

Rising Africa: Finding a Path to a Sustainable and Egalitarian Future

2018 International Student Summit Background Briefing Paper

Introduction

For decades, Africa has been given the hopeful titles of “Rising Africa” or “Lions on the move”¹, each meant to highlight the enormous potential on the continent. A young, growing, and rapidly urbanizing population is set to redefine the narrative of Africa as it becomes a greater international force. Africa is a continent of extremes, and is home to some of the world’s most resource-rich nations, in South Africa and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. However, the continent is also home to some of the world’s poorest countries, lowest standards of living, and greatest public health crises. All too often, the development of many African countries is impeded by the policies and politics of unstable democracies, **autocratic regimes**, and the shifting interests of global powers.²

Africa, often misrepresented as a bloc of common interests and backgrounds, is made up of 54 independent and **sovereign** countries. Each nation contains many diverse cultures, languages and ethnicities, which bring a rich cultural influence to the region.

Africa is also home to a number of climates, geographies and ecosystems, making it one of the most ecologically diverse continents on the planet and a growing tourist destination for people across the world. In addition to the diverse cultures and geographies present on the continent, there is also significant diversity in the economies of all 54 nations. Africa has been traditionally portrayed as overly reliant on natural resources, a notion that has historical and colonial roots. However, many of Africa’s nations have developed strong technology, information and service-based economies.³ Likewise, some nations like South Africa and Morocco, among others, benefit from robust tourism industries that help support strong economies. The **diversification** of an economy allows for independent nations to survive



Source: *Time Magazine*, December 2012.

¹ A term coined by the McKinsey Global Institute in their 2010 report by the same name.

² Richard Joseph, “Dilemmas of Democracy and State Power in Africa,” *The Brookings Institute*, 7 January 2016. <https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/dilemmas-of-democracy-and-state-power-in-africa/>

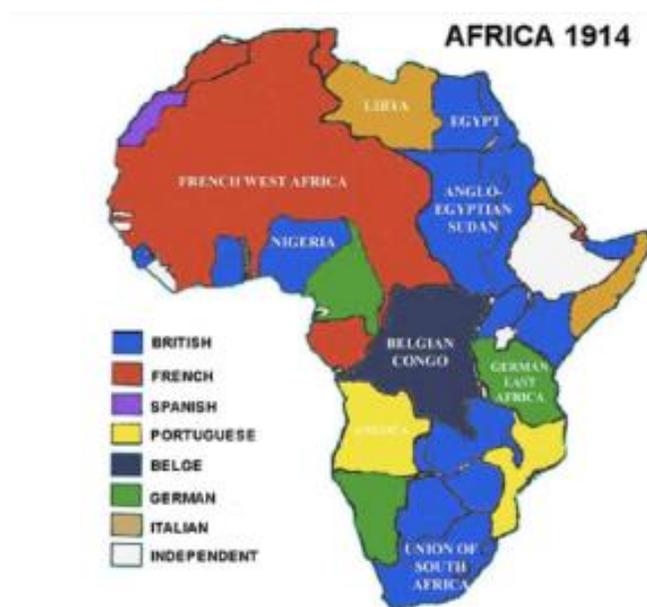
³ Botswana has made diversification a central tenet of their economic agenda, with significant resources and investment in information and telecommunications. Likewise, Kenya has explored telecommunications and banking as a means of economic diversification

global economic recessions and allows for a strong economic foundation if and when natural resources become depleted.

Africa is also home to a number of different political structures. On the continent, there exist **true and partial democracies**, **parliamentary** systems, and **monarchies**. Often these different political structures are born out of a colonial past, and can cause tension within the region. Additionally, each system produces significantly different outcomes in key democratic **indicators** such as basic human rights, free and fair elections, free speech, and the rights of **marginalized** communities.

Historical Relationships & Political Realities in Africa

Colonialism plays a significant factor in the past, present, and future of the African continent. Many of the political, economic, social, and health structures present on the continent today are directly related to the



Source: "Lasting Effects of Imperialism/Colonialism in Africa,"
Colonialism in the Present, 9 February 2015.

impacts of colonialism. **Industrialization** on the European continent drove an **insatiable** need for raw materials, natural resources, and cheap labor. Dutch, German, French, and American representatives (among others) saw the African continent as a resource rich land capable of meeting the shifting needs of **developing nations**. Often these nations **exploited** African peoples, governments, and cultures to gain the valuable resources that they coveted.

