



AFRICA  
POLITICAL  
OUTLOOK

# POST-APO 2026 REPORT



FORCES OF THE  
FUTURE

26 & 27 MARCH 2026



BRUSSELS

**DAY 1**



# OPENING REMARKS



Africa does not need saviors, neither from inside nor from outside. Africa needs strategic thinking, honest conversations, sharp minds, and the political will to act.

Amb. Viwanou Gnassounou

## **Amb. Viwanou Gnassounou**

President of the Steering Committee of the Africa Political Outlook  
Former Assistant Secretary-General of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States

Ambassador Viwanou Gnassounou opened the summit by framing the moment as both urgent and full of possibility, a continent in motion that refuses to be defined by its challenges alone. He acknowledged Africa's progress in democratic transitions and regional institution-building, but was honest about the headwinds: unconstitutional changes of government, weak strategic vision in public policy, the spread of violent extremism and the deepening intersection of geopolitics and governance on African soil.

He positioned the APO Summit not as a luxury but as a necessity; as a space where the best thinking about Africa's political future is led by Africans, for Africans, in partnership with the world. When closing, he called on every delegate to move beyond diagnosis toward action, leaving not only with sharper analysis but with specific commitments to carry forward.





It is a weight which we carry with us, but it is also an opportunity, to speak about the past, to know what is our common history, and to allow the public to understand what is in the end our common past. But our duty is as well to look forward.

Mr. Bart Ouvry

### **Mr. Bart Ouvry**

Managing Director  
AfricaMuseum

Mr. Bart Ouvry opened with a frank account of the Africa Museum's history which was built in 1908 as a monument to Belgian colonialism, on a site where Congolese people were displayed in human zoos as recently as 1897. He did not flinch from this weight, but framed it as both a responsibility and an opportunity: to speak honestly about a shared past and to actively reinvent the institution for the future.

His invitation to delegates was deliberate and symbolic, to reappropriate the space, to make it their own, as part of a broader project to transform the museum into a genuine world institution of the 21st century. He closed with a Sahelian proverb - "if you want to go fast, go alone; if you want to go far, go together" - as the spirit he hoped would animate the summit.





It is our common responsibility to make the African Union-European Union partnership a pillar of stability, shared prosperity and the defence of a multilateralism founded on law and mutual respect.

H.E. Amb. Ali Yakoub  
Mahamoud

### **H.E. Amb Ali Yakoub Mahamoud**

Permanent Representative of the African Union to the European Union and the Organization of African, Caribbean, and Pacific States (OACPS)

H.E. Ambassador Ali Yaakoub Mahamoud set out the African Union's strategic vision with clarity and conviction. Africa, he argued, is no longer a periphery to be administered or a reservoir of natural resources, it is asserting itself as the architect of its own destiny, driven by deep structural forces: demographic dynamism, continental integration and the rise of green and digital economies. He pointed to Agenda 2063 and its flagship projects (the AfCFTA, African financial institutions and ultimately the African passport) as the concrete architecture through which sovereignty must be built.

On the AU-EU partnership, he called for a decisive shift away from the donor-recipient model toward co-constructed value chains, shared interests and innovative financing. He closed with a direct challenge: the time has come to move durably beyond aid dependency and build the frameworks for endogenous development, assumed integration and effective sovereignty, with the diaspora, recognised as Africa's sixth region, fully integrated into that project.



# Special Address

Remote intervention



Together, the African Union and the European Union make up 40% of votes in the United Nations. When we join forces, we can make a difference.

Hon. Serap Güler

## Hon. Serap Güler

Minister of State at the Federal Foreign Office  
Federal Republic of Germany

Speaking remotely from the German Foreign Office in Berlin, Hon. Serap Güler framed the current moment as a binary choice: every country can either be a passive taker of external forces, or actively build partnerships with those who share their values and interests. Germany and the EU, she was unequivocal, have made their choice.

She outlined four concrete commitments: supporting two permanent African seats on the UN Security Council, with Germany itself a candidate for a non-permanent seat in 2027-28; sustained engagement on peace and security, including personal visits to Sudan and the Great Lakes region; economic partnership through €227 million committed to AfCFTA implementation since 2016; and people-to-people ties embodied by the forthcoming Goethe-Institut in Dakar, designed by architect Francis Kéré.





AFRICA  
museum



# OPENING SESSION - OUTLOOK ON GOVERNANCE IN AFRICA

## PRESENTATION OF THE AFRICA POLITICAL OUTLOOK 2026 REPORT

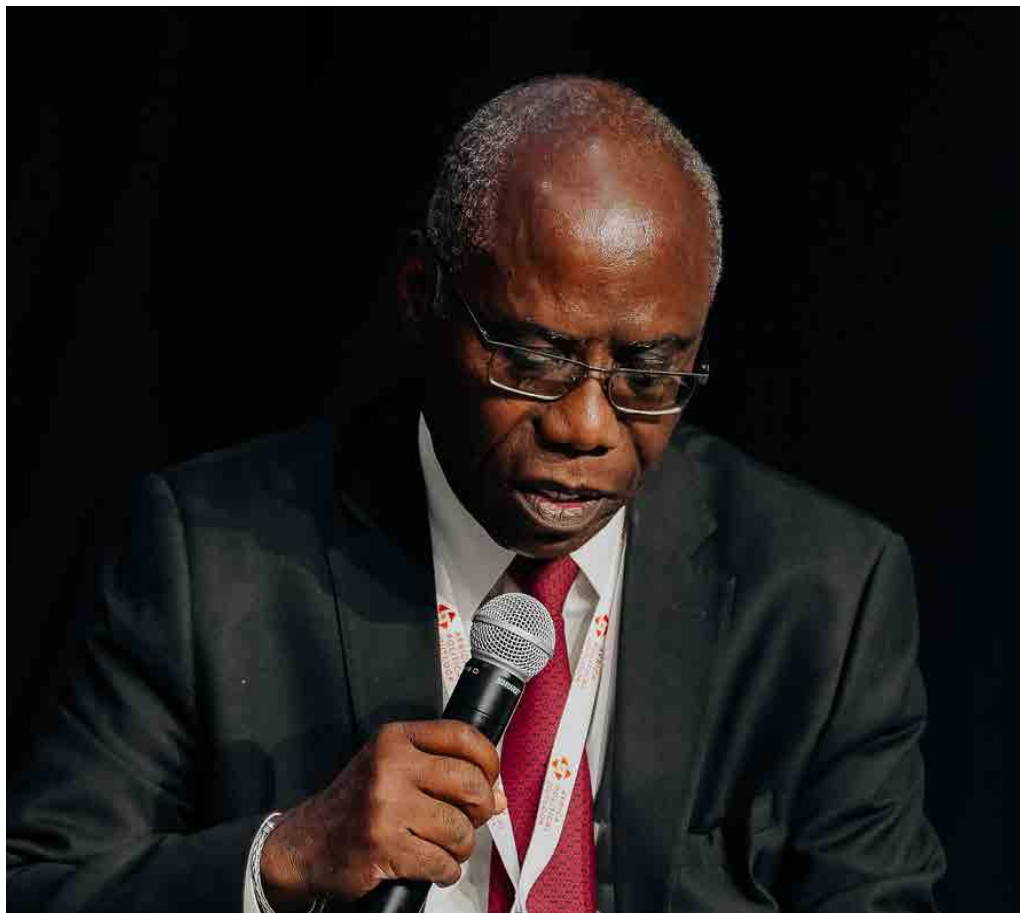


### **Mr. Adébissi Djogan**

Founder & Executive Director  
Africa Political Outlook

This year, the Africa Political Outlook introduced a significant innovation: rather than delivering its flagship report following the summit, the 2026 edition was published in advance as a pre-summit report, setting the analytical stage for the two days of dialogue that followed. Presented by Adébissi Djogan, the 104-page report brings together expert analysis and the perspectives of senior leaders to offer a structured assessment of the state of governance across the African continent.

The report is organised around two pillars. The first provides rigorous, firsthand analysis of the present and future, covering elections and democracy, development models, and Africa's voice and standing on the global stage. The second gives a platform to what Djogan described as «voices of the future»: insightful contributions from emerging and established leaders on topics ranging from critical raw minerals and mining governance to the situation in the Sahel.



## PANEL PARTICIPANTS



**Mr. Sébastien F. W. Brack**

Senior Advisor  
Representative to the European Union  
Kofi Annan Foundation



**Mr. Arnauld Akodjenou**

Special Advisor for Africa  
Kofi Annan Foundation



**Dr. Christopher Fomunyoh**

Senior Associate and Regional  
Director for Central and West Africa  
Programs  
National Democratic Institute (NDI)



**Dr. Stefan Friedrich**

Head of the Sub-Saharan Africa  
Department  
Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung

The panel examined the state of democratic governance across Africa, using the APO 2026 report on the State of Governance as its analytical foundation. The discussion opened with a striking reframing of the continent's electoral challenge: the central problem is no longer fraud on election day, but the systematic narrowing of political competition before voters ever reach the polls. Through accumulation - a court ruling here, a technical disqualification there, pressure on civil society and media - processes that are formally regular are rendered politically non-competitive. Mr. Arnauld Akodjenou drew on cases across Côte d'Ivoire, Cameroon, Guinea, Uganda and Congo-Brazzaville to argue that the 2025-2026 electoral cycle should be read not as a list of individual contests but as a continental stress test, in which methods of restricting political competition travel from one country to the next.

Panelists converged on a pointed rebuttal to the notion that democracy is an externally imposed standard. Chris Fomunyoh cited Article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, enshrined in every African constitution, as evidence that genuine elections are a universal principle African leaders have already committed to. Afrobarometer data reinforces this: over 70% of Africans consistently say democracy is the best form of government. Dr Stefan Friedrich, drawing on four decades of KAS's work, made the empirical case that governance and prosperity are inseparable. Stronger institutions and rule of law create the conditions in which investment flows and societies stabilise. Without that foundation, neither economic growth nor security gains are likely to prove durable.

Against a backdrop of shrinking international democracy support, with American funding severely cut and European budgets under pressure, the panel found cautious optimism in homegrown forces. The emergence of citizen observer movements, youth-led civic mobilisation on issues of governance and budget transparency, and new technology-enabled parallel vote tabulation exercises are building electoral accountability from within. As Dr Fomunyoh observed, civil society organisations that once wore foreign branding now organise under their national colours with greater determination than before.

If elections stop being a real choice, they also stop being reliable instruments of legitimacy. When citizens, especially younger citizens, begin to believe that institutional politics no longer offer meaningful choice, the cost is no longer only national. It becomes continental.

Mr. Arnauld Akodjenou

Elections are the one, the only social contract that gets negotiated between governments and their citizens in public view, with the participation of the entire citizenry. If a government steals an election then everything else pales in comparison.

Dr. Christopher Fomunyoh

Where governance improves, opportunity accelerates. Where rule of law strengthens, investment follows. Where democratic institutions grow more resilient, citizens gain trust and societies gain stability.

Dr. Stefan Friedrich





## Key recommendations



### Activate existing African norms, don't invent new ones

Africa already has the instruments – the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance and regional frameworks through ECOWAS and others. The priority for the African Union and regional organisations is to implement these tools earlier, more consistently and more politically, rather than producing new normative texts.



### Move beyond the election day mindset

International partners and observers must extend their engagement well before polling day. If competitiveness has already been weakened through exclusions, dissolved parties and restricted civic space in the months prior, observation on election day is insufficient to guarantee a meaningful process.



### Guarantee the four minimum conditions for electoral legitimacy

Every electoral process requires credible and independent arbiters; rules that are not designed ad hominem to exclude specific candidates; effective legal remedies for those who are wrongly disqualified; and a protected civic space in which civil society and media can operate freely.



### Sustain and increase European commitment to democracy support

At a moment when American funding has been sharply reduced, Europe must not follow suit. The empirical evidence is clear: without legitimate and inclusive governance, gains in economic growth and security will not prove durable. Democracy support is not altruism – it is shared strategic interest.



### Invest in homegrown civic infrastructure

Citizen observer networks, parallel vote tabulation methodologies and youth-led accountability movements are proving their resilience even in the face of funding cuts. Donors and partners should direct resources toward building and sustaining these indigenous initiatives rather than substituting for them with externally managed programmes.



# PANEL 1



## GRAND DIALOGUE

### FORCES OF THE FUTURE : CO-BUILDING THE GREAT REALIGNMENT



**Mr. Marc Reverdin**

President Reverdin Consulting  
Former Secretary General of Paris  
Peace Forum



**Hon. Mulambo H. Haimbe**

Minister of Foreign Affairs and  
International Cooperation  
Republic of Zambia



**Dr. Anthony Costa**

Head of the Secretariat  
B20 South Africa  
Former Investment Lead to the  
President of South Africa



**H.E. Isabelle Durant**

Former Deputy Prime Minister of  
Belgium  
Former Deputy Secretary-General of  
UNCTAD (United Nations Conference  
on Trade and Development)  
President of Friends of Europe



**Mr. Hakim El Karoui**

Founding Partner, Volentia  
President of the Action Committee for  
the Mediterranean



**Ms. Chidi Blyden**

Chief Executive Officer & Principal  
Culturally Bound Consulting  
Former U.S. deputy assistant  
secretary of defense, African Affairs

The Grand Dialogue served as a high-level exploration of the fundamental shift in how Africa engages with global powers, moving from a historical model of aid dependency toward a defining future of strategic co-creation and industrial sovereignty. Hon. Mulambo H. Haimbe opened the session by asserting that Africa enters this moment not as a guest waiting for an invitation, but as a «co-architect» of the world's economic and governance future. He emphasized that with Africa holding 30% of the world's critical minerals, the continent must shift from importing raw materials to adding value domestically, underpinned by the African Green Mineral Strategy. This opening set a rigorous tone for the dialogue, framing Africa's demographic dynamism and mineral wealth as global catalysts for a sustainable digital and green economy.

