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AFRICA
POLITICAL
OUTLOOK



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Political Outlook



OPENING SPEECHES



H.E. MOSES VILAKATI

Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development Economy and Sustainable Environment (ARBE), African Union

Moses Vilakati, African Union Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy, and Sustainable Environment, on behalf of the new African Union Commission chairperson, H.E. Mahmoud Ali Youssouf, opens the Africa Political Outlook 2025 Summit with a call to action on redefining the paradigms of global cooperation. He made a focus on Africa's agricultural future, emphasizing the continent's demographic strength, set to reach 1.7 billion by 2030, and its role in shaping global change.

Reflecting on his journey from Eswatini's agriculture ministry to the African Commission, he underscores the sector's potential as Africa's economic backbone. He highlights the success of Eswatini's National Agricultural Investment Plan as a model for scaling sustainable agriculture across the continent.

Four key pillars will drive this transformation:

1. **Climate-Resilient Agriculture** – Investing in drought-resistant crops, water conservation, and climate-smart farming.
2. **Blue Economy Development** – Unlocking Africa's \$1.5 trillion marine resources through sustainable fisheries and aquaculture.
3. **Rural Infrastructure & Digital Connectivity** – Bringing markets closer to farmers and expanding value chains.
4. **Youth & Women in Agriculture** – Modernizing agricultural education and ensuring inclusive opportunities.

Africa's role in global food security is undeniable. The continent must move beyond raw exports, producing high-value goods for global markets. Strengthening AU-EU agricultural partnerships, fostering South-South cooperation, and attracting private sector investment are critical to this vision.

"Africa – our new Africa – stands at the precipice of redefining its place in the global order. We are not merely adapting to change – we are driving it."

Africa – our new Africa – stands at the precipice of redefining its place in the global order. We are not merely adapting to change – we are driving it.

- Moses VILAKATI





HON. YOUNOUS OMARJEE

Vice-President of the European Parliament

Younous Omarjee, Vice-President of the European Parliament, highlights the upheaval of the global order and the urgent need to rethink outdated geopolitical structures. He underscores Africa's rising demographic and economic weight and calls for its permanent inclusion on the UN Security Council, framing it as a "diplomatic and moral emergency."

Criticizing the current transformation of the world, he warns against a new order emerging through violence and confrontation rather than diplomacy. He laments the erosion of democratic values and international law, while commending Africa's moral leadership on the global stage—particularly through South Africa's legal action against crimes in Gaza.

Emphasizing Africa's central role in the 21st century, he states: "Today, we must see Africa for what it is: a continent of the future, a rising geopolitical power, and a key actor of the 21st century." He advocates for a fair partnership between Europe and Africa, built on trust and shared responsibility, and announces his upcoming visit to Addis Ababa to discuss these critical issues with the Chairperson of the African Union Commission.



H.E. AMBASSADOR MNGOMEZULU SIBUSISIWE

Ambassador of the Kingdom of Eswatini to the European Union, Chairman of the Committee of Ambassadors of the Organization of African Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS)

H.E. Ambassador Mngomezulu Sibusisiwe highlights the evolving AU-EU partnership, emphasizing shared goals of peace, prosperity, and sustainable development. Speaking from Eswatini, he reflects on the transformation of this relationship, moving beyond aid to investment, with initiatives like the €150 billion Global Gateway.

He stresses Africa's growing assertiveness in global governance and calls for a partnership that respects African-led solutions. As Chair of the OACPS Committee of Ambassadors, he underscores the 2023 Samoa Agreement as a framework to strengthen cooperation. Looking ahead, he urges action in amplifying Africa's Union role, innovative financing, youth empowerment, and global advocacy.

Quoting Kwame Nkrumah, he reminds us that Africa must "unite and create our own destiny."

Today, we must see Africa for what it is: a continent of the future, a rising geopolitical power, and a key actor of the 21st century.

- *Younous OMARJEE*

The new south is more than an emerging block, it is a rising force for equitable global transformation, and Africa working through partnerships rooted in trust and shared purpose, is ready to help shape a more just peaceful and prosperous world.

- *Mngomezulu SIBUSISIWE*



DR. BÄRBEL KOFLER

Parliamentary State Secretary to the Federal Minister
for Economic Cooperation and Development in Germany

Dr. Bärbel Kofler argues that the Global South, particularly Africa, isn't actually "new" but rather finally asserting its rightful place in global governance after experiencing remarkable progress in technology, economics, and governance. Similarly, while the world order may be "old," what it truly needs is renewal through greater commitment to inclusive multilateralism, not replacement.

Dr. Kofler positions Germany and Europe as supporters of reforms that would create a more balanced and representative international system, including backing the African Union's membership in the G20. The speech emphasizes that this shift toward more equitable global representation benefits both Africa and Europe. The address concludes with a powerful call for Africa-Europe partnership based on mutual respect, shared objectives, and collaboration on pressing challenges like peace, climate change, natural resources, and fair trade – framing this relationship as essential to preserving and strengthening a more inclusive multilateral order.

"The South is not new. It is simply asserting its right to take its place in the multilateral system."



ADÉBISSI DJOGAN

Founder & Executive Director
Africa Political Outlook

Adébiessi Djogan, Founder & Executive Director of the Africa Political Outlook describes a world in transformation where the post-war multilateral order is collapsing to make way for "plurilateralism" with the emergence of the Global South as an essential actor. He highlights the rise of BRICS and Africa's growing importance on the international stage. He calls for Africa to move beyond the development aid paradigm to become a power of proposition, building an equal alliance with Europe structured around three priorities: peace, shared prosperity, and co-power. He urges the continent to actively shape the new world order rather than passively conforming to it.

"It seems to me that in this new strategic setting between Africa, Europe, and the world, three priorities are necessary: the priority of peace, the priority of prosperity, and that of power." Those wise words from Adébiessi launched the summit's high-level discussions.

The South is not new. It is simply asserting its right