Like many historical events, colonialism has had direct consequences for present-day Africa. Current issues like certain ethnic conflicts, **authoritarian** leadership, natural resource dependence, and underdeveloped economies can all be traced to the impacts of colonists' activities centuries ago. As global powers begin to grapple with the dark legacy

of colonialism, it will be up to African nations to carve out a prosperous and **egalitarian** future.

Each of Africa's 54 nations has a unique socio-political culture, which colors national sentiments on a wide range of issues. The various forms of government, as well as the policy goals of each head of state, can define national priorities, economic agendas, and relationships with neighboring countries. In some nations, including Egypt and Zimbabwe, **military rule** dominates politics, where national military leaders have significant authority over political decisions. Who has power within the national hierarchy is as important as the structure of government itself.

Beginning in the 20th century, many nations achieved independence, and some parts of the African continent began to trend toward democratic representation. Today, there exists a number of **full democracies**, with nations such as Botswana, South Africa, and Ghana scoring high on The Economist's

Democracy Index.⁴ However, like other continents, Africa still contains a number of **flawed democracies**, where certain metrics like civil liberties, electoral processes, or political participation are partially or severely impacted.

Today, the continent is home to some of the world’s most authoritarian and repressive governments. Some of these governments are traditional descent-based monarchies, with power passed down through birth and lineage. However, some of these authoritarian regimes exist in “democratic” nations, where political participation and fair elections are nonexistent. Authoritarian regimes often have a different set of political, economic, and social goals than countries striving for legitimate democracies.

What is the African Union?

The **African Union (AU)** was formed in 1999 and is composed of all 54 globally recognized **member states**. The AU replaced the previously established Organization of African Unity (OAU), which was founded in the mid 1960’s and represented the interests of only 22 nations. The AU seeks to bring together the different nations on the African continent toward a series of unified goals in the hope of bettering the entire continent. In their own words, the African Union seeks to create “an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in global arena.”⁵

The AU seeks to achieve these goals through the promotion of certain practices within the continent. However, unlike some aspects of the European Union, African Union law is not **binding** over national laws. Therefore, individual nations retain much of their **sovereignty** and can act in ways that either support or act against the goals of the broader African community. Therefore, the AU seeks to establish broad but unified goals with which all member states can agree.

THE AFRICAN UNION'S AGENDA 2063

- A PROSPEROUS AFRICA**
A prosperous Africa, based on inclusive growth and sustainable development
- POLITICALLY UNITED**
An integrated continent, politically united, based on the ideals of Pan Africanism and the vision of Africa’s Renaissance
- GOOD GOVERNANCE**
An Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law
- PEACEFUL AND SECURE**
A peaceful and secure Africa
- STRONG CULTURAL IDENTITY**
An Africa with a strong cultural identity, common heritage, values and ethics
- PEOPLE-DRIVEN**
An Africa whose development is people driven, relying on the potential offered by people, especially its women and youth and caring for children
- INFLUENTIAL GLOBAL PLAYER**
An Africa who is a strong, united, resilient and influential global player and partner

⁴ Economist Intelligence Unit, *Democracy Index 2017*, accessed 2018. <https://www.eiu.com/topic/democracy-index>

⁵ “AU in a Nutshell,” African Union. Accessed November 2018. <https://au.int/en/history/oau-and-au>

In addition to the continental efforts toward greater prosperity, the AU works within the broader international community to achieve its goals. This means that the AU works with other international government structures, such as the European Union and the United Nations, to develop policies that would benefit the African continent as a whole. Providing a unified voice on the international stage can demonstrate both international legitimacy and active participation in shaping international law.

Created in 2013, **Agenda 2063** is a 50 year plan created by the AU, to develop and remake the African continent. The Agenda is rooted in “the socio-economic transformation of the continent” as it “seeks to accelerate the implementation of past and existing continental initiatives for growth and sustainable development”.⁶ A critical concept to understanding the agenda is that growth and prosperity occur from within the continent, and in a bottom-up approach. The AU designed Agenda 2063 with the hope of uplifting the citizens of each nation and granting economic potential and prosperity to people across the continent.

