



Wilson Center Africa Program

Africa Year in Review 2015

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Africa 2015 – The Year in Review



A Letter from the Director

2015 was a pivotal year for Africa in many spheres. On the governance front, what once seemed to be an-inevitable wave of democratization has slowed, and third term bids across the continent threaten to erase recent progress. Despite that, more than 16 countries held national elections and democratic successes were recorded in some countries, from Muhammadu Buhari’s stunning election in Nigeria to Tunisia’s quieter but just as crucial democratic consolidation. In other countries new ground was broken, such as with the consolidation of Burkina Faso’s young democracy.

In the security realm, African countries also played a more active role, including in peacekeeping, through an Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)-led peace deal in South Sudan, and in the normalization of relations between Sudan and Uganda. However, conflicts and security crises remain a serious concern, from South Sudan’s tenuous peace deal to increasing insecurity in Central Africa, across the Sahel, and in the broader Horn of Africa. Furthermore, fragility and insecurity remain a key concern, with the continent hosting 9 of the 16 United Nations peacekeeping missions as well as several African Union missions.

On the economic and development front, the Millennium Development Goals transitioned into the Sustainable Development Goals, and African countries signed the historic Tripartite Free Trade Agreement (TFTA). The uneven but increasingly deepening economic ties between the United States and African countries were consolidated and expanded in the crucial, long-term reauthorization of the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), a cornerstone



of U.S.-Africa trade. There was also a noticeable shift in the balance between Overseas Direct Investment and Foreign Direct Assistance, which may offer opportunities to reconfigure and perhaps transform U.S. engagement with Africa. Despite these developments, Africa continued to face economic challenges, including the falling price of oil and currency instability, as well as hurdles presented by China's slowing economic growth.

There were also key developments related to international partnerships, from bringing the devastating Ebola outbreak under control to confronting security, development, and peacebuilding dilemmas through cooperation like U.S. Army Africa's partnerships with African militaries. However, some partnerships were less successful, such as the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States, which expired in 2015 with few tangible results.

As we look ahead to 2016, it's clear that the future holds both promise and risk for the continent. The Wilson Center Africa Program asked experts, scholars, and policymakers to weigh in on the most important and impactful events of 2015 for the continent and their implications for U.S.-Africa relations. They responded with brief and insightful essays which are presented in this volume. We thank them for their contributions. In some cases, we have two perspectives on the same development—in Burkina Faso, Nigeria, and AGOA—highlighting both the areas of confluence and difference as to why an event mattered.

Dr. Monde Muyangwa
Director, Africa Program

Please note that the views expressed in these essays are solely the responsibility of the authors, and not those of the Wilson Center.



A Nigerian woman signs up to vote in the historic March 2015 elections.

Photo by Idika Onyukwu/U.S. Embassy Nigeria, Creative Commons.

GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP

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The Nigerian election struck a particular nerve across Africa and the globe. Mr. Nii Akuetteh and Mr. Olusegun Sotola present two different perspectives on the election and its implications for Africa and U.S.-Africa relations. Ambassador David Shinn examines Tunisia's democracy, while Mr. Brice Bado and Dr. Sophia Moestrup touch on Burkina Faso's tumultuous year, and Professor Bernadette Atuahene breaks down the status of land reform in South Africa.

Nigeria's Election is the Winner!

Mr. Nii Akuetteh

What was Africa's most important story of 2015? Was it the Great Lakes' devastating downward spiral? No. The ignored reality that Africa bears the globe's heaviest refugee burden? No. The Cairo meeting that brought an African common market nearer in the form of the Tripartite Free Trade Agreement? No. Not even American-Chinese dueling across Africa merits the title of most important development. That distinction belongs to Nigeria's 2015 presidential election.

Consider: The lead-up to the elections, including the much-maligned six-week postponement, was alarmingly quarrelsome. Kofi Annan, and later John Kerry, visited to stress the need for clean, non-violent polls. When finally cast, the March 28-29 balloting proved largely clean and peaceful. Three days later, INEC, the Independent National Electoral Commission, announced the final results, officially ending the race. But INEC was late: A full day earlier, incumbent President Goodluck Jonathan had conceded to challenger General Muhammadu Buhari and pledged a smooth handover. Jonathan also discouraged violence—sternly. INEC's numbers revealed that Buhari had won decisively. He took 54 percent, walloping the incumbent 15,424,921 votes to 12,853,162. And the victory was broad-based, with Buhari winning 21 states outright and exceeding Nigeria's daunting constitutional 25/24 hurdle, which requires at least 25 percent of the vote in two thirds of the states.

Clearly, Nigeria's 2015 presidential election represents refreshing change. Unsure? Recall the country's dismal track record: coups, a brutal secessionist civil war, assassinations, and violent, dirty elections polarized along regional, sectarian, and ethnic fault lines.

Additionally, that change is weighty. Peacefully forcing a hand-over of power is a big deal in any country. Nor is Nigeria just any country. It remains Africa's most important country, leading on four important metrics—population, economy, size of the middle class, and oil exports. Its comparatively formidable army, movie industry, literature, and sports boost its clout.

That clout will increasingly be felt globally. Consider one indicator: According to United Nations estimates, by 2050, Nigeria's population will skyrocket from its current 180 million to 400 million, displacing the U.S. as the third most populous country on earth.

What about the election's external impact? The best answer is that much of that is yet to unfold; Buhari only assumed office in late May 2015.

