training:** The launch of a free AI adoption training program for SMEs and economic development officers to equip them with practical digital skills.
- ➔ **Relational Trade:** A strategic call to move from transactional to relational global trade, treating diaspora networks as Canada's most untapped resource for international expansion.

The summit concluded that the future belongs to regions that can transition from being program administrators to ecosystem orchestrators, intentionally designing systems that are inclusive, accessible, and resilient.





WHY ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION MATTERS



Economic diversification has become one of the defining economic priorities of the twenty-first century. While global growth remains relatively stable, advanced economies are experiencing slower productivity growth, workforce pressures, geopolitical uncertainty, and increasing competition for investment and talent. At the same time, new centres of economic opportunity are emerging across Africa, South Asia, Southeast Asia, and the Middle East, reshaping global trade, investment, and innovation patterns.

Recent global events—including supply chain disruptions, inflationary pressures, climate-related risks, geopolitical conflicts, and rapid technological transformation—have demonstrated the vulnerability of economies that rely heavily on a narrow range of industries, markets, or revenue sources. As a result, economic diversification is no longer simply a strategy for growth; it has become a strategy for resilience, competitiveness, and long-term prosperity.

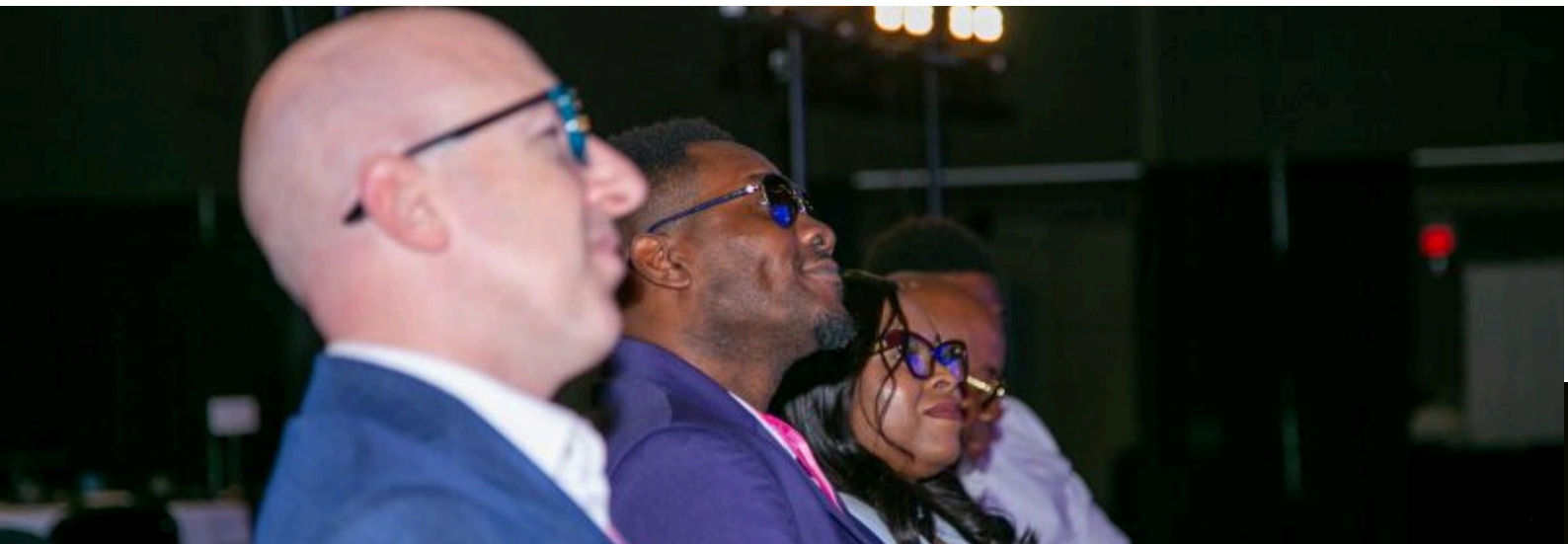
For governments, diversification helps reduce economic volatility, strengthen resilience, and position jurisdictions to capitalize on emerging opportunities. For businesses, it supports innovation, market expansion, productivity, and risk management. For communities, diversification creates jobs, attracts investment, and strengthens social and economic stability.

The discussions at GED Summit 2026 emphasized that diversification extends beyond creating new industries. It requires building the capabilities, talent, institutions, partnerships, and innovation ecosystems that enable economies to adapt and thrive in an increasingly complex and uncertain world. Participants highlighted four critical pillars of diversification: entrepreneurship as economic infrastructure, responsible and widespread adoption of artificial intelligence, workforce transformation through competency-based learning and skilled trades development, and inclusive investment that expands participation among women, youth, Indigenous communities, newcomers, and underserved entrepreneurs.

The Summit further emphasized that diversification must be supported by investments in entrepreneurship, technology adoption, workforce development, infrastructure, and strategic international partnerships. These elements form the foundation of resilient economies capable of responding to disruption while creating multiple pathways for sustainable growth.

Alberta provides a compelling example of diversification in action. While the province remains a global leader in energy production and agriculture, it is increasingly positioning itself as a leader in artificial intelligence, clean technology, advanced manufacturing, and net-zero hydrogen development. Combined with a competitive business environment and ongoing efforts to reduce regulatory barriers, Alberta demonstrates how regions can leverage traditional strengths while investing in future growth sectors.

Ultimately, GED Summit 2026 reinforced that economic diversification is not a destination but an ongoing process of adaptation, innovation, and collaboration. The economies that succeed in the coming decades will be those that can connect talent, technology, capital, entrepreneurship, and global partnerships into dynamic ecosystems capable of creating resilient, inclusive, and future-ready prosperity.



GED COUNCIL'S ROLE IN ADVANCING ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION & INVESTMENT ATTRACTION

The Global Economic Diversification (GED) Council is positioned as a strategic orchestrator and "change catalyst" that bridges gaps in the global economic ecosystem to drive resilient growth. Its positioning for supporting investment attraction and economic diversification is built on three core elements: connecting ecosystems, building capacity, and leveraging global trust.

GED Council serves as a global ecosystem connector, capacity-building platform, and catalyst for investment-ready opportunities, working to bridge local economic strengths with international markets, investors, expertise, and strategic partnerships. Through global convenings, investment and trade facilitation, entrepreneurship development, capacity-building initiatives, market access programs, and thought leadership, the Council helps businesses, communities, and institutions strengthen their competitiveness and participate in emerging economic opportunities.

For more information, visit: www.gedsummit.ca or www.gedcouncil.ca

CORE STRATEGIES

The GED Council's approach is designed to transform theoretical economic potential into tangible investment and growth.

➔ Global Connectivity and Relational Trade

The Council functions as a "superconductor," establishing meaningful relationships that serve as the foundation for economic opportunity

- *Intercontinental Networks:* By building relational trade corridors across Africa, the Middle East, and North America, the Council facilitates the flow of capital and expertise between diverse markets.
- *Cultural and Institutional Trust:* The appointment of Asamoah Gyan as Global Goodwill Ambassador leverages cross-regional influence to build trust among investors and engage the global diaspora.
- *Policy Alignment:* Through partnerships with organizations like the International Economic Development Council (IEDC), the Council ensures that regional efforts are aligned with global standards and policy frameworks.

➔ Capacity Building and Investment Readiness

Moving beyond high-level discourse, the Council provides the practical tools necessary for regions and businesses to become "investment ready."

- *Economic Accelerators:* The Alberta Future Economy Accelerator (AFEA) provides specialized training in export and investment readiness to support regional diversification.
- *Technological Empowerment:* In collaboration with the Government of Alberta, the Council has launched AI adoption training for SMEs, treating artificial intelligence as foundational economic infrastructure rather than a mere digital tool.
- *Gap Mitigation:* The Council actively identifies and addresses systemic constraints, such as limited access to capital and export capacity, through coordinated support systems.

➔ Entrepreneurship as Core Infrastructure

A central tenet of the Council's strategy is the reframing of entrepreneurship from an individual pursuit to a collective utility.

- *The Infrastructure Framework:* The Council promotes "Entrepreneurship as Infrastructure," advocating that entrepreneurial support systems should be treated with the same priority as physical roads or digital broadband.
- *Inclusive Economic Design:* There is a strategic focus on the equitable distribution of capital, specifically targeting women, youth, and underserved communities to unlock untapped growth potential.

