

Rwanda is banking on its new 10-year Formula 1 agreement to attract more visitors, investment and business as it prepares to bring the world's premier motor racing championship back to Africa.

The deal was announced on Tuesday at BK Arena in Kigali, where President Paul Kagame and First Lady Jeannette Kagame joined Formula 1 President and Chief Executive Officer Stefano Domenicali, Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA) President Mohammed Ben Sulayem and other stakeholders.



*President Paul Kagame attended the announcement of hosting Formula 1 in Rwanda at BK Arena in Kigali*

The Formula 1 African Grand Prix, presented by Visit Rwanda, is expected to join the championship calendar in the early 2030s, once a purpose-built circuit in Bugesera, near the new Kigali International Airport, has been completed.

The venue is part of a wider sports, tourism, infrastructure and commercial development project led by the Rwanda Development Board. It is also intended to host international motorsport, conferences and other major events outside race weekends.

The project could create business for hotels, restaurants, transport operators, event organisers and other service providers, while construction and operations could generate employment. The scale of those opportunities will depend on the investment required, visitor demand and the extent to which local businesses secure contracts.

Kagame said the agreement was intended to deliver benefits beyond the race itself.

"This 10-year partnership is also an investment in Rwanda's future," he said in remarks published by Formula 1.

He said the circuit, alongside the new international airport, would bring jobs, skills, tourism and new business to Rwanda and the wider region.

For Formula 1, the agreement marks a return to Africa for the first time since the South African Grand Prix at Kyalami in 1993. The championship says more than 100 million fans across Africa already follow the sport, presenting an opportunity to

reach new audiences.

Domenicali said the partnership was designed to create benefits that would last beyond the event.



*Chief Executive Officer Stefano Domenicali*

“This is about much more than hosting a Grand Prix,” he said. “Together, we can create lasting economic and social benefits through tourism, investment, skills development and local business growth.”

The FIA has also pledged to support Rwanda’s preparations and develop motorsport opportunities for young people. Speaking at the ceremony, Ben Sulayem said the federation would work with Formula 1 and its partners to ensure the circuit meets international standards while helping develop talent across Africa.

In remarks reported by Kigali Today, he highlighted support for Cross Car and karting, disciplines that can introduce young people to competitive racing. He also pointed to cooperation on road safety, including initiatives to improve motorcycle helmet testing.

The FIA has supported road-safety initiatives in Rwanda since 2022, according to Kigali Today. Ben Sulayem said the federation would continue working with the country before the Grand Prix begins, rather than limiting its involvement to the race itself.

Rwanda has hosted several major international sporting events in recent years, including the UCI Road World Championships in 2025. Kigali also hosted the FIA General Assemblies and Awards Ceremony in December 2024.



The Bugesera project now moves into a development phase. The circuit must meet FIA Grade 1 standards, which are required to host Formula 1, and the first race will take place only after the venue is completed.

Formula 1 has yet to announce the inaugural race date, construction milestones or further details of the project.

The first race is expected in the early 2030s, but Formula 1 has yet to announce a specific date or detailed construction schedule for the Bugesera circuit. The venue must meet FIA Grade 1 standards before it can host the championship.