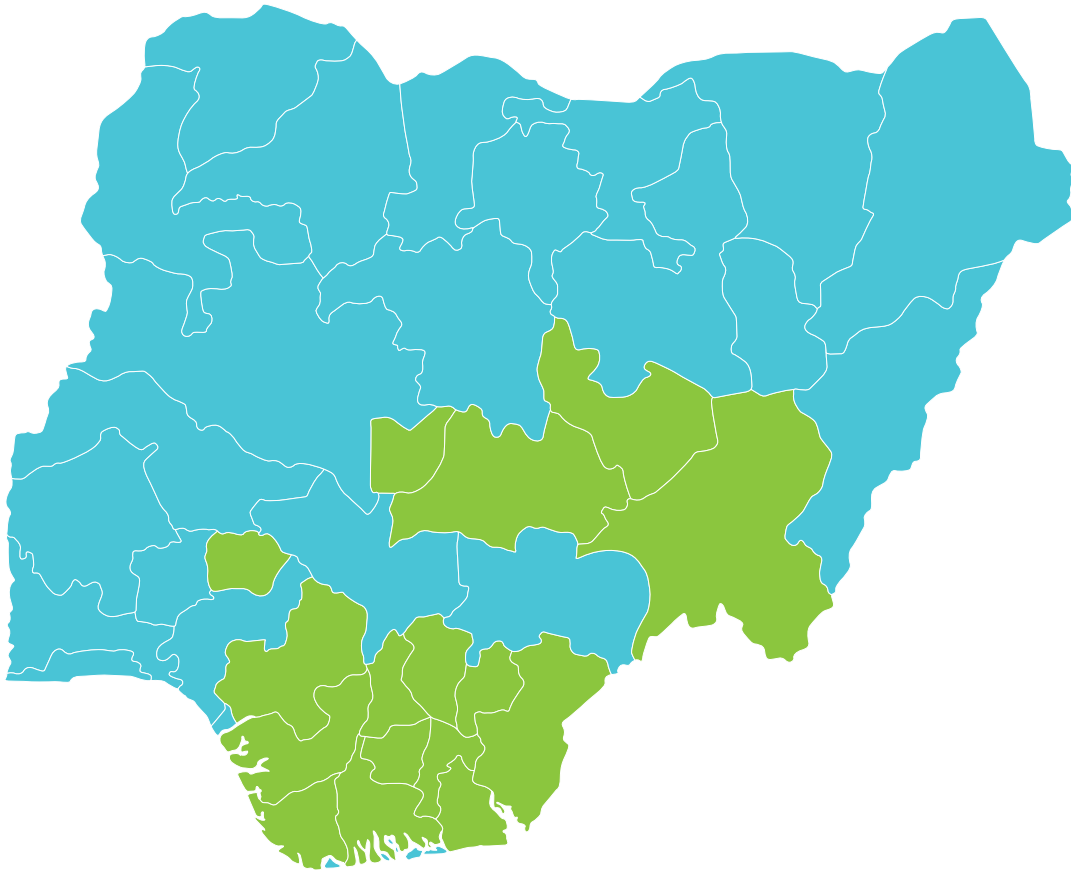
However, a few fortuitous consequences have already occurred: Nigeria's 2015 elections were a big confidence boost for Africa's mass movements for democracy. And Buhari's immediate

actions resulted in the country experiencing a reduction in the threat of Boko Haram joining hands with the Central African Republic’s Muslim rebels.

Further, thanks to Jonathan’s handling the election and the turnover of power so smoothly, another potential havoc was avoided. “Had serious post-election disturbances erupted, Nigerian refugees flooding Ghana would have exceeded your entire population,” President Jonathan told me last October. My jaw is still dropped.

Unquestionably, Nigeria’s recent embrace of democracy and Jonathan’s classy role define Africa’s most important—and uplifting—story of 2015. Africa and the world should give thanks.

2015 Election Results, By State



States won by Jonathan (in green) and Buhari (blue)

Source: Wikipedia, Creative Commons.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nigerian_general_election,_2015

Nigeria's Elections, Africa, and the United States

Mr. Olusegun Sotola

Nigeria's historic and successful 2015 election marks a significant milestone in the country's democracy, and it signposts several emerging positive trends in Africa. Opposition candidate Muhammedu Buhari's win led to the loss of the ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP), which had ruled since Nigeria embarked on the path to democracy 16 years earlier.

First, given Nigeria's stature in the region, the willingness of the incumbent to concede power and not manipulate the process matters a great deal. African leaders are known for attempting to manipulate the electoral process to lengthen their stay in office. The electoral histories of African countries are replete with post-election violence caused by the unwillingness of the ruling party or the incumbent to relinquish power. That an entrenched power bloc would acquiesce to its loss in an election without engineering violence suggests a new robustness of Nigerian democracy and provides a strong practical example for African leaders. At least 17 African countries will hold elections this year. The outcome of the 2015 Nigerian election should serve as a benchmark for these other coming elections, especially those which the incumbent is contesting.

Second, elections generally have several consequences. The good outcome of the election has raised expectations and the early signs are promising, as governance is showing a clear departure from the past. Another clear consequence from the election is that it marks a new level of relations between Nigeria and the United States. The relationship between Nigeria and the United States ebbed to a low point in the last years of President Jonathan's administration. The main cause of the frosty relationship was governance-related, including concerns about the prosecution of the war against Boko Haram, the management of the military, and the country's overall recent governance record. Had the elections not led to a change in government, it is obvious that relations would have deteriorated further. The former government had warmed up to the former Eastern Bloc countries, particularly Russia, in building a new military alliance by buying weapons and opening up more diplomatic communications. However, given the difficulties that Nigeria has had in building robust and sustainable relations with Russia in the past, it is unclear how this relationship will evolve.

In July 2015, President Buhari visited Washington at the invitation of President Obama. As expected, a key take-away from the visit was the United States promising security support for the fight against insurgents. Beyond that, the meeting should be seen as a sign of U.S. confidence in the new leadership in the country, as well as a willingness to reconnect with the government and rebuild ties.

Tunisia, Democracy, and Tourism: An Arab Spring Survivor

Ambassador David H. Shinn

The fall of Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali in 2011 marked the beginning of the Arab Spring, which has so far been a disappointment in the development of Arab democracy. The one exception, albeit a fragile one, has been progress on democratization in Tunisia.

The moderate Islamist movement, Ennahda, won democratic elections in 2011. Two high profile political assassinations and popular protests led to pressure on the Ennahda-led government to step down. The primary labor union and three civil society organizations, known as the Quartet, oversaw a process that ended with a new constitution and agreement by Ennahda to relinquish power.

Democratic elections in December 2014 resulted in a victory by secular political parties. Early in 2015, Tunisia's parliament approved a coalition cabinet that included secularists, Islamists, and minority parties. The Quartet that orchestrated the democratic transition received the Nobel Peace Prize.

Tunisia's transition remains a work in progress. Tourism, for example, is the third most important sector of the economy and was hit hard because of political instability. An estimated two of Tunisia's ten million inhabitants depend on the tourism sector, which in 2014 accounted for about 15 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Three terrorist attacks in 2015, two aimed at foreign tourists and one at the Presidential Guards, caused significant deaths and further decimated tourism. An estimated 5,000 to 6,000 Tunisians, the largest number from any country, have joined Islamic extremist organizations. Tunisia has a long border with ungoverned sections of Libya, and its southern border with Algeria faces extremist groups there. Tourism dropped precipitously in 2015. Unemployment is high, especially among young Tunisians. The GDP growth rate for 2015 was a feeble one percent.

Two and a half weeks of traveling around Tunisia at the end of 2015 suggest that the country functions well. There is a sense of pride and confidence among the Tunisian people. Security is pervasive but not overbearing and the personnel exude professionalism. Like all countries, however, Tunisia will never be able to prevent the committed suicide attack.

As 2015 came to a close, Tunisia offered the only model in the region for putting democratic governance in place. If Tunisians continue this program, it may well prove to be the strongest bulwark against terrorism and result in an improved economy and the return of foreign tourists.