SUMMARY OF STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

INITIATIVE	PRIMARY OBJECTIVE	KEY PARTNERSHIP/FOCUS
Relational Corridors	Create trade links between North America and emerging markets.	Africa, Middle East, and Diaspora networks.
AFEA	Enhance regional investment and export readiness.	Capacity building for economic development officers.
AI Adoption Training	Equip SMEs with foundational AI skills.	Government of Alberta and local SMEs.
MOU with Ghana	Connect youth ecosystems across continents.	National Youth Authority of Ghana.
Policy Advocacy	Shape global agendas for sustainable growth.	IEDC and regional government bodies.

COMMITMENT: TURNING VISION INTO OPERATIONAL REALITY

The GED Council distinguishes itself by converting summit-level ideas into operational realities through formal agreements, such as its landmark Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the National Youth Authority of Ghana. By producing comprehensive, actionable reports and maintaining a focus on "investment readiness," the Council ensures that its global commitments lead to measurable economic transformation.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Global Economic Diversification (GED) Council and the National Youth Authority (NYA) of Ghana is designed to drive inclusive economic growth by connecting people, opportunities, and ecosystems across North America and African growth regions.

Based on the conference proceedings, the expected outcomes of this partnership include:

- **Policy and Job Creation:** Transforming the ideas shared during the summit into tangible policies, investments, businesses, and jobs within local communities.
- **Youth Inclusion in Procurement:** Implementing "Youth Content" requirements in government procurement processes to ensure that youth-led businesses, where directors and owners are young, can bypass traditional experience barriers and secure a portion of major contracts.
- **Skill Development and Apprenticeship:** Supporting the National Apprenticeship Program and other mentorship initiatives to help young people acquire marketable skills in various sectors, from culinary arts to furniture design.
- **Digital Transformation and AI Literacy:** Increasing technical competency through the launch of the free AI adoption training program for SMEs and economic development officers, equipping them to apply AI practically within their businesses.
- **Global Ecosystem Connectivity:** Building meaningful networks that allow local startups to scale into global players by leveraging the credibility of ambassadors like Asamoah Gyan to foster international trust and partnership attraction.
- **Economic Resilience:** Strengthening the capacity of underserved and emerging markets to build multiple sources of growth, making them less vulnerable to global disruptions.

CORE STRATEGIC PILLARS

The summit's deliberations were centered on five transformative themes:

- 1. Entrepreneurship as Infrastructure:** Reframing entrepreneurship as a core utility that moves economic opportunity. A healthy ecosystem requires a five-system framework: Access, Capacity Building, Social Capital, Capital Access, and Market Connection.
- 2. The AI Imperative:** Defining AI as foundational infrastructure, like electricity, essential for shifting from a scarcity of human capital to a "**genuine abundance**" of expertise. Strategic priorities include addressing "digital colonialism" and ensuring human-in-the-loop accountability.
- 3. Workforce Transformation:** Addressing the "1221 problem" (12th-century constructs like degrees solving 21st-century problems) by advocating for competency-based talent pipelines and elevating skilled trades as the backbone of the green energy transition.
- 4. Inclusive Investment:** Emphasizing equitable rather than equal distribution of wealth to remove structural barriers for women, youth, and newcomers. Proposals included "*Youth Content*" requirements in government procurement and gender-smart capital models.
- 5. Public-Private Collaboration:** Strong public-private partnerships accelerate economic diversification by aligning government leadership with private-sector innovation, investment, and expertise. Together, they create sustainable solutions that drive inclusive growth, strengthen competitiveness, and build resilient economies.

THEME 1: ENTREPRENEURSHIP AS ECONOMIC INFRASTRUCTURE

KEY INSIGHT

One of the strongest messages emerging from GED Summit 2026 was that entrepreneurship should no longer be viewed simply as a small business activity. Rather, entrepreneurship must be recognized as a critical component of economic infrastructure. The experts emphasized that entrepreneurs play a central role in creating jobs, introducing innovation, expanding exports, attracting investment, and strengthening economic resilience. Economies that intentionally cultivate entrepreneurship ecosystems are better positioned to adapt to economic disruptions and capitalize on emerging opportunities.

Discussions highlighted that entrepreneurship policies should extend beyond startup creation to include business growth, market expansion, access to capital, technology adoption, mentorship, and international market access.

KEY CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED

- Limited access to growth capital for early-stage and scaling businesses.
- Insufficient support for underrepresented entrepreneurs.
- Fragmented business support ecosystems.
- Barriers to international market entry.
- Low technology adoption among many small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

OPPORTUNITIES IDENTIFIED

Significant opportunities identified to strengthen entrepreneurial ecosystems include:

- Improved access to investment capital.
- Enhanced mentorship and business advisory programs.
- Greater collaboration between universities and industry.
- Increased support for export readiness.
- Adoption of digital technologies and artificial intelligence.

STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATION

Governments, economic development organizations, and private-sector stakeholders should treat entrepreneurship development as a long-term economic diversification strategy rather than a short-term employment initiative.

➔ Institutionalize the "Infrastructure" Mindset

- *Reframe the Narrative:* Move away from viewing entrepreneurship as "small business support" or "social work" and treat it as a deliberate economic strategy for resilience and talent retention.
- *Evolve Organizational Roles:* Economic development organizations must transition from being "program administrators" (simply running government grants) to becoming "ecosystem orchestrators".
- *Decentralize to the Local Level:* Resilience infrastructure must be local to respond to specific community requirements and activate talent wherever it resides, rather than relying on one-size-fits-all provincial programs.

➔ Implement the Five-System Framework

A healthy ecosystem requires five interconnected systems to move opportunity effectively:

• System 1: Access (The Front Door):

1. Create **low-barrier entry points and onboarding processes** that meet entrepreneurs in their preferred learning style (audible, visual, or experiential).
2. Utilize "**trusted community connectors**", individuals who may not be officials but are the "mayors of entrepreneur-ville", to bridge the gap between institutions and founders.

• System 2: Capacity Building:

1. Focus on **practical business education** rather than formal degrees. Key areas include financial literacy, AI/technology utilization, and sales/customer acquisition.

• System 3: Social Capital:

1. Surround founders with **mentorship and peer networks**, as opportunities often move through relationships before they move through institutions.

• System 4: Capital Access:

1. Shift focus to **microloans and community finance**. Most startups need less than \$20,000 to reach the next step, a level traditional banks often find "ridiculous" to service.
2. Adopt **blended finance models** where public infrastructure grants and government-backed loans de-risk early-stage projects for private equity and venture capital.

• System 5: Market Connection:

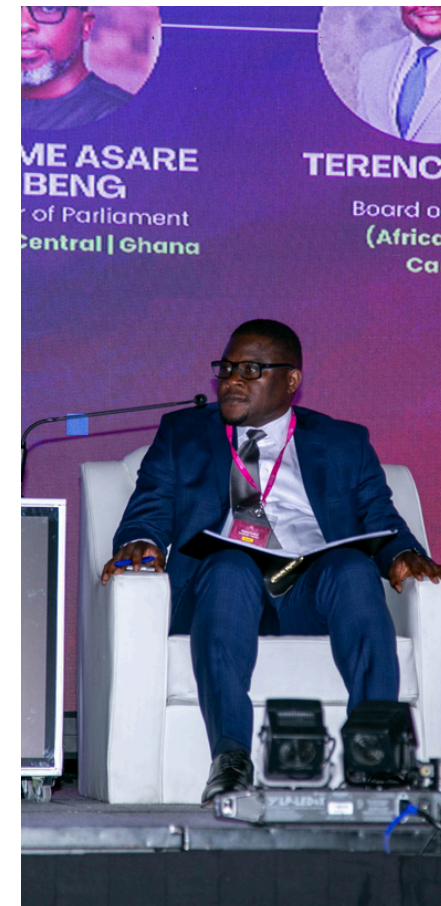
1. Actively bridge the gap to sales by integrating startups into supply chains through procurement pathways and diaspora trade networks.

➔ Leverage Diversity as a Growth Engine

- *Commercialize Cultural Assets:* Leverage entrepreneurship to engage immigrant communities, enabling them to capitalize on the cultural nuances and global connections they bring to local economies.
- *Build Founder Pipelines in Underserved Areas:* Recognize that undercapitalized communities have the highest growth potential. By building infrastructure there, regions can create stable, scalable growth from within.
- *Include "Youth Content" in Procurement:* Treat youth as a distinct sector and reserve a portion of government contracts for businesses whose directors and owners are young, helping them bypass the "experience" barrier.

