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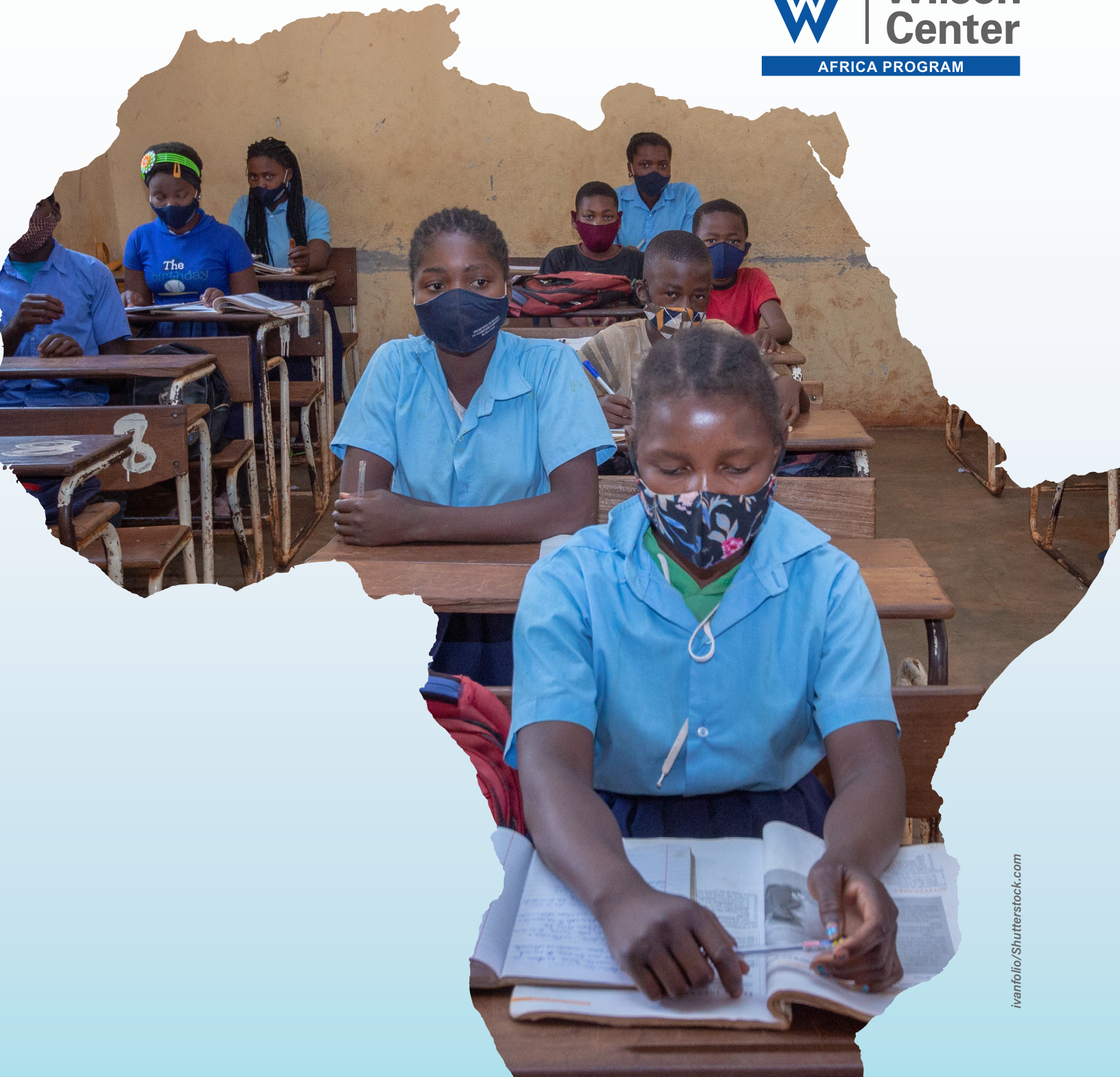


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Africa: Year in Review 2021

A Letter from the Director

Welcome to *Africa: Year in Review 2021* (AYIR). As the year came to a close, the Wilson Center Africa Program continued its annual tradition of asking policymakers, practitioners, scholars, and Africa watchers to reflect on what they considered to be the year’s most impactful developments on the African continent, in U.S.-Africa relations, and about Africa’s role in the global arena. Our contributors responded with 27 mini-essays covering a broad range of topics in the governance, security, development, and social spheres.

Our first group of AYIR essays focuses on the strategic direction of U.S.-Africa relations. The role of China in Africa has been a major point of debate for at least two decades. What is often lost in this discussion is how ordinary Africans view China’s engagement with the continent. This year’s compilation opens with a text giving voice to ordinary Africans on their perceptions of Chinese and U.S. engagement on their continent. Contributors also address how the United States could strengthen its relations with the continent, including by articulating the enhancement and development among the pillars of U.S. engagement with African countries, prioritizing the

revitalization of global democracy, and strengthening science diplomacy, particularly in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The state of global democracy was one of the biggest stories of 2021, with authoritarianism rising in many parts of the world, including Africa. Seven of our AYIR authors express concern over Africa's democratic trajectory, touching on various aspects of the issue. Several contributors highlight the concerning resurgence of coups in Africa, the challenges to democratic governance in various sub-regions and countries, and the governance norms and frameworks that appear to need updating. In this regard, one contributor looks at the debate within the African Union's (AU) Peace and Security Council (PSC) regarding the military coup in Sudan and the differing attitudes toward governance that were exposed. In response to the challenges posed by democratic decline, authors propose solutions ranging from safe guarding presidential term limits, to tapping into the youth-led protests that emerged across the continent to defend democracy, improving management of elections to preclude fraud and violence, and incentivizing democratic governance within U.S. policy toward Africa in 2022.

Security and peacebuilding are perennial AYIR topics. Authors underscore the continent's continuing fragility in 2021 and the need to develop political leadership to address governance challenges that can lead to insecurity. One writer points to the implications of Afghanistan's fall on violent extremism in Africa while another urges the United States to sustain the necessary momentum to stabilize the security situation in Northern Mozambique, and a third focuses on the ongoing conflict in Ethiopia.

Additionally, some contributors stress the vital role women play in both the peacebuilding and governance sectors. One author looks at the Women's Situation Room of Uganda (WSR), a women-led early warning and rapid response mechanism created to prevent violence before, during, and after African elections, and how it promoted peace during Uganda's divisive election.



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Climate change and the dashed hopes of African countries for increased mitigation and adaptation assistance at the Glasgow Climate Change Conference (COP26) was raised by several AYIR 2021 authors. One contributor outlines the benefits of investing in solar energy in the Sahel, while another focuses on how the Democratic Republic of the Congo's rich natural resources could position the country in the global fight against climate change.

Several authors note that in the global arena, African relationships with international partners and institutions are evolving or in need of a rethink. One author argues that the traditional way of development finance has not yielded the desired results and that the \$650 billion in Special Drawing Rights by the International Monetary Fund offers an opportunity to redefine development in post-COVID Africa. Another contributor considers how Turkey is assessing potential opportunities offered by the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

Colonialism's legacy of disruption and trauma has rarely been sufficiently acknowledged by former colonial powers. Following the 2021 official recognition by the German government of its colonial-era genocide in what is now Namibia, one contributor underlines the controversies surrounding the German and Namibian governments' compensation agreement.

COVID-19 continued to have negative fallout on public health and economies throughout Africa. Two essays on the pandemic's impact on African debt and finance are included in AYIR 2021. Citing the insecurity of logistical operations, one essay additionally calls for U.S. support of an effective strategy against the spread of COVID-19 within Nigerian conflict zones.

As it has globally, the pandemic has made virtual tools and engagement indispensable to governance, development, and social engagement in Africa. Two essays focus on the increasing importance of digital communication from different perspectives. One looks at the concerning restrictions imposed by African governments on internet and social media access while another highlights how social media messaging can be a powerful connector of individuals and groups across the continent.

Finally, as 2021 was the “African Union Year of Arts, Culture, and Heritage: Levers for Building the Africa We Want,” we end this year’s AYIR with an essay reminding us of the increasing role of the African creative sector and its powerful potential to improve governance and drive development on the continent.