Burkina Faso Breaks New Ground

Dr. Sophia Moestrup

Sustained pressure for political change in Burkina Faso came to fruition as an often-tumultuous transition culminated in peaceful and transparent national elections in November 2015. The people of Burkina Faso demonstrated that when political parties, civil society groups, and citizens come together for political reform, change can happen. Autocrats bow out and new leaders and institutions emerge.

Former President Blaise Compaoré had underestimated the people's determination to see constitutional limitations on presidential terms respected when he insisted on extending his rule after 26 years in power. He was ousted in a popular uprising in October 2014. On that fateful day, as the ruling party-dominated legislature was set to rubber stamp a constitutional amendment removing presidential term limits, hundreds of thousands of Burkinabé mobilized in the streets, occupied the national assembly building, and pressured Compaoré to flee into exile.

Burkina Faso's transition was the product of months of organizing by a coalition of opposition political parties, labor unions, students, and an active and outspoken civil society. "Balai citoyen," or "citizen broom," a reference to sweeping away corruption and an organization inspired by the Senegalese youth movement "Y'en a marre," was among those leading the demonstrators. The vast majority of the people in the streets were youth, many of whom complained that in their lifetime they had known no other president than Compaoré.

Managing the transition was at times challenging. Some activists sought to bar individuals that had supported Compaoré's bid to extend his rule from running as candidates. Others demanded the dissolution of the presidential guard, seen as a hold-over of the Compaoré regime. In early October, days before the presidential poll, recalcitrant Compaoré supporters within the presidential guard took the interim president and prime minister hostage and tried to roll back the transition process. The attempted coup failed, as citizens and youth in particular again mobilized in the streets. The rest of the military converged on the capital Ouagadougou and subsequently arrested the coup makers who are now in detention, awaiting trial.

The people of Burkina Faso broke new, democratic ground through their tenacity and determination, disproving critics who argue that people in developing nations care more about food than about their democratic rights and freedoms. Newly-elected President Roch Marc Kaboré faces high expectations of continued democratic progress, for as one Burkinabé civic leader stated, "This was not a passing spring storm; we will henceforth always hold our leaders accountable."

The Rise of Critical Citizens in Burkina Faso and Across Africa in 2015

Mr. Arsène Brice Bado

The reinstatement in power of Burkina Faso's interim civilian president, Michel Kafando, on September 23rd, 2015, a week after he was overthrown by a military coup, was a triumph of democracy and of the people. The failure of the short-lived coup was due less to international pressure than to the courage of the people of Burkina Faso, who took to the streets despite brutality and killings by the elite presidential guards. This popular resistance was the second chapter to the October 2014 protests, which brought thousands of Burkinabé to the streets to oppose President Blaise Compaoré's attempt to amend the constitution in order to stand for another term after 27 years in power. President Compaoré was forced to resign.

This strong popular commitment to democracy attests to the rise of a large domestic political community in Burkina Faso devoted to democratic principles such as freedom, the rule of law, and good governance. The uprisings were led by neither the political opposition nor the army, but by youth, who were spontaneously drawn to the protests or organized through civil society groups or student unions. Men and women of every social strata and ethnic group joined the uprisings. By so doing, The Burkinabé demonstrated they are becoming critical citizens toward undemocratic regimes, that the power belongs to the people, and that they are no longer a mere collection of polarized ethnic communities to be manipulated by politicians. They are a nation taking responsibility for their own future.

Likewise, across the continent, African populations challenged their governments to demand better-functioning democracies and improved socio-economic conditions. In Côte d'Ivoire and Nigeria, grassroots movements were instrumental in delegitimizing electoral violence and ensuring peaceful elections. In other countries, such as South Africa, Ghana, Kenya, Democratic Republic of Congo, Guinea, Niger, and Mali, numerous demonstrations by citizens arose to demand better governance.

African governments are now being pressured by their own populations. The 2015 Nobel Peace Prize, awarded to the Tunisian National Dialogue Quartet, highlights Tunisia's success as part of this pattern of increasingly active African populations. The rise of critical African citizens will shape the future of democracy in Africa.

Land Rights in South Africa: Progress Stalled?

Professor Bernadette Atuahene

When we scratch beneath the surface, we find that the political bargain that Nelson Mandela and the African National Congress (ANC) brokered to bring an end to apartheid while avoiding massive bloodletting and economic disintegration has fallen apart more than ever in 2015.

Due to massive colonial and apartheid-era land theft, when apartheid ended in 1994, 87 percent of the land was owned by whites, though they constituted less than 10 percent of the population. The bargain laid out in section 25 of the South African constitution allowed whites to keep their land despite how it was acquired. In exchange, blacks got the promise of land reform. Unfortunately, the state has transferred only about 10 percent of the land from whites back to blacks to date. Consequently, whites have retained secure land rights while the promise made to blacks has gone unfulfilled. Needless to say, many blacks are losing their patience.

In one of the most impressive public opinion studies on land reform in South Africa to date, Professor James Gibson surveyed 3,700 South Africans and found that 85 percent of black respondents believed that “most land in South Africa was taken unfairly by white settlers, and they therefore have no right to the land today.”¹ Gibson’s most troubling finding was that two of every three blacks agreed that “land must be returned to blacks in South Africa, no matter what the consequences are for the current owners and for political stability in the country.” According to Gibson’s data, most blacks, whether they live in rural or urban areas, see the land as stolen and want it back, even if redistribution will provoke political unrest. Land injustice has become a sea of oil waiting for a match.

Since urban areas are often incubators for revolution, it is important to monitor their levels of discontent. My book, *We Want What’s Ours: Learning from South Africa’s Land Restitution Program*, is based on 150 interviews with land claimants whose families were forcibly removed from urban areas. One of the book’s principal findings is that poor communication between the land claims commission and land claimants is undermining the land restitution process. Locating and transferring land to claimants is a complex task that takes time, but if claimants do not get regular updates on the challenges faced by the commission, they are left in the dark and feel disrespected, anxious, and frustrated. When a claimant, who was among those waiting for land, was asked if the commission was doing anything well, he angrily replied “A big no! A big no! [They] are doing an injustice! Yes, it’s an injustice!” Through poor communication, the land claims process, which was intended to heal past wounds, is instead salting them.

By signing the Restitution of Land Rights Amendment Act of 2014, President Jacob Zuma initiated round two of South Africa’s land restitution program. Moving forward, the ANC must address the poor communication that crippled the first round of restitution. If they do not, the consequences could be severe.

1 James L. Gibson, *Overcoming Historical Injustices: Land Reconciliation in South Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).



A Ugandan soldier serving in AMISOM, the African Union Mission in Somalia, stands at the ready. Uganda and several other African countries play an active security role in the region, including in South Sudan.

CONFLICT AND SECURITY

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South Sudan's tenuous peace deal and the complex regional dynamics surrounding it are addressed in pieces by Dr. Getachew Gebrekidan and Ambassador Nureldin Satti. Ms. Vivian Lowery Derryck examines the fragile security situation in the Sahel, while Dr. Jacqueline Wilson breaks down the improvements necessary for truly sustainable peace processes.

