

## Highway Africa kicks off this weekend

Highway Africa, described as Africa's premier journalism conference, is taking place from 7-8 September at Rhodes University, Grahamstown. This year the conference has gone back to its digital focus with the theme 'Social Media - from the margins to the mainstream'.

Using plenary sessions, keynote addresses, and panel discussions, the event will see journalists, civil society activists, academics and the youth reflecting on the role technology is playing in shaping journalism and the media in the society.



The conference will also host various training workshops, book launches and exhibitions linked to the theme, plus evening gala dinners and networking sessions, including the prestigious Telkom-Highway Africa New Media Awards.

### MTN joins African media professionals

In addition to extending its 13 year relationship with Rhodes University, MTN will be represented in two sessions at this year's conference. Dr Hanlie Smuts, Head of Digital at MTN South Africa, will join a panel discussion on managing organisational reputation online. MTN will also add its voice to discussions about 'working in the media - when corporate communications meets editorial', with Xolisa Vapi, Head of Group Corporate Communication and Stakeholder Relations, representing the company. As part of the operator's commitment to the development of journalism in Africa, MTN is also sponsoring a number of journalists from its markets to attend the conference.

"The media plays an important role in society, particularly in a developing continent such as ours. MTN is proud to have the opportunity to support the work of our media. As a telecoms and digital services provider, we are conscious of the needs to enable conversations between families, communities and the global community. We are thus very supportive of this year's focus at the conference, as it shines the spotlight on social media and the role of journalism, which are both integral to leading debates in our societies", says Chris Maroleng, Executive for Group Corporate Affairs at MTN.

This year's conference will again bring together a rich diverse number of speakers and panellists from across the world, including media academics, NGOs, global internet companies and telecoms operators.

Chris Kabwato, Director of Highway Africa, says: "Each year I am humbled by the interest in the conference by journalists and MTN staff across the continent. I greatly value their participation as speakers and delegates."