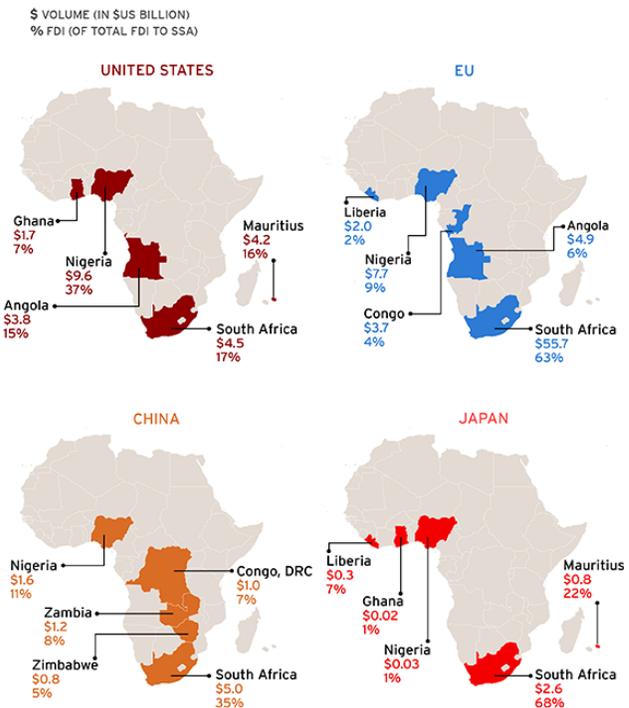
Through the Agenda’s seven aspirations, the African Union has set the foundation for strong and achievable goals for its member states over the next 50 years. In order for these goals to be met, there must be a coordinated effort by individual nations, something that is made even more difficult to achieve due to the enormous variety in peoples, cultures and politics.

Foreign Investment

Investment is the act of spending money in anticipation of getting a greater return than the amount invested. Nations invest in **infrastructure**, education programs, and health services among many other areas, with the goal of creating a healthy, productive workforce that can drive the national economy. However, some African nations do not have a sufficient budget for large scale projects like highway systems or airports, and instead use their money on more immediate issues like food production or national security. This often causes underdeveloped nations to look toward the international community for support in funding large-scale government programs.

Foreign investment usually involves one or more nations providing money to a borrowing nation so they can build or buy necessary goods and services. Foreign investment often involves **loans** worth billions of dollars that accrue **interest** over time. Loans that are incorrectly managed or not paid off in time, can lead to debt and long-term financial pain. Often the consequences of

TOP 5 RECIPIENTS OF FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT (TOTALS 2001 - 2012)



Source: Amy Copley et al., “The U.S.-Africa Leaders’ Summit: A Focus on Foreign Direct Investment,” *The Brookings Institute*, 11 July 2014.

⁶ “Agenda 2063,” African Union. Accessed November 2018. <https://au.int/en/agenda2063>

mismanaged foreign investment are felt by the people that the borrowed money was initially meant to help. Foreign investment may also come with “strings attached,” where the lending nation can create rules or regulations on how investment money can be used or distributed. Poorer nations often rely heavily on foreign investment as a means of growing an under-developed economy.

International aid differs significantly from foreign investment. Aid often takes the form of **grants**, or free money, where the receiving nations have no obligation to pay back the donating nation. Often, international aid is given to nations with an immediate public health or humanitarian crisis. A famine, drought or mass migration of refugee populations, will significantly affect a nation’s ability to provide crucial services to its people, and may cause widespread death or disease. In this case, the international community may come together to provide direct resources like food, water or shelter to provide immediate help. International organizations like the UN have increasingly taken over the responsibility of direct foreign aid.

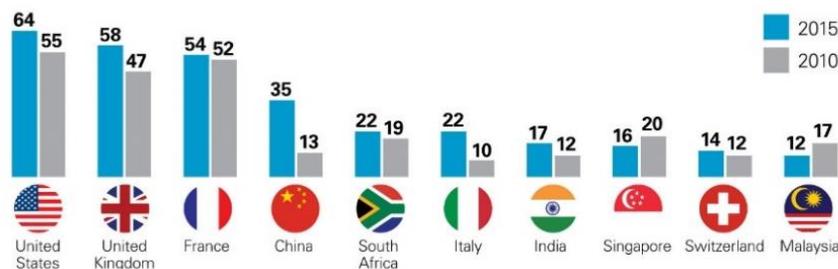
Who is investing in Africa?

As the world becomes a more global environment, countries are beginning to take a more active interest in the affairs of other nations. Developed nations such as the United States, China, France, and most recently the United Kingdom have taken active measures to advance their interests on the African continent. The United States, sometimes through international organizations like the United Nations, has increased its military and security forces in order to deter terrorism on the continent.⁷ France has likewise increased its security presence on the continent, often for its own perceived direct benefit.