Dr. Anthony Costa built upon this by reflecting on South Africa's G20 and B20 presidency, noting that for the first time, African issues, including inclusive growth, infrastructure reform, and the digital divide, were placed at the very core of the global business agenda. He argued that the private sector managed to find common ground and consensus on Africa's centrality even when traditional political processes were stalled by global upheavals.

A major theme of the session was the critical need to reform the culture of international diplomacy and investment. H.E. Isabelle Durant highlighted that while the «narrative» has shifted toward partnership, European practices must catch up to this theory. She cautioned that initiatives like the Global Gateway must be more than reactive tools to counter Chinese influence; they must instead be built on equitable relationships that respect African self-determination and national interests. Durant also pointed to unilateral European decisions, such as the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), as examples of where communication has failed, often being perceived by African partners as a form of protectionism rather than genuine climate action.

The dialogue also addressed the «resource diplomacy» currently being shaped by global competition for critical minerals. Mrs. Chidi

Blyden noted that while China has a long historical lead in African infrastructure and extraction, the United States is urgently re-engaging through the private sector. She made a forceful case for «African ownership» over «co-ownership», asserting that critical minerals belong to the African people and should be leveraged to build domestic manufacturing and processing capacities. Blyden emphasized that technology used in everyday devices like tablets and phones—as well as sophisticated defense equipment—should be manufactured directly on the continent to provide jobs for Africa's youth.

Ultimately, the participants concluded that a successful future depends on an integrated ecosystem approach that moves beyond siloed investment sectors. This includes a rigorous fight against illicit financial flows, which Durant noted deprives the continent of essential capital for endogenous growth. The panel also championed the inclusion of cross-cutting issues like «clean cooking» into major investment plans, noting its profound impact on health, gender equity, and carbon emissions. Marc Reverdin closed the dialogue by urging a complete change of mindset, where global partners stop «giving lessons» and instead start learning from African-developed solutions to global challenges.



Let this gathering be remembered not as another forum of declarations, but as a turning point where Africa and its partners moved from ambition to implementation, from potential to power, from rhetoric to results.

Hon. Mulambo H.Haimbe

These are not just African challenges; they are global challenges. The opportunity is not just an African opportunity, but a global opportunity... isolation and fragmentation will not lead to prosperity.

Dr. Anthony Costa

We no longer talk about aid; we talk about co-creation, we talk about partnership... European initiatives cannot just be something to counterbalance China; they must be about establishing an equitable relationship with African partners.

Isabelle Durant

It's not co-ownership, it's African ownership. Critical minerals are yours; they are critical and rare to us because we need them across the pond, but how you negotiate ensures they help your population.

Chidi Blyden





## Key recommendations



### Transition from Assistance to Co-Investment

Shift the partnership paradigm from traditional aid to co-investment in African-led projects that uphold sovereignty and deliver shared prosperity.



### Assert African Industrial Ownership

Strike deals for critical minerals that mandate domestic beneficiation and value addition, ensuring the continent moves up the value chain instead of merely exporting raw materials.



### Reform the Global Financial Architecture

Redesign multilateral lending rules and IMF/World Bank governance to treat Africa as an equal shareholder and reduce the high borrowing costs currently penalizing developing economies.



### Prioritize Transboundary Infrastructure

Call on global partners to prioritize co-investment in transboundary energy and transport corridors to enable intra-African trade and link the continent to global markets effectively.



### Combat Illicit Financial Flows and Lesson-Giving

Prioritize international transparency to stop tax evasion and shift the diplomatic mindset from «giving lessons» to learning from African-developed solutions.



# PANEL 2



## FORCES OF IMAGINATION

### NOLLYNOMICS, SPORT, CULTURAL AND CREATIVE INDUSTRIES, NEW AFRICAN SOFTPOWER



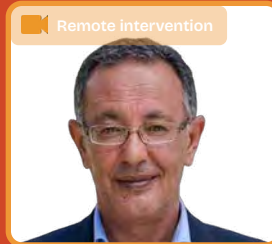
**Mr. Nicolas Esgain**

Founder and Managing Director of Phrenos.EU, Managing Director of the Youssou N'Dour Foundation for Cultural and creative Industries (FYNICO)



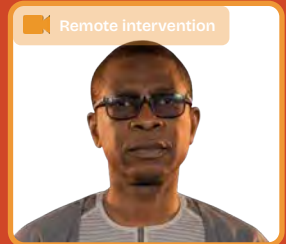
**Mr. Bart Ouvry**

Managing Director, AfricaMuseum



**Dr. Ahmed Ghoneim**

Director, Grand Egyptian Museum



**Mr. Youssou N'Dour**

Senegalese Artist, Founder of the Foundation Youssou N'Dour, Former Minister of Tourism of Senegal



**Ms. Dorine Rurashitse**

Managing Director, Africalia



**Mr. Ola Bergström**

Director for Government and Policy Advocacy, Ericsson



**Ms. Carolina Vallejo**

CEO, One World Records & Manager of Salif Keita



**Ms. Sandra Kassab**

Director of the Africa Department, French Development Agency (AFD)



**Dr. Moudjib Djinadou**

Founder and Executive Director, Itumo Institute

The panel examined the transition of Africa's creative and cultural industries from an informal, survivalist model toward a structured economic powerhouse, reframing creativity not as entertainment or aid-dependent folklore, but as the continent's most sustainable and renewable resource. The central paradox driving the discussion was familiar: African creativity dominates global charts and cultural conversations, yet the continent captures only a fraction of the economic value it generates.

Mr. Bart Ouvry opened by contrasting the finite nature of mineral extraction with the infinite potential of the creative economy, arguing that Africa's soft power is already being exercised globally but lacks the infrastructure to be monetised locally. A recurring theme was the structural architecture required to make that monetisation possible. Mr. Nicolas Esgain and Ms. Dorine Rurashitse highlighted the critical absence of modernised copyright frameworks, with many African nations still operating with outdated 1980s-era intellectual property institutions ill-equipped for the digital age. Without robust legal protections, African artists remain vulnerable to exploitation by global platforms and the rising threat of unauthorised AI-generated content.

Ms. Sandra Kassab pointed to a shift in development finance, with CCIs now viewed as a legitimate investment sector evidenced by a €500 million portfolio. Yet Dr. Moudjib Djinadou and Ms. Carolina Vallejo offered a grounding counterpoint: talent alone is not enough. Without formal business training and professional ecosystem support, the industry remains decorative rather than a pillar of national GDP.

The panel concluded that treating culture as a strategic asset, through cross-ministerial approaches linking culture with finance, digital infrastructure and education, is the path through which Africa's force of imagination translates into dignified employment, social cohesion and a respected seat at the global economic table.



If there is one industry which I believe is sustainable—more sustainable than mining... it is the creative industry. Creative industries by definition are renewable.

Mr. Bart Ouvry

The CCI sector is an answer...to the question you are asking regarding the issue of youth employability.

Ms. Dorine Rurashitse

Now, what we need on the continent is to be able to progress in a way that is certainly personal or societal, but definitely economic—to be able to have economies that are truly our own, both in thought and in action.

Dr. Moudjib Djinadou

Basic access to a digital society is sort of a human right for citizens... networks today are used for quite a lot of purposes for different sectors.

Mr. Ola Bergström

We can contrast extraction with creation through cultural and creative industries, just as governance will be linked to protection

Mr. Nicolas Esgain

At the time, I didn't take the economic aspect into account. It was only later that I understood that behind every song, behind every film, behind every bit of creativity, there was an economy.

Mr. Youssou N'Dour

We don't just think about the economy, we think about the intellectual ecosystem, the cultural ecosystem, and we also want to defend human heritage.

Ms. Carolina Vallejo

It is a failure to recognize the value and it is allowing the added value to be generated elsewhere while Africa is producing the content... African imaginaries must have their rightful place.

Ms. Sandra Kassab

The question is not only how we preserve heritage, but how we activate it — how we transform it into education, innovation and creative industries.

Dr Ahmed Ghoneim





## Key recommendations



### Modernize Legal and Regulatory Frameworks for Intellectual Property

Governments must transition from outdated 1980s-style copyright bureaus to modernized institutions capable of managing digital rights and intellectual property. Establishing robust mechanisms to track and collect royalties is essential to ensure that artists and their descendants receive fair compensation, preventing the loss of cultural value to the «informal» void.



### Instate Cross-Ministerial Collaboration

The development of the creative economy should not be the sole responsibility of the Ministry of Culture. It requires a «whole-of-government» approach that brings in the Ministries of Finance, Communication, and Digital Economy. This ensures that creative industries are integrated into national infrastructure planning, employment policies, and digital agendas.



### Invest in «Artistic Entrepreneurship» and Professionalization

There is a critical need to move beyond raw talent by funding incubators and specialized education. Curricula should be updated to include business management, «CEO mindsets», and technical skills that align with current market demands. This shifts the perception of the artist from an «entertainer» to a «business owner» capable of scaling their impact.



### Assert Digital and Data Sovereignty

African nations must prioritize the protection of localized data and the promotion of African-generated content within the digital ecosystem. This includes creating safeguards against the unauthorized use of African cultural heritage by Artificial Intelligence and ensuring that the «narrative» and «imaginaries» of the continent are produced and owned by African artists rather than external entities.



### Reframe CCIs as a Formal Investment Sector

Financial institutions and development banks should move away from a «grant-only» mindset and treat creative industries as a high-potential investment sector. By developing specific financial vehicles and risk-assessment tools tailored to the unique nature of creative production, the sector can attract the capital necessary for large-scale infrastructure and industrialization.

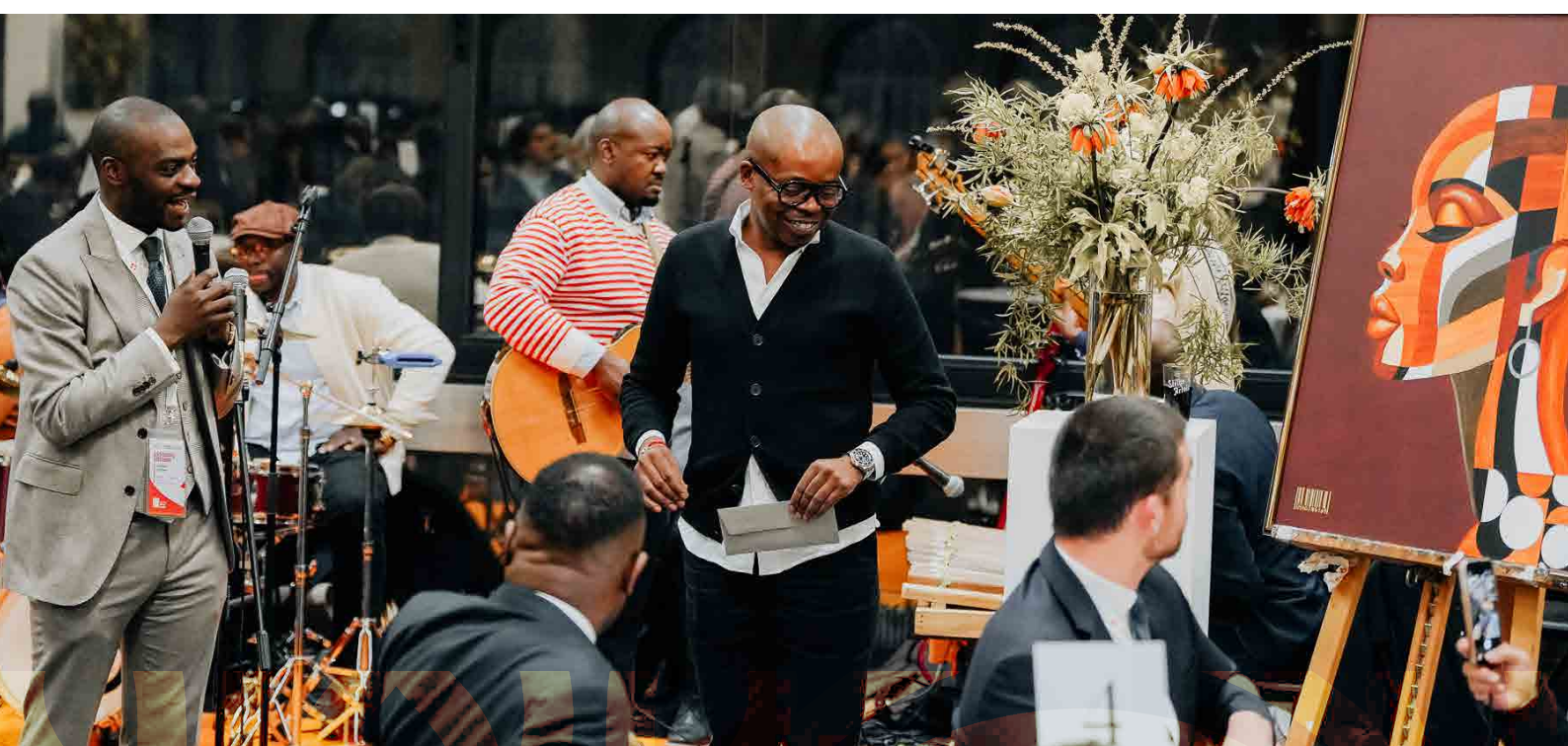


# APO GALA DINNER



The APO Official Dinner brought together 150 VIP guests - heads of state, ministers, ambassadors, CEOs and leading cultural figures - for an evening that was as much a diplomatic and cultural convergence as a formal occasion.