Africa: Year in Review has become one of the most widely read publications of the Africa Program, garnering over 20,000 views and downloads since its first edition was released in 2015. On behalf of the Wilson Center Africa Program, I thank all of the authors for their contributions to this year’s edition. I would also like to thank the Africa Program staff including Hannah Akuyibo, Gamuchirai Mhute, and Catharine Helmers along with former Africa Program interns Jennyfer Jimenez and Ryan Slaughter for their hard work, research, and administrative support on this publication. I am especially grateful to Alyson Grunder, our Senior Diplomatic Fellow, who offered editorial assistance, and Cherodie Ayers, our Communications Program Assistant, for serving as a liaison with authors, designing, and producing AYIR 2021.

As you read these mini-essays, we ask you to join the Wilson Center Africa Program in reflecting on the developments highlighted, challenges faced, and solutions offered that we hope will educate, inform, and serve as inspiration to propel the continent forward in 2022.

Dr. Monde Muyangwa



Director, Wilson Center Africa Program

We appreciate the richness of the contributions on significant developments in political, economic, and social affairs for our sixth edition of the Africa: Year in Review series. The statements made and views expressed are solely those of the individual authors and do not represent the views or official positions of the Wilson Center.



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U.S.-Africa Relations

U.S.-China “Competition” is a Win-Win in the Eyes of Ordinary Africans

Dr. Joseph Asunka

U.S.-China competition for influence in Africa neither started nor ended in 2021, but it may have taken a turn—for the better, in the eyes of ordinary Africans.

In outlining the Biden administration’s vision during a visit to Nigeria in November, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken promised to **“stop treating Africa as a subject of geopolitics”** and to pursue a policy that is **“not about China or any other third party. It’s about Africa.”**

Findings from Afrobarometer surveys in 34 African countries suggest that such an approach will sit well with many Africans, who see investments and assistance from the United States and Chinese less in terms of a geopolitical struggle and more in terms of practical development priorities.

A majority of Africans welcomes both Chinese and U.S. engagement (63 percent and 60 percent, respectively). Very few see it as negative (14 percent and 13 percent, respectively). In fact, those who feel positively about Chinese influence in their country are also more likely to feel positively about U.S. influence. This sentiment suggests that for many Africans, a U.S.-China “competition” is a win-win rather than an either/or proposition.

However, Nigerian Foreign Minister Geoffrey Onyeama’s intended lighthearted (and admittedly, almost cynical) image of Africa as the bride accepting the billion-dollar best of two suitors—China’s Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the U.S. Build Back Better World (B3W)—doesn’t quite capture African opinion. In fact, Afrobarometer findings indicate that Africans largely abhor paternalistic development assistance.

A majority (55 percent) say that their own governments should control decisions about how development assistance is used. Even when it comes to tying development assistance to the promotion of democracy, half (51 percent) of Africans demur; they want their own governments to decide these things.

The “competition” for opportunities and influence in Africa may remain contentious as President Biden and Secretary Blinken have made it clear that, unlike BRI, B3W aims to advance democratic governance. But in a context of engagement that addresses real needs while respecting sovereign nations as partners, rather than pawns in a global game, even such disputes could prove fruitful.

Don't Forget Development: Three Recommendations for U.S. Development Activities in Africa

Mr. Christopher Maloney

While 2021 has seen dramatic humanitarian, security, and democratic governance crises in countries such as Ethiopia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mozambique, Mali, Sudan, and Guinea, most African countries still remain most focused on grappling with their ongoing, longer-term development challenges. While these crises rightly demand our immediate attention, it is just as critical that the United States not diminish its more traditional development partnerships in Africa. Otherwise, this will undermine the very investments that prevent further crises from emerging.

As new political leadership overseeing foreign assistance takes stock of U.S. development partnerships across Africa, here are three recommendations that can ensure maximal development aid effectiveness:

- 1. Ensure all development programming is rooted in evidence and unique to that country's specific developmental profile.** Every country's level of political will is different, as is its level of capacity—this is true overall, and within sectors. USAID's Country Roadmaps¹ and MCC's Country Scorecards² offer objective sets of entry points to examine these unique "skill versus will" profiles. These can spur productive conversations with African counterparts on how to create more effective development partnerships—from programming areas, to ensuring mutual accountability.
- 2. Advocate for a better alignment of budgets with strategies.** The high level of directives in U.S. development funding to Africa results in budget inflexibility that skews the ability of the United States to work nimbly, and on holistic developmental programming more reflective of country need. For the first time, however, the internal versions of USAID's new country strategies³ objectively quantified this strategy-versus-budget mismatch; leadership should use these analyses to engage its funders on where specific budget flexibilities are needed most. In addition, making these analyses publicly available would allow other development actors—especially those in Africa—better identify financing gaps and areas for improvement.
- 3. Do not be afraid of incentives.** The United States could do more to ensure the right incentives for its country counterparts are built into its investments—thereby ensuring better country ownership and longer-term sustainability. Cost-sharing with the partner government, co-designing programs, and supporting pay-for-results assistance are all areas where more could be done. The reforms begun under USAID's Redefining the Relationship with Partner Governments⁴ initiative can help make this happen.

Momentum Needed in Mozambique

Mr. Thomas P. Sheehy

In a year of growing violence across Africa, Mozambique represents encouraging news. Horrific killings and human rights abuses that have occurred over several years in its Cabo Delgado province have been for the most part halted, at least for now, stemming a humanitarian disaster that has killed thousands and displaced nearly a million Mozambicans.

The stabilization of Cabo Delgado is an underappreciated triumph of regional cooperation. Security forces from eight countries of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) plus Rwanda, have helped Mozambique put Islamic State-affiliated al-Shabaab forces on the defensive, reportedly forcing its leadership to flee the country. Some displaced Mozambicans are returning home. This security mission, while imperfect, has been effective.

However, security operations alone do not bring peace. Concerted and determined efforts must build more representative politics and broader economic development in a region long marginalized by the ruling Frelimo party. The radical ideology that has sanctioned brutal human rights abuses must be discredited. Mozambicans must lead these efforts, but as with the security challenge, they need help.

Fortunately, the outside resources available to rebuild are significant. The World Bank has made a near billion-dollar commitment. The United States may designate Mozambique as a Global Fragility Act country, unlocking hundreds of millions of dollars in aid. Many other countries are donors as well. Additionally, Cabo Delgado houses a major gas project that promises billions of dollars in revenue. Of course, public resources have often been abused in Mozambique, so the international community should demand accountability.

Even well-funded, transparent efforts would take years to build a democratic, well-functioning government in Mozambique. That's the long game, but it is critical that there be some "quick wins" for Cabo Delgado to have a chance at sustained peace. Those countries that committed troops must see immediate progress on resettling Mozambicans and a visibly energized political and economic dialogue to address popular dissatisfaction led by the national government. Otherwise, their efforts will be questioned at home, and the security gains will become static and stale in Mozambican eyes, encouraging al-Shabaab to creep back. The Biden administration must rally the commitment and sense of urgency to push momentum-building, quick impact resettlement and reconciliation efforts.

The Untapped Potential of Science Diplomacy for U.S.-Africa Relations

Ms. Margaret Muthee

In 2021, the African Union and Africa Center for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) launched the Partnerships for African Vaccine Manufacturing (PAVM) aimed at leveraging pan-African and global partnerships to scale-up vaccine manufacturing in Africa. One of the specific goals of PAVM is to ensure that by 2040, African countries produce at least 60 percent of the vaccines they use instead of the 1 percent currently manufactured on the continent.

Coming at a time when the COVID-19 pandemic and other cross-border challenges, relating notably to the environment and security have ravaged world economies, PAVM offers significant opportunities to foster connections between science, technology, and innovation with geopolitics and diplomacy. The transcendental nature of science diplomacy infused with nearly universal scientific language helps blur political differences, build confidence, and mutual understanding.

Although Africa lacks a well-defined science diplomacy approach and strategy, the core principles of science diplomacy—attraction, cooperation, and influence—are present in the African Union's Agenda 2063 for the continent's transformation. The interface between science and diplomacy, which goes beyond bilateral or multilateral scientific relationships, and speaks to broader foreign policy objectives, has not been fully explored in Africa. Joseph Nye's definition of soft power—the ability to influence the behavior of others through attraction, rather than coercion or payment—makes science diplomacy a pivotal 21st century soft power tool that can be deployed to better manage and even redefine geo-political engagement.