The Challenge of Breaking the Cycle of Civil War in South Sudan

Dr. Getachew Zeru Gebrekidan

Compared to the two preceding years, 2015 was a historic year for the South Sudanese and the international community engaged in South Sudan. Under pressure from the Obama Administration and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Plus,¹ the government of South Sudan, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army-in-Opposition (SPLM/A-IO), and former political detainees signed an agreement in August 2015 to form an interim government that would stay in power for 30 months. The Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (JMEC) was formed by IGAD in October 2015 as the body tasked with heading the implementation process of the IGAD Plus deal. The agreement lays a foundation for the people of South Sudan to resume building their country and transitioning towards peace. In accordance with the agreement, the government, SPLM/A-IO, and former political detainees have begun talks in Juba under the leadership of Festus Mogae (Chairman of the JMEC and former president of Botswana) to start implementation of the accord.

In the middle of this process, however, President Salva Kiir restructured the state, creating 28 new states in October 2015 and appointing governors loyal to him to each in late December 2015. This is a major setback to the peace process, as the agreement was signed on the basis of the existing 10 states. The scheme has been rejected by the rebels, the international community, and SPLM-Democratic Change party (the opposition), who say the order violates the pact. The European Union and the Troika (comprised of the United Kingdom, United States, and Norway) voiced similar concerns as the move directly controverts the government's commitment to the peace deal.

In the signed peace deal, SPLM/A-IO would get 40 percent of the territory of the three oil-rich states—Unity, Upper Nile, and Jonglei states—which have now been altered and split into 10 new states. It would also get 15 percent from the remaining seven states in the greater Bahr el Ghazal and greater Equatoria regions, which have also been split by President Kiir into 18 new states with additional executive and legislative organs.

While 2015 offered prospects for forward movement with regard to the situation in South Sudan, unfortunately the socioeconomic and political conditions in the country continue to deteriorate. More work remains to be done to ensure respect for and implementation of the signed agreement. As they have done in the past, the United States and Africa, through the African Union and IGAD Plus initiative, should continue to work robustly together to show their commitment to peace and security in South Sudan and the region.

¹ "IGAD Plus" – an organization that includes the member states of IGAD, the regional organization leading the peace process, as well as major international partners including the United States, UK, Norway, AU, EU, UN, and China.

Normalizing Uganda-Sudan Relations: Regional Implications

Ambassador Nureldin Satti

For many years, relations between Sudan and Uganda have been plagued by mistrust and mutual harm. The two countries engaged in a proxy war whereby Uganda supported the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/SPLA) led by the late Dr. John Garang in its war against the central government in Khartoum and Sudan provided assistance to the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) led by Joseph Kony.

This tug-of-war had continued even after the independence of South Sudan in 2011 and the eruption of the civil war in December 2013. The Ugandan army intervened in the conflict on the side of the government in Juba. Sudan, on its part, proclaimed its neutrality in the conflict in South Sudan, while at the same time allegedly providing support to opposition groups.

Of late, the two countries have realized that it is in their interest to mend fences and work together for achieving a peaceful settlement in South Sudan and the wider region. As a gesture of goodwill, Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni visited Sudan on 15 September 2015.

Following the signing of the peace agreement in August 2015 between the government and the opposition in South Sudan, both Sudan, which is part of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) peace process, and Uganda are playing a more constructive role in bringing peace to South Sudan.

Consequently, Uganda announced the withdrawal of its troops from South Sudan and the two countries vowed to follow a policy of appeasement towards South Sudan and the region at large. In implementing this new policy, President Museveni visited Sudan on 15-17 September 2015 and was welcomed with enthusiasm in Khartoum. He held bilateral talks with President al-Bashir and met with South Sudanese opposition leader Dr. Riek Machar in what observers consider a gesture of goodwill from Khartoum to repair the rift that exists between the two men.

President Museveni's visit to Khartoum has contributed considerably to lowering the degree of mistrust between Sudan and Uganda and has also opened the path for more constructive relations between the two countries. This may have beneficial effects on the situation in South Sudan and the region at large. In the Final Communiqué signed by the two foreign ministers at the end of the visit, the two sides vowed to support peace and stability in the region and in South Sudan. President al-Bashir called on security organs in the two countries to work together to alleviate tensions between the two countries.

Interestingly, the two countries vowed to preserve African culture, an issue which has been at the core of the longstanding conflict between the two countries due to divergent attitudes towards the issue of African identity and how it can be preserved in a changing world.

Spotlight on the Sahel: Responding to the Radisson Hotel Attack in Bamako

Ms. Vivian Lowery Derryck

One of the most important events of 2015 was the November 20, 2015 attack on the Radisson Blu Hotel in Bamako, Mali. The attack demonstrated not only the fragility of peace in Mali, but the vulnerability of the entire region to security challenges from the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), al-Qaeda and its various sub-groups, and independent militant jihadists, who all move easily among fragile Sahelian countries with porous borders.

The Radisson attack brought into sharp focus the acute challenges facing the Sahel: security incursions, political instability, violations of the rule of law, and the destruction of historic sites. In a vicious cycle, these challenges impede economic growth, fuel youth unrest, and increase the region's susceptibility to the ploys of ISIS, al-Qaeda, and other radical groups.

The Radisson attack confirmed the regional nature of the crisis, implicating Libya and Nigeria as well. While three groups claimed responsibility for the attack, there is now proof of al-Mourabitoun's authorship, in an effort to free prisoners held in Niger and Mauritania. Nevertheless, other jihadist groups are roaming the Sahel from Algeria to Nigeria to Libya, claiming credit for the attack and using it as a recruitment tool. Ominously, al-Mourabitoun has pledged allegiance to ISIS, while Boko Haram also claims allegiance to ISIS as it marauds through and destabilizes northeastern Nigeria and moves into Cameroun.

Globally, the Sahelian situation may have links to the crisis in the Middle East. Mali's Sunni majority has historic trade, cultural, and political ties to Sunnis in the Middle East. Tellingly, a Syrian strain of polio has been found in Mali, suggesting significant contact between the two countries.

The U.S. and other allies can take several actions to deter jihadists and strengthen security and economic productivity in the region. First, the U.S. should consider vigorously promoting its Security Governance Initiative, underscoring the clear linkage between good governance and security. Second, all donors should consider supporting the Group of Five (G5) (Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger) in its efforts to address regional security concerns. Third, the United States should consider strengthening the United States Agency For International Development (USAID)'s Peace in Development program, which links economic development to good governance. Fourth, the International Criminal Court (ICC) will prosecute an Ansar al-Dine member for directing the destruction of religious and cultural monuments such as the manuscripts of Timbuktu. The U.S. should continue to publicly support this action and further ICC prosecutions. Fifth, the U.S. should consider appointing a special envoy to the Sahel, a huge 1,178,850 square mile region of vast ungovernable spaces.