Far more than a dinner, it offered a rare space where public decision-makers, private capital and cultural creation could meet in an intimate setting conducive to meaningful exchange.





The programme combined an Afro-fusion gourmet menu crafted by acclaimed Chef Dieuveil Malonga, exclusive artistic and musical performances and the APO Prize Ceremony - together embodying the spirit of a summit that places African excellence, creativity and connection at its centre.





# APO PRIZES

## APO GRAND PRIX



### **Sir Mohammed Fathi Ahmed Ibrahim**

KCMG. Founder and Chairman  
Mo Ibrahim Foundation

Sir Mo Ibrahim receives the Grand Prize for his exceptional commitment to peace and structural progress in Africa. Through the Mo Ibrahim Foundation, he champions the belief that without strong governance, lasting peace cannot take root. This vision translates into concrete impact through the Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG), the most comprehensive snapshot of what is happening in Africa, serving as the basis for evidence-based policymaking across the continent. By objectively measuring institutional performance and training young leaders, the foundation empowers decision-makers to anticipate structural crises before they escalate, actively working toward stability, sovereignty, and the promotion of Africa's authentic voice on the international stage.

## **APO AWARD FOR INCLUSIVE PROSPERITY**

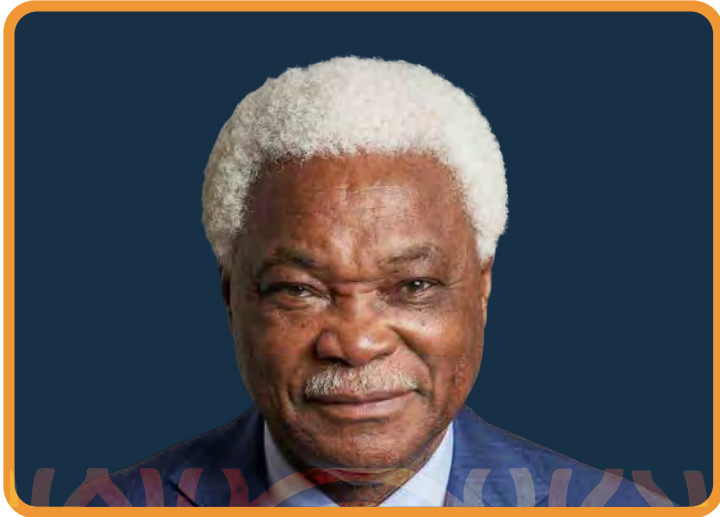


### **Mr. Tony O. Elumelu**

Founder and Chairman of Heirs Holdings, Chairman of the United Bank for Africa, Founder of the Tony Elumelu Foundation

Mr. Tony O. Elumelu receives the Inclusive Prosperity Award in recognition of his unprecedented impact on Africa's economic empowerment. Guided by his pioneering philosophy of "Africapitalism," he established the Tony Elumelu Foundation (TEF) to position young entrepreneurs as the primary catalysts of the continent's development. This vision translates into massive action: TEF has disbursed over \$100 million to more than 27,000 entrepreneurs across all 54 African countries. By catalyzing the creation of over 1.5 million jobs and generating more than \$4.2 billion in revenue, his philanthropy is actively eradicating poverty and shaping a new paradigm of inclusive growth.

## APO LOCAL DEVELOPMENT AWARD



### **Mr. Jean-Pierre Elong Mbassi**

Secretary General, United Cities and Local Governments of Africa (UCLG Africa)

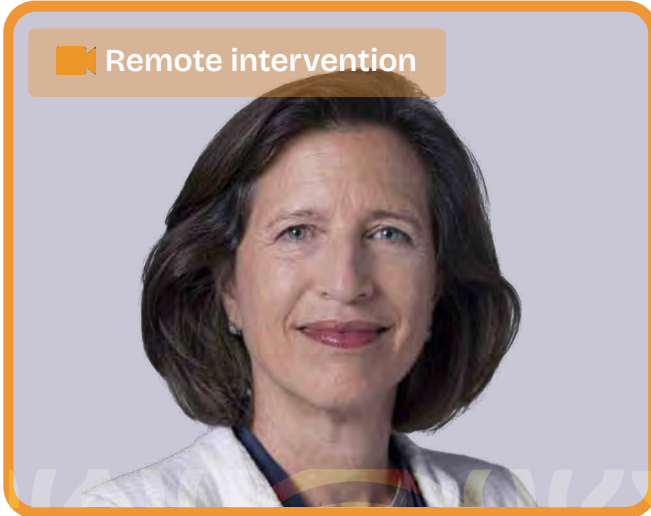
Jean-Pierre Elong Mbassi receives the Local Development Award in recognition of his four decades of commitment to territorial governance and urban transformation. As Secretary General of UCLG Africa, he serves as the unified voice of local governments, representing nearly 350 million citizens. Guided by the fundamental vision of “building African unity from the bottom up,” he tirelessly advocates for decentralization that directly empowers citizens. His impact is particularly tangible: from the rehabilitation of slums in Douala to the conception of the flagship Africities summits since 1998, his leadership firmly anchors Africa’s structural progress at the local level.

**DAY 2**



# OPENING REMARKS

Remote intervention



When misleading narratives dominate, they do more than distort perception. They distort policymaking, investment, and opportunity. But when integrity, accuracy, and African agency define information spaces, something else happens entirely: possibility expands

Ms. Melissa Fleming

## Ms. Melissa Fleming

Under-Secretary-General, United Nations

Speaking remotely, Ms Melissa Fleming argued that while Africa has long been referenced in global conversations without truly being represented, that dynamic has shifted. The question now is whether the global information environment is honest and open enough to carry Africa's diverse voices without distortion. She highlighted disinformation and AI-generated content as instruments of geopolitical power, countered by Africa's generation of digital natives, journalists, fact-checkers and coders, who are reclaiming the continent's narrative from within.

Ms Fleming outlined the UN's commitment to information integrity: expanding media partnerships across Africa, strengthening digital literacy and demanding accountability from global technology platforms. She concluded that when accuracy and African agency define information spaces, possibility expands, and African nations must be key partners in co-authoring the new narrative of multilateralism.





## H.E. Mahamoud Ali Youssouf

Chairperson of the African Union Commission

Speaking from Addis Ababa, the new AU Commission Chairperson called for a rigorous reading of Africa's present as the precondition for identifying the forces of its future. He noted the continent's appreciable resilience, with growth projected at over 4% through 2027, while warning that vast mineral wealth remains a source of fragility rather than strength, as great-power competition over those resources generates tensions and crises.

He closed with a pointed challenge to the summit: frameworks and recommendations are only valuable if accompanied by clear answers to who will implement them, with what resources, and under what oversight. A strategic platform must translate ambition into concrete, measurable action.



The choice of this theme reveals a major preoccupation. Africa's present must be dissociated from its interested ambivalences and cultivated ambiguities. Building the positive forces of a renewed Pan-Africanism demands always-proactive reflection.

H.E. Mahamoud Ali Youssouf



### H.E. Gilbert F Houngbo

Director-General, International Labour Organization, Former Prime Minister of Togo

H.E. Gilbert F. Houngbo, Director-General of the International Labour Organisation and Former Prime Minister of Togo, framed Africa's future around the concept of augmented work – an age in which AI, automation and digital platforms are redefining rather than replacing labour. With 10 to 12 million young people entering Africa's labour market every year, he stressed that a demographic dividend is not automatic: it becomes real only when there are decent, productive jobs.

For Africa, he argued, this moment represents a historic opportunity to leapfrog legacy systems and lead in shaping new models of enterprise. He called for investment in three foundations: skills and digital literacy, productive SMEs with access to finance and markets, and robust social protection. The ILO, he said, stands ready to support African governments because the forces of the future are already visible in every young entrepreneur and every farmer adopting climate-smart practices.



The future of work will not be man versus machine; it will be human capability amplified by technology. Africa can position itself not as a follower of global trends, but as a leader in shaping them.

H.E. Gilbert F Houngbo



Africa is not simply our neighbour – we Europeans must embed in our convictions that it is today one of the great centres of gravity of the 21st century.

Hon. Younous Omarjee

### **Hon. Younous Omarjee**

Vice-President  
European Parliament

Hon. Younous Omarjee, Vice-President of the European Parliament, called for a fundamental reimagining of the Europe-Africa relationship, not as a vertical donor-recipient dynamic, but as an archipelagic partnership linked by the seas that have always connected both continents. Against a backdrop of war in Europe, conflict in the Middle East and the erosion of international law, he argued that Europe and Africa together carry a shared responsibility to champion multilateralism and a more just world order.

He reiterated strong support for permanent African representation on the UN Security Council, welcomed the UN General Assembly's recognition of the transatlantic slave trade as a crime against humanity, and called on both continents to become co-architects of a future in which Africa is recognised as the rising geopolitical power it already is.





### **Mr. Adébissi Djogan**

Founder & Executive Director  
Africa Political Outlook

Adebissi Djogan described a world cracking under the weight of old habits and new horrors, in which the international order built on rule of law and dialogue is visibly fracturing. Yet he refused despair, insisting that the creative forces capable of transforming the world are alive in Africa, a continent no longer the object of someone else's narrative, but the author of the next chapter of its own history and the world's.

He called for three radical ruptures: a Pact of Values restoring solidarity and rule of law over amoral pragmatism; a Pact of Prosperity moving beyond aid toward investment-driven transformation; and a Pact of Conscience, challenging every leader to choose creativity and justice over domination. Closing with Thomas Sankara "We must dare to invent the future" he asked every delegate to decide which side of history they stand on.



You cannot carry out fundamental change without a certain amount of madness. And in this case, it comes from non-conformity—the courage to turn your back on the old formulas, on the past—the courage to invent the future.

Mr. Adébissi Djogan



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# PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS



Broken solidarity anywhere in Africa is a threat to solidarity everywhere in Africa. We must value the alliances and associations geared towards progress and protect them jealously.

H.E. DR LAZARUS  
MCCARTHY CHAKWERA

## H.E. DR LAZARUS MCCARTHY CHAKWERA

6<sup>th</sup> President of the Republic of Malawi

Drawing on his five-year presidency, Lazarus Chakwera organised his address around three forces shaping the future. The first is providence: the unforeseeable crises, from COVID-19 to Cyclone Freddy to a cholera emergency, that no leader can predict. The only response to this is dignity and resilience. The second is the power of association: deliberate alliance-building as a form of resistance against a new geopolitical spirit seeking to dismantle multilateralism, which he likened to King Leopold making a comeback.

The third is the capacity to learn new ways of doing things. AI is no longer a future topic but a present reality to be mastered. Africa's development formula must shift away from poverty programmes and toward investments in transport corridors, corruption-free institutions, industrial value-addition and intra-African trade. These are priorities that Africans themselves must begin to fund.





FORCES OF THE FUTURE



# PANEL 1




## HIGH-LEVEL DIALOGUE

### FORCES OF PLURILATERALISM : AFRICA IN THE POST-AID ERA



**Amb. Viwanou Gnassounou**  
President of the Steering Committee of the Africa Political Outlook, Former Assistant Secretary-General of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States



**Professor Daron Acemoglu**  
2024 Nobel Prize in Economics, Professor of Economics, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)




**H.E. Ismaël Nabé**  
Minister of Planning, International Cooperation, and Development, Republic of Guinea



**Ambassador Marc Pecsteen de Buytsverve**  
Director for Africa Federal Public Service Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Belgium



**Mr. Jean Van Wetter**  
Chief Executive Officer Belgian Agency for International Cooperation (Enabel)



**Mr. Babajide Sodipo**  
Acting Executive Secretary Alliance of African Multilateral Financial Institutions (AAMFI)

The panel explored the fundamental shift in Africa's global positioning from a traditional beneficiary of foreign aid to a sovereign architect of its own economic and strategic destiny. Setting the stage, Professor Daron Acemoglu emphasized that as artificial intelligence and technological advancements reshape the global order, developing nations must build robust, inclusive institutions to avoid being left behind and to actively shape the direction of these technologies.

This call for structural strength was practically illustrated by Guinea's Minister H.E. Ismaël Nabé, who outlined the «Simandou 2040» project—a \$200 billion integrated economic doctrine designed to transform raw mineral wealth into comprehensive value chains spanning agriculture, education, transport, and health. The discussion highlighted that this era of «strategic plurilateralism» means Africa will no longer choose geopolitical camps, but will instead align with partners based on its own optimized interests.