Through the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other U.S. health agencies, the United States has played a key role in continuous scientific research on HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria. The three constitute the continent's biggest infectious disease burdens. The fight against COVID-19 and Ebola calls for regionally coordinated, knowledge-based transnational programs to foster the development of cost-effective medical products, technologies, and a shared information system.

PAVM offers a unique framework for Africa to leapfrog to more novel vaccine platform technologies and manufacturing processes, including those with flexible applications or quicker ability to scale. This can only be realized through strong scientific collaborations to build local human capacity and foster technological transfers and linkages in research for evidence-based homegrown policy decisions. The U.S.-Africa, science-driven diplomacy will help to catalyze scientific research, test and scale technology, and innovate a better development and geo-political engagement amongst African nations and the United States.

Terrorism, Democracy, and Human Rights in Nigeria: Is the United States Back?

Dr. Olusola O. Isola

Compared to the last five years, relations between the United States and Africa improved considerably in 2021. Since Secretary Pompeo visited Africa in February 2020, no top ranking American government official visited the continent until Secretary Blinken in November 2021. This indicates the low importance the previous U.S. administration attached to relations with Africa, a lack of prioritization which offered opportunities to China—and to some extent Russia—to have unobstructed inroad into the continent.

Nigeria suffered from U.S. inattention in both its war against terrorism and in stricter entry visa regime for Nigerians coming to America. The United States was initially supportive of Nigeria's counterterrorism efforts, including providing military instructors, intelligence and equipment. However, there arose allegations that Nigerian forces were trampling on the fundamental human rights of citizens and that Boko Haram had infiltrated the Nigerian armed forces, leading to the withdrawal of American military instructors from Nigeria. Consequently, the United States refused to sell special air interdiction weapons to Nigeria to reinforce the fight against the terrorists. This caused some setback in counterterrorism efforts, leading to ISIS and al-Qaida networking with Boko Haram. This prolonged the war on terror, while the West African Sahel region became more dangerous. In addition, visa relations between the two countries dipped, with American visa procedures becoming tighter for Nigerians.

The United States finally acceded to Nigeria's request in 2021 to allow the purchase of twelve A29 Super Tucano military jets, an acquisition that is expected to make appreciable impact on the war against terrorists. Secretary Blinken's visit to Nigeria and other African countries was remarkable. He insisted on reinvigorating democracy, preserving human rights of citizens and pledged support for human development in Africa.

The visit coincided with the release of the investigative report of the October 2020 massacre of youths who were protesting against police brutality in Lekki, Lagos. Secretary Blinken insisted that government must ensure the implementation of the recommendations in the report. This signaled to Nigeria and Africa that the United State is back as a watchdog for democracy and development. A new policy dimension to U.S.-Africa relations may likely be witnessed in the coming years.

African Lion 21: Partnering with Social Media Influencers

Major General Andrew Rohling

For many of the 8,000 multi-national troops participating in Exercise African Lion 21 last June, it was the culmination of a year's worth of planning and arduous preparation. However, for one Moroccan professional surfer turned social media influencer, African Lion 21 was a compelling story that had to be told.

Saad Abid is a charismatic young Moroccan with a deep love of his country and the outdoors. I came to know him in Morocco last summer during African Lion 21. At first, I didn't know what to think of him. Everywhere I went surveying the exercise, there he was, dressed awkwardly in the army uniform of the Moroccan Royal Armed Forces, with a phone, camera and a microphone, snapping selfies and shooting videos with troops and generals. His energy was relentless. He wanted to try everything with his own hands—but he clearly was not a soldier.

What he might have lacked in terms of training for combat, he more than made up for it with his skills as a communicator and videographer.

Our partnership with Saad wasn't by accident. Saad had been brainstorming with a friend from the U.S. Consulate in Casablanca on ways he could inspire Moroccan youth to be more involved citizens. Meanwhile, our team at U.S. Army Southern European Task Force, Africa and United States Air Force Africa was carving out a plan for a U.S.-based social media influencer to experience the exercise.

Ultimately, those efforts converged, and the result was spectacular. Saad made nine videos during the exercise. His content uploaded to YouTube and Instagram dominated Moroccan social media platforms over three weeks. They were viewed nearly three million times on YouTube and garnered 32.7 million impressions on Instagram. With a little creativity and a lot of partnership, we were able to reach a niche audience with truly authentic storytelling.

This kind of collaboration and engagement needs repeating, especially as we look to build on the success of African Lion 21 and strengthen our strategic partnerships on the continent. Saad is only one of many influencers across Africa. We must seek them out and strive to involve them in helping us transparently and authentically communicate the great things we are doing with partner militaries in Africa.

Governance and Leadership

Africa's Diverging Views on Governance Norms

Dr. Joseph Siegle

The October 25, 2021 military coup in Sudan sparked an intense two-day debate within the African Union's (AU) 15-member Peace and Security Council (PSC). Some members, notably Kenya, Ghana, Lesotho, Malawi, Nigeria, and Senegal, supported the automatic suspension and application of penalties as called for by the African Charter on Democracy, Elections, and Governance.⁵ Others, including Algeria, Djibouti, Egypt, and Chad, contended that the military takeover did not amount to a coup and lobbied for a mild statement.⁶

In the end, the PSC called out the coup and suspended Sudan. However, the debate exposed a broadening gulf in attitudes toward governance norms on the continent. Signed by 46 AU members and ratified in 2012, the legally binding Democracy Charter as well as the AU's Constitutive Act have been guideposts for the continent's democratic aspirations since the formation of the African Union. Non-trivially, these aspirations continue to be held by large majorities of African citizens, especially youth.

A decade of democratic stagnation capped by a surge in the number of African leaders who have come to power through coups and evasion of term limits⁷ has put these democratic norms under strain.

Kenya's Foreign Affairs Principal Secretary, Macharia Kamau,⁸ summed up the predicament: "There's a big divide between governments that have been brought in by military coups and those that have been brought in by democratic free and fair elections. That divide is playing out all over Africa. It is for us to understand which side we stand on. The more we sanction and legitimize coups, the more we should expect to be out-negotiated in many of these continental decisions and organizations."

Africa's regional bodies have been instrumental in articulating a vision for their member states, even if these principles were aspirational. While the AU and Regional Economic Communities may have flaws, the absence of a regional body trying to advance elevated governance norms would be far worse.

A less stable Africa is a less reliable partner for the United States—constraining opportunities for security cooperation and investment. While embracing democratic governance norms must ultimately come from within Africa, international support for democratic processes critically matters⁹—something made painfully clear by its absence in recent years. Shifting course will require more than rhetoric. Elevating and incentivizing democratic governance will need to be a major priority for U.S. policy in Africa in 2022 if the slide in norms is to be reversed.

Resurgence of Coups in Africa: Are They Here to Stay?

Ms. Maame Esi Eshun

Military coups are becoming more frequent in Africa. In 2021 alone, four successful coups occurred—Chad (April), Mali (May), Guinea (September), and Sudan (October). At least two unsuccessful attempts were made including Niger (March) and Sudan (September). Although many independent observers acknowledged the coup in Chad, the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), did not proclaim a coup as such. These statistics however, demonstrate that military coups in Africa are a present possibility.

These recent episodes of coups have triggered some troubling questions. Do African countries have certain conditions (poverty, infrastructural deficit, poor socio-economic systems and institutions) common for coups? Is Africa's socio-political structure fundamentally flawed to cause coups? Do coups improve governance in Africa?

The structures and motivations of coups have not changed much. Africa's coup leaders cite poverty, corruption, autocratic rule, and economic mismanagement as reasons for deposing ruling governments, with the firm conviction of reversing these to provide socio-economic dividends to citizens.

These justifications unfortunately resonate with many Africans' realities. According to the 2021 Afrobarometer survey, many Africans believe that overall economic conditions are deteriorating, that governments are doing little to combat corruption, and that the COVID-19 pandemic is exacerbating an already tragic poverty situation. These conditions may elicit public outrage and contribute to coup-plotters sense of righteousness in undertaking undemocratic government takeovers. However, given the current state of many African countries, particularly those with a history of coups, there is little, if any, evidence that coups improve governance and economic development.