➔ Priority Actions for Leadership

- *Map Ecosystem Gaps:* Identify where founders are currently "falling through the cracks" in the five systems.
- *Reward Early Candor:* In risk management, encourage teams to raise difficult issues early so they can be addressed before they become failures.
- *Start Before it is Perfect:* Catalysts should focus on getting the system started; the founders will naturally seek to perfect it over time as they move through it.
- *Protect Mental Capacity:* Treat the entrepreneur's emotional and mental health as part of the core infrastructure. Founders often run out of emotional capacity before they run out of money.



THEME 2: ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE & FUTURE COMPETITIVENESS

KEY INSIGHT

Artificial Intelligence (AI) emerged as one of the most significant opportunities for economic transformation at the Summit.

The experts highlighted that AI is no longer a future consideration—it is a present-day competitive necessity. Organizations that successfully integrate AI into their operations are likely to achieve significant gains in productivity, efficiency, innovation, and market competitiveness.

At the same time, discussions emphasized the importance of ensuring that AI adoption remains human-centered, ethical, and inclusive.

KEY DISCUSSION AREAS

AI and SME Growth

Small and medium-sized enterprises often face resource constraints that limit their ability to compete with larger organizations. AI tools can help bridge this gap by enabling:

- Business process automation.
- Customer service enhancement.
- Marketing optimization.
- Predictive analytics.
- Decision support systems.

Workforce Transformation

Experts acknowledged concerns regarding workforce displacement but emphasized that AI should be viewed primarily as a tool that augments human capabilities rather than replaces workers.

Future workforce success will require:

- Digital literacy.
- Data literacy.
- Critical thinking.
- Adaptability.
- Continuous learning.

Responsible AI

Several discussions highlighted the need for governance frameworks that ensure AI systems are:

- Transparent.
- Fair.
- Secure.
- Accountable.
- Human-centered.



Strategic Recommendation

Governments and industry leaders should prioritize AI readiness programs, particularly for SMEs, to ensure that businesses of all sizes can participate in the benefits of the digital economy.

1. Institutionalize AI as Foundational Infrastructure

- *Reframe as a Strategic Priority:* AI should no longer be viewed as an optional software tool but as core economic infrastructure equivalent to electricity or telecommunications.
- *Shift from Scarcity to Abundance:* Use AI as a force multiplier to boost societal capacity from scarcity of human capital to genuine abundance, providing world-class tutors for every student and health guidance for every family via existing devices.
- *Adopt Lifecycle Governance:* Implement a governance model that covers the entire AI lifecycle—design, deployment, and monitoring—ensuring that human accountability remains central: "AI informs, but humans decide".

2. Prioritize Inclusive Upskilling and Literacy

- *Expand Practical Training:* Scale programs like the free AI adoption training launched by GED Council for SMEs and economic development officers to equip them with practical skills for immediate application in their local contexts.
- *Focus on Comprehension over Prompting:* Shift workforce development away from simple "prompt engineering" toward critical thinking and reading comprehension to help workers navigate misinformation and low-quality "AI slop".
- *Universal Digital Literacy:* Establish national roadmaps that combine digital foundations with short, stackable micro-credentials to keep the workforce current with rapid technological shifts.

3. Address "Digital Colonialism" and Data Equity

- *Indigenize AI Models:* Actively work to protect local language and culture by ensuring AI models are trained on diverse, representative datasets rather than just English-centric Western values.
- *Include the Underrepresented:* Intentionally involve women, youth, and marginalized groups in the design and building phases of AI to prevent systemic bias from being "baked in" to future systems.
- *Leverage Local Data Assets:* Utilize specialized regional datasets, such as Alberta's single health entity data, to drive niche innovation in sectors like biotech and life sciences while maintaining strict ethical oversight.

4. Execute Through Strategic Collaboration

- *Align Stakeholder Roles:* Use a "Floor-to-Ceiling" model where governments set the regulatory floor, industry builds the technology ceiling, and academia connects the two through research and testing.
- *Focus on Outcomes over Hype:* Organizations must resist the "hype cycle" and only deploy AI to solve specific business or social problems rather than chasing technology for technology's sake.
- *Establish Accountability Mechanisms:* Create independent authorities to audit AI infrastructure and measure performance against ethical principles and long-term economic goals.

PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR COMPETITIVE REGIONS

- *Map Intelligence Gaps:* Identify which sectors are currently falling behind in digital adoption and target them with specialized infrastructure grants.
- *Foster a Culture of Innovation:* Encourage leaders to reward early candor regarding AI risks while creating "safe and serious" spaces for piloting new technologies.
- *Invest in Regional Power:* Ensure that digital strategies are matched by investments in resilient power and broadband, particularly in rural areas where the digital divide is most acute.

THEME 3: INCLUSIVE INVESTMENT & ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION

KEY INSIGHT

Economic diversification cannot succeed if significant portions of society remain excluded from opportunities.

Throughout the Summit, speakers emphasized that women, youth, newcomers, Indigenous communities, and underrepresented entrepreneurs represent an enormous source of untapped economic potential.

Inclusive economic development is not only a social objective—it is a strategic economic imperative.

WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

Experts discussed the persistent barriers women entrepreneurs face, including:

- Access to capital.
- Investor networks.
- Mentorship opportunities.
- Procurement opportunities.

Several examples were presented demonstrating how targeted support programs have increased business growth and employment outcomes among women-led enterprises.

YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Youth were identified as a critical driver of future economic growth. Emphasis was placed on the importance of:

- Entrepreneurship education.
- Business incubation programs.
- Access to startup capital.
- Mentorship opportunities.
- Technology training.

Special attention was given to opportunities across Africa, where rapidly growing youth populations present significant opportunities for entrepreneurship-driven economic development.



NEWCOMER AND DIVERSE ENTREPRENEURS

The Summit recognized the substantial economic contributions made by immigrants and diverse communities through:

- Business creation.
- International trade connections.
- Workforce participation.
- Innovation and knowledge transfer.

STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATION

Economic development strategies should include measurable inclusion targets and ensure equitable access to funding, mentorship, procurement, and leadership opportunities.

Below are the key strategic recommendations and priority actions synthesized from the summit proceedings:

1. Shift from "Equal" to "Equitable" Capital Distribution

- *Prioritize Equity Over Equality:* Wealth and capital should be distributed equitably rather than equally; equal distribution can further marginalize those who lack the initial resources to compete with established entities.
- *Implement Blended Finance Models:* Use a three-pillar framework where public infrastructure grants and government-backed loans de-risk early-stage projects to attract traditional private capital, venture capital, and institutional investors.
- *Bypass Traditional Collateral Restrictions:* Adopt alternative lending models, such as those used by the First Nations Bank, to help indigenous and emerging entrepreneurs who may not have traditional assets to back loans.

2. Institutionalize Inclusive Procurement Policies

- *Introduce "Youth Content" Requirements:* Mirroring "local content" laws, governments should mandate "Youth Content" in procurement, reserving a specific percentage of major contracts for businesses where the directors and owners are young.
- *Lower the Barrier of Experience:* Redesign procurement rubrics to allow SMEs and youth-led startups to bypass the "no job without experience" trap by allowing them to subcontract or compete for smaller, modularized contracts.
- *Mainstream Gender-Smart Capital:* Investors must adopt gender-fluid language and remove biases in their evaluation processes, noting that women-led businesses traditionally receive less than 5% of venture capital despite asking for less and often being more efficient with what they receive.

3. Bridge the "Mind Shift" and Information Gaps

- *Solve Information Asymmetry:* Create centralized, accessible pathways to help entrepreneurs understand what financial products are available and how to access them.
- *Foster "Recycled Capital":* Encourage successful local founders to "pay it forward" by transitioning into private equity and angel investing within their own communities, leveraging their lived experience to mentor the next generation.
- *Adopt "Grassroots Up" Design:* Economic development programs should be designed with the involvement of the groups they serve—rural, indigenous, or racialized women—to ensure the systems are culturally competent and meet their specific needs.

4. Simplify Regulatory and Supportive Infrastructure

- *Enact Regulatory Simplicity:* Make company registration and tax compliance "comfort of home" easy to prevent SMEs from circumventing the law due to administrative complexity.
- *Enhance Investment Readiness:* Move beyond just providing money; invest in capacity building to ensure entrepreneurs can produce the professional documentation and systems required to be truly ready for international investment.
- *Create Trade Corridors via Diaspora:* Treat newcomer networks as a primary trade asset, leveraging their cultural nuances and global connections to build relational trade corridors in emerging markets.

PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR INCLUSIVE GROWTH

- *Map Capital Gaps:* Identify which specific demographics in the region are most "undercapitalized" and target them with specialized microloan programs (under \$20,000).
- *Establish Support Stacks:* Build "integrated support stacks" that combine financing with mentorship, peer networks, and sponsorship rather than offering isolated grants.
- *Appoint Inclusive Ambassadors:* Utilize global icons and influencers to build institutional trust and brand visibility for inclusive economic initiatives.
- *Reward Early Candor in Risk:* Leadership should foster a culture where teams can flag risks and "dying horses" early to avoid the sunk cost fallacy in underperforming projects.



THEME 4: STRATEGIC RISK MANAGEMENT AND ECONOMIC RESILIENCE

KEY INSIGHT

Resilience emerged as one of the defining concepts of GED Summit 2026.

The experts agreed that modern economies must be prepared to navigate a growing range of disruptions, including:

- Geopolitical instability.
- Trade disruptions.
- Supply chain interruptions.
- Cybersecurity threats.
- Climate-related events.
- Technological disruption.

ECONOMIC RESILIENCE FRAMEWORK

Several speakers highlighted the importance of adopting enterprise risk management principles at both organizational and economic levels.

Key resilience factors include:

➔ DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRY BASE

Economies with diverse sectors are generally better able to absorb economic shocks.

➔ WORKFORCE ADAPTABILITY

Continuous upskilling and reskilling improve economic flexibility.

➔ TECHNOLOGY ADOPTION

Organizations that leverage emerging technologies are often more resilient during periods of disruption.

➔ STRONG INSTITUTIONS

Transparent governance, effective policies, and trusted institutions contribute significantly to resilience.

➔ STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Cross-sector collaboration enables faster responses to emerging risks.



STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATION

Economic resilience planning should become a core component of economic development strategies at municipal, provincial, national, and international levels.

Below are the key strategic recommendations and priority actions synthesized from the summit proceedings:

1. Transform Risk Mindset: From "Caution" to "Ambition Enabler"

- *Reframe the Premise:* Risk management should be viewed as the discipline that allows leaders to move and not freeze. It sits between paralysis and recklessness, making ambition executable.
- *Eliminate "Cover" Culture:* Shift away from a culture where risks are buried in long annexes to protect files but not the organization. Instead, move risks into active management conversations.
- *Reward Early Candor:* Leaders must encourage teams to speak up when assumptions are no longer valid or projects are failing. If speaking out generates better decisions rather than blame, the quality of risk management is significantly lifted.

2. Implement Life-Cycle Governance and Integrated Visibility

- *Break Down Risk Silos:* Recognize that AI, cybersecurity, and geopolitics are not isolated technical issues; they move across the entire organization, affecting reputation, operations, and trust.
- *Coordinate Rather than Improvise:* Build connecting points in advance so signals visible in one part of the organization (e.g., legal or operational) are elevated and connected early enough to prevent being caught off guard.
- *Design Enabling Governance:* Poorly designed governance adds steps without adding clarity. Well-designed governance clarifies who decides what is acceptable, setting guardrails that make innovation sustainable rather than reckless.

3. Bridge the Strategy-Execution Gap

- *Attach Names to Accountability:* A risk that belongs to "the organization" effectively belongs to nobody. Execution succeeds when Decisions are translated into actions with identified accountable owner(s).
- *Establish a Decision Rhythm:* For every priority risk, define the "Next Three Actions" and agree on what specific triggers will require escalation to leadership.
- *Make Risk Routine:* Move risk discussions out of annual reviews and audit cycles and into ordinary, day-to-day management conversations about resources and delivery.

4. Build Organizational "Crisis Muscle"

- *Conduct Tabletop Exercises:* Every six months, organizations should run realistic crisis scenarios (e.g., total power loss, sudden technological disruption) to practice working as a team under pressure.
- *Identify "Crown Jewels":* Preparedness requires a clear understanding of the essence of the organization and what must be protected at all costs during a shock.
- *Protect Thinking Capacity:* Leaders must distinguish between what is "genuinely new" and what is "simply loud". A leader who reacts to every signal stops leading and begins merely managing noise.

PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR INCLUSIVE GROWTH

- *Adopt the Five-Question Discipline:* Systematically ask: What matters now? What can wait? Who owns it? What decision is needed? What would make us change course?
- *Institutionalize Diversification:* Treat economic diversification not just as an opportunity agenda but as a risk agenda—a strategy for survival in a landscape where supply chains and technology are shifting simultaneously.
- *Implement Integrated Infrastructure:* Stop building fossil-fuel-reliant infrastructure that creates "sunk costs" and immediate retrofit requirements. Transition to all-electric, building-integrated infrastructure to de-risk portfolios.
- *Leverage Inclusive De-risking:* Use diverse mechanisms, such as loan guarantees, to de-risk capital-intensive ventures through meaningful equity participation.

THEME 5: PUBLIC-PRIVATE COLLABORATION AND GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS

KEY INSIGHT

No single organization can achieve economic diversification alone.

The speakers at the summit repeatedly demonstrated that successful economic transformation requires collaboration among governments, businesses, educational institutions, investors, and civil society organizations.

COLLABORATION PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED

➔ GOVERNMENT AND INDUSTRY

The speakers emphasized the need for stronger alignment between public policy and private-sector investment priorities.

➔ ACADEMIA AND INDUSTRY

- Universities and colleges have an important role to play in -
 - Workforce development.
 - Research commercialization.
 - Innovation support.
 - Talent attraction.

➔ INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

Cross-border collaboration was identified as a significant opportunity to -

- Expand trade.
- Attract investment.
- Share knowledge.
- Strengthen innovation ecosystems.

STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATION

Stakeholders should pursue structured partnerships that create measurable outcomes in investment, entrepreneurship development, innovation, and workforce advancement.

1. Transition from Transactional to Relational Trade

- *Move Beyond the Handshake*: Trade should be viewed as connecting businesses through long-term relationships rather than isolated transactions.
- *Invest in Relationships Early*: Regions should invest in building international relationships before they are needed, as these connections (e.g., between Canada and Europe) often take years to mature into functional trade corridors.
- *Leverage "Superconductors"*: Economic development professionals must act as superconductors, connecting local talent to global networks and mentors who can provide "trusted introductions".

2. Activate Diaspora and Newcomer Networks

- *Capitalize on Global Roots*: The "global networks of newcomers" represent the most untapped and affordable resource for Canadian cities. These individuals have cultural nuances and direct connections to pretty much every country in the world that can be leveraged to open new markets.
- *Youth as Trade Diversification Links*: Utilize international students and graduates as connectors back to their home countries to help local companies internationalize.
- *Bilingual Assets*: Leverage local bilingual forces (e.g., Francophone communities in Manitoba) to create specialized trade corridors connecting North American markets to Europe and West Africa.

3. Institutionalize Multi-Sector Ecosystem Orchestration

- *Adopt the Five-Stakeholder Model*: Successful innovation ecosystems require all five key stakeholders at the table: entrepreneurs, risk capital, post-secondary institutions, government, and corporations.
- *Set the Stage for Serendipity*: Governments should focus on "setting the stage" (turning down the lights and turning up the music) for innovation to happen naturally, rather than attempting to "buy" or force the creation of entrepreneurs through top-down mandates.
- *Regional Collaboration over Competition*: Municipalities should work as collectives (e.g., Edmonton Global) to market entire regions to the world, utilizing "Sister City" partnerships (like Kumasi, Ghana's partnership with Dortmund, Germany) for direct industrial collaboration.

4. Implement Blended Finance and Inclusive Procurement

- *De-Risk through Blended Finance*: Use public infrastructure grants and government-backed loans to provide "first-loss guarantees" and patient capital, making high-innovation projects in clean tech and health sciences attractive to traditional private and institutional investors.
- *Mandate "Youth Content" and Local Participation*: Follow the model of the National Youth Authority of Ghana by institutionalizing "Youth Content" in government procurement to ensure emerging businesses can bypass experience barriers.
- *Equity Participation*: Move beyond job creation to actual equity ownership for marginalized groups, such as the Alberta Indigenous Opportunities Corporation's \$3 billion loan guarantee program for energy projects.

5. Foster Global Governance and Shared Language

- *Floor-to-Ceiling Model:* Establish a framework where governments set the regulatory floor, industry builds the technology ceiling, and academia connects the two through research and testing.
- *Create a Shared Common Language:* Develop universal training and certification for economic development practitioners to ensure a shared understanding of program structures and cultural nuances across global regions.
- *Formalize Global MOUs:* Use landmarks like the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the GED Council and the National Youth Authority of Ghana to bridge gaps in capital, market access, and capacity building between North America and African growth regions.

PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR GLOBAL INTEGRATION

- *Map Ecosystem Gaps:* Conduct a "surgical operation" of local problems to identify where underrepresented groups are falling through the cracks.
- *Launch Specialized Trade Missions:* Pivot away from a singular dependence on the U.S. by launching interprovincial and international missions focused on emerging clusters like net-zero hydrogen and biotech.
- *Reward Early Candor:* Build a culture that encourages teams to flag risks early, transforming risk management from a "department of caution" into an ambition enabler.



REGIONAL OPPORTUNITY OUTLOOK

One of the strongest themes emerging from GED Summit 2026 was the recognition that the geography of global economic opportunity is undergoing a significant transformation. While many advanced economies continue to face slower productivity growth, demographic pressures, and increasing economic uncertainty, emerging regions are rapidly becoming new engines of investment, innovation, entrepreneurship, and trade.

The Summit highlighted the importance of positioning communities, businesses, and policymakers to capitalize on these shifts by building stronger connections to high-growth markets and leveraging regional competitive advantages.

Canada's Regional Opportunity Outlook: A Strategic Framework for Diversified Growth

Canada is currently undergoing a fundamental strategic pivot, transitioning from a model of isolated regional growth toward the cultivation of connected, diversified, and future-ready economies. This transformation is predicated on the integration of high-impact industrial sectors with Canada's unique geographical and demographic advantages. By prioritizing long-term resilience over short-term gains, the nation is positioning itself to lead in the global transition toward sustainable and technologically advanced economic structures.

Canada possesses significant opportunities in:

- Artificial intelligence.
- Clean technology.
- Energy transition.
- Agriculture.
- Advanced manufacturing.
- Entrepreneurship development.

The need to support SME growth and technology adoption remains a key priority.

Core Strategic Pillars

The following sectors represent the vanguard of Canada's economic evolution, each offering a distinct pathway to global competitiveness and domestic prosperity.

1. The Clean Energy Frontier: Hydrogen and Green Tech

Canada has established a formidable presence in the global energy transition, with the Edmonton region emerging as a premier hydrogen hub. Currently producing 80% of the nation's hydrogen, Edmonton leverages the world's largest net-zero hydrogen facility to offer low-cost, low-carbon energy at an industrial scale.

"The shift from fossil fuel dependence to clean energy is not merely an environmental mandate but an economic necessity as global demand for green materials continues to surge."

2. Artificial Intelligence as Economic Infrastructure

Rather than treating Artificial Intelligence (AI) as a peripheral software tool, Canada is reframing it as core economic infrastructure, comparable in importance to the electrical grid. With the University of Alberta ranking fifth globally in AI research, the focus has shifted toward the practical application of AI in critical areas such as wildfire prediction, construction optimization, and oncology. However, the "digital divide" remains a significant hurdle, as two-thirds of rural communities still lack the high-speed connectivity required for full economic participation.

3. Life Sciences and Health Innovation

Alberta’s biotech ecosystem is uniquely empowered by one of the largest single-entity patient datasets in the world, managed through its provincial health services. This data asset, combined with a growing capacity for generic drug manufacturing—specifically GLP-1 medications—provides a robust foundation for scaling local health-tech innovators and attracting global investment.

4. Relational Trade and Internal Market Optimization

To mitigate over-reliance on the United States, Canada is exploring relational trade corridors and internal market optimization. This includes interprovincial trade missions to harmonize the domestic supply chain and leveraging bilingual assets in regions like Manitoba to bridge North American markets with Francophone nations in Europe and West Africa. Furthermore, Canada’s diverse diaspora is recognized as an underutilized resource for establishing global commercial connections.

SUMMARY OF SECTORAL OPPORTUNITIES

SECTOR	KEY STRATEGIC ASSET	PRIMARY GROWTH DRIVER
Energy Transition	Edmonton Hydrogen Hub (80% of national output)	Global demand for net-zero materials and low-cost green energy
AI & Digital Economy	Top 5 Global AI Research Ranking (U of A)	Integration of AI into industrial applications and rural connectivity.
Biotech & Health	World-class provincial patient datasets	Scaling niche innovation and generic drug manufacturing (GLP-1).
Relational Trade	Bilingualism and Diaspora Networks	Diversifying export markets and optimizing internal trade.
Agriculture	The "Food Basket" of the Prairies	AgTech integration to enhance yields and de-risk smallholder farming.

Canada’s Strategic Inclusion and the Workforce of the Future

A critical component of this outlook is the emphasis on participatory growth. This involves de-risking major infrastructure through Indigenous partnerships—supported by initiatives like the Alberta Indigenous Opportunity Corporation’s \$3 billion loan guarantee—and mandating "Youth Content" in procurement to lower entry barriers for young entrepreneurs.

Ultimately, the success of these initiatives depends on solving the "1221 Workforce Problem": the disconnect between 12th-century academic constructs (traditional degrees) and 21st-century industrial needs. Transitioning toward competency-based talent pipelines and stackable micro-credentials is essential to ensure that the Canadian workforce can adapt at the pace of modern technological change.



Alberta and Edmonton: Building the Economy of the Future

Alberta's regional opportunity outlook is defined by a strategic transition from its traditional focus on energy and beef into a global leader in clean energy, artificial intelligence, and biotechnology.

The City of Edmonton is a premier destination for investment, leveraging traditional strengths in energy and agriculture to lead in emerging global markets like clean energy, artificial intelligence, and biotechnology.

This region is positioning itself as a top destination for investment by leveraging several core competitive advantages:

1. Strategic Economic Advantages

- *Competitive Tax Environment:* Alberta maintains a "Competitive Tax Advantage" with no provincial sales tax, no healthcare premiums, and a low 2% small business income tax rate.
- *Regulatory Reform:* The Ministry of Red Tape Reduction has reportedly cut over \$3 billion in regulatory costs since 2019, reinvesting that capital back into company growth and salaries.
- *Mobile Capital and Infrastructure:* The province offers reliable infrastructure and access to major global markets via rail, air, water, and roads, making it a high-priority location for mobile global capital.

2. High-Growth Sector Opportunities

- *The Hydrogen Hub:* Edmonton is rapidly emerging as a global center for net-zero hydrogen energy, producing 80% of Canada's hydrogen and hosting the world's largest net-zero hydrogen facility.
- *AI and Tech Leadership:* Alberta is home to world-class research through the University of Alberta (ranked #5 globally for AI research) and the Alberta Machine Intelligence Institute (Amii). Real-world applications are already active in wildfire prediction, construction innovation, and cancer detection through local companies like NanoSticks.
- *Biotechnology and Life Sciences:* The region is leveraging its talent density and the world's largest single-entity health dataset (through Alberta Health Services) to drive niche innovation in drug discovery. Furthermore, Edmonton is set to become a hub for manufacturing generic GLP-1 drugs.
- *Digital Construction and Permitting:* The City of Edmonton was the first municipality in Canada to use AI to automate real-time decisions for construction inspections, significantly speeding up building projects.

3. Innovation and Workforce Infrastructure

- *Intellectual Property Protection:* The newly created Alberta Intellectual Property Office aims to protect local innovations and ensure that the economic benefits of trade accrue back to the province.
- *Talent Attraction and Retention:* Alberta has seen over 600,000 new residents in recent years and continues to focus on economically focused immigration to fill niche talent gaps that cannot be satisfied locally.
- *Inclusive Participation:* The province uses mechanisms like the Alberta Indigenous Opportunity Corporation's \$3 billion loan guarantee to de-risk major infrastructure projects by involving Indigenous populations as equity partners.

In conclusion, Alberta's outlook is focused on being "open for business" by moving at the speed of the free market while intentionally building an ecosystem that is future-ready and diversified by design. Additionally, investors are drawn by Edmonton's relative affordability—particularly in housing compared to cities like Vancouver—and its high quality of life, featuring extensive green spaces like the River Valley.

Manitoba and the Francophone Advantage

Francophone Trade Corridor

The Summit highlighted Manitoba as a practical example of how cultural and linguistic assets can be leveraged to attract investment and expand international trade relationships.

By utilizing its bilingual workforce and strong Francophone connections, Manitoba has successfully developed trade and investment relationships with markets such as France, Belgium, and North Africa. These experiences demonstrate how language, culture, and trusted relationships can serve as powerful economic development tools and create specialized pathways for foreign direct investment.