European representatives, including Mr Jean Van Wetter and Ambassador Marc Pecsteen de Buytsverve, acknowledged this paradigm shift, noting that frameworks like the EU's Global Gateway aims to leverage public funds to attract private investment and build 360-degree partnerships rooted in mutual interest rather than traditional charity. Furthermore, Mr Babajide Sodipo highlighted the critical need for African financial agency, pointing out that aggregating the continent's \$4 trillion in fragmented domestic capital is essential to overcoming externally imposed risk perceptions and independently funding mega-projects like the Dangote Refinery.

In a fragmented world, Africa will not choose a camp; it will choose its interests. African plurilateralism is not an opportunistic posture — it is a sovereignty strategy in an uncertain world.

H.E. Minister Ismaël Nabé

African institutions must reclaim our risk perception; it is time to stop outsourcing how the world prices our economies.

Mr. Babajide Sodipo

I tend to say that Europe needs Africa more than Africa needs Europe — and there is still an enormous amount of work to do to get that message across here in Europe.

Mr. Jean Van Wetter

Unless one strengthens one's institutions, starting at the community level, at the local level, going all the way to the national and the international level the benefits of AI are likely to pass one by - and even worse, the costs of AI will fall on the shoulders of populations that are unready.

Professor Daron Acemoğlu

We must develop a narrative to explain to our own taxpayers why investing in Africa also responds to our own interests.

Amb. Marc Pecsteen de Buytsverve





## Key recommendations



### Build Institutional Resilience for the AI Era

Developing nations must strengthen their institutions from the community level up to the international level to ensure they can harness the benefits of artificial intelligence and advocate for their populations' specific needs.



### Transition to Ecosystem Structuring

International partners must move away from funding isolated infrastructure projects and instead focus on structuring comprehensive economic ecosystems and full value chains within Africa.



### Aggregate Domestic African Capital

African multilateral financial institutions and governments must prioritize domestic resource mobilization by pooling the estimated \$4 trillion in fragmented continental capital (pension funds, reserves, etc.) to independently finance transformative priorities.



### Embrace African Multi-Alignment

Global partners must accept that African nations will pursue «multi-alignment», working simultaneously with Europe, Asia, the Americas, and the Global South, as a legitimate strategy for sovereignty and optimization, rather than viewing it as hostile opposition.



### Reinvent the European Narrative and Leverage

European nations must change the domestic narrative to show taxpayers that investing in Africa is a matter of mutual interest, while using frameworks like the Global Gateway to maximize the leverage of limited public development funds to attract private capital.

E FUTURE

BRUSSELS



# PANEL 2

## FORCES OF FAITH: AFRICA, GOD AND US



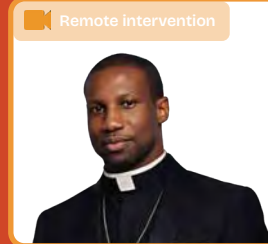
**Ms. Mabel Nederlof Sithole**

Author, Leadership Expert, and Facilitator of Cross-Sector Partnerships.



**Apostle Grace Lubega Matovu**

Founder and President, Phaneroo Ministries International



**Father Bernard Didier Ntamak Songue**

Theologian  
Director of the Specialized Research Library of the École Biblique et Archéologique Française de Jérusalem (EBAF)



**H.E. Ambassador Khalid Fathalrahman**

Director of the Center for Civilizational Dialogue  
Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO)



**Ms. Hilde Deman**

Executive Director – Europe  
Search for Common Ground



**Dr. Steven Nabieu Rogers**

Executive Director  
Africa Faith and Justice Network



**Prof. Jan De Volder**

Historian of religions  
Professor at the Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies at the Catholic University of Leuven  
Representative of the Sant'Egidio Community in Brussels

The panel wove together several interconnected themes addressing the profound influence of faith on Africa's statecraft, while highlighting promising pathways toward true sovereignty. A central thread connected the continent's historical burdens with its future potential: the necessity of moving beyond extractive global structures to define the internal soul and inherent value of the continent from within.

Apostle Grace Lubega Matovu's framing of sovereignty not merely as a political status but as the definition of a people's soul resonated throughout the discussion, with panelists building on this concept through various lenses. This perspective aligned with his historical reading of colonialism – noting how early missionaries inadvertently provided the intelligence for Africa's division – highlighting a troubling paradox: despite immense natural wealth, extractive global structures leave the continent capturing only a fraction of the economic value it produces.

The need for value-driven leadership emerged as a pivotal concept that exposed both vulnerabilities and strengths. Professor Jan de Volder's observation that faith traditions offer deep historical credibility to counter rising amoral pragmatism sparked a deeper exploration of religion's social and political impact. His vision of a new collaborative partnership between state and religion found practical complement in Ms Hilde Deman's and Dr. Steven N. Rogers' examples, where religious leaders in the Sahel, Sierra Leone and Mozambique acted as crucial, trusted mediators to navigate political transitions and secure lasting peace.

Father Bernard Didier deepened the theological framing, arguing that Africa's challenges are not merely socio-political but profoundly spiritual. Speaking from Jerusalem, he called for a «conversion of the gaze» regarding power and responsibility, warning that corruption and oppression break the biblical covenant and social pact alike. He called instead for a servant leadership model, wherein power is exercised as sacrificial service to ensure justice, protect the vulnerable and preserve the continent's ecology.

The discussion ultimately converged on a vision of African statecraft that transcends traditional development and aid models. By reimagining culture and faith not as peripheral elements but as engines of innovation rooted in the communal philosophy of Ubuntu («I am because we are»), Africa has the opportunity to pioneer governance models that are simultaneously more sovereign, equitable and focused on empowering future generations than existing systems worldwide.



True sovereignty begins by defining the soul of a people, the soul of a nation, the soul of a continent. And we cannot define the future of Africa without understanding the soul of Africa, or the soul of a people.

Apostle Grace Lubega Matovu

Change in Africa cannot just be done by policy. It can be done by value. The problems we have in Africa are issues of values. When you talk about corruption, when you talk about lack of democratic space, if we push value systems in governance, we can get a lot of things done.

Dr. Steven N. Rogers

Africa does not only need institutional reforms for its development. It needs a conversion of the gaze regarding power and responsibility.

Father Bernard Didier Ntamak Songue

Especially outside capitals, religious leaders can be among the most trusted leaders of the community, sometimes more than governments, more than judicial systems, more than security forces. So they hold a very important access and influence over their communities.

Ms Hilde Deman

I think Africa has the opportunity in the 21st century to develop a new model on how states and religions can work together. [...] I hope it can be a model that is really based on values and on the social common good.

Professor Jan de Volder





## Key recommendations



### Shift from «Helping» to «Alignment»

Move away from hierarchical, interventionist models that assume a monopoly on solutions and adopt a strategy of alignment based on equality and win-win partnerships.



### Transform Education into «Exhumation»

Education must go beyond basic literacy to «dig out the gold» within the African child, focusing on their ability to interpret their own potential and history rather than merely fitting into global systems designed in their absence.



### Prioritize Institutional Integrity over Individual Charisma

Leadership mindsets must shift from the acquisition of power to the distribution of empowerment, building state systems that are more robust and enduring than the individuals who run them.



### Harness Cultural Frameworks like Ubuntu for Innovation

Utilize Africa's «cultural DNA», specifically the philosophy of «I am because we are», as a blueprint for high-level multi-lateralism and communal wealth models to counter global fragmentation.



### Adopt a New Model of State-Religion Partnership

Develop a 21st-century model where religions act as independent, value-driven partners for the common good, moving away from models that either ignore or co-opt religious influence.



# PANEL 3



## FORCES OF MINING

### SECURING THE FUTURE OF AFRICAN CRITICAL RESOURCES, AVOIDING OLD TRAPS



**Mr. Pascal Airault**

Journalist in charge of African and Middle Eastern Politics and Economics L'Opinion



**Mr. Saliem Fakir**

Executive Director  
African Climate Foundation



**Mr. Pascal Agboyibor**

Managing partner  
ASAFO & CO



**Hon. Hildegard Bentele**

Member of the European Parliament  
Vice Chair of the Development  
Committee European Parliament



**Mr. Olivier Buyoya**

Regional Director West Africa  
International Finance Corporation



**Ms. Thouraya Triki**

Director of International Partners  
European Investment Bank (EIB)



**Mr. Federico Bonaglia**

Deputy Director  
OECD Development Centre

The panel explored the critical strategic shift required to transform Africa from a primary exporter of raw minerals into a sovereign industrial power. While the continent holds nearly 30% of global critical mineral reserves, including 70% of the world's cobalt, it currently retains only 10% of the financial benefits. Panelists emphasized that the global energy transition has placed Africa at a geopolitical crossroads, where rising demand for lithium, copper, and rare earths offers a unique lever for domestic prosperity if paired with local processing and «green» industrialization.

# FORCES OF THE FUTURE BRUNNEN



2024  
**SPEAKER**  
Olivier  
BUYOVA  
Executive Director  
Africa  
Africa  
Africa



Due to time constraints, the summit was unable to broadcast the pre-recorded keynote from Mr. Saliem Fakir, Executive Director of the African Climate Foundation, but his prepared remarks addressed the intersection of Africa's mineral wealth and a shifting global order. In his video, he noted that the world has entered an era of profound uncertainty, where the global energy transition has elevated critical minerals into a top-tier priority for artificial intelligence, military technology, and green industries. Mr. Fakir argued that because traditional international aid is dwindling, Africa must move toward an «investment-led» growth model that leverages the continent's 30% share of the world's most essential minerals. He emphasized the need for «harder and realist forms of diplomacy» to negotiate beneficial economic outcomes and avoid the historical «resource curse».

During the live session, Mr. Pascal Agboyibor highlighted that African nations are seeking greater control over the marketing and trading of raw materials to better leverage global prices. He noted that strategic market interventions, such as the 2025 cobalt ban, demonstrated that decisive state action can have an immediate doubling effect on commodity prices.

Hon. Hildegard Bentele highlighted the EU's Critical Raw Materials Act and the Global Gateway initiative as strategic tools designed to foster «mutually beneficial» partnerships that move beyond simple extraction. She noted that while processing in Europe is often energy-prohibitive,

the EU seeks reliable African partners to diversify supply chains away from dominant players like China. Mr. Federico Bonaglia added a demographic urgency to this shift, noting that with 29 million Africans turning 16 each year, «quality jobs» must be the primary performance indicator for the mining sector's success.

A recurring theme was the massive infrastructure and energy deficit, estimated at a \$155 billion annual funding gap. Panelists argued that mining projects must be integrated into broader economic «ecosystems,» leveraging them to build national energy capacity, such as the Inga hydroelectric project, which could serve both industrial and civilian needs with clean energy. Ms Thouraya Triki emphasized that the European Investment Bank (EIB) provides «catalytic» long-term financing to de-risk these complex projects, provided they meet rigorous environmental and social standards. The discussion concluded on the necessity of regulatory stability. Mr. Olivier Buyoya remarked that while contract renegotiations - such as Guinea's Simandou project - are a natural part of the business cycle, investors are most deterred by legal instability and a lack of transparency. By consolidating legal frameworks and promoting regional value chains through the Africa Free Trade process, African nations can transition from being «price takers» to influential actors in the 21st-century global economy.



Africa holds approximately 30% of the world's most critical mineral reserves. We have to rely on creating opportunities ourselves rather than aid-dependent forms of growth and development.

Mr. Saliem Fakir

We [the European Union] talk more openly about our interests. We talk about our needs and we want to combine our development aid tools with the engagement of the private sector. This is the big step forward we want to make.

Hon. Hildegard Bentele

If this mining sector extractive industry has to become a driver of development, what are the key performance indicators? And for us at the OECD Development Centre, this is quality jobs.

Mr. Federico Bonaglia

Good governance, a stable and coherent regulatory framework, is a good thing for African countries and for Africans themselves

Mr. Olivier Buyoya

There is going to be more and more emphasis on local transformation... and this will have the consequence of fueling a domestic economic fabric that will be strengthened and therefore more local capitalism.

Mr. Pascal Agboyibor





## Key recommendations



### Prioritize Local Transformation and Value Addition

Move beyond the «extractive» model by implementing policies that require domestic processing and refining. This ensures that African nations capture a larger share of the value chain and foster a «local capitalism» that strengthens the domestic economic fabric.



### Bridge the Infrastructure and Energy Gap

Treat mining, energy, and transport as an integrated ecosystem. Leverage mining investments to build large-scale energy infrastructure that powers industrialization while providing clean energy to the broader population.



### Strengthen Regulatory and Governance Frameworks

Establish stable, transparent, and consistent legal environments to attract long-term private capital. Focus on «institutional integrity» to reassure investors and ensure that mining revenues are responsibly reinvested into national development funds.



### Invest in Human Capital and Quality Job Creation

Align local content provisions with real-world skills development. Jointly develop educational programs that produce the local engineers and technicians necessary to manage sophisticated industrial operations.