The evidence rather indicates a cycle of coups begetting more coups fraught with corruption and economic mismanagement. While some coups may have resulted in the establishment of democracy including Mali (1991), Guinea Bissau (2003), and Niger (2010), coups, on the whole, erode a country's democratic gains, advancing a state of democratic regression rather than progress. In some authoritarian regimes, coups may replace one authoritarian leader with another.

African leaders may need to brace themselves for the possibility of additional coups—which are unpredictable—if the underlying causes are not addressed deliberately and effectively. While confronting these root causes is an essential step toward coup prevention, African leaders should also establish necessary institutional structures and conditions to make it difficult for groups to seize power. Additionally, Africa's regional bodies, the African Union, the United Nations, and other international partners must be more proactive in anticipating and responding to coup resurgence in African countries.

Resurgence of Authoritarianism in West Africa Reflects a Declining Trend in Democracy

Mr. Osei Baffour Frimpong

In 2021, the political landscape of West Africa witnessed another military coup that toppled the government of President Alpha Conde in Guinea, signaling continuation and increasing decline in democratic governance as well as resurgence of authoritarianism in the region. Prior to the Guinea coup, Mali was a scene of military foray in its governance and politics that led to the overthrow of the incumbent president Boubacar Keita in August 2020. These coups have not only truncated democratic governance in both countries, but also plunged the countries into political uncertainties, with no clear measures to return to constitutional rule. Already, Togo, Cote D'Ivoire and Guinea (prior to the coup) saw constitutional amendments of presidential term limits to prolong the regimes of the incumbent governments. Aside from this, electoral processes are also replete with challenges including abuse of incumbency, tensions and violence, irregularities, and lack of consensus and inclusivity. The protests, boycotts, and rejection of results by opposition parties in recent elections held between 2020 and 2021 in Cote D'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Burkina Faso and Niger reflect a visible signpost of declining trend in democratic governance in the region.

Moreover, governments' weaponization of legislations as evident in the promulgation of false information laws in countries including Benin, Burkina Faso, Guinea, Niger, and Mali between 2020 and 2021 continues to suppress freedom of expression and stymie political dissent. In some contexts, political authorities have also instrumentalized the COVID-19 pandemic as a pretext to undemocratically consolidate power and stifle human rights. These trends are eroding democratic ethos and could potentially heighten instability given the already intense cauldron of security challenges facing the region.

The resurgence of authoritarian rule in the region also has external dimensions. There is a lack of strong democratic leadership in the promotion and diffusion of democratic norms and international consensus on sanctions regime against unconstitutional changes of government. This has contributed to the declining democracy across the world, with no exception to West Africa. Additionally, the waning influence of the United States, France, UK, and other western states coupled with the growing influence of China and Russia as illiberal states is aiding authoritarian rule and infractions on democratic governance through provision of economic and security assistance.

To stem the resurgence of authoritarianism and strengthen democracy in West Africa, it is imperative for the United States as a global leader of democracy to reform its policy towards Africa and increase engagement and support for democratic governance. Equally, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) should rethink its normative frameworks on democratic governance, especially by reviewing the *2001 ECOWAS Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance* to enhance its effectiveness to respond to the current challenges to democracy in the region. Importantly, ECOWAS' sanction regimes against unconstitutional changes of government should reflect the current political realities in countries and ensure adequate compliance of Member-States to existing norms to strengthen democratic ethos in West Africa.

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Guinea: Yet Another Attempt at a Democratic Transition

Dr. Sophia Moestrup

In the early morning on September 5, 2021, soldiers of the Special Forces unit commanded by Colonel Mamady Doumbouya stormed the presidential palace in Conakry and ousted then-president Alpha Condé. Condé won a controversial third term in 2020 following the adoption of a new constitution. His undermining of constitutional term limits that were supported by more than 80 percent of Guineans, according to a 2019 Afrobarometer survey, also eroded his legitimacy in the eyes of many Guineans.

Coming after military takeovers in Mali, Chad, and Sudan in 2020, the coup in Guinea raises the specter of a return to “politics by bullets” over ballots in Africa, just as it exemplifies the backsliding that has occurred recently in West Africa, a region previously considered to have made significant democratic progress in the past three decades. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) condemned the coup, demanding early elections and a transition to democratic rule within six months. The bloc has suspended Guinea’s membership and adopted individual sanctions against coup leaders.

Guineans are hopeful the transition can lead to democratic renewal for the country. Promising signs include Doumbouya’s appointment of an all-civilian cabinet as well as the transitional government’s readiness to collaborate with the International Criminal Court to finally prosecute perpetrators of a 2009 massacre in which over 150 were killed, and more than 100 women were raped by soldiers. The junta also announced that none of its members plan to seek political office after the transition. An 81-member transitional council composed of members of civil society, political parties, unions, employers’ associations, and others will act as a legislature with the task of developing a new draft constitution. However, Guinea watchers are concerned about the lack of a timeline for transition to civilian rule and the junta’s recusal of an ECOWAS-appointed mediator. Furthermore, the United States has suspended Guinea from all forms of military assistance as well as trade benefits under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA).

While the coup was definitely a backward step for democratic progress, there is reason to hope that a successful transition would minimize future attempts at abrogating or undermining term limits in the region.

Fighting Corruption in the Democratic Republic of Congo

Ms. Ida Sawyer

In Africa's largest leak ever of sensitive financial data, dubbed "Congo Hold-Up,"¹⁰ a coalition of media outlets and anti-corruption groups revealed¹¹ in November 2021 how the former president of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Joseph Kabila, and his close associates allegedly embezzled at least \$138 million of public funds between 2013 and 2018. This includes money from Congo's state-owned mining company;¹² the Central Bank;¹³ the national electoral commission;¹⁴ Chinese companies¹⁵ involved in the multibillion-dollar infrastructure for minerals deal, and payments¹⁶ from the United Nations meant for Congolese peacekeepers deployed to the Central African Republic.

Findings show¹⁷ how Kabila used the presidency, a bank run by his brother, and a web of shell companies to amass a fortune—while Congo's population remained one of the poorest¹⁸ in the world and while Kabila held on to power beyond the end of his constitutionally mandated two-term limit.

The revelations provide critical evidence that should be used to finally¹⁹ hold those responsible for large-scale corruption, and their international enablers, to account. They also reinforce the urgent need for systemic reforms to prevent this type of state capture from occurring again, and the importance of ensuring legal protections for whistleblowers²⁰, without whom the data would never have come to light.

Such steps could not only allow the Congolese people to finally benefit from their country's wealth, but they would also help Congo become a more effective partner in the global fight against climate change. Congo has the world's biggest supply of cobalt and is Africa's largest producer of copper²¹—essential for electric vehicles. The country is also home to a majority of the world's second largest rainforest.²² Yet the kleptocratic state has prevented Congo from fully realizing the potential of these resources.

The United States played a critical role in pressing Kabila to step down at the end of his mandate and in supporting the calls of Congolese demanding an end to his abusive and corrupt regime, including by imposing targeted sanctions against those responsible for corruption,²³ human rights abuses,²⁴ and undermining democracy.²⁵

The challenge now is to ensure that the country's new leaders do not continue with the same corrupt, abusive practices. The United States and other partners should support Congolese efforts to investigate and prosecute allegations of corruption and bring about the systemic changes needed to create a more transparent and rights-respecting business climate. They should also be ready to sanction, investigate, and prosecute when appropriate—not only those implicated in major financial crimes under Kabila, but also any wrongdoing by those currently in power and their international associates.

To Address Democratic Erosion in West Africa, Support Presidential Term-Limits

Ms. Oge Onubogu

For two decades, West Africa has led Africa's transition toward democracy, but this year's coups in Mali and Guinea and a near miss in Niger highlight a recent stall in democratization. Reversing this erosion will require leadership from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), supported by the United States and pro-democracy allies and institutions.

Since 2015, 13 African²⁶ heads of state have altered constitutions or undermined two-term limits to extend their rule—a weakening of democratic norms that the international community has failed to address effectively. In 2015, ECOWAS came close to formally requiring its member states to respect presidential two-term limits, but Togo and Gambia, among the 15 member states, vetoed the proposal. Guinea's President Alpha Conde used that open door to maneuver his way to an unpopular third term in office, triggering the September coup by Guinea's army.