The above actions would be a welcome signal to Sahel states, especially Mali, that the U.S. understands the importance of the Radisson attack and stands in solidarity with local efforts to strengthen security, economic development, and good governance in the region.

MS. VIVIAN LOWERY DERRYCK, former Assistant Administrator for Africa at USAID and former President of the Africa-America Institute, is President and CEO of the Bridges Institute, a non-profit she launched in 2009 to help strengthen African governance and democracy through social development partnerships.

Improving Peace Processes Is Critical for Africa and the United States

Dr. Jacqueline Wilson

2015 saw African sub-regional organizations and African neighbors take on the major peace and security challenges in their own backyards, including the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in South Sudan, the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) in Central African Republic, and Algeria in Mali. Yet despite these courageous aims, the world watched as ambitious peace initiatives fell short of bringing comprehensive, transformative peace. These laudable efforts can be augmented by enhancing three main aspects of peace processes: inclusivity, coordination, and persistence.

Inclusivity is a catch phrase in the peace lexicon, but in practice it remains aspirational. “Seats at the table” are largely reserved for armed actors and government representatives, while “civil society” is relegated to observer status. Importantly, recent research demonstrates that when civil society and unarmed actors, especially women, are engaged in peace efforts, outcomes are more sustainable. Peace efforts must broaden inclusion through activities like the Bangui Forum, which is helping Central African Republic citizens craft their own peace.

Peace processes must be designed with coordination in mind. From Mali to South Sudan, mediators had to deal with armed actors and stakeholders, as well as interested neighbors and international initiatives. Choices about choosing venues, identifying an acceptable mediator, planning how to integrate Track II inputs, and finding constructive contributions for interested observers all require careful orchestration. Neighbors have an interest in peace, but may have other interests as well. Understanding and addressing the interests of all mediation stakeholders is critical, as their contributions can buttress or undermine resulting agreements.

Finally, peace efforts must be persistent and actors must be patient. Peace processes in Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Mali all require ongoing attention. Success requires analyzing previous peace efforts and addressing the reasons they failed. Conflicts and stakeholders are all constantly shifting, so peace efforts must be simultaneously well-planned and dynamic. A signed agreement that neither party intends to honor—as in South Sudan—may be a step forward but requires redoubled efforts to gain and use leverage, persuasion, and pressure to get signatories to shift to non-violent competition.

As long as there is violence, peacebuilders must never rest. Change in Somalia, Côte d’Ivoire, Sierra Leone, and Liberia did not happen over night. In the end, peace processes must be better at making citizens believe that negotiation is preferable to fighting. International actors should support African peace initiatives toward that common goal.



A container ship, packed with goods. U.S.-Africa trade has grown steadily, spurred in part by AGOA.

TRADE, INVESTMENT, AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Ms. Florizelle Liser and Dr. Mima Nedelcovych present public and private sector perspectives on AGOA's current and future impact, and Dr. Raymond Gilpin explores trends and trajectories for Foreign Direct Investment and Overseas Development Assistance and their implications for U.S. engagement with Africa.

Deepening U.S.-Africa Economic Engagement through AGOA

Ms. Florizelle Liser

In 2015, a cornerstone of the U.S.-Africa economic partnership received a historic upgrade. Working together, President Obama and the U.S. Congress renewed the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) for ten years, the longest-ever extension of this successful program. Since its passage in 2000, AGOA has provided duty-free access to the U.S. market for thousands of products from eligible Sub-Saharan African nations, including many value-added manufactured goods such as apparel, footwear, and processed agricultural products. Over AGOA's first fifteen years, African countries more than tripled their exports of non-oil products to the United States. But supply-side constraints and uncertainty about extensions limited the program from reaching its full potential to grow and diversify African exports. Extending AGOA to 2025 provides the certainty needed for U.S. buyers to source from African suppliers and for global investors to invest in African manufacturing. This extension also enhanced AGOA in a number of other ways, including promoting greater regional integration by expanding the rule of origin; encouraging the development of utilization strategies; and outlining a path for deepening and expanding trade and investment ties with eligible countries. These efforts can enable more citizens on both continents to use trade as an engine for economic development, job creation, and poverty alleviation.

Africa now has a historic opportunity to look beyond AGOA and address core issues impacting African regional trade and its global competitiveness. By itself, preferential access to the United States and other markets will not lead to increased and more diversified African exports. Also needed are policies like the World Trade Organization's Trade Facilitation Agreement that reduce red tape, facilitate cross-border trade within Africa, and create trade and investment-friendly environments. To benefit more from the global trading system, Africans also need domestic and foreign investment in key infrastructure, including electricity, transportation, and human capital. Capacity building and technical assistance from bilateral partners, multilateral financial institutions, and public-private partnerships are also key factors in Africa's trade and development. Africa and the United States must also begin to look towards more robust, mutually beneficial trade partnerships, including free trade agreements and the building blocks that could lead to such agreements in the long term. With these goals in mind, the United States has launched a study of how to improve U.S.-Africa trade and investment relations beyond AGOA. Together, the United States and Africa can build on last year's historic achievements and establish an even deeper, more sustainable trade and investment partnership.

Supporting Africa's Private Sector to Maximize AGOA

Dr. Mima S. Nedelcovych

The reauthorization of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), the U.S.-Africa trade law which passed late-June 2015, marked one of the most important and impactful advances in U.S.-Africa trade relations. AGOA, which provides eligible African countries with duty-free and quota-free access into the U.S. market, was created to deepen U.S.-Africa trade and investment ties and to help level the playing field for African businesses.

The AGOA renewal builds on the first U.S.-Africa trade agreement that was signed into law in 2000. Since 2000, trade flows from Africa to the U.S. have nearly tripled, helping to spur market-led economic growth and development progress in Africa. Indeed, the business environment in Africa has dramatically evolved from the law's passage in 2000 compared to 2015. Today, the Sub-Saharan Africa region has some of the fastest growing economies in the world. An emergence of a new class of African born and bred companies is increasingly taking advantage of AGOA and operating in the world-class space.

African companies are the engines of growth on the continent, creating more than 80 percent of the jobs in their countries. With greater access to the U.S. market, African companies in an AGOA-eligible country have a tremendous opportunity to scale and expand their exports to a larger market. That could not have been achieved competitively in the earlier version of AGOA because a strong, well-developed African private sector was only in its nascent stages.

At its inception, few African countries had the capacity to reap the trade benefits under AGOA. The nascent African private sector had very little manufacturing and industrial capacity at that time, and having to bear inordinate costs for infrastructure such as power and transport, it was simply not cost competitive. The first phase of AGOA helped to boost Africa's textile and apparel industry for starters, while other manufacturing capacity was coming to fruition on the continent.