### Foster Regional and Strategic Partnerships

Utilize continental protocols, such as the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), to build regional value chains. Shift international dynamics from «aid-based intervention» to «strategic alignment,» ensuring that external partnerships accelerate rather than dictate Africa's development.

# FORCES OF THE FUTURE

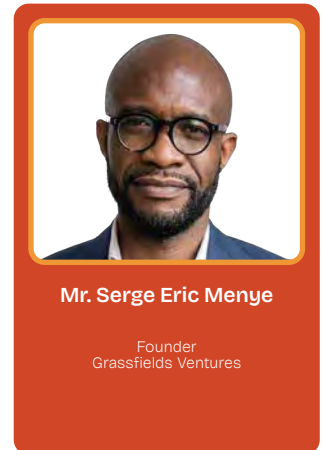
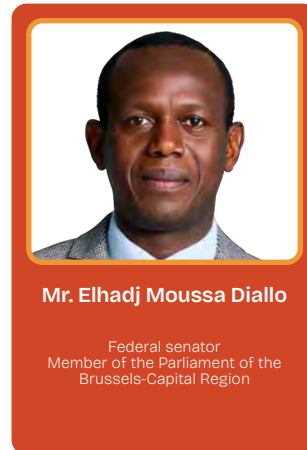
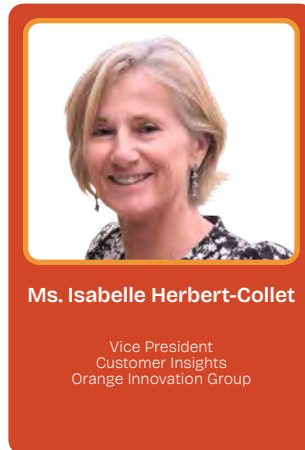
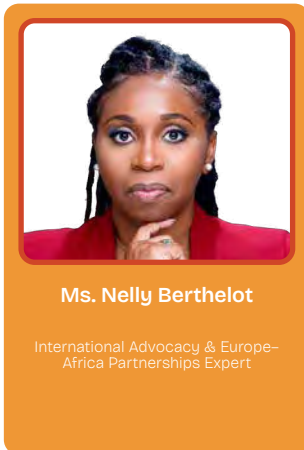


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# PANEL 4

## FORCES OF THE DIASPORA CIRCULARITY, CONNECTIVITY, CAPITAL



The panel examined the potential of the African diaspora; often referred to by the African Union as the continent's «6th Continent»; to move beyond its role as a source of emergency financial aid toward becoming a structured force for development, influence, and sovereignty. While remittances currently exceed \$100 billion annually, the discussion revealed a critical gap between these massive financial flows and their ability to transform national economic structures.

Ms. Isabelle Herbert-Collet and Mr. Serge Eric Menye provided a data-driven reality check on current financial dynamics. Herbert-Collet presented findings showing that 47% of the diaspora sends money regularly, yet these funds primarily serve as a «social buffer» for basic needs like health and education rather than structural investment. She noted that a persistent lack of trust in institutional and banking systems remains a major hurdle to channeling these funds into larger economic projects. Serge Eric Menye delivered a forceful critique of the «romantic» view of diaspora impact, arguing that relative to a population of 1.3 billion, \$100 billion amounts to only \$6 per person per month. He contended that the diaspora alone cannot be a «miracle» solution and emphasized that true development must stem from internal mobilization, rigorous vision, and leadership modeled after successful Asian developmental states.

The discussion highlighted the necessity of institutional representation and professionalization. Senator Elhadj Moussa Diallo, drawing on his experience in the Belgian Senate, argued that diaspora members in institutional roles must act as «bridges» to align the interests of their countries of residence and origin. He stressed that the diaspora must organize into democratic, unified bodies to exercise collective lobbying power on major issues like climate change. He further noted that many opportunities are lost because smaller diaspora associations often lack the project management skills and «solid dossier bundling» required to successfully respond to complex international calls for projects.

Throughout the discussion, speakers converged on the need for a paradigm shift from «helping Africa» to an «alignment» model built on reciprocal partnerships. As Herbert-Collet noted through Orange's «Lead the Future» strategy, corporate integration of diaspora expertise is already proving successful in driving innovation. The panel concluded that by shifting the mindset from aid to co-creation, and by investing in the cultural reconnection of younger generations, the diaspora can transform from a diffuse financial power into a fundamental engine for African sovereignty and communal wealth.

It is indeed a question of seeing in the African diasporas a way to finance the development of Africa. The idea in itself is not bad except that there is a part of romanticism in it that indeed poses many problems for me

Serge Eric Menye

We don't do politics because we come from a diaspora; we do politics because we carry values, we have convictions to defend. And once we are effectively in the decision-making bodies, we must ensure that the necessary bridge is established

Elhadj Moussa Diallo

There is really this kind of tension between individual well-being in the country of residence and the desire—perhaps it's romanticism, perhaps it's also simply an aspiration—to see one's family or local relations have an improved standard of living

Isabelle Herbert-Collet





## Key recommendations



### Establish Autonomous Financial Systems

Create specialized banking institutions dedicated to diaspora deposits that operate independently of state control. These systems should offer competitive interest rates (5-8%) to mobilize capital toward productive sectors like infrastructure and agriculture rather than just primary consumption.



### Professionalize Diaspora Lobbying

Build unified «umbrella» organizations at continental and international levels to consolidate the diaspora's political voice. Establish specialized support structures to help smaller associations develop the project management skills needed to respond to international funding calls.



### Invest in Youth and Cultural Reconnection

African states should actively invest in the education and cultural reconnection of diaspora youth to utilize their «double-culture» talents as strategic diplomatic and economic assets.



### Shift from Aid to Institutional Alignment

Transition the international narrative away from a «helping Africa» model toward an «alignment» model that treats diaspora expertise as a lead driver in locally identified solutions rather than a recipient of external dictates.



### Leverage Local Influence for Stability

Formally integrate trusted religious and spiritual leaders into national stability and «early warning» systems, utilizing their high levels of community trust to prevent conflict and erupting violence.

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OUTLOOK

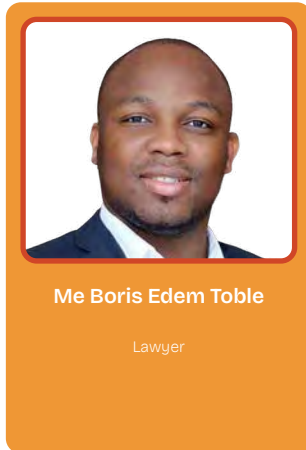
FORCES OF  
THE FUTURE



# COUNTRY SPOTLIGHT



## REPUBLIC OF GUINEA



This session focused on the Republic of Guinea's ambitious «Simandou 2040» program, a 15-year socio-economic development vision designed to leverage the massive Simandou iron ore and infrastructure project for national transformation. Minister Ismaël Nabé outlined that the goal is to use mining revenues to develop the country much like Gulf nations used oil, avoiding the «resource curse» by diversifying the economy and ensuring shared prosperity. This session detailed how the program encompasses five core pillars - Agriculture, Education, Infrastructure, Economy, and Health - comprising 122 mega-projects and 36 reforms requiring over \$200 billion in investment.

To actualize this vision, Guinea is relying on several strategic catalysts including its inaugural sovereign credit rating (recently upgraded to B+ with a positive outlook by S&P) and the creation of a Sovereign Wealth Fund. Mr Federico Bonaglia of the OECD emphasized during this session that for such mega-projects to succeed, governments must invest heavily in state capacity and skills, ensure transparent policy environments to attract capital, and aggressively mobilize domestic resources to fund social protection and public services.

Addressing the challenge of implementation, Minister Nabé highlighted in this session that 95% of a development plan's success relies on execution. To this end, Guinea is establishing «Delivery Units» at the presidential and ministerial levels, mobilizing its diaspora, and finalizing regional development schemes (SRAT) to ensure rural populations benefit directly. Furthermore, this session explained that the government aims to fund 40% of the program through the private sector by utilizing Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs), blended finance, and upcoming international bond issuances.

We must use mines to develop Guinea just as the Gulf used oil to develop their countries.

H.E. Ismaël Nabé

We can talk about all these projects and reforms, but if there is no stability, we do not move forward. The president speaks of shared prosperity: Simandou and all our resources must be synonymous with shared prosperity.

H.E. Ismaël Nabé

I think the success of the transformation lies in placing the mining sectors at the center of the country's and the economy's transformation project, and ensuring that these transformations can benefit the citizens and act as a vector for development and social inclusion.

Federico Bonaglia

In studies we have done, we have seen that 80% of infrastructure projects in Africa fail to reach completion. On the other hand, projects that do succeed have a very low failure rate, less than 2%. So it is a paradox...

Federico Bonaglia





## Key recommendations



### Utilize Mining as a Transformative Catalyst

Shift the paradigm from treating natural resources as mere rent to using them as foundational levers for comprehensive, long-term socio-economic development across non-mining sectors.



### Establish Robust Financial Mechanisms

Secure sovereign credit ratings and establish Sovereign Wealth Funds to de-risk private investments, facilitate co-investments, and ensure intergenerational wealth preservation.



### Prioritize Execution and Accountability

Create dedicated «Delivery Units» at the presidential and ministerial levels, complete with tracking dashboards, to ensure mega-projects and reforms are actively monitored and implemented rather than just remaining on paper.



### Mobilize Private Capital via PPPs and Blended Finance

Actively attract the targeted 40% private sector funding by structuring Public-Private Partnerships, Private Finance Initiatives, and blended finance arrangements to reduce risks for international investors.



### Integrate Local and Regional Development

Ensure that national development plans are explicitly linked to regional schemes (SRAT) so that investments reach rural areas and benefit the majority of the population, thereby ensuring stability and shared prosperity.

### Principes directeurs :

- Le CCB n'a pas vocation à tout faire, et il n'en a ni le mandat, ni la capacité.
- Il a la responsabilité de garantir que ce qui doit être fait le soit avec méthode, cohérence et impact.

### Guiding principles:

- CCB is not intended to do everything, nor does it have the mandate or the capacity to do so.
- Its responsibility is to ensure that what needs to be done is done with method, coherence and impact.



① Gestion Axée sur les Résultats (GAR)  
bénéfices | Responsabilisation  
Secteur privé, Société civile, Part

① Results-Based Management (RBM)  
Clear responsibilities and account  
sector, Civil society, Partners | Indica



② Approche Incrémentale : « Sous-proj  
la réalisation du projet global | Prioris  
| Attention permanente à l'adaptatio  
Livrer régulièrement, identifier, aj

② Incremental Approach: "Sub-proje  
overall project | Prioritising on importa  
emerging requirements | Deliver regularly, id

# COUNTRY SPOTLIGHT



## DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO



**Mr. Hernan Manson**

Head of Sustainable and Inclusive Value Chains  
International Trade Centre (ITC)



**Ms. Vanessa Erogbogbo**

Director of the Sustainable and Inclusive Trade Division  
International Trade Centre (ITC)



**Mr. Yannick Luvuezo**

CFO  
Congoese Battery Council (CCB)



**Mr. Henri M. Plessers**

Senior Strategic Advisor  
Congoese Battery Council (CCB)

The DRC holds an unrivalled position in the global critical minerals landscape, supplying over 70% of world cobalt production alongside significant copper reserves, making it structurally indispensable to the EV battery supply chain. This panel examined the country's strategic pivot from raw material exporter to industrial processor, anchored in the Congoese Battery Council's national master plan.

Presenters from the CCB and the International Trade Centre explored how the DRC can leverage its mineral dominance to negotiate sovereign industrial partnerships, build domestic value chains, and integrate into global battery supply chains on its own terms. Central to the discussion was the \$14 billion Grand Inga Hydropower Project, identified as the foundational energy condition without which industrial-scale processing cannot be realised, alongside the need for coherent governance frameworks, inclusive financing mechanisms, and a stable security environment in the east to underpin long-term investment and human development.





## Key recommendations



### Accelerate the operationalisation of Grand Inga

Prioritise the financial and diplomatic structuring of the Grand Inga Hydropower Project as the single most critical enabler of DRC industrialisation, engaging multilateral development banks and strategic bilateral partners to unlock affordable, large-scale energy for processing industries.



### Convert mineral leverage into sovereign industrial pacts

Negotiate agreements that condition cobalt and copper off-take access on technology transfer, domestic value addition commitments, and local equity participation — moving the DRC from passive resource supplier to active industrial partner in global battery supply chains.



### Strengthen governance and regulatory frameworks

Develop and enforce performance contracts, transparent licensing, and local content standards to build investor confidence, hold operators accountable, and ensure that resource revenues translate into lasting national development outcomes.



### Deploy targeted financing instruments for domestic value chains

Establish blended finance structures and SME-focused credit facilities within Transformation Zones to lower the cost of capital for anchor industrial investments and ensure meaningful Congolese participation beyond royalties.



### Link industrial development to peace and community benefit-sharing

Integrate local employment conditions and transparent revenue-sharing mechanisms into industrial licensing in conflict-affected regions, aligning economic incentives with stability objectives in the eastern DRC.