Several ECOWAS heads of state have acknowledged²⁷ the strains on democratic norms. This—plus public opinion²⁸ demonstrably favoring a region-wide, two-term limit—may now help achieve its formal passage. In October, ECOWAS re-introduced the term limit proposal at a parliamentary seminar. Such a limit would strengthen ECOWAS' 2001 Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance, the community's main mechanism for opposing authoritarianism and consolidating peace and security. Yet even if the protocol is reinforced with a term limit, implementing the measure would require sustained effort to hold governments accountable.

Ultimately, West African governments must lead in addressing the region's erosion of democratic norms. A generation of former West African presidents has now been subject to term limits and shows a better appreciation for the protocols of good governance. Some have positioned²⁹ themselves to help in tackling electoral and democratic conflicts in the region.

As ECOWAS takes renewed steps to update its Protocol on Democracy, the United States and allies must repair a tendency to over-focus on the mechanism of periodic elections, and instead prioritize full-time, long-term partnerships with both governments and civil society. As the United States commits to revitalizing global democracy, supporting ECOWAS' reconsideration of presidential term limits would be a good place to start.

Pro-democracy Protests: Generation Next at the Barricades in Africa

Dr. Cyril Obi

Since its emergence, the COVID-19 pandemic has widened socio-economic and spatial inequalities as the world simultaneously grapples with its complex impacts and hurtles further into a future marked by hope and uncertainty. This situation continued to worsen in 2021. African democracy is at the crossroads, confronted by an upsurge in young voices protesting the rising tide of misgovernance laced with impunity, police brutality, gender-based violence, and poverty. It seems that Africa's "third democratic" wave of the 1990s, when popular uprisings led to the downfall of most authoritarian regimes and one-party states, is aging out. In its place, the next generation of young Africans are literally back at the barricades—generating a new impetus and momentum for a fourth wave of democratic governance based on social justice, inclusive participation, and equitable development.

The renewed quest for democracy has expressed itself in the streets, popular culture, internet, and social media. It has gone beyond protesting unjust, corrupt leaders, and domestic insecurities to interrogating the erosion of democratic principles and values as the "third wave" peters out. Those pushing for a "fourth wave" seek the freedom to participate in governance and a life of dignity as equal citizens.

Youth-led prodemocracy or anti-government protests have swept through Algeria, Burkina Faso, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Nigeria, Senegal, Somalia, Sudan, Cameroon, Eswatini, and Zambia. Easy accessibility to smartphones, Facebook and Twitter have become key instruments of pro-democracy protests. Hashtags such as #CongolsBleeding, in the DRC; #endSars, in Nigeria; #AmINext and #StopSGV, in South Africa; have been successfully used as messaging tools for digital civic activism and mobilization. The response of governments to such protests have largely been a severe push back in terms of more authoritarian measures, repression of protests, banning of social media, and blocking or shutting down the internet.

Africa needs more participatory democracy and equitable development, not less. The international community would do well to support policies, social actors and political institutions that are at the heart of reversing the erosion of democratic principles, thus helping rebuild pandemic impacted economies. Leaders must respond to calls from pro-democracy youths in barricaded streets to build a just peace and re-democratize Africa.

Civil Unrest in South Africa: The Imprisonment of Jacob Zuma Sparks Protests

Ms. Jennyfer Jimenez

Following the imprisonment of South Africa's former President Jacob Zuma on June 29, 2021 civil unrest broke out in the country's KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng provinces. The protests quickly snowballed into a deadly outbreak including looting and arson. Zuma had been found guilty of contempt for failing to appear before an anti-corruption commission to face bribery and fraud allegations. The Acting Minister in the Presidency, Khumbudzo Ntshavheni, announced there were 276 total deaths linked to the unrest: 234 in KwaZulu-Natal and 42 in Gauteng. President Cyril Ramaphosa commented that the unrest was the result of an orchestrated campaign to start an insurrection against South Africa's constitutional order.

While former President Zuma did inherit an economy in distress in 2009, South Africa's economy worsened under his leadership. The 'state capture' of South Africa during Zuma's presidency (2009 to 2018) in which some civil servants, businesses, and politicians conspired to influence and shape South Africa's policy, legal environment, and economy to fit their own interests, contributed to the slowing of economic growth and the massive level of government corruption. The state capture of South Africa was forged by the relationship between Zuma and many others in government with a criminal syndicate run by the Gupta family.³⁰ All parties have denied the allegations against them, although Zuma was arrested for refusing to appear before the Judicial Commission of Inquiry to answer for his alleged sale of influence over the government.

While initially politically motivated, the protests were primarily fueled by high levels of inequality in South African society and anger over economic difficulties that were further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.³¹ Societal challenges worsened during the pandemic, in which more than a third of middle-class homes fell into poverty.³² The third wave of COVID-19 infections affected low-skilled jobs through lockdown measures, adding to the economic burden faced by young, black South Africans.

Last summer's violent protests are estimated to have cost the South African economy nearly \$2.4 billion USD. While Zuma's tenure in office and corruption gave rise to political institutional decay, his imprisonment demonstrates South Africa's commitment to the rule of law and good governance, and its determination to pursue a more democratic trajectory.

Conflict Prevention, Peacebuilding, and Security

Women at the Frontline of Promoting Peaceful Elections: Example of the Women's Situation Room in Uganda

Ms. Helen Kezie-Nwoha

Women are often not represented³³ in peace processes despite increasing recognition of their added value. In 2021, the Women's Situation Room (WSR), played a critical role in Uganda's election. The WSR is a women-led early warning and rapid response mechanism to electoral violence in Africa has been recognized by the UN Security Council as a best practice.³⁴ WSR has successfully promoted peaceful elections in many African countries and demonstrated women's effectiveness in peacebuilding.

The WSR Uganda worked with Eminent Women (EW), who intervened and mediated to avert conflict, advising electoral stakeholders to ensure that each played their role to promote peaceful elections. During the 2021 elections, the WSR Uganda hosted four Physical Situation Rooms across the country where they received 1,778 calls through the WSR call centers³⁵ and mediated violence and threats of violence, thus contributing to peaceful elections. The EW worked with a 15-member steering committee comprising women's rights organizations and provided an opportunity for 4,500 women and youth to monitor peace and the polling process as peace advocates and election observers in 30 districts of Uganda. In an election where young people played a remarkable role in political mobilization, they might have been tempted by others to engage in violence or election fraud; however, the WSR's engagement drew on their potential [and held them accountable] to positively contribute to peace.

Using a multimedia campaign, the WSR Uganda used peace messages that encouraged citizens to prioritize peace and avoid any situations that may threaten peace. These approaches helped to ensure that Ugandans went to non-violent polls. The WSR mechanism has demonstrated that the mitigation of electoral violence played a large role in maintaining peace before, during, and after the elections.

To sustain such innovative approaches, U.S. policymakers need to invest resources in women's peacebuilding efforts and support the work of women's rights organizations. As shown by the WSR, peace processes are sustained when women are involved.

The Ripple Effects of the Fall of Afghanistan on Violent Extremism in Africa

Ms. Kristen O'Connell

Ensuring Afghanistan does not once again harbor terrorists, along with ensuring human rights and humanitarian priorities are met, are top priorities for the international community since the Taliban won control of the country in 2021. However, evidence from the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF) suggests that the fall of Afghanistan may have implications for a rising terrorist threat beyond its borders, including in Africa. Conflict has increased in African countries despite the interventions of the United States and other Western nations, with the Global Peace Index 2021 reporting an overall decrease in peacefulness in the region.³⁶

Violent extremist groups in Africa are using the “defeat” of Western interventions in Afghanistan to motivate and mobilize new recruits, feeding extremist rhetoric and narratives. In particular, there has been a spike in social media campaigns by violent extremist groups in Africa using this positive narrative as a strategic opportunity. Further, some African governments are reinforcing their security against violent extremist groups in response, which can serve to exacerbate tensions and notably, to drive citizens towards these groups. Such security responses typically alienate and instill fear in citizens, as we saw in Afghanistan.

The solution, for the United States, its Western allies, and global actors, is to ensure a local, community-driven approach to building resilience against violent extremist groups and their influential narratives. Examples of community-based approaches that have proven effective include Kenya,³⁷ Nigeria,³⁸ and the Sahel³⁹ where GCERF provides ongoing capacity building and links community organizations to local authorities, national governments, and regional entities to increase buy in, counter harmful narratives, and ensure sustainability.