While some African companies like SoleRebels, an Ethiopian eco-friendly footwear manufacturer, have leveraged AGOA and transformed into global powerhouses, the fact remains that most of Africa's homegrown businesses still need time and investment to scale their manufacturing capacity before entering the U.S. market.

The next phase of AGOA should focus on supporting African businesses in their quest to gain greater trade capacity to move beyond their local markets and operate on a global scale. African governments must do their part to create an improved business environment and infrastructure for companies to succeed in the global marketplace. The 10-year renewal of AGOA was the first step; now, it's critically important to ensure that more African born-and-bred companies can take full advantage of AGOA's economic potential.

MIMA S. NEDELCOVYCH

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Trends in Foreign Direct Investment vs. Overseas Development Assistance: Implications for U.S.-Africa Relations

Dr. Raymond Gilpin

After a five-year hiatus, foreign direct investment (FDI) is expected to exceed development assistance to African countries in 2015 by 34 percent (totaling \$73.5 billion). This could mark the resumption of a trend that started a decade ago when a combination of aid fatigue and increased FDI signaled a change in Africa's capital inflow landscape. One big difference in 2015 was that most FDI went to infrastructure, power, and service sectors, not mining. It is also worth noting that remittances have grown significantly since the turn of the century, expected to reach \$64.6 billion in 2015. African countries are becoming relatively less dependent on development assistance, which is an integral part of U.S.-Africa policy.

Four broad policy implications may be deduced. First, the U.S. could be more selective and strategic in programming development assistance across the continent. Rather than try to address every problem with a dwindling budget, development assistance could focus on strengthening institutions that enhance national and sub-national capacities sustainably. Second, more could be done to leverage the U.S. private sector since most of the FDI in 2015 came from American companies and investment firms. These companies are vested for the long term and could complement development assistance via strategic partnerships and targeted social investments. Third, the administrators of U.S. development assistance should prepare for increasing contestability in the larger African economies. This need not be viewed as a zero-sum proposition or an insurmountable hurdle. Strategies could be formulated to establish and promote shared interests, while using engaged diplomacy to resolve areas of discord. Fourth, steps should be taken to harness the substantial (six-fold) increase in remittance inflows since the turn of the century. Although remittances are primarily for consumption, innovative mechanisms could be put in place to leverage obvious diaspora interest for development, governance, and entrepreneurial purposes.

Retooling U.S.-Africa development assistance requires a sharper focus, effective partnerships, and a more nuanced approach that would help African countries trade their way out of endemic poverty and underdevelopment. This is not a reprise of the seemingly perennial 'trade vs. aid' debate. It is a call for smarter aid that is appropriately tailored to Africa's current reality and emerging prospects. To succeed, smarter aid should reflect the fact that Africa is becoming less of a basket case and more of a business case. Concomitantly, African countries must do more to reduce uncertainties, promote stability, address corruption, and reward entrepreneurship.



U.S. soldiers and soldiers of several African armies are inspected by Senegalese and American commanders.

Photo by U.S. Army Africa, Creative Commons.

INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

Major General Darryl A. Williams addresses U.S. Army Africa's security cooperation with the continent, Dr. Ann L. Phillips presents a perspective on the New Deal's big year, and the Center for Policy Studies (CERPS) examines the convergence of development frameworks put forward by Africa and the international community.

Building Trust and Partnerships To Help Enhance African Security Capacities

Major General Darryl A. Williams

In 2015, Africa saw numerous encouraging developments addressing the persistent security challenges facing the continent. While there was a myriad of factors, partnership was clearly the centerpiece, which grew both regionally and internationally. To that effect, and to orient its support to African Partners, United States Army Africa (USARAF) enacted a concept called 'African Horizons' that focused on building enduring partnerships based on trust and respect from the tactical to strategic level.

The cornerstone event associated with African Horizons in 2015 was the African Land Forces Summit (ALFS), reinforced by a series of regional seminars. These partnership events were critical elements for building a Global Landpower Network that aims to "create and sustain relationships with allies and partners that will build confidence, deter conflict, and if necessary, provide forces for a combined campaign."¹¹

In February, the U.S. Army and the Senegalese Armed Forces co-hosted the third such event, ALFS 2015, in Dakar. It brought together nearly 100 senior African military leaders to include 36 African countries' Chiefs of Land Forces. ALFS 2015 focused on overarching security related issues ranging from efforts to counter violent extremist organizations and criminal traffickers, to interoperability with multinational partners, as well as gender integration and strengthening the military ethic.

Following ALFS, four partner nations hosted seminars bringing together regional military leaders for candid senior level discussions to deepen relationships, and to enhance integration and dialogue about approaches to solve shared security challenges. The regional seminars were the culminating events to four Peace Keeping Operations-focused training exercises. These exercises partner Africans, Europeans, and U.S. forces, and are tailored to the African Union and United Nations Peace Keeping missions in Somalia, Mali, and the Central African Republic.

In another key partnership event, Chad hosted the counterterrorism-focused FLINTLOCK 2015 exercise in conjunction with Special Operations Command Africa. Over 1,200 participants from twenty-three African, European, and North American countries worked together to improve counter-terrorism forces' integration at the operational and tactical levels, while fostering increased collaboration and coordination within the Trans-Sahara Counter-Terrorism Partnership.

Through these partnerships, militaries have established trust and respect between military leaders and created a climate where nations can address security challenges together. On the horizon for 2016, partnering will continue with an emphasis towards improved multilateral information sharing and interoperability. Tanzania will host ALFS 2016 with a focus on building army readiness, developing future armies, and maintaining the health and welfare of soldiers.

1 Ray Kimball, "The Army Operating Concept's Global Landpower Network Challenges and Cautions," October 15 2014. <https://medium.com/the-bridge/the-army-operating-concepts-global-landpower-network-98a0cb979c58>

A Watershed Year for the New Deal

Dr. Ann L. Phillips

In 2012, six African countries volunteered to test implementation of New Deal principles and processes. Initiated by leaders of fragile states and endorsed by all major donors in December 2011, the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States was hailed as a paradigm shift from failed donor-driven assistance practices to fragile states'-led and -owned pathways toward stability.

The New Deal pilots concluded at the end of 2015. The record is dismal. The Central African Republic, eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia, and South Sudan are active conflict zones. Limited progress in Sierra Leone and Liberia was cut short by the Ebola crisis. Each failure, although grounded in specific circumstances, derived from the inability to make progress on the core New Deal principle; that is, to knit government and society together in a relationship of mutual trust and dependence. Other New Deal principles have been found in donor documents for many years, including those of local ownership, capacity building, and donor coordination. The New Deal commitment to use and strengthen host country systems proved insufficient to translate donor capacity building promises into concrete action. Emblematic of the entire effort, all principles have been honored more in the breach than in practice.