2026  
FORCES OF THE FUTURE  
28 & 29 MARCH 2024 BRUSSELS

# COUNTRY SPOTLIGHT NATION

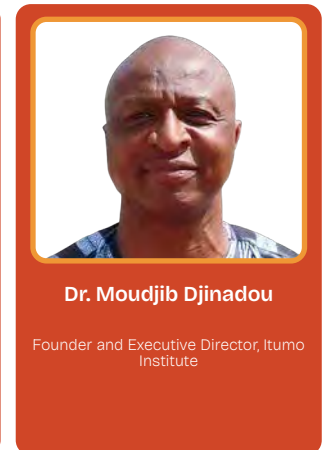
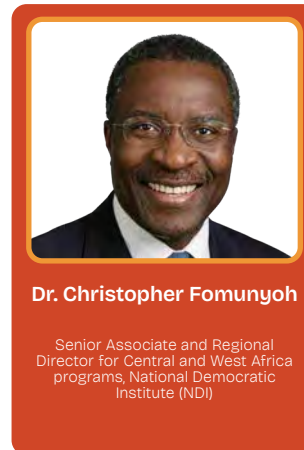
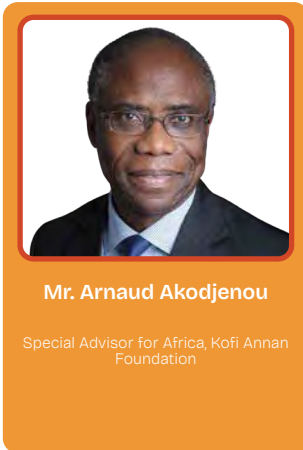
## BUILDING IN AFRICA



# COUNTRY SPOTLIGHT



## NATION BUILDING IN AFRICA



Nation-building in 21st-century Africa is not a distant ideal – it is an immediate strategic imperative. In a world of fracturing multilateralism and fierce competition for critical resources, only states with credible institutions, sound governance, and robust security architectures can negotiate partnerships that truly serve their national interests. This strategic conclave brought together a rich exchange on the structural, cultural, and political conditions that make lasting statehood possible. It was underpinned by the idea that building a nation is not a technical exercise but a deeply human one, requiring governance frameworks rooted in local realities, responsive to citizens, and owned by the societies they serve.

Panellists reflected on the enduring tension between inherited political structures and the diverse ethnic, linguistic, and cross-border identities that define African communities, reframing this not as a problem to be solved but as an invitation to rethink sovereignty itself, drawing on Africa's own political cultures as a resource rather than an obstacle. Democratic institutions, genuine leadership, and civic trust emerged as interconnected pillars: credible governance is built not through external benchmarks but through the deliberate cultivation of legitimacy, demanding political will, sustained investment in civic participation, and leaders genuinely committed to a shared national project. The session closed with an animated exchange with the audience that brought the conversation to its most revealing moment.





## Key recommendations



### Ground governance reform in local legitimacy

Design and implement institutional reforms from within African political cultures and social realities rather than importing external templates.



### Invest in legal security and regulatory predictability as foundational infrastructure

Transparent legislation, independent judiciaries, and enforceable contracts are the real preconditions of any credible investment ecosystem. Governments and international partners should treat judicial independence and rule-of-law reform as strategic priorities on a par with physical infrastructure.



### Cultivate civic trust through inclusive political participation

Long-term national cohesion depends on citizens experiencing the state as legitimate and responsive. Governments should invest in civic education, participatory governance mechanisms, and political processes that give diverse communities, including youth and women, a genuine stake in the national project.




# STRATEGIC CONCLAVE




## FORCES OF INNOVATION

### TECHNOLOGICAL PARTNERSHIPS AND DIGITAL SOVEREIGNTY



**Ms. Valerie Tiacoh**  
Director of Strategy and Social Innovation, Orange




**Mr. Jean-Pierre Elong Mbassi**  
Secretary General, United Cities and Local Governments of Africa (UCLG Africa)




**Mr. Armel Mezazem Fodoh**  
Technical Director, KA Technologies




**Mr. Gustav Ahadji**  
Co-founder, Afronex Group



**Mr. Anthony Ratier**  
Head of Organizational Development and Fundraising, ESS Forum International  
Mme. Linda Bonyo: Founder, Lawyers Hub



**Ms. Linda Bonyo**  
Founder  
Lawyers Hub



**Mr. Thierno Barry**  
Founder and CEO of Tbworld Coaching and Consultancy; Vice-president of Nexus-club



The panel brought together a wide spectrum of voices on technological innovation, digital infrastructure, and the question of sovereignty in an age of accelerating connectivity. Technology in itself being neither transformative nor neutral, but its impact depends entirely on who owns it, who governs it, and whose needs it is designed to serve was a consistent central theme. Panelists reflected on the growing gap between technological adoption and technological ownership: digital infrastructure is expanding rapidly across many contexts, yet the underlying architectures, platforms, data systems, connectivity networks, remain largely controlled by external actors.

The panel invited a rethinking of what digital sovereignty actually requires. It is not merely access, but the capacity to design, regulate, and direct technology in alignment with local priorities. It was noted that innovation rarely originates at the top of institutional hierarchies; it takes root in communities, legal ecosystems, entrepreneurial networks, and social enterprises that are closest to the problems being solved. The exchange with the audience reflected just how immediate and contested these themes remain. Questions came in quickly and from many directions, signalling that technological sovereignty and digital partnership are far from settled debates. For practitioners, entrepreneurs, and citizens alike, they represent live and pressing concerns that the panel had clearly struck a nerve in bringing to the surface.





## Key recommendations



### Assert African data sovereignty through regulation and infrastructure

African governments and regional bodies must develop enforceable data governance frameworks that require data generated on the continent to be stored, processed, and adjudicated locally – reducing dependency on external cloud and platform providers and building the foundation for genuine digital sovereignty.



### Shift technology partnerships from access to co-ownership

Renegotiate the terms of engagement with global technology companies to move beyond licence and access models toward joint ventures, technology transfer agreements, and shared intellectual property arrangements that build lasting African capacity rather than entrenching dependency.



### Support innovation ecosystems at the community and city level

Recognising that transformative innovation emerges from the ground up, direct financing and policy support toward local hubs, legal tech ecosystems, and social enterprises that are solving African problems with African solutions.

# FORCES OF THE FUTURE

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# STRATEGIC CONCLAVE



## THE NEW AFRICAN FINANCIAL ARCHITECTURE

### DELIVERING THE CONTINENT'S STRUCTURAL TRANSFORMATION




**Dr. Sanoussi Bilal**

Executive Director, European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM)



**Hon. Mulambo H. Haimbe**

Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Republic of Zambia



Remote intervention


**Mr. Didier Acouétey**

Advisor to the President of the African Development Bank on NAFA




**Dr. Anthony Costa**

Head of the Secretariat B20 South Africa  
Former Investment Lead to the President of South Africa



**Dr. Slim Feriani**

Managing partner Alternative Path Partners (APP)  
Former Minister of Industry and Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises of Tunisia




**Mr. El-Hassana Kaba**

Founder and CEO MANSÁ BANK



**Mr. David Kuijper**

Chief Executive Officer European Development Finance Institutions



**Mr. Ben Zwinkels**

Chairman of Africhvest  
Senior Advisor at NextBold Capital

The panel examined the urgent case for a New African Financial Architecture (NAFA), anchoring its discussion in a striking contradiction: a continent facing a \$400 billion annual financing gap for infrastructure and social needs, yet sitting on an estimated \$4 trillion in untapped internal resources. Setting the strategic tone, Hon. Mulambo Haimbe, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Zambia, highlighted his country's successful debt restructuring as a stepping stone toward building a truly sovereign financial system capable of funding its own green and industrial transformation.

Remote keynote speaker Didier Acouétey, coordinating the NAFA initiative for the African Development Bank, outlined the architecture's core mechanics. He emphasized the need to organize continental, regional, and national institutions through the strict principles of subsidiarity and complementarity—eliminating mandate overlaps, sharing risk effectively, and maximizing the multiplier effect of domestic capital. The challenge, panelists agreed, is not capital scarcity but what Dr. Slim Feriani termed «capital choreography»—the urgent need to build better «plumbing and pipes» to convert raw projects into bankable, investable pipelines. The conversation also tackled systemic barriers, particularly the punishing «Africa risk premium» and the unintended consequences of Western regulations like Basel III, which Dr. Anthony Costa argued artificially constrain long-term infrastructure lending and reduce fiscal space. Offering a practical counter-narrative, Mr. El Hassana Kaba illustrated how local institutions like Mansa Bank are successfully bypassing these multinational hurdles. By leveraging fintech to eliminate heavy operational costs and relying on a 100% African shareholder base, his bank navigates local realities to provide value-chain financing without the regulatory constraints of foreign institutions. He noted that the true bottleneck is not SME credit risk, but the lack of liquidity stemming from unbanked populations.

International perspectives from David Kuijper (EDFI) and Ben Swinkels (AfricInvest) reinforced a fundamental economic law: «foreign capital follows domestic capital». They urged Development Finance Institutions (DFIs) to act as orchestrators of blended finance while primarily backing local entrepreneurs and helping to mobilize domestic pension funds. Moderated by Sanoussi Bilal, the session concluded with a collective call to «walk the talk»—envisioning a NAFA that channels domestic savings directly into local growth, ensuring that Africa's financial future is driven from within.



Financial independence is not achieved through isolation. It is built through credible reforms, strong institutions, and mutually beneficial partnerships.

Hon. Mulambo Haimbe

Africa does not suffer from a lack of savings. Africa actually suffers from a disconnect between these savings and productive investment.

David Kuijper

There is a kind of paradox between Africa's evident wealth... we are talking about financial resources that are available in Africa but that Africa struggles to mobilise

Didier Acouétey

We have a well-educated youth that has no inferiority complex towards anyone. Let's move beyond what was true 15, 20 years ago. The future is not about being stuck in the prejudices of the past

El Hassana Kaba

A higher cost of capital creates an increased debt burden that reduces fiscal space. As a result, governments in Africa have less headroom to invest in infrastructure, less growth, there is less institutional capacity, and so risk perception goes up, and so we create a vicious cycle.

Dr. Anthony Costa

I believe that we should work to improve the relationship with pension funds in Africa, and try to get local funding and deposits for obtaining the liquidity you want.

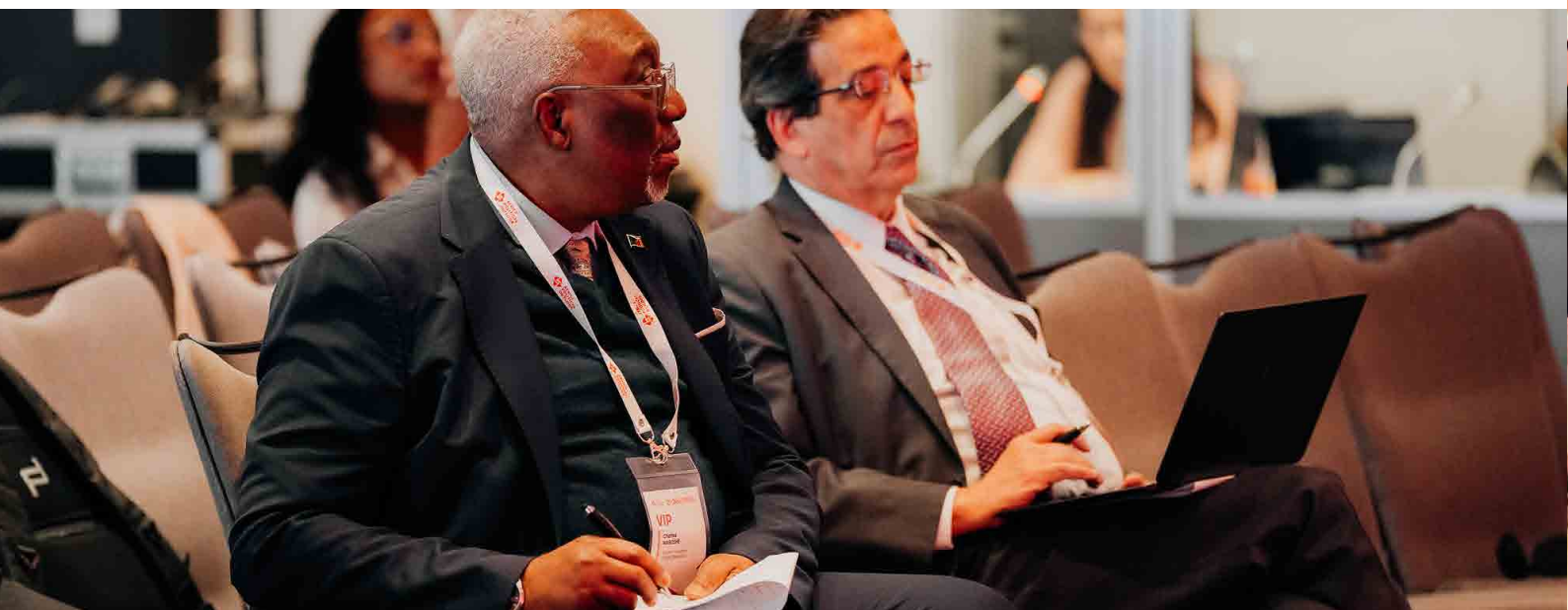
Ben Zwinkels

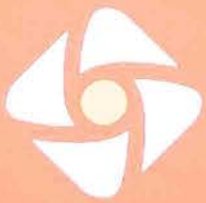
Africa does not lack capital, it's more about capital choreography. It lacks efficient channels to deploy capital at scale.