The United States, a founding member and current member of GCERF's Governing Board, has supported these programs in its recognition of the increasing need for preventive efforts driven by communities. Going forward, the impact of Afghanistan's fall to the Taliban on other terrorist movements should be closely monitored so appropriate countermeasures can be taken.

Ethiopia's Year in Review

Dr. Donna A. Patterson

Many Ethiopians as well as observers around the world welcomed Abiy Ahmed Ali's political rise to become Ethiopia's prime minister in 2018 with a sense of hope. Abiy, Ethiopia's first Oromo prime minister, called for peace and cooperation through his philosophy of *medemer* and began making a number of conciliatory acts, including freeing political prisoners, encouraging Ethiopians in exile to return, and appointing former opposition leaders, such as Birtukan Mideska, to political posts. In 2019, Abiy was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for brokering a peace deal with Eritrea. "Abiymania" was in full swing, and I witnessed it firsthand when I attended meetings at the African Union and the Africa Business Health forum.

Unfortunately, Abiymania and the Ethiopian renaissance appear to have been short-lived, though Abiy still has some support in Ethiopia and the Ethiopian diaspora. By 2021, Ethiopia had become plagued with simmering domestic and regional conflicts that have garnered global concern. In November 2020, Ethiopia became embroiled in civil war with the Tigrayan Defense Force (TDF).

By summer 2021, the TDF had pushed back Ethiopian troops and even expanded the conflict into other regions, yet by the end of 2021, Ethiopian forces began retaking territory near the capital of Addis Ababa, as well in the Tigray and Amhara regions. Government forces have been aided by armed drone deliveries supplied by Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, and Iran. Sadly, the war has been rife with human rights violations, including the rape and torture of women and targeted crop destruction.

Futures

Ethiopia houses the African Union, hundreds of NGOs, multinational companies, and biomedical facilities. Despite periods of conflict and pockets of instability, it has largely been more stable than most of its Horn of Africa neighbors. If Ethiopia is not able to resolve its conflict with Tigray and calm simmering tensions throughout the country, it could lead to greater instability.

An unresolved and deepening conflict in Ethiopia will continue to have reverberations in the region and around the world. A strong, stable Ethiopia is key to U.S. security in the Horn of Africa region. It is imperative that the United States continues to engage with the Ethiopian government and reiterate the importance of conflict resolution, human rights, and expanded humanitarian support.

Africa's Fragility Problem

Professor Robert I. Rotberg

Much of sub-Saharan Africa is intrinsically fragile. Many states are not yet nations, being geographical entities without (as yet) a sense of an overarching national identity. Few have substantial political cultures of democratic inclusionism or enduring political institutions. A number cannot project power very far beyond a capital city. Citizens are secure in many jurisdictions, but in 2021, at least a dozen states (Burkina Faso, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, South Sudan, Sudan, Uganda), harbored ongoing civil conflicts with some battling multiple internal insurgencies.

Fragile states can easily become failed states as they exhibit several kinds of weaknesses, but fundamentally they supply insufficient quantities and qualities of essential political goods to their peoples. Therefore, they are considered lacking in good governance, with governance being defined as the performance of governments, and performance being specified as the delivery to citizens of the political goods of security, safety, rule of law, transparency and accountability, political participation, respect for human rights and civil liberties, the provision of sustainable economic opportunity, and human development possibilities such as schooling and medical care.

Because so few of the 54 nations of the African Union score highly for governance (according to a range of indexes), most of the nations of Africa are considered "weak." Only Botswana, Mauritius, the Seychelles, Cape Verde, Namibia, Ghana, and Senegal may be considered "strong." All the others, including South Africa, and particularly Nigeria, may also be considered weak, with Nigeria now considered failing. Somalia, the Central African Republic, Libya, and Ethiopia are incontestably failed states, and should even be thought of as "collapsed" according to criteria established originally in Rotberg, *When States Fail* (2004) and elaborated upon in Rotberg and Rachel Gisselquist, *The Index of African Governance* (2007, 2008, 2009).

Africa requires newly directed young political leaders. U.S. foreign assistance programs could help reduce fragility in Africa by supporting major capacity building instruction for junior leaders, i.e. those entering the political arena. Leadership training for these beginning politicians could help over time to reduce autocracy, kleptocracy, and even corruption. It could also strengthen democratic values, so often honored in the breach in much of Africa. For example, thanks to gifted leadership at independence in 1966, Botswana managed to socialize followers and young politicians to embrace integrity and the inclusionism that President Nelson Mandela embraced. What is needed is a new *political* leadership capacity building program.

Trade, Investment, and Sustainable Development

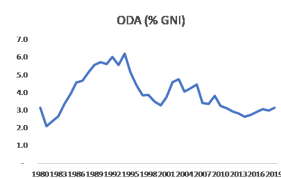
Redefining Development Finance in Post-COVID Africa

Dr. Raymond Gilpin

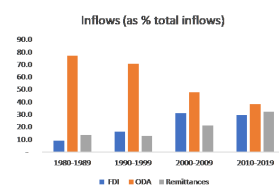
Even though African countries have received trillions of dollars in development assistance since 1990, most are yet to enjoy significant and sustainable development gains. Analysts estimate that while aid accounted for about \$1,000 per capita over this period, per capita incomes rose by only \$350.⁴⁰ The continent has not seen an appreciable return on the development investment because Africa and its development partners have not gone beyond a traditional “poverty approach”. They have failed to finance necessary structural transitions, particularly in the areas of infrastructure, technology, and entrepreneurship. Although Africa has been progressively weaning itself of aid since 2000, as shown in the chart, much more needs to be done to revitalize and re-purpose development finance.

The Evolution of Aid Dependency in Africa

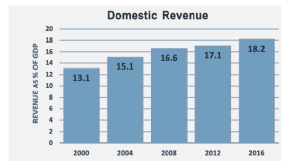
1. Aid dependency is waning



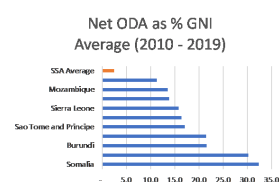
2. . . . as ODA falls as a % of financial inflows . . .



3. . . . Domestic revenue mobilization is improving



4. . . . but aid dependency remains problematic for many countries



The issuance of an unprecedented \$650 billion in Special Drawing Rights (SDR) by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in August 2021⁴¹ could be a game changer in three important ways. First, it inherently recognizes that business as usual will not solve Africa’s development financing challenges. Second, it potentially shifts the narrative away from recurrent short-term budget support. Third, by boosting reserves, it could catalyze increased and cheaper longer-term financing that would address the structural transitions mentioned above.

The SDR issuance could accelerate and deepen a trend that African countries have observed since the turn of the century. Traditional aid is becoming a less important part of Africa’s development financing equation. The more diversified options also help address four principal shortcomings of traditional aid: adequacy, timeliness, reliability, and conditionality. In addition to enhanced foreign direct investments, increasing remittance flows and targeted portfolio flows, blended finance can help de-risk investments, particularly those related to green transitions.

The United States could play an important role in championing post-COVID development financing in Africa. First, it could effectively advocate for an increased channeling of SDRs to complement the paltry \$34 billion the continent received via quota allocation. Second, the United States could reenergize the Development Finance Corporation to expedite adequate resource flows and technology to Africa’s fledging entrepreneurial sector. Third, the United States can help Africa trade its way out of poverty by supporting the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) agreement to scale-up productivity, expand regional markets, and facilitate the growth of regional synergies. Fourth, the United States can support international efforts to prevent and reverse the estimated \$90 billion of illicit financial flows that leave Africa annually.⁴²

Uncertain Horizons: COVID-19, Debt, and the Future of Public Health in Africa

Dr. Theodore Powers

Throughout 2021, the COVID-19 pandemic has continued to unfold around the world, bringing with it significant public health challenges. Thankfully, the effects of the pandemic in Africa have been less severe than initially feared, an outcome that has been due to factors such as the relative youth of the African population and interventions by African public sector health personnel. While the epidemiological effects of COVID-19 on African societies have been comparatively mild, the same cannot be said for the pandemic's socio-economic impact.