The Francophone Advantage in Manitoba is a strategic economic development model that leverages the province's "bilingual force" (French and English) to attract foreign direct investment and open new international trade corridors.

The "Bilingual Force" as a Strategic Asset

Manitoba uses its bilingual status to differentiate itself, particularly in attracting investment from French-speaking markets that might otherwise overlook Tier 2 or Tier 3 Canadian cities. This strategy is managed through organizations such as Sidama (the Economic Development Council for Manitoba Bilingual Municipalities), which focuses on using linguistic assets to drive regional growth.

Key Case Studies and Successes

The sources highlight specific instances where this linguistic advantage was the deciding factor for major international investments:

- *Roquette (Portage la Prairie)*: A French pea processing company chose Manitoba over competing jurisdictions like Saskatchewan and Kansas City for a new factory. A primary reason was the availability of bilingual human resources, which Roquette deemed essential for its staff to communicate and report back to its headquarters in France. This investment created 400 jobs in a small town.
- *Ubisoft*: Manitoba successfully leveraged its Francophone assets to attract this global gaming giant, further diversifying the local tech ecosystem.

Global Market Connectivity

By leading with its Francophone identity, Manitoba has successfully established relational trade connections with several high-growth and established markets, including:

- Europe: France and Belgium.
- North Africa: Tunisia.
- Domestic: Strengthening trade ties with Quebec.

Participatory and Grassroots Design

A core principle of this advantage is that it is designed from the grassroots up. Economic development agencies consult with individual bilingual municipalities to identify their specific priorities—such as wind farms, tourism attractions, or golf courses—and then provide the visionary tools and business plans needed to market these localized opportunities to a global Francophone audience.

Africa

Africa is identified as a pivotal growth region and a primary frontier for global economic expansion, driven by its massive demographic shift and rapid digital adoption. The continent is projected to house 2.5 billion people by 2050, making it the host of the world's youngest population.

The following key themes highlight why Africa is viewed as the next global growth frontier:

1. Demographic Powerhouse and Youth Economy

- *Massive Youth Population:* In countries like Ghana, over 50% of the population is young, representing a significant engine for entrepreneurship and labor.
- *Youth-Centric Policies:* To capitalize on this, African leaders are implementing practical inclusion strategies, such as "Youth Content" in procurement, which reserves government contracts for youth-led businesses to bypass traditional experience barriers.
- *Apprenticeship Models:* Programs like the National Apprenticeship Program in Ghana are training youth in specialized skills, from culinary arts to furniture design, to foster self-sufficiency and SME growth.

2. Digital Transformation and Fintech Surge

- *The AfCFTA Advantage:* The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) is creating the largest single market in the world, allowing SMEs to trade globally using mobile technology and bypassing traditional physical trade barriers.
- *Fintech Leadership:* Fintech has surged, particularly in West Africa, facilitating hundreds of billions in trade annually and providing financial access to the unbanked.
- *Digital Infrastructure:* Ghana has pioneered digital governance through the "Ghana Card" (biometric ID) and a nationwide digital address system, which maps every 5x5 meter square in the country to support a functional digital economy.

3. Strategic Resource Wealth and Energy Transition

- *Critical Minerals:* The continent is essential to the global green energy transition, with recent significant discoveries of lithium, titanium, and nickel.
- *Renewable Energy Laws:* Countries like Ghana have established robust legal frameworks for renewable energy, aiming to catch up with global electric vehicle trends while leveraging existing petroleum resources.

4. Relational Trade and Global Connectivity

- *Leveraging Diaspora Networks:* Experts suggest that Canada's most untapped and affordable resource is the global networks of newcomers from Africa, who possess the cultural nuances and direct connections needed to open relational trade corridors.
- *Sister City Partnerships:* Successful models of international collaboration exist, such as Kumasi's partnerships with Dortmund (Germany) and New Orleans/Charlotte (USA), which have directly attracted industrial investment and tourism.
- *Trust as Currency:* Global icons like Asamoah Gyan emphasize that building international trust is the primary currency needed for foreign investors to navigate African markets successfully.

5. Resilient Local Systems

- *Support for Underrepresented Groups:* Innovative systems, such as the National Buffer Stock Company, provide guaranteed markets for women farmers and fishers, ensuring food security and sustainable incomes.
- *Regulatory Simplicity:* There is a strong call to move toward regulatory simplicity, making it as easy as "the comfort of home" for entrepreneurs to register businesses and comply with taxes.

Middle East

Vision 2030 Clean Energy AI Infrastructure

The Middle East, particularly the Gulf region, is undergoing an aggressive economic transformation as it moves to diversify beyond its traditional reliance on oil and gas. This shift is characterized by massive investments in artificial intelligence, clean energy, and specialized health sciences, positioning the region as a futuristic hub for global capital.

The following key themes highlight the acceleration of economic diversification in the Middle East:

1. Vision 2030 and Strategic Non-Oil Growth

- *Diversification Milestones:* Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 has already achieved a non-oil GDP of 55%, with private sector contributions rising to 51%.
- *Diversified Industry Focus:* The region is pivoting toward advanced manufacturing, tourism, and biotechnology, leveraging its sovereign wealth funds to build entire new sectors from the ground up.

2. AI Leadership and Digital Sovereignty

- *Public Sector Adoption:* Saudi Arabia ranks first globally in public sector AI adoption and 14th in the global AI index. The year 2026 was officially declared the "Year of AI" by the Saudi cabinet.
- *Cultural Preservation in Tech:* To combat "digital colonialism," countries like the UAE are developing their own localized Large Language Models (LLMs) to protect their specific language, culture, and values from being overwhelmed by Western-centric AI models.
- *Business Growth:* The rapid adoption of technology has led to over 19,000 AI company registrations in Saudi Arabia in recent years.

3. Sustainable Innovation and Clean Tech

- *Green Energy Projects:* The region is investing heavily in net-zero infrastructure and all-electric building designs, moving away from fossil-fuel-reliant urban planning.
- *ESG Frameworks:* A solid framework around Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles is being built into the DNA of new developments, requiring both local startups and foreign SMEs to qualify for sustainability metrics.

4. Gender-Smart Diversification

- *Women in Leadership:* The Middle East has seen a "huge transformation" in women's economic participation. Currently, 45% of SME CEOs in Saudi Arabia are female, a statistic that underscores the region's commitment to activating its entire talent pool.

5. De-risking and Investment Attraction

- *Incentive Programs:* Governments in the region utilize aggressive incentive programs to de-risk capital-intensive ventures for international investors.
- *Regulatory Evolution:* The creation of futuristic regulatory environments allows foreign companies to establish bases and test new approaches in health and energy sectors with high levels of institutional support.

6. Global Connectivity

- *Relational Corridors:* As part of its diversification, the Middle East is strengthening trade ties with North America and Africa, utilizing its unique geographical position and world-class logistics infrastructure to serve as a global bridge for trade and innovation.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING OUTCOMES

GED Council & National Youth Authority (Ghana)

Purpose

Key Commitments: • AI Adoption Training • Youth Entrepreneurship • Workforce Development • Market Access • Investment Readiness • Diaspora Trade Connections

Expected Outcomes: • Jobs • Businesses • AI Literacy • Trade Expansion • Cross-Border Partnerships

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the **Global Economic Diversification (GED) Council** and the **National Youth Authority (NYA) of Ghana** is a strategic partnership aimed at connecting people, opportunities, and ecosystems across North America and African growth regions.

Based on the summit proceedings, the expected outcomes of this MOU include:

1. POLICY AND JOB CREATION

The partnership aims to transform the high-level ideas discussed at the summit into tangible results, specifically targeting the creation of new policies, investments, businesses, and jobs within local communities.

2. YOUTH INCLUSION IN PROCUREMENT ("YOUTH CONTENT")

A major expected outcome is the institutionalization of "Youth Content" in government procurement. This policy is designed to:

- Mandate that a specific percentage of government contracts be reserved for youth-led businesses.
- Allow young entrepreneurs to bypass traditional "years of experience" barriers by competing for smaller, modularized contracts.

3. SPECIALIZED SKILL DEVELOPMENT

The MOU supports practical training frameworks, such as the National Apprenticeship Program in Ghana, to help young people acquire marketable skills in sectors like:

- Culinary arts
- Furniture design
- Fashion and hair design

4. DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION AND AI LITERACY

A central commitment linked to this collaboration is the launch of a free AI adoption training program. Outcomes include:

- Increasing the technical competency of SMEs and economic development officers.
- Equipping local businesses with practical knowledge to apply AI to their operations.

