



PRESS RELEASE

Helios partners with Wale Ayeni to lead Venture Capital strategy

26 May 2022. Helios Investment Partners is delighted to announce that it has partnered with Wale Ayeni to head its venture capital strategy and launch Helios Digital Ventures.

Ayeni was until recently at the International Finance Corporation (IFC), the private sector arm of the World Bank Group, where he was head of venture capital investments across Africa, the Middle East and Central Asia. During his five years at the organisation, he helped to build its venture capital investment practice in Africa and co-headed disruptive technologies and VC investments for emerging and frontier markets globally.

Prior to joining the IFC, Ayeni led venture capital investments in Silicon Valley for Orange, the French telecoms company. He started his career as a microprocessor design engineer with Intel Corp. and later Qualcomm, before moving to JP Morgan's Technology Investment Banking group in San Francisco.

An explosion in innovation is underway in Africa, driven by a youthful and urbanising demographic and the availability of cheaper and better technological tools. African tech entrepreneurs are creating value by leveraging technology to address daily needs, creating economic value, and delivering significant positive social impact. This digital transformation is poised to become a principal driver of economic growth on the continent.

Helios Digital Ventures will support founders at the early-growth stage to build long-lasting businesses using technology to rethink and deliver impact to the mass-market, focusing on large addressable market segments including education, food security, financial services, healthcare, and sustainability.

Tope Lawani, co-founder and Managing Partner of Helios, said:

"We are extremely excited to have Wale join us to drive our venture capital effort. He brings many years of successful global experience in the venture asset class, and a deep understanding of the African markets and tech ecosystems. Helios Digital Ventures will key off the same core themes of demographics and urbanisation; and technology and innovation that underpin our Private Equity investment strategy. We are excited about the synergies inherent in being able to identify and invest in the highest potential Africa start-ups with venture capital and continuing to support them with private equity as they mature."

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About Helios Investment Partners

Established in 2004, Helios Investment Partners is the largest Africa-focused private investment firm, with a record that spans creating start-ups to providing expanding companies with growth capital and expertise. The firm is led and managed by a predominantly African team based in London, Paris, Lagos and Nairobi, with the language skills and cultural affinity to engage with local entrepreneurs, managers and intermediaries on the continent. Helios leverages its local and global networks to create attractive proprietary investment opportunities, with an emphasis on building market leaders in core economic sectors and driving performance through a highly engaged approach to portfolio operations. The firm's unique combination of a deep knowledge of the African operating environment, a singular commitment to the region and a proven capability to manage complexity, is reflected in its diverse portfolio of growing, market-leading businesses and its position as a partner of choice in Africa. Helios is the second mainstream private equity firm globally and the largest emerging markets-focused private equity firm, to receive B Corp certification. B Corp status recognizes the firm's long-standing commitment to sustainability and responsible business practices.