Other countries have taken a different approach to broadening their reach in Africa. For decades, China has invested heavily in the economies and infrastructure of many African nations. By supporting these

nations, China hopes to increase its footprint on the continent, while securing vital access to energy and resources. As discussed, Africa is home to some of the Earth’s rare precious metals and energy sources which China covets for a rapidly growing economy and population. However, China has come into

Figure 3: Top 10 countries investing in Africa, by investment stock



Source: UNCTAD

criticism on the world stage due to the extent of international lending and the burdens these loans may place on fledgling African nations. Whether these actions amount to modern day colonialism, **predatory lending**, or “win-win” financial deals, remains an open question.

⁷ Paul McLeary, “Niger Ambush Highlights Growing U.S. Military Involvement in Africa,” *Foreign Policy*, 5 October 2017. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2017/10/05/niger-ambush-highlights-growing-u-s-military-involvement-in-africa/>

Understanding “Egalitarian Growth”

One of the major guiding principles of the AU and the Agenda 2063 is egalitarian growth, the idea that all people within a country or on a continent should benefit from development and increased economic activity. Many governments institute policies like a minimum wage guarantees or special considerations for female-owned, small businesses in an attempt to ensure all levels of society benefit from economic growth. However, in today’s world, both developed and under-developed countries continue to struggle with significant gaps between the wealthy and the poor, between men and women, and between ethnic groups. Ensuring egalitarian growth prioritizes that income and wealth are spread more evenly among all peoples, and not concentrated in the hands of a few. What policies can ensure equal growth across all levels of society? How do countries prioritize certain practices or policies given the realities of their individual countries and economies?

A focus on egalitarian growth must also include a focus on **marginalized populations** and those peoples who have not experienced economic or social equality in the past. Special considerations may need to be made for women, LGBTQ peoples, certain ethnic populations, and people with short or long term disabilities that have been previously cast aside or neglected. Which populations need consideration will vary from country to country, but egalitarian growth necessitates the growth of all groups within a country.

Simulation Goals for the 2018 International Student Summit

The **2018 International Student Summit** will simulate a meeting of AU member states tasked with devising policies and proposals meant to further Agenda 2063 and, more broadly, egalitarian growth on the African continent. This meeting will take place under the assumption that multiple world powers are developing plans to invest heavily on the African continent. Students should be prepared to debate the merits of multiple proposals, and determine how invested money will be shared between regions, nations and committee groups.

Student delegates and student leaders will represent a member nation of the AU that is paired with a broader regional grouping of nations with similar interests. On the day of the simulation, these four-nation regional groups will work together to determine the strengths and the needs of the region, and will explore strategies for maximizing a fictional investment opportunity. In addition, student participants will work as a member of a Specialized Technical Committee (STC), and will be tasked with developing policies and proposals aimed at promoting best practices within their committee’s area of expertise. A successful student participant in the 2018 International Student Summit will come prepared with a significant understanding of their country’s background and history with regard to the topic, as well as a firm understanding of the goals and policy areas of their assigned committee.

Questions to Consider (from the perspective of your assigned country)

1. What system of government is used in your country? Is this system responsive to the will of the people (i.e. democratic)? Use the Economist's *Democracy Index* for more information.

2. What are the economic conditions of your assigned country? What is the major industry in your assigned country? Define Gross Domestic Product (GDP). What is your assigned country's GDP and how does it compare to neighboring countries?

3. Select two of the themes from Agenda 2063 (graphic, page 3). How does your assigned country meet one of these goals and how does it fall short of one of these goals?

4. Does your assigned country currently receive international development money? What projects or programs are being invested in? Does your assigned country have an obligation to pay the lending nation back?

5. How can African countries commit to sustainable and egalitarian growth for the citizens of their countries?

6. What policies can your assigned country commit to in order to create prosperity on both a regional and continental scale?