5. GLOBAL ECOSYSTEM CONNECTIVITY

The MOU leverages the credibility of the GED Council's Global Goodwill Ambassador, Asamoah Gyan, to build international trust. This is expected to:

- Help local startups scale into global players.
- Establish relational trade corridors between North America and African growth markets.

6. STRENGTHENING ECONOMIC RESILIENCE

By addressing gaps in capital, market access, and coordinated support, the MOU aims to build multiple sources of growth in underserved markets, making them less vulnerable to global disruptions.



ECONOMIC IMPACT ASSESSMENT

➔ Regional Economic Performance (Alberta & Edmonton)

Alberta has positioned itself as a global leader through aggressive fiscal and regulatory policies designed to attract mobile global capital.

- **Regulatory Efficiency:** The Ministry of Red Tape Reduction has cut over \$3 billion in regulatory costs since 2019, capital which is directly reinvested into company growth and salaries.
- **Hydrogen Leadership:** Edmonton produces 80% of Canada's hydrogen, an amount equivalent to roughly 50% of the entire United States' production. This hub provides low-cost, low-carbon energy at a global scale.
- **Demographic Growth:** Alberta has seen over 600,000 new residents in recent years, with Edmonton alone adding 250,000 people in the last five years, providing a massive expansion to the local labor market.
- **Tax Advantage:** The province maintains a 2% small business income tax rate and no provincial sales tax to attract and retain businesses.

➔ The Digital Economy and AI Imperative

Digital infrastructure is now viewed as core economic infrastructure equivalent to electricity.

- *National GDP Contribution:* Canada's digital economy is valued at over \$223 billion, contributing approximately 10% of the national GDP, and is projected to reach \$250 billion by 2030.
- *AI Investment:* Global investment in AI is forecasted to reach nearly \$3 trillion in 2026, with 61% of global venture capital currently directed toward AI-related initiatives.
- *Public Sector Leadership:* Saudi Arabia ranks first globally in public-sector AI adoption, having already achieved a non-oil GDP share of 55% through its Vision 2030 diversification strategy.

➔ Inclusive Investment and Participation

The summit highlighted that failing to include marginalized groups represents a significant lost economic opportunity.

- **The Gender Dividend:** In Saudi Arabia, **45% of SME CEOs are now female**. In Canada, the **Women Entrepreneurship Strategy** represents nearly **\$7 billion** in investments and commitments across 20 federal departments to address ecosystem gaps. Experts noted that private equity systems are missing out on **hundreds of millions of dollars in economic impact** by failing to apply a gender-diverse lens.
- **Indigenous Equity:** The Alberta Indigenous Opportunities Corporation (AIOC) provides a **\$3 billion loan guarantee** to de-risk major infrastructure projects by enabling Indigenous groups to participate as equity partners.
- **The Francophone Advantage:** Manitoba's use of its "bilingual force" was the deciding factor in attracting the **Roquette pea factory**, a project that created **400 jobs** in the town of Portage la Prairie.

➔ Workforce and Immigration

The economic impact of the talent pipeline is managed through strategic immigration and addressing the "1221" workforce problem (12th-century constructs solving 21st-century problems).

- **2026 Immigration Targets:** To meet labor demands, Canada has set targets of **155,000 new students**, **230,000 temporary workers**, and **380,000 new permanent residents**.
- **Trade Efficiencies:** Internal trade missions within Canada seek to unlock the potential of the domestic supply chain; for example, Ontario currently loses an estimated **\$50 billion annually** due to traffic and logistical inefficiencies.

Conclusion of Impact

The Summit concluded that the highest economic returns will be realized by regions that transition from being program administrators to ecosystem orchestrators. Rather than focusing solely on delivering programs or attracting a limited number of large employers, successful jurisdictions will intentionally cultivate interconnected ecosystems where entrepreneurs, investors, academia, governments, and communities collaborate to create sustained economic value.

By institutionalizing entrepreneurship as critical economic infrastructure, cities can diversify their growth engines, reduce dependence on a few dominant industries, stimulate local innovation, and build resilient networks of high-growth SMEs that are better positioned to withstand economic shocks. This ecosystem-based approach strengthens long-term competitiveness, accelerates job creation, attracts strategic investment, and enables communities to adapt more effectively to technological disruption, changing global markets, and future economic uncertainties.

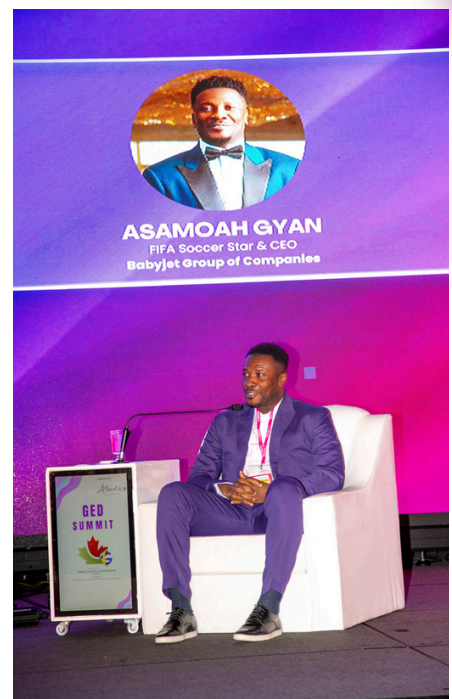


LEADERSHIP FEATURE: ASAMOAH GYAN

From Global Football Icon to Global Economic Ambassador

Key Leadership Lessons: • Trust is Currency • Discipline Drives Success • Resilience Creates Opportunity • Entrepreneurship Beyond Sport

Contribution to GED Council's Global Mission



FROM GLOBAL FOOTBALL ICON TO GLOBAL ECONOMIC AMBASSADOR

Leadership, Entrepreneurship and Economic Empowerment

One of the most memorable moments of GED Summit 2026 was the fireside conversation featuring Ghanaian football legend, entrepreneur, philanthropist, and GED Council Global Goodwill Ambassador, Asamoah Gyan.

While recognized globally for his achievements on the football field, the discussion focused on a broader narrative: the transition from athletic success to entrepreneurship, leadership, and economic empowerment.

His story resonated strongly with delegates because it reflected many of the themes explored throughout the Summit—resilience, adaptability, innovation, and long-term value creation.

Beyond Sport

Throughout the discussion, Asamoah emphasized that success in any field requires discipline, consistency, and the willingness to embrace challenges.

His entrepreneurial journey demonstrates how skills developed in one domain can be transferred to entirely new opportunities.

For many young people, professional sport is often viewed as an endpoint. However, Asamoah's experience illustrates that sport can also serve as a platform for entrepreneurship, investment, leadership, and social impact.

Key Leadership Lessons

➔ Trust is Currency

One of the strongest messages from the discussion was the importance of trust.

Whether building businesses, partnerships, or communities, trust remains one of the most valuable assets leaders possess.

Trust enables collaboration, reduces barriers, and creates opportunities that would otherwise remain inaccessible.

➔ Discipline Drives Long-Term Success

The conversation highlighted the importance of discipline in achieving sustainable success.

While talent may create opportunities, long-term achievement requires commitment, preparation, and continuous improvement.

➔ Resilience Creates Opportunity

Every entrepreneurial journey involves setbacks and uncertainty.

Asamoah's experiences reinforced the idea that resilience is often the differentiating factor between those who adapt and those who disengage when challenges arise.

➔ Strategic Relevance to Economic Diversification

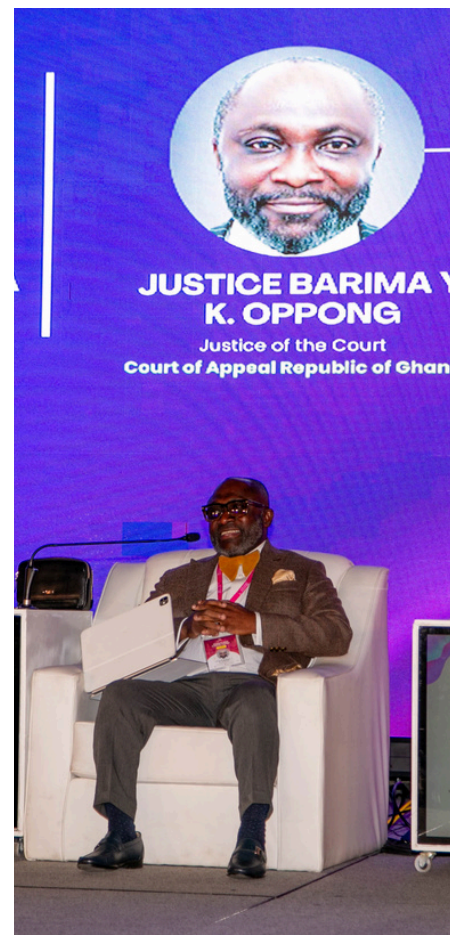
The appointment of Asamoah Gyan as GED Council's Global Goodwill Ambassador reflects a broader commitment to connecting youth, entrepreneurship, leadership, and economic opportunity.

