

Lewis Hamilton, the seven-time Formula One world champion, has taken significant steps to bring a Formula One race to Africa, working with Rwanda and South Africa on potential plans. In a statement made at the Dutch Grand Prix on Thursday, Hamilton emphasized the importance of including Africa in the Formula One calendar.

“The time’s 100% right,” Hamilton declared. “We can’t be adding races in other locations and continue to ignore Africa, which the rest of the world just takes from. No one gives anything to Africa. I think having a Grand Prix there will really be able to highlight just how great the place is and bring in tourism and all sorts of things. Why are we not on that continent?”

Hamilton’s comments followed his recent visits to Africa during the August break from Formula One. The Mercedes driver has been actively involved in discussions behind the scenes, aiming to make the African Grand Prix a reality. “There is at least one track that’s ready,” he said. “In the short term, we should just get on that track and have that part of the calendar, and then work on building out something really cool.”

The push for a Formula One race in Africa has been ongoing for years, with South Africa’s Kyalami circuit last hosting a race in 1993. Despite interest from Formula One’s leadership, financial hurdles have been a significant barrier. Formula One chief executive Stefano Domenicali recently mentioned that Rwanda is keen on hosting a race at a permanent circuit yet to be constructed, with further discussions planned for September.

Hamilton, who is the only Black driver in Formula One, has been vocal about his support for African inclusion in the sport. “Rwanda is one of my favorite places I’ve been to actually,” he shared. “I’ve been doing a lot of work in the background on it. I’ve spoken to people in Rwanda, I’ve spoken to people in South Africa. That’s a longer project, Rwanda, but it’s amazing that they’re so keen to get a part of it.”

In addition to his work on the Formula One project, Hamilton has been actively involved with the United Nations refugee agency UNHCR. His recent trip to Africa included visits to Morocco, Senegal, Benin, Mozambique, and Madagascar. Reflecting on his experiences, Hamilton described the impact of visiting a refugee camp and learning about the challenges faced by displaced individuals.

“Going to a refugee camp and seeing the work that is being done there and how

people who are displaced are affected was really hard to see and experience,” Hamilton said. “It’s one thing reading about it, or hearing on the news, but actually seeing and speaking to kids who are walking 10km to get to school just to have an education and then 10km back and not having school meals and being able to eat during the day—that was really heavy.”