At the 2021 annual meeting of the African Development Bank, International Monetary Fund Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva outlined the economic consequences of COVID-19 for African societies. The pandemic has severely undermined African economies, straining national budgets and leading to increasing levels of indebtedness. In her address, Managing Director Georgieva indicated that, in aggregate, debt-to-GDP ratios for sub-Saharan African countries rose from 52 percent to 58 percent during 2020. The increasing levels of debt being incurred by African societies have potentially grave consequences for African people and harken back to an earlier era of debt crisis.

The Third World Debt Crisis, which began in 1982, was addressed by the World Bank via a strategy of structural adjustment, which cut spending on social services such as public sector health care, to repay debts taken on to facilitate socio-economic development. This policy approach, now framed under the rubric of austerity, has been shown to increase mortality and expedite the emergence of large-scale infectious disease epidemics, including HIV/AIDS. As Dr. Sanjay Basu and Dr. David Stuckler have argued in their 2013 book, austerity kills.

Many African societies thus stand at a critical inflection point, whereby the debts incurred due to the socio-economic impact of the pandemic serve as a potentially lethal threat to their citizens. It is now widely accepted that robust public health systems are the optimal tool for controlling emergent pathogens such as COVID-19. The United States can thus play a critical role in stopping future pandemics and preventing avoidable deaths by eschewing austerity and supporting public health systems strengthening across the African continent at the primary care level.

The Sun: The Sahel's Potential Solar Savior

Ms. Vivian Lowery Derryck

COP26 was one of the most consequential global events of 2021. When Africa's bleak future was thrown into the spotlight, world leaders were forced to acknowledge that the continent which will suffer the most from climate change has contributed the least to the current crisis.

For example, the Sahel is projected to suffer a 15 percent decrease in GDP in the next two decades due to climate change.

Meaningful *adaptation* and *mitigation* efforts are essential for that swath of the continent beleaguered by security and sustainable development challenges that threaten some nations' very existence.

One of the most promising mitigation tools is solar energy. Solar is eternally available, sustainable, produces no greenhouse gases, and does not pollute the planet. Mali, the most emblematic country of the Sahel, has one of the highest rates of daily sunlight in the world. A solar photovoltaic (PV) cell requires 150 hours of sunlight per month to operate effectively. Mali has 280 hours of sun in November—3,000 hours of sunlight annually.

Currently, only 7 percent of Mali's energy comes from solar. This is the moment for a major donor-supported public-private solar investment. New technologies have lowered start-up costs, and with solar PV tariffs falling below 4 cents, solar is now the least expensive form of energy for the continent.

Solar investment is a win-win in multiple sectors, including sustainable development, conflict mitigation and national security.

A robust program could involve multiple stakeholders and rebuild national cohesion. Unemployed youth could acquire twenty-first century vocational training in a fast-growing sector with long-term employment prospects. Women could become climate-change champions, form solar coops, learn new vocations and acquire new income-generating skills.

Easing the military support burden for the United States and other donors, a solar program across the G5 Sahelian countries could incorporate early warning system features to alert national defense forces and vulnerable villagers *before* ISIS and Islamist attacks, as well as deepen bonds of trust among the five countries.

Industrialized countries should find it easy to support solar initiatives in the Sahel, given the sustainable development, social cohesion, economic growth and security benefits solar programs could offer. After despoiling our planet, it is the least the rich nations can do.

MS. VIVIAN LOWERY DERRYCK, the Founder and President Emerita of the Bridges Institute in Washington D.C., has been working on democracy strengthening in the Sahel, especially Mali, for the past two decades. She is also a former Assistant Administrator for Africa at USAID, Washington D.C., United States.

Can Nigeria Fulfill an Effective Pandemic Strategy in an Environment at Risk?

Dr. Deirdre LaPin

In late 2021 several articles in major publications including *Foreign Affairs* and the *Economist* depicted Nigeria as nearly a “failed state.” Africa’s most populous country is dogged by conflicts in several regions, personal insecurity and frequent kidnapping, rising ethnic separatism, low oil production, high unemployment, and social unrest among jobless youths. SARS-CoV-2 has placed further demands on government to procure vaccines, store and distribute them equitably, undertake continuous COVID-19 testing and tracing, educate and vaccinate the public, provide Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), and maintain a committed health staff.

An estimated 4.2 percent of Nigerians are now fully vaccinated. Altogether, 2021 campaigns should receive 12 million doses donated through the international COVAX facility (United States and UK), topped by 5 million doses of Johnson & Johnson vaccines procured by the government through the African Union’s African Vaccine Acquisition Trust (AVAT). In the early days of the pandemic, a commercial sector relief initiative, the Coalition Against COVID-19 (CACOVID), stepped in with food, isolation centers, supplies, and equipment in all 36 states to offset food insecurity and economic hardship caused by mandates for masking, distancing, border closings, testing, and some lockdowns.

The well-led Nigerian Center for Disease Control (NCDC) and Presidential Steering Committee face multisectoral challenges. Vaccines, supplies, and infrastructure are clearly not sufficient to vaccinate the 40 percent WHO target by year’s end. A serious government failure to improve pay and working conditions led to strikes and brain drain by resident doctors and nurses. Health staff report that patient apathy is widespread towards vaccine uptake and physical prevention.

Insecurity compounds these challenges. Logistics operations cannot safely reach many of the 774 local government area (LGA) health care facilities and the 90,000 communities they serve, especially in conflict zones. Rural populations are often thinly spread. Three million people are displaced, and 40 percent of children are out of school.

Nigeria conquered Ebola and polio. Linking vaccinators to 175 million “arms” will be an enormous undertaking. Three strategies with U.S. and other donor assistance will help: 1) provide secure land, water, and air transport through international organizations, the military and the oil industry; 2) gain the buy in of “community gatekeepers”; and 3) integrate COVID prevention and treatment into ongoing health programs such as the U.S.-supported President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), Malaria Initiative for States (PMI-S), Tuberculosis efforts, etc. The United States could also further expand support to local genomics research, epidemiology for modeling, geo-spatial technologies, and existing manufacturing for syringes, PPE, and potentially vaccines and therapeutics.

Digital Media in Africa: Missed Opportunity or Chance for Growth?

Ms. Cherodie Ayers

Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and WhatsApp may feel like a constant presence in today's age; however, social media shutdowns amongst African nations continued to grow in 2021. Burkina Faso and Ethiopia both experienced some form of digital media restrictions in November, increasing the number to 10 African countries who have restricted online activity this year.⁴³

Other examples from 2021 include South Sudan's internet disruption by the People's Coalition for Civil Action (PCCA) in August and Zambia's digital shutdown during elections in August, Nigeria's Twitter ban in June, and the Democratic Republic of Congo's (DRC) internet blackout during their presidential election in March. In total, 32 African countries have limited online access since 2015.⁴⁴ Many of these interruptions and interferences were government-directed, occurring during election periods. While activists call the restraints a form of censorship, governments claim their actions are appropriate, all in the name of security.⁴⁵

Despite the limitations imposed in Africa and around the world, digital media has experienced tremendous growth throughout the year. Worldwide, users ages 16-64, access the internet for just under 7 hours daily—with 2 hours and 25 minutes accounting for social media.⁴⁶ Additionally, the total number of active social media users reached 4.55 billion worldwide in October compared to 3.80 billion in January 2020. Africa attained 13.92 percent⁴⁷ growth in social media users from 2019-2020 with over 230 million users on Facebook alone.⁴⁸ Regardless of restrictions, digital media remains an increasingly viable source for communication.

However, it should be clear that as an outlet, digital media exists for more than simply watching entertaining clips or sharing funny memes. The top reasons for using the internet include keeping up-to-date with news and events as well as gathering information.⁴⁹ Although utilizing social media as a marketing tool has great promotional value, another benefit includes giving governments, companies, and other organizations the opportunity to talk "with" their target audience rather than talking "at" them.

The benefits of allowing users full access to virtual platforms far outweigh the negatives. Rather than stifling digital communication, governments should focus on creating content that engages—with both citizens and policymakers alike—to generate an informational online dialogue that encourages engagement collectively. Producing honest and informative content sparks insightful responsiveness, thus helping to create transparency that signals trustworthiness and accountability.

Africa's Evolving Role in the Global Arena

Pandemic and Climate Failures Hurt Africa

Mr. Niikwao Akuetteh

During 2021, Africa confronted a decades-old array of serious challenges including terrorism, resource theft, coups, dictatorship, corruption, poverty, and more. At first glance therefore, 2021 looked familiar.