Glossary of Terms

Term	Description
Agenda 2063	Agenda 2063 is the African Union plan to transform Africa socially, economically, and politically by 2063.
African Union	A continental union made up of all 54 countries on the continent of Africa. The main objectives of the AU are to rid the continent of lasting effects of colonization and apartheid; to promote unity among African States; to coordinate and promote cooperation for development; to defend the security of the member states and to promote international cooperation.
authoritarian	Of or relating to a governmental or political system, principle, or practice in which individual freedom is held as completely subordinate to the power or authority of the state, centered either in one person or a small group that is not constitutionally accountable to the people.
autocratic regimes	System of government in which one person has uncontrolled or unlimited authority over others.
binding	(About an agreement or promise) involving an obligation that cannot be broken.
Colonialism	The policy of a foreign nation seeking to extend or retain its authority over other people or territories, generally with the aim of developing or exploiting them to the benefit of the colonizing country and of introducing changes to the colony in terms defined by the colonizers, especially in economics, religion, and health.
developed countries/regions	Countries that are generally wealthy with advanced economies, mostly based on the service sector which provides more wealth than the industrial sector. Geographically, the developed economies of the world can mostly be found in North America, Europe, Japan and South Korea. Oceania?
developing countries/regions	Relatively poor, usually agricultural, countries that are seeking to become more advanced economically and socially; Geographical regions for developing countries worldwide are as follows: Africa, East Asia, South Asia, Western Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean.
diversification	A risk management technique that mixes a wide variety of investments to provide higher returns on the investment with lower risk. If one investment fails, it will not ruin the investor because they have invested in other places that are safe. A diversified economy has multiple strong sectors (agriculture, service, manufacturing etc.) and can remain strong even if one sector fails.
egalitarian	The idea that all people are equal and deserve equal rights and opportunities.
exploit	To use and utilize selfishly for one's own ends, especially for profit.
flawed democracy	Flawed democracies are nations where elections are fair and free and basic civil liberties are honored but may have issues such as media restrictions that in some way prevents complete freedom of speech. These nations have significant faults in other democratic aspects, including underdeveloped political culture, low levels of participation in politics, and issues in the functioning of governance.
foreign investment	One or more nations providing money to a borrowing nation so they can build or buy necessary goods and services.
full democracy	A full democracy is a nation where civil liberties and basic political freedoms are not only respected but also reinforced. These nations have a valid system of governmental checks and balances, independent judiciary whose decisions are enforced, governments that function adequately, and media that is diverse and independent.
grants	A sum of money given by an organization, especially a government, for a particular purpose. Unlike a loan, there is no need to "pay back" a grant.
human rights	The rights and freedoms that we are all entitled to including (but not limited to) the right to go to school and to work. Every person has every human right because we are all born equal and should be treated with equal dignity and respect.

indicators	A sign or signal that shows something exists or is true, or that makes something clear
industrialization	The large-scale introduction of manufacturing, advanced technical enterprises, and other productive economic activity into an area, society, country, etc.
infrastructure	The basic physical and organizational structures and facilities (i.e. buildings, roads) needed for a society to operate.
insatiable	Having an appetite or desire for something that is impossible to satisfy.
interest	A charge for borrowed money. Generally a percentage of the amount borrowed
International aid	Money, goods and services given by the government of one country or an international institution such as the World Bank to help another country.
investment	The expenditure or use of money and capital in order to gain profitable returns as interest, income, or appreciation in value.
loans	Things that are borrowed, especially a sum of money that is expected to be paid back with interest.
marginalized	Treated (a person, group, or concept) as insignificant or peripheral
marginalized populations	Groups of people that are treated as insignificant or of lower status.
member state	The term used for a country that is a member of an international organization, such as the United Nations.
military rule	A form of government where the military has complete control over political authority.
monarchy	A form of government where one person rules the state. What differentiates a monarchy from a dictatorship for example is the fact that the ruler (the monarch, like kings or queens) gains power through family succession.
non-governmental organizations (NGOs)	Non-profit, citizen-based groups or international organizations that are independent of governments. NGOs are typically active in humanitarian, educational, healthcare, public policy, social, human rights, environmental, and other areas to make changes according to their objectives.
parliament	A representative body of people who make the laws in some countries; Generally found in flawed or full democracies.
partial democracy	A partial democracy, also known as an illiberal democracy, is a governing system in which, although elections take place, citizens are cut off from knowledge about the activities of those who exercise real power because of the lack of civil liberties. It is not an "open society."
predatory lending	A practice of loaning money to a borrower and forcing them to accept unfair terms through deceiving, coercing, or exploiting the borrower.
sovereignty	The full right and power of a governing body over itself, without any interference from outside sources, influence, or actors.
true democracy	A true democracy, also known as a direct democracy, is a type of democracy in which the people vote on policy and initiatives directly. This differs from a representative democracy, where the people vote for politicians (ex: House of Representatives, Senate) who vote for policy.