Dr. Slim Feriani

While the dynamics have to start from Africa and it's an African project for Africa, Africa does not operate in isolation... let's walk the talk.

Sanoussi Bilal





AFRI  
POLI  
OUT



2  
26



## Key recommendations



### Accelerate the systemic inclusion of the unbanked population

Transition from passive financial awareness to mandatory inclusion policies, such as «instant payment» mandates across banks and Fintechs, to capture «sleeping» liquidity in mobile wallets and lower the overall cost of credit for domestic industries.



### Operationalize the principles of subsidiarity and complementarity

Establish clear roles within the three-tiered financial architecture—continental, regional, and national—to eliminate duplication of effort and ensure regional development banks prioritize providing local currency lines to domestic commercial banks.



### Institutionalize domestic capital as a primary engine for growth

Reform national pension and insurance systems to allow for the systematic intermediation of Africa's \$4 trillion in internal resources, transforming domestic savings into long-term equity for transformative economic projects.



### Reform international risk perception and rating methodologies

Demand that global rating agencies establish an on-the-ground presence in Africa to align their risk models with actual borrower experience rather than distant perceptions, thereby reducing the punitive «Africa risk premium».



### Deploy catalytic blended finance to de-risk investments

Direct Multilateral and Development Finance Institutions (DFIs) to adopt the role of «choreographers» by utilizing guarantees and first-loss capital to «crowd in» private investment for critical infrastructure and SME value chains.



### Mitigate the unintended consequences of global financial regulations

Advocate for the recalibration of international standards, such as Basel III and AML/CFT regulations, to prevent the inadvertent withdrawal of capital from African markets and encourage long-term lending for industrialization.

# STRATEGIC COUNCLAVE



Investing in the blue economy: Ports, maritime infrastructure, and logistics for continental integration

Opportunity through trade - MARITIME ASHRAF OF THE FUTURE - CHANGING OF PERSPECTIVES AND A NEWER WAY TO GROWTH ENGINE



Mr. Ahmed Mohamed



Mr. Mohamed Ali



Ms. Sarah Ahmed



Ms. Fatima Al-Falaki



Mr. Marko Ljubic



Mr. Ali Al-Sayid




# STRATEGIC CONCLAVE



## INVESTING IN THE BLUE ECONOMY


### PORTS, MARITIME INFRASTRUCTURE, AND LOGISTICS FOR CONTINENTAL INTEGRATION




**Mr. Eric Kouevi**  
CEO at Dzifia & CO, Managing Partner at Serenity Impact Fund, Former Country Director at Tony Blair Institute.




**H.E. Barry Faure**  
Minister of Foreign Affairs and Diaspora, Republic of Seychelles




**Mr. Mouctar Bah**  
President, Brussels-Africa Hub



**Ms. Sophie Errante**  
Member of Parliament, National Assembly of France



**Ms. Virginie Touré de Baglion**  
Advisor responsible for monitoring externally funded strategic projects, Office of Prime Minister, Republic of Guinea



**Mr. Mario Lievens**  
Director of Port of Antwerp-Bruges International, Director of APEC

Africa's maritime infrastructure was for decades shaped by colonial logic, designed to extract resources outward rather than connect the continent inward. With over 90% of African trade moving by sea and the AfCFTA creating the world's largest single market, this panel examined how ports must be reimagined not as transit chokepoints but as sovereign economic platforms and engines of continental integration.



The session opened with a remote keynote from H.E. Barry Faure, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Seychelles, who reframed the terms of the debate from the outset. Speaking as a representative of what he called a “large ocean state”, with an exclusive economic zone of 1.35 million square kilometres, H.E. Barry Faure argued that the sea is not a barrier but Africa’s primary highway, and that ports must become the sovereign lungs of a self-sustaining African economy rather than exits for resource extraction.

Discussion ranged across three interconnected challenges. Firstly, how to link port modernisation to hinterland corridors and productive transformation rather than leaving efficient ports stranded behind inadequate road and rail networks. Secondly, how to structure long-term concessions that attract top-tier global capital while preserving host-country strategic sovereignty over critical assets and data. Lastly, how to address the persistent maritime insecurity, from piracy to illicit trafficking, that functions as a standing tax on African trade and investor confidence.

Panellists were united in the view that the real unit of transformation is the corridor, not the port alone, and that financing architectures, governance frameworks, and security arrangements must all be designed at that larger scale if Africa is to realise the full developmental potential of its blue economy.

**Strategic sovereignty is not about isolation; it is about the power to say no to terms that do not serve our children.**

H.E. Barry Faure

**A world-class port is useless if the cargo is strangled by a third-class road... Our investment portfolios must treat ports and the hinterland as a single living organism.**

H.E. Barry Faure





## Key recommendations



### Reframe ports as industrial and integration platform

Mandate that new port concessions and upgrades include binding commitments to adjacent special economic zones, industrial parks, and last-mile logistics links, ensuring that port efficiency translates into productive transformation rather than accelerated raw material extraction.



### Design concessions that protect strategic sovereignty

Establish non-negotiable national redlines in port PPP negotiations, covering data ownership, security infrastructure access, and reversion clauses, and build African negotiating capacity so that governments can attract top-tier global operators without structuring away sovereign control over critical assets.



### Build a pan-African maritime security architecture

Develop African-owned and African-commanded maritime security capacity, through regional bodies such as the AU, ECOWAS, and the Djibouti Code of Conduct, to reduce dependence on external naval powers while providing the security assurances that long-term infrastructure investors require.




### Rebalance EU-Africa infrastructure partnerships

Ensure that European financing instruments, including the Global Gateway, support African-defined corridor priorities with genuine co-ownership, transparent contractual terms, and provisions for technology transfer and local capacity development rather than reproducing aid-era dependency through infrastructure finance.




# CLOSING PANEL

## FORCES OF THE FUTURE VOICES OF COURAGE




**Ms. Eveline Rodrigues**

Lawyer and policy advisor  
Vice President for Partnerships,  
Initiative For Africa




**Mr. Dieudonné Gakire**

Founder and Executive Director  
Dusego Empowerment Hub




**Ms. Ny Aro Andriamiarosoa**

Executive Director  
Climates Madagascar



**Ms. Agnes Gachui Kariuki**

Advocate of the High Court of Kenya  
Director of Programmes, Inter-Parties  
Youth Forum (IPYF)



**Ms. Marie-Noelle Nwokolo**

Researcher and public policy advisor  
Ghana

The «Voices of Courage» panel shifted the narrative away from Africa's challenges to focus entirely on its primary driving forces of transformation: youth and women. Due to time constraints, the summit was unable to broadcast the pre-recorded keynote from Ambassador (ret.) Reuben E. Brigety, II, but his prepared remarks underscored the geopolitical urgency of this shift, noting that by 2050, nearly 40% of the world's working-age population will be African.

Echoing his sentiment that courage is the foundational virtue making all progress possible, panelists emphasized that courage must be an institutional requirement. They advocated for structural reforms such as political quotas, lowered age requirements, and transparent nomination processes to dismantle gatekeeping, rather than telling young people to simply «wait their turn».

The discussion highlighted how young Africans are uniquely positioned to leapfrog outdated technologies (such as jumping directly from 3G to satellite internet) and leverage digital platforms for political advocacy, though they require robust institutional support to scale these innovations equitably.

Addressing gender parity, the panelists stressed the urgent need to move women's inclusion beyond token representation toward genuine agenda-setting power. They pointed out that true inclusion requires reforming political parties, often the primary bottlenecks, and providing equitable access to capital and civic capability training. This aligned with Ambassador Brigety's prepared remarks urging African youth to embrace an entrepreneurial mindset and insist on enabling environments for private-sector-led growth, reminding them that in a democracy, «nobody is coming to save us».

Finally, the panel framed national sovereignty not as a mere declaration, but as a condition built from the grassroots up. Achieving this requires decentralization, public participation, the rewriting of historical narratives to foster a strong African identity, and the building of robust domestic fiscal capacities so African states can negotiate global partnerships from a position of strength rather than dependency.



The problem is still the system treats young people as the future leaders, not the leaders of today.

Dieudonné Gakire

It's not opening up a youth wing, it's not putting them in advisory roles, it's not tucking them at the end of things. It's adding them to the process from start to finish.

Marie-Noelle Nwokolo

We must remove structural barriers because women don't lack competence—systems lack inclusivity.

Ny Aro Andriamiarosoa

I reject any notion or narrative that young people cannot run for office or lead a country or lead a nation for that matter.

Agnes Gachui Kariuki





## Key recommendations



### Implement Meaningful Youth Inclusion

Institute leadership quotas, lower age requirements for political office, and build strong mentorship pipelines so youth can shape governance today rather than waiting to inherit it later.



### Move Women from Representation to Influence

Reform internal political party structures to dismantle gatekeeping, ensure equitable access to capital, and invest in civic capability training so women can actively set policy agendas rather than serving as passive compliance figures.



### Systematize Digital and Green Innovation

Anchor youth-led technological momentum in strong institutions and e-governance frameworks to ensure equitable digital access across urban, rural, and socioeconomic divides, enabling young people to bypass outdated infrastructure.



### Build Sovereignty from the Grassroots

Strengthen national sovereignty by decentralizing power, ensuring public participation, and protecting access to information, so that citizens have true ownership over national policies and sovereign debt decisions.



### Strengthen Domestic Fiscal and Policy Coherence

Get domestic economic and political policies in order to build the fiscal capacity necessary to negotiate international partnerships from a strong, unified position, using data and strategic intentionality to advocate for national interests.



# CONVERSATION FOR THE FUTURE



**Mr. Adébissi Djogan**

Founder & Executive Director, Africa Political Outlook



**H.E. Dr Lazarus Mccarthy Chakwera**

6th President Of Republic Of Malawi

The summit reached its conclusion with an expansive «Conversation for the Future,» featuring H.E. Lazarus Chakwera, who delivered a profound response to the day's proceedings. President Chakwera championed a paradigm shift in leadership, advocating for intergenerational co-governance where the traditional hierarchy of age is replaced by a synergy of mutual learning. He introduced the concept of «reverse mentoring,» noting that the youth teach established leaders as much as they are taught in return. By emphasizing that «every one of us is limited,» he argued that true power lies in the unlimited synergy created when generations walk together and honestly listen to one another.

Central to the President's message was the theme of intentionality. He urged Africans to move beyond «amoral pragmatism» and fear, which often inhibits progress, and instead act with deliberate courage. Using a technological metaphor, he observed that opportunities—much like automatic doors—often appear closed until one takes the initiative to get closer, knock, or simply ask. His address served as a call to «democratize luck» and opportunity, challenging leaders to create the conditions for success rather than waiting for them to materialize.



Following the President's remarks, Adébissi Djogan, Founder and Executive Director of the Africa Political Outlook, translated this vision into a concrete institutional roadmap. He announced the launch of the APO Future Leaders program, a strategic initiative to «democratize governance» by identifying and mentoring the next generation of African public servants. This was complemented by a video message from Tony Elumelu, who echoed the President's sentiments by detailing how his foundation's \$5,000 seed capital grants are actively «democratizing luck» for thousands of young entrepreneurs. The session closed with the official announcement of APO 2027, scheduled for March 25th and 26th in Brussels, solidifying the summit's commitment to building a legacy that outlives its current participants.

Every one of us is limited, but our coming together creates a synergy that is unlimited. That intergenerational way of doing things benefits everyone. So that you're not talking about youth without youth. You're not talking about women without women. Nothing for us without us.

H.E. Lazarus Chakwera

I kept listening and hearing the word intentionality. Doing things deliberately because they will not happen by themselves. Creating opportunities even when doors seem closed. Sometimes they are not as close as you think they are. If it's not there, make it!

H.E. Lazarus Chakwera

Fear is what inhibits us. And that's why they're talking about courage. Not that we have no fear, but that we act it out anyway, despite our fear. That way, we can leave a legacy that goes beyond us. And when you die, you live.

H.E. Lazarus Chakwera





## Key recommendations



### Adopt Intergenerational Co-Governance

Move beyond age-based hierarchies by implementing «reverse mentoring» and intentional collaboration, where established leaders and youth actively teach and learn from one another to create unlimited synergy.



### Move from Fear to Intentional Action

Create a culture of deliberate courage where Africans take the initiative to «create opportunities» and «knock on doors» rather than waiting for favorable conditions to materialize.



### Democratize Governance and Leadership

Invest in strategic institutional roadmaps, such as the APO Future Leaders program, to mentor and produce a high-caliber next generation of public servants capable of leading Africa's institutions.



### Scale the «Democratization of Luck»

Expand initiatives that provide non-refundable seed capital and mentorship to young entrepreneurs, effectively transforming systemic disadvantages into inclusive prosperity and job creation.

# PARTNERS

## Main Partners

Join our network of committed partners to shape Africa's future through dialogue, research, and action.



### **African Union**

Founded in 2002 in Durban, South Africa to succeed the Organization of African Unity, the African Union brings together 55 member states.

