

Rwanda's annual international trade fair has opened with hundreds of businesses seeking new customers, partnerships and market opportunities, as the country continues efforts to strengthen private sector growth and promote locally made products.

The 29th edition of Expo2026, being held in Gikondo, Kicukiro District, has brought together manufacturers, traders and foreign exhibitors displaying a wide range of goods, including beauty products, fashion accessories, children's items, decorations and household products.



The exhibition, which opened this week, is expected to attract more than 500 exhibitors and over 300,000 visitors, according to organisers. It also aims to create employment opportunities for more than 2,000 young people through activities linked to the event.

The Private Sector Federation (PSF) said more than 150 local companies and industries had registered to participate, alongside more than 120 exhibitors from outside the country.

For many small businesses, the trade fair provides an opportunity to expand their customer base, test market demand and connect with potential buyers.

"Customers are already asking about prices, and some have started buying. We expect more visitors as the exhibition continues," said Iradukunda Kenia, an exhibitor selling women's handbags.



Although the exhibition was still in its early days, with some businesses continuing to arrange their stands and products, exhibitors said they were encouraged by the number of visitors showing interest in their goods.

Malaika Mwihoreze, who sells children's toys and accessories, said the school holiday period could help attract more families to the event.

"It is still early, but we believe more customers will come. Parents should bring their children because they can find products that interest them," she said.

Beyond direct sales, businesses see Expo2026 as a platform to increase visibility and build relationships with customers and other companies.

Rwanda has in recent years focused on expanding its private sector, supporting entrepreneurship and improving opportunities for businesses to access local and international markets.

Expo2026 is expected to continue serving as a meeting point for businesses, consumers and investors while showcasing products from Rwanda and other countries.