By: Viateur Nzeyimana

France and several African nations are set to deepen their ties at a major summit in Nairobi later this month, aimed at boosting investment, innovation and economic cooperation across the continent.

Speaking at a press conference in Kigali on 29 April, France's ambassador to Rwanda, Aurélie Royet-Gounin, outlined plans for the "Africa Forward" summit, which will take place in the Kenyan capital on 11 and 12 May.

Co-hosted by Kenya and France, the meeting will bring together several African heads of state alongside Emmanuel Macron. It comes nearly a decade after Mr Macron's landmark speech in Ouagadougou, which set out a new vision for France's relationship with Africa.

What makes this gathering stand out is its format. For the first time, France is co-chairing such a summit with an English-speaking African country—something officials say reflects a shift towards more balanced and inclusive partnerships.

The focus, organisers said, will be on practical cooperation. That includes encouraging investment in both directions and working together on shared challenges such as healthcare, food security, digital development and access to energy.

A wide range of voices is expected to take part, from government leaders and business executives to young entrepreneurs, artists and civil society groups. The aim is to capture the breadth of modern Franco-African relations, which have grown more diverse in recent years.

The summit will unfold over two days. The first, themed "Inspire and Connect", will centre on a large business forum expected to attract around 2,000 participants, including investors and policymakers from Africa and Europe. Discussions there will focus on building partnerships, supporting industries and driving job creation, particularly in sectors like sports and the creative economy.

On the second day, attention will shift to development financing and global issues. Panels will look at agriculture, health, the blue economy and artificial intelligence, while also tackling questions around youth employment, skills training and economic competitiveness.

Peace and security are also on the agenda, with organisers highlighting support for African-led mediation efforts and the role of the African Union.

Some of the outcomes from Nairobi are expected to feed into preparations for the next G7 Summit, which France will host in Évian in June.