New Deal assessments note the gap between principle and practice. They bemoan the dilution of specific New Deal steps and processes into a technical check list. Nonetheless, discussions are already underway for a New Deal 2.0. An independent review presented to the International Dialogue on Peace and State-building in November 2015 glosses over substantive failures and misrepresents elements of progress. References to "whole of government" ownership raise other questions about the review, whose real purpose seems to be to justify continuation of the New Deal, rather than to assess performance.

Neither fragile states nor donors have operated according to the New Deal principles that they endorsed. Core impediments are embedded in their respective practices. Host country governments and civil society remain focused on donor funding rather than on prioritizing and solving problems together. Donors maintain institutional arrangements, professional incentive structures, time horizons, and rotation practices which do not produce the deep local knowledge, strategic patience, and long-term relationships with locals indispensable to implementation of the New Deal. Until these impediments are addressed, the New Deal's potential will remain unrealized.

The New Deal could have had a substantial and positive impact on U.S.-Africa relations had a representative set of host country actors coalesced around a short list of priorities and invested in a plan to achieve them, and had U.S. actors re-made their assistance to create an honest partnership. Success in the pilots might have re-shaped U.S.-Africa relations toward one of mutual responsibility. Instead, the impact has been one of widespread disappointment. Flawed implementation of the New Deal has undermined the much needed paradigm shift away from traditional donor-recipient relations that have proved unhelpful in the past.

The Convergence of the Global and African Development Agendas

Center for Policy Studies (CERPS), Liberia

The convergence of the global community's development goals in the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the goals of African governments, embodied in the African Union's *Agenda 2063*, was a critical development of 2015. Both the SDGs and *Agenda 2063* open the prospects that Africa may become integrated into the world order as a responsible partner in defining and implementing the common global agenda, and not as a poster region for political and socioeconomic challenges. Africa's most pressing issues are becoming an inseparable part of global issues, with clear African participation in issue identification and implementation.

The convergence of the two agendas has been accompanied by a wide range of economic, political, social, and environmental objectives that have been set forth within a framework for implementation. The forces that tie these agendas together create collaborative prospects for the "deep interconnections and many cross-cutting elements" that define success or failure. Africa's 50-year vision and its strategic framework aspire to the socioeconomic transformation of the continent. A new medium-term global agenda of 17 sustainable development goals and 169 associated targets will constitute the nexus of collaboration.

Agenda 2063 incorporates seven African aspirations into perhaps the most far-reaching articulation of the continent's challenges since decolonization; it seems capable of creating an African order in the aftermath of decolonization. *Agenda 2063* embodies the ideals of Pan-Africanism, continental integration, and a vision of an African renaissance: an Africa of good governance, democracy and respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law; an Africa with a strong cultural identity, common heritage, and values and ethics; an Africa whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential and the resilience of African people, especially its women and youth, and caring for children; and an Africa that is a strong, united, and influential global player and partner.

Agenda 2063 is an aspiration for African solutions to African problems. Despite the continuing challenges and realities of the nation-state system, both the United Nations and Africa have envisioned a meaningful global partnership. Collaboration toward mutual benefit requires a true partnership. There is no effective, sustainable partnership when multi-year "country strategy papers" are written abroad without credible local participation and when inter-governmental relations erode the importance and potential impact of domestic public opinion.

From an Africa as an arena for global spheres of influence toward an Africa that partners with the global community to address its daunting problems collaboratively, these changes have important implications for Africa and U.S.-Africa relations. Africa seems to have expressed its intention to enter a binding social compact with the peoples of the world; it aspires to be taken seriously on resolving the issues that have plagued the continent. Regarding U.S.-Africa relations, 2015's developments may signal a shift from foreign aid as an instrument and goal of policy toward intra-regional and world trade and investment as major goals of foreign policy. If this agenda is implemented, Africa will embark on the way toward a transformation into a respected actor on the global agenda.

But will Africa implement its agenda?



The African Union's *Agenda 2063* lays out a bold plan for the continent. *Photo courtesy of the United States Department of State via Flickr, public domain.*



Thousands of people attend the inauguration of new Tanzanian president John Pembe Magufuli.

Photo by Government of South Africa, Creative Commons.

2016 Global Trends: Africa's Divergent Paths Continue

Ambassador Don Gips

Diverse Priorities and Expectations Across Africa

2015 was a complex year for the African continent. Major milestones, such as Nigeria's first peaceful democratic transfer of power and impressive growth in Tanzania and Rwanda, were offset by economic stagnation in Africa's commodity-dependent economies, ongoing conflict in Central Africa and South Sudan, and terrorist attacks in Mali, Nigeria, and Somalia. China's economic slowdown dealt a significant blow to numerous African economies, which the region's three largest economies, Nigeria, South Africa, and Angola, felt acutely. But the economic downturn also created new opportunities for investment and public-private partnerships as traditional heavyweights were forced to diversify their markets. These divergent trends, reflecting the breadth of the economic and geopolitical landscape across sub-Saharan Africa's 49 countries, will likely continue in 2016.

Nigeria's Buhari Looks to Reset The Country and Economy

The historic 2015 election of President Muhammadu Buhari marked the first time in Nigeria's history in which an incumbent was successfully voted out of office and peacefully conceded. As the continent's largest economy and most populous country, many interpret the successful Nigerian elections as a sign that, for the first time, citizens are demanding that endemic governance challenges must improve, setting the stage for Nigeria's rise to its full potential as the continent's political and economic leader. While President Buhari was criticized for deliberating over his cabinet appointments for six months, those ultimately named are regarded as capable, and the Nigerian leader has received early praise for his commitment to tackle some of the most serious threats to Nigeria's future, including rampant corruption and the terrorist threat of Boko Haram. With Nigeria's oil-dependent economy struggling to adjust to falling commodity prices, a renewed willingness to partner with the private sector will be key to reviving Nigeria's lagging economy in the coming year.

South Africa: Strong Headwinds in 2016

2015 was a troubling year for South Africa, the traditional economic and political powerhouse on the continent. The Rand fell sharply, economic growth was marred by disruptive power shortages, and investors expressed diminishing confidence in the government's ability to enact effective policies to ensure economic stability and battle corruption. In December, President Zuma's unexpected sacking of Finance Minister Nhlanhla Nene and appointment of little-known

loyalist David van Rooyen was met with shock. Public outcry erupted, following in the footsteps of the successful #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall Twitter campaigns. This public outcry and sharp drop of the Rand prompted Zuma, only four days after naming van Rooyen, to re-appoint Pravin Gordhan as Finance Minister (he held the position from 2009-2014), a move that halted the Rand's freefall. South Africa's economic outlook in 2016 will be improved by Gordhan's return, especially if he is empowered to set investor-friendly policies and weed out corruption; however, he will be facing significant structural headwinds as he tries to navigate the way forward. With bell-weather municipal elections scheduled for 2016 and the ruling party set to elect its leadership in 2017, South Africa will remain an important country to watch in 2016.