Well, look again. Notice that two relative newcomers overshadowed the rest. Climate emergency and COVID-19 constituted Africa's greatest existential threats, making 2021 an unusually dangerous year.

Sadly, Africa enters 2022 with these two dangers unreduced. Why? Failure. 2021 rang with self-preening declarations to tackle each menace, but as that year closed, the failures are what stand out.

Consider the climate failures first. After ten years, rich countries have still not delivered promised mitigation and adaptation funds to Africa and other hammered destitute regions. COP26 in Glasgow only produced more unreliable promises. These underwhelming vows came only after the rich governments had refused becoming the first to reduce emissions. We can blame global media for some of this. They have long covered-up developed countries' massive culpability and once silenced Africa's clearest voice, Vanessa Nekata. Bluntly stated, in Glasgow developed countries continued denying Africa the climate fairness she deserves.

Similar misbehavior appeared in the COVID-19 fight. Rich countries placed profit above lives by clutching patents, hoarding available vaccines, and thwarting SDR funding. Global media revealed once again its anti-African prejudice. When the West egregiously punished South Africa's exemplary Omicron behavior, elite journalists turned the truth on its head and piled on (see David Leonhardt's "Africa, Far Behind on Vaccines").

If you lament ethics' absence and racism's presence in all this, you are not alone. Beware, however—many more vehemently deny this. Unfolding events (e.g. Omicron's explosive spread and wrenching impact across Europe and America in just weeks) make undeniable this immutable truth: Covid and climate menace rich countries too. Therefore, when prejudice and greed cause them to react ineffectually, they injure themselves too, not just the global south. For the many in denial, this is a truth too lacerating to embrace.

But there is hope. That emergent truth is a coin, with a liberating flip-side message. So, here is to the hope that the world's most powerful journalists, capitalists and politicians realize that when they do the right thing and save the planet, they serve their own interests—even if Africa too benefits. Call this insight a truth that liberates.

MR. NIIKWAO AKUETTEH has headed 5 non-governmental organizations and taught at 2 U.S. universities over a decades-long advocacy career. He now chairs the Advocacy Network for Africa's security working group in Washington D.C., United States.

The African Continental Free Trade Area and Turkey's Trade Ties with Africa

Dr. Elem Eyrice Tepeciklioğlu

It has been a busy year for Turkey-Africa relations. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan paid a four-day visit to three African countries in October, ahead of the Turkey-Africa III. Business and Economic Forum and the Third Turkey-Africa Partnership Summit. Turkey's interest in Africa's mining and energy sectors were key topics for discussion during Erdoğan's Africa tour, yet it was mostly Turkey's hard power credentials and the sales of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) to African countries that sparked debate. One neglected area has been Turkey's existing trade and economic cooperation agreements with African countries and their implications for the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

The AfCFTA entered into force in 2019 and free trading started under the AfCFTA Agreement on January 1, 2021. It has the broader aim to expand intra-regional trade and boost Africa's position in the global trading system. However, it is still not clear how Africa's external trade agreements align with the continental free trade area.

Turkey, as with many other external players in Africa, has several bilateral trade arrangements with African countries. These include 34 trade and economic cooperation agreements, 6 agreements on cooperation and mutual assistance in customs matters, 4 free trade agreements, and 22 bilateral investment treaties. The Turkish government is considering rearranging those agreements and signing new ones in an attempt to support the CFTA in different sectors.

There are also other challenges to promoting intra-regional trade and expanding continental connectivity including poor trade logistics, lack of infrastructure, and energy deficits, which complicate the implementation of the AfCFTA.

Although there is no clear strategy issued by relevant ministries, Turkey is eager to exploit potential opportunities offered by the AfCFTA and contribute to the elimination of such non-tariff barriers, by getting involved in the urgently needed development of infrastructure and the building of logistical centers. It also aims to secure trade opportunities through its expertise and experience in the field. However, Turkey has to put more effort forward in order to help address the constraints, thereby substantially accelerating intra-regional trade and investment. The key is to create win-win strategies for the successful implementation of the AfCFTA agenda through enhanced collaboration with African countries.

A Lesson in Post-Colonial (In)Justice: German Recognition of Namibian Genocide

Ms. Catharine Helmers

2021 saw the official recognition by the German government of its colonial-era genocide against the Herero and Nama people of present-day Namibia (then called German South West Africa), and an agreement was reached between the German and Namibian governments for Germany to pay around \$1.3 billion in development aid. The recognition of the atrocities as genocide took 117 years from the beginning of the extermination campaign in 1904, which resulted in the deaths of some 80,000 Herero and Nama—nearly 80 percent and 50 percent of the Herero and Nama populations, respectively.

While some in the international community welcomed the formal recognition and agreement as an important step, Herero and Nama descendants, among others in Namibia and across the globe, took to the streets and the press to criticize the agreement⁵⁰ as hollow. Specifically, critics pointed to two crucial failings: 1) the lack of consultation and ownership in the agreement process by the victims' and survivors' descendants and 2) the fact that the agreement included development assistance but no formal reparations—which carry legal implications⁵¹ under international human rights law.

The high-level negotiations that took place between the German and Namibian governments over the span of six years excluded local representatives⁵² from the Herero and Nama communities. While investing aid in communities that include Herero and Nama residents, the agreement does not include direct payments or consider land restitution⁵³ to those communities or individuals. Some have criticized the negotiation process as reinforcing colonial dynamics⁵⁴ of erasure and exclusion.

As Western nations face increasing pressure to acknowledge and make amends for past wrongs and atrocities in former colonies, what does the German/Namibian case tell us? First, the strong backlash⁵⁵ from Namibian activists and protesters sends a message to Western and African governments alike: the communities impacted by historic wrongdoings must have a seat at the table during negotiations, and are prepared to hold governments accountable. Second, general aid and development assistance do not constitute reparations, which must go directly to the communities that have suffered and address the specific, generational ramifications of the historic wrongdoings, such as loss of land and income disparities.

If Western nations, including the United States, want to engage with Africa in a respectful and fruitful way, they should take note of the German approach as an example of how not to address colonial legacies.

The Next “Gold” for Africa is the Cultural and Creative Economy

Ms. K. Riva Levinson

History was made during Paris Fashion Week 2021, when 31-year-old Nigerian-born Kenneth Ize opened the festivities. He was the first African designer to be showcased in the coveted spot reserved for the year’s up and coming talent.

Ize’s seed funding was provided, in part, by Ghanaian entrepreneur Roberta Annan, who after years of making non-profit grants through her foundation, established the Impact Fund for African Creatives in 2021 to provide a long-term financing vehicle to nurture talents like Ize across disciplines—in music, film, beauty, fashion, literature, and the culinary arts.

Ize and Annan are part of the coming of age of the African creative industries—the realization that the cultural arts can be commercialized globally and drive development.

Why is this fashion-first noteworthy for 2021? There are three reasons:

Development potential: Some 10 million young Africans look for jobs every day and the prospective for youth-centered employment generation from the creative economy is substantial. Nigeria’s film industry contributes \$7 billion to the country’s GDP, employing 300,000 people directly and one million others indirectly. South Africa’s creative industry accounts for 3.6 per cent of the country’s employment. Think about the economic impact if brought to scale.

Political power: African democracy is backsliding despite the majority of citizens demanding democracy and accountable governance. It will take political outsiders, including women and youth, to change the governing inertia, and it is this same demographic that is powering the creative economy. Economic power can become political power.

Changing the narrative: A continent historically defined by the exploitation of its natural resources for the benefit of others, could be—through its creatives—reimagined and celebrated for the global export of its artistic talent and capital.

Despite its potential, only 1 percent of start-up funding in Africa went to the creative sector in 2019. The industry needs accelerators. The Biden administration should take a holistic approach to support these entrepreneurs from grant funding through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), to feasibility studies through U.S. Trade and Development Authority (USTDA), matchmaking through Prosper Africa, and financing through the Development Finance Corporation.

As South Africa’s Minister of Arts and Culture, Kosinathi Mthethwa said, *“The next gold for Africa is the cultural and creative economy.”*

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The Africa Program

The Africa Program works to address the most critical issues facing Africa and U.S.-Africa relations, build mutually beneficial U.S.-Africa relations, and enhance knowledge and understanding about Africa in the United States.

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