Based in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia), it promotes peace, stability and security through its field missions.

Its priorities include Agenda 2063, economic integration through the Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and inclusive governance. Furthermore, it coordinates responses to health and climate crises, while mobilizing leaders and partners for tangible results.



### **Konrad Adenauer Foundation**

The Konrad Adenauer Foundation (KAS), founded in Germany in 1955 and linked to the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), trains political leaders in the values of democracy, the rule of law, and the social market economy.

With a presence in more than 100 countries through 78 offices, it organizes 2,500 events annually, connecting decision-makers, civil society, and businesses around governance and development.

In Africa, it supports interfaith dialogue and local reforms, with 25 years of engagement in Senegal, in direct alignment with the pan-African priorities of APO 2026.



### **Kofi Annan Foundation**

Founded in Geneva in 2007 by former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, the Kofi Annan Foundation is an independent, non-artisan organization committed to a more peaceful, just, and resilient world.

It promotes ethical leadership and responsible governance through initiatives dedicated to conflict prevention, electoral integrity, democratic accountability, and the fight against corruption.

Active particularly in fragile contexts and periods of transition, the Foundation mobilizes a high-level international network to foster dialogue, strengthen multilateral cooperation, and translate global commitments into concrete results for citizens.



## Strategic Partners

Leading stakeholders who bring sector-specific expertise and a strong pan-African footprint to design high-impact solutions in service of the continent.



### Asafo & Co

ASAFO & CO is a leading international law firm exclusively dedicated to transactions and litigation related to the African continent. It brings together more than 150 legal professionals across offices located in key hubs such as Abidjan, Casablanca, Johannesburg, London, Mombasa, Nairobi, Paris, and Washington DC, providing a truly panAfrican presence. The firm stands out for its ability to combine deep understanding of local contexts with top-tier international expertise to deliver robust and innovative legal solutions. ASAFO & CO handles complex, high-impact operations in financing, transactions, and dispute resolution across strategic sectors including energy, infrastructure, natural resources, telecommunications, as well as banking and financial services.



## Partners

Companies and organizations that actively support the Africa Political Outlook and contribute to the successful delivery of its initiatives.



### Orange

Orange is a global leader in telecommunications and digital services, offering connectivity, cybersecurity, and digital financial solutions. Present in more than 15 countries across Africa and the Middle East, the group plays a key role in reducing the digital divide through major infrastructure investments and the deployment of Orange Money, a driver of financial inclusion.

Through the Orange Digital Centers, Orange supports innovation, youth employability, and digital empowerment across the continent, actively contributing to sustainable and inclusive growth.

## Country Spotlight Partners

Partner countries featured in the Country Spotlight, contributing to richer discussions by sharing their experiences, perspectives, and national dynamics.



### **Democratic Republic of the Congo**

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), with its 2.34 million km<sup>2</sup>, is the second largest country in Africa and the economic powerhouse of the Congo Basin.

A world leader in cobalt and the second largest producer of copper, it also holds the Grand Inga hydroelectric potential. Under the presidency of H.E. Félix Tshisekedi, the DRC aims to transform its mineral wealth into an industrial hub for batteries and green energy for Africa.



### **Republic of the Guinea**

The Republic of Guinea, with its 15.4 million inhabitants, holds 25% of the world's bauxite reserves and the vast Simandou iron ore deposit.

Under the transition led by the CNSP since 2021, its economy is projected to grow by 6.1% in 2024, driven by mining and agriculture, with inflation kept under control at 8.1%. Today, Guinea aims for ambitious mining industrialization and economic diversification to achieve accelerated inclusive development.

## Industry partners

Stakeholders from the trade, consulting, and industrial sectors who support Africa's economic transformation through their operational expertise and on-the-ground commitment.



### **Public Affairs Africa**

Public Affairs Africa (PAA) is a leading consulting firm specializing in public affairs and international development.

Serving governments, large corporations, philanthropic organizations, and start-ups, PAA deploys unique expertise in strategic communications, public policy, and stakeholder engagement across the continent.

A true network of influence, PAA supports public and private decisionmakers in navigating complex political and regulatory landscapes, actively contributing to building Africa's future.



### **CCB - Conseil Congolais de la Batterie**

The Congolese Battery Council (CCB), established in December 2022 by decree of Prime Minister Sama Lukonde, manages the entire value chain for batteries and electric vehicles in the DRC. A strategic public institution, it identifies international partnerships, investments, and technologies to locally process critical minerals (cobalt, lithium) used in battery manufacturing. The CCB positions the DRC as a global industrial hub for the energy transition, extending beyond mere mining.



### **VR Advisors**

VR Advisors specializes in business strategy and management consulting. Based in France, the firm supports its clients in areas such as process optimization, project management, and strategic decisionmaking. With an approach tailored to the specific needs of each client, VR Advisors positions itself as a trusted partner for companies looking to enhance their performance and tackle operational challenges in an ever-evolving economic environment.



### **International Trade Centre**

Established in 1964, the International Trade Center (ITC) is a joint UNWTO agency that strengthens the competitiveness of businesses in developing countries through international trade and economic integration. With expertise in value chains, technical standards and market access, ITC excels in training SMEs, export support and sustainable trade analyzes in the face of the challenges of globalization.

Its partners include governments, regional organizations, chambers of commerce and multinationals that support African, Asian and Latin American exporters in their conquest of global markets.



### **Peritum Advisory**

Peritum Advisory is a strategy and management consulting firm. It works with companies and organizations to help them optimize their processes, manage projects and make strategic decisions. With a personalized approach tailored to the specific challenges of each customer, Peritum Advisory aims to strengthen their performance and help them navigate successfully in a constantly changing economic environment.

## Network partners

Our network partners foster essential connections between African and European stakeholders, creating platforms for dialogue, engagement, and cooperation that sustainably strengthen the partnership between the two continents.



### **Fondation Youssou N'DOUR**

Founded by world-renowned artist and entrepreneur Youssou N'Dour to pass on his legacy to African youth, the Youssou N'dour Foundation for Cultural and Creative Industries (FYNICC) is dedicated to empowering young talents. Its mission is to catalyze the potential of CCIs across Africa and globally. By fostering sustainable, cross-border collaborations, the Foundation leverages creativity as a powerful engine for building more open, equitable, and inclusive societies.



### **Africalia**

Since 2001, Africalia has championed culture and creativity as essential catalysts for sustainable human development in Africa. The organization supports contemporary cultural actors across audiovisual, performing, literary, and visual arts to build their capacities and structure their networks. Firmly believing that culture is a strategic resource, Africalia leverages it as a powerful engine for socio-economic innovation and the creation of decent jobs, while mobilizing the Belgian cultural sector to foster genuine intercultural exchange.



### **Brussels Africa Hub**

The Brussels Africa Hub is a dynamic platform launched in Brussels to connect European decision-makers and African leaders around strategic and sustainable investments in the continent's priority sectors.

It brings together public, private, and civil society actors in a multistakeholder interface, facilitating public-private partnerships in renewable energy, the digital transformation, and the critical infrastructure that underpins pan-African development.

A catalyst for bilateral trade, it translates political dialogue into high-impact, fundable projects, transforming African opportunities into concrete and sustainable economic realities.



### **Initiative for Africa**

Initiative For Africa (IFA) has been working for a decade to strengthen change agents leaders, development institutions, researchers, businesses, decision-makers, and citizens to foster the emergence of a robust African private sector that creates value and drives sustainable growth. A dynamic platform dedicated to sustainable development and economic growth across the continent, IFA is active in key areas such as entrepreneurship, youth empowerment, and innovation, bringing together governments, civil society, and businesses in strategic and collaborative partnerships.



### **One World**

Founded by award-winning multidisciplinary artist and producer Carolina Vallejo, One World Records is a premier music production and creative platform and Grammy Awarded label. Representing a rich diversity of original global musicians across a wide array of genres (including Afrobeat, Afro Cuban Jazz, Kuduru, Manding, and Hip Hop), the agency has produced over 2,000 concerts across five continents. Renowned for its technical excellence, One World guarantees outstanding live performances and high-quality sound, consistently delivering memorable and immersive cultural experiences worldwide.

Vallejo works as curator for a.o.UN events, Festivals, Institute of Human Rights, Embassies and conferences



### **Fondation FINS WINS**

Founded by Martine-Cécile Ngo Nyemb-Wisman, the FINS WINS Foundation is a non-profit organization which positions women as citizens of the world and actors of socio-economic, political and cultural changes in the face of globalization.

It adopts an action research strategy combining theory and practice to break the glass ceiling and identify the levers that make women essential actors of harmonious development.

The multidisciplinary team, made up of women and men from varied cultures, supervises discussions and pilots concrete actions in the North and the South for the effective integration of women into the global dynamic.



### **Reverdin Consulting**

Founded in 2024, Reverdin Consulting is a Rome-based international consultancy that helps governments, businesses and philanthropic foundations navigate political and financial dynamics from local to global. With expertise in diplomacy, public affairs and global issues, Reverdin Consulting excels in crisis management, political analysis, communication strategies and stakeholder mapping in the face of contemporary geopolitical challenges. Their partners include European, American and African institutional players, as well as multinationals in the health, technology, agri-food, energy and defense sectors.



### **AfricaMuseum**

The AfricaMuseum (Royal Museum for Central Africa), a Belgian federal scientific institution in Tervuren (Brussels suburb), was founded in 1897 at the impetus of King Leopold II and houses a building designed between 1905 and 1908 by architect Charles Girault. Long an instrument promoting Belgian colonization of the Congo, it reopened in December 2018 after five years of renovations, with a firmly decolonial approach. Its 11,000 m<sup>2</sup> permanent exhibition covers five themes biodiversity, colonial history, art, music, and rituals and its collections include over 10 million animal specimens, 180,000 ethnographic objects, 8,000 musical instruments, and 2 kilometers of historical archives.



### **ECDPM**

The ECDPM (European Centre for Development Policy Management), founded in 1986, is a leading independent think and do tank working to bring European and African policies together towards inclusive and sustainable development.

With over 30 years of experience in Africa-Europe relations, ECDPM works in key areas: climate, energy and food, economy and trade, geopolitics, governance, development, migration, peace, and security.

It brings together ministries, international organizations, think tanks, universities, and socio-economic actors from Africa, Europe, and elsewhere.



### **Itumo Institute**

The Itumò Institute is a pan-African think tank and training center dedicated to the critical analysis and understanding of African realities, launched in 2025 in Porto-Novo.

Inspired by the Yoruba word «itumò» (deep understanding), it produces innovative and grounded knowledge on security, education, and governance. A platform connecting European investors and African partners, it translates strategic analyses into concrete and impactful development projects.



### **Afronex**

Afronex is the leading platform for the African community, connecting African talent with global opportunities through a powerful professional network.

It offers job opportunities, events, and business matching, showcasing the continent's cultures, economies, and innovations to international investors and partners. A catalyst for economic impact, Afronex transforms African potential into tangible achievements, accelerating entrepreneurship and pan-African visibility.



### **Youth Democracy Cohort (YDC)**

The Youth Democracy Cohort (YDC) seeks to enhance the involvement of youth in democratic processes at national, regional, and global levels.

The platform is composed of 9 co-leading organisations and over 550 member organisations worldwide, including governments, international organisations, civil society, academia and the private sector.



### **Toble Aprim Law Firm**

Toble Aprim is a pan-African business law firm specializing in OHADA law, covering 17 West and Central African states.

Led by Boris Toble, an expert in mergers and acquisitions and crossborder investments, the firm assists European companies in their expansion into sub-Saharan Africa. Its network of lawyers, notaries, and tax specialists in France, Luxembourg, and OHADA countries ensures the security of complex contracts, joint ventures, and strategic projects with significant continental implications



**European  
Partnership for  
Democracy**

### **European Partnership for Democracy (EPD)**

The European Partnership for Democracy (EPD) is a network founded in 2008 with the mission of supporting democracy worldwide.

Born out of the merger of several organizations, the EPD strengthens European support for democracy by building a community that defends and promotes democratic values around the world.

The EPD operates in Europe and beyond, recognizing that democracy is a universal aspiration with global challenges and opportunities



**INFLUENCEWATCH**

### **Influence Watch**

Influence Watch is an online database launched in 2016 by the Capital Research Center, an American conservative think tank, to map the funding and networks of organizations influencing public policy.

It profiles foundations, NGOs, unions, and movements, focusing on their donors, motivations, and ideological interconnections. A key resource for journalists and policymakers, it sheds light on the power and financial dynamics behind global debates on climate, labor, and social justice.

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**DIEUVEIL  
MALONGA**

### **Chef Dieuveil Malonga**

Chef Dieuveil Malonga runs the gourmet restaurant Meza Malonga in Kigali, where Afrofusion combines Congolese traditions and Rwandan innovation to delight palates around the world. A pioneer of Chefs in Africa, he has been revealing African culinary talents since 2016 and building a gastronomic village in Musanze that transmits local knowledge and products.

Having worked in Michelin-starred German kitchens, he transforms African terroirs into an international culinary experience recognized by the World's 50 Best.



AFRICA  
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# AFRICA POLITICAL OUTLOOK 2027



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# POST-APO 2026 REPORT



**FORCES OF THE  
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