Across the Continent: High Growth, Pivotal Elections, and High Stakes for Africa's Youth

Elsewhere, a number of African economies not dependent on oil or minerals benefited from the drop in global prices, as seen in Ethiopia, Côte d'Ivoire, Rwanda, and Tanzania. Ethiopia grew an astonishing 10.3 percent from 2013 to 2014, 9.5 percent from 2014 to 2015 according to official statistics, and continued growth is expected in 2016. The country held peaceful elections in 2015 that renewed the ruling party's mandate, though, as in many African nations, economic and democratic growth remains at odds as critics decry what they see as increasingly authoritarian tendencies of the government. The country's continued rise depends in part upon the pace of the transition of its economy from being largely state-dominated to one that effectively attracts private investment. As holds true across the continent, efforts to reduce regional barriers to trade will be critical to sustainable and transformative growth.

The coming year will test the continent's resolve. A number of national elections are scheduled across Africa in which several long-standing African presidents, including Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni and Congolese President Joseph Kabila, will face challenges to their continued rule. Elections are likely to pose serious implications for security and stability, and respect for term limits is in question as some leaders attempt to alter national constitutions to remain in power. Just this month, the U.S. government expressed its "deep disappointment" after Rwandan President Paul Kagame announced his intentions to run for an additional term after a popular referendum passed a constitutional amendment to extend term limits.

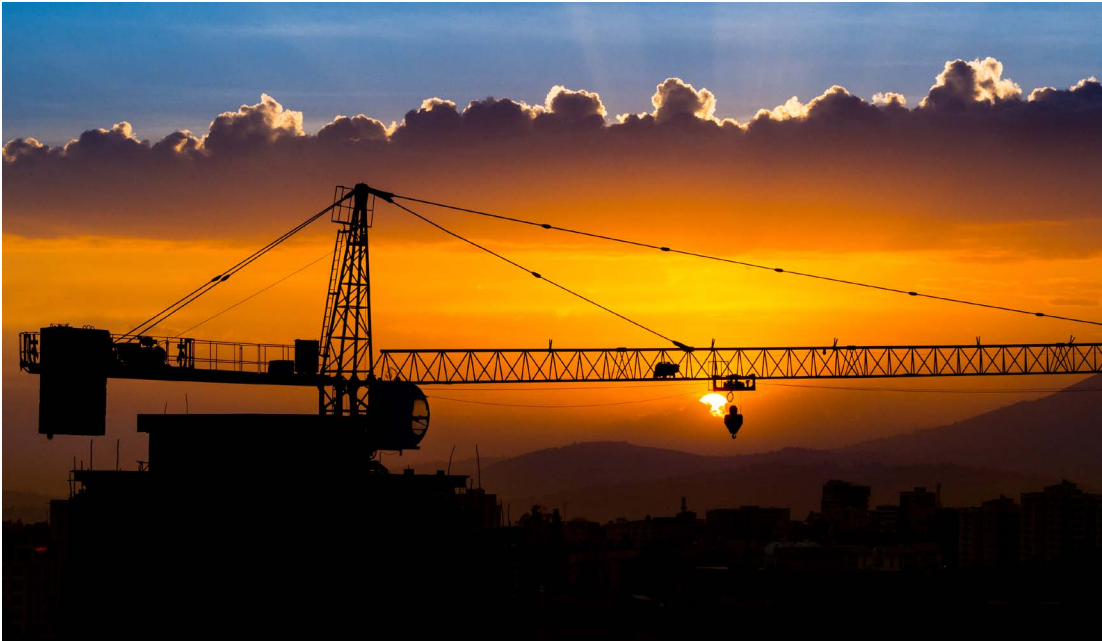
Africa's staggering youth bulge continues to present the potential for huge demographic dividends or disaster. The stakes are high not only for Africa but for the world. If left unharnessed, a growing segment of the population could be left without access to the formal economy—the perfect recruitment tool for terrorist and other criminal organizations. Meanwhile, massive waves of refugees fleeing conflict continue to stress many of Africa's already fragile states, as well as Europe. If harnessed successfully, this youth bulge could be the engine that will drive forward both African and global growth. The challenges are significant but not insurmountable, and Africans are working to find innovative and durable solutions. In the wake of the Buhari upset in Nigeria, calls for improved accountability are increasingly taking

root, including in such markets as Tanzania, where new President John Magufuli is being widely praised for his provocative anti-graft agenda, and Kenya, where the private sector and civil society pundits are together driving change through social media in advance of 2017 elections.

In Conclusion: Smart Investors Will Evaluate African Markets Individually

Africa's 49 sub-Saharan economies can no longer be conflated into a single "African" market. Overall, 2015 underscored the importance of carefully assessing African markets to exploit their unique potential—whether in the tech, health, energy, agriculture, or social sectors—while carefully managing political risk. Despite divergence in the popular "Africa rising" metanarrative, smart investors will take advantage of the fact that with many currencies under pressure, asset values are low yet prospects for long-term growth in promising individual and regional markets remain strong.

This essay was also published on the website of Albright Stonebridge Group.



Sunset over Addis Ababa: a city skyline dotted with construction cranes, reflecting a booming economy.

Photo courtesy of Jean Rebiffe via Flickr, Creative Commons.

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 understanding about Africa in the United States.

The Program achieves its mission through in-depth research and analyses, including our blog Africa Up Close, public discussion, working groups, and briefings that bring together policymakers, practitioners, and subject matter experts to analyze and offer practical options for tackling key challenges in Africa and in U.S.-Africa relations.

The Africa Program focuses on four core issues:

- i. Inclusive governance and leadership
- ii. Conflict prevention and peacebuilding
- iii. Trade, investment, and sustainable development
- iv. Africa’s evolving role in the global arena

The Program maintains a cross-cutting focus on the roles of women, youth, and technology, which are critical to Africa’s future: to supporting good governance, to securing peace, to mitigating poverty, and to assuring sustainable development.

The Africa Program currently manages two major, multi-year initiatives:






The Brown Capital Management Africa Forum

The Brown Capital Management Africa Forum is a best-in-class platform for bringing together key business and political leaders as well as subject-matter experts around a myriad of economic, trade, and investment issues in Africa.

The Southern Voices Network

The Southern Voices Network is a continent-wide network of African policy and research organizations that works with the Africa Program to bring African analyses and perspectives to key issues in U.S.-Africa relations. Funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York since 2011, the project provides avenues for African researchers to engage with, inform, and exchange perspectives with U.S. and international policymakers in order to develop the most appropriate, cohesive, and inclusive policy frameworks for the issues of peacebuilding and state-building in Africa.

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