His global influence provides a platform for inspiring future entrepreneurs while strengthening international engagement and collaboration.

➔ Key Takeaway

Economic diversification is ultimately about people.

By investing in leadership, entrepreneurship, and human potential, communities create foundations for sustainable prosperity.



STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

- Pillar 1: Institutionalize Entrepreneurship as Infrastructure
- Pillar 2: Adopt the AI Imperative
- Pillar 3: Bridge the 1221 Workforce Gap
- Pillar 4: Move from Transactional to Relational Trade
- Pillar 5: Transform Risk Management into an Ambition Enabler

➔ Recommendations for Governments

1. Position Economic Diversification as a Resilience Strategy

- Economic diversification should be integrated into broader economic, workforce, innovation, and investment strategies.
- Governments should move beyond sector-specific approaches and focus on building adaptive economic ecosystems.

2. Invest in Entrepreneurship as Infrastructure

- Entrepreneurship ecosystems should receive the same strategic attention as transportation, utilities, and digital infrastructure.
- Supporting entrepreneurs creates multiple pathways for economic growth and resilience.

3. Accelerate AI Readiness

- Governments should develop AI readiness strategies that address workforce development, adoption, governance, commercialization, and public sector innovation.

4. Expand Inclusive Procurement

- Procurement policies should create opportunities for SMEs, women-owned businesses, youth entrepreneurs, Indigenous enterprises, and underrepresented founders.

5. Strengthen International Partnerships

- Cross-border collaboration should be leveraged to expand investment, trade, talent mobility, and innovation opportunities.

➔ Recommendations for Economic Development Organizations

1. Become Ecosystem Orchestrators

- Economic development agencies should focus on connecting stakeholders rather than solely delivering programs

2. Strengthen Entrepreneurial Ecosystems

- Support systems should address access, capacity building, social capital, capital access, and market connection simultaneously.

3. Expand Global Market Access

- Organizations should help businesses identify and access international opportunities.

4. Foster Innovation Collaboration

- Partnerships between academia, industry, government, and entrepreneurs should be strengthened.

➔ Recommendations for Investors

1. Increase Support for Emerging Entrepreneurs

- Investors should expand access to capital for early-stage businesses and underrepresented founders.

2. Support Patient Capital Models

- Longer investment horizons are often necessary to support innovation and ecosystem development.

3. Invest in Future-Oriented Sectors

Priority sectors include:

- Artificial Intelligence
- Clean Technology
- Hydrogen
- Agri-Food Innovation
- Advanced Manufacturing
- Digital Economies

➔ Recommendations for Educational Institutions

1. Modernize Learning Models

Expand competency-based learning, micro-credentials, and experiential education.

2. Strengthen Industry Partnerships

Collaborate more closely with employers to align programs with workforce needs.

3. Promote Entrepreneurship Education

Entrepreneurship should be integrated across disciplines.

4. Support Lifelong Learning

Learning systems must enable continuous upskilling and reskilling.

➔ Recommendations for Entrepreneurs

1. Embrace Innovation

Organizations should actively explore AI adoption and digital transformation opportunities.

2. Build Strategic Networks

Relationships remain critical to growth and market access.

3. Invest in Talent Development

People remain the most valuable asset within any organization.

4. Pursue Global Opportunities

Digital technologies increasingly enable entrepreneurs to compete internationally.

ROADMAP TO GED SUMMIT 2027

2026–2027 Priority Areas

• Entrepreneurship Ecosystems • AI Adoption • Investment Attraction • Workforce Transformation • Africa–North America Trade Corridors • Inclusive Economic Participation • Strategic Partnerships

2027 Vision: Moving from Dialogue to Implementation

The **Roadmap to the 2027 Global Economic Diversification (GED) Summit** builds upon the foundational shifts established in 2026, transitioning from high-level strategic dialogue to the institutionalization of the "ecosystem orchestrator" model. This roadmap outlines the critical phases and priorities required to deliver inclusive, resilient, and future-ready economies by the next gathering.

➔ Vision and Strategic Focus

The 2027 Summit will focus on the theme of **"Moving from Potential to Prosperity,"** specifically targeting the conversion of the "genuine abundance" provided by AI and youth demographics into tangible jobs, investments, and policies.

➔ Key Pillars of Action for 2027

• Pillar 1: Scaling Capacity and Literacy:

- **Expand AI Adoption Training:** Following the 2026 launch in Alberta, the Council will scale the **free AI adoption training program** across Canada and align it with international standards to equip more SMEs and economic development officers.
- **Operationalize the Alberta Future Economy Accelerator (AFEA):** Focus on delivering "Export & Investment Readiness" training to ensure local businesses are prepared for global market entry.

• Pillar 2: Institutionalizing Inclusive Participation:

- **Implement "Youth Content" Frameworks:** Based on the MOU with the National Youth Authority of Ghana, the Council will advocate for policies that reserve a percentage of government procurement for youth-led businesses, bypassing traditional "experience" barriers.
- **Mainstream Gender-Smart Capital:** Work with private equity systems to remove structural biases, aiming to increase the current 5% venture capital allocation for women-led enterprises.

• Pillar 3: Strengthening Strategic Global Networks:

- **Leverage Diaspora Assets:** Actively convene diaspora communities as "supracenductors" to open relational trade corridors in emerging growth regions like Africa and Southeast Asia.
- **Activate Goodwill Ambassadorship:** Utilize **Asamoah Gyan's** global credibility to build institutional trust and attract international partnerships ahead of 2027.

➔ The Call to Action

The roadmap to 2027 demands a shift from isolated individual efforts to broad-based **collaboration**. By treating **entrepreneurship as infrastructure**—no different than roads or broadband—the GED Council aims to empower communities to create wealth from within, ensuring no group is left behind in the digital and clean energy transition.

Join us in **Edmonton, May 2027** for **GED Summit 2027** as we move from ideas to implementation and strengthen global partnerships for resilient, inclusive, and future-ready economies. Be part of the next chapter—where leaders, investors, innovators, and changemakers connect to turn shared ambition into measurable economic impact.



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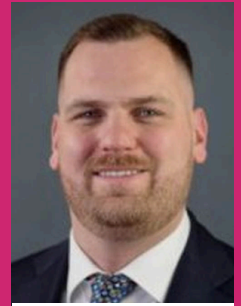
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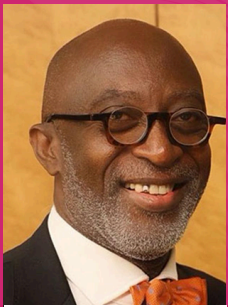
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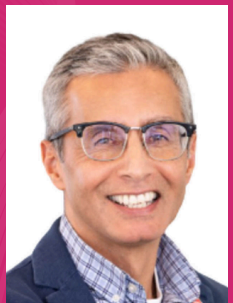
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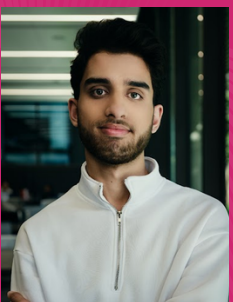
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GED Council's

ALBERTA FUTURE ECONOMY ACCELERATOR (AFEA)

Fuel Your Business Growth

- Sales & Marketing
- Business Strategy
- AI & Cybersecurity
- Operations Improvement
- Business Innovation
- Export Readiness

Our Goals

- Empower diverse talent for innovation sectors
- Drive regional diversification via digital tech
- Boost SME competitiveness & global market access
- Build inclusive pipelines for long-term growth

An exclusive 1-Year bootcamp for Startups and SME Businesses in Alberta.



4 Core Pillars

AI & Cybersecurity

Global Readiness

Economic Diversification

Inclusive Talent Pipeline

Supported by the
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APPLY ONLINE by July 31, 2026

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Thank You!



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- National Youth Authority of Ghana
- GED Council Team

Together, we are building resilient, inclusive, and future-ready economies.

