

Nigerian industrialist Aliko Dangote on Wednesday launched construction of a \$16 billion oil refinery in Kenya, a project expected to increase the supply of refined petroleum products in East Africa and create new opportunities for regional investment.

Rwanda was among the countries represented at the groundbreaking ceremony at the port of Lamu, with Trade and Industry Minister Antoine-Marie Kajangwe attending on behalf of President Paul Kagame. Kenyan President William Ruto, Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni, Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, President of Benin, Romuald Wadagni and Togo's President Jean-Lucien Savi de Tové also attended.



The Dangote East Africa Petroleum Refinery is expected to have the capacity to process 700,000 barrels of crude oil a day and is scheduled for completion in 2030. The development also includes a special economic zone for industries that use petroleum and petrochemical products.

Rwanda's presence at the launch comes after Kagame said in August that Kigali had held preliminary discussions with Dangote about taking a stake in the project. He said Rwanda would be interested in participating, although details had yet to be worked out.

Dangote has offered regional governments a combined 30% stake in the refinery, giving countries in the region an opportunity to participate in the project.

The Rwandan Ministry of Trade and Industry said the country looked forward to the project and its contribution to adding value to Africa's natural resources.

"Rwanda looks forward to the commencement of this landmark project and to its contribution to unlocking the value of Africa's natural resources," the ministry said in a post on X.

Dangote said the refinery was intended to help East Africa reduce its dependence on imported petroleum products, pointing to the continent's continued reliance on overseas supplies.

"If you look at East Africa, and not only East Africa, most of the 54 countries in Africa import petroleum products," he told journalists in Nairobi.



The refinery is expected to supply fuels to Kenya and other markets in the region while supporting industries producing petroleum-based goods, including bitumen used in road construction.

Engineers India Limited has secured a \$450 million engineering contract for the project. The development is also expected to create more than 50,000 jobs.

Dangote is seeking to build the Kenyan facility with a capacity comparable to the refinery his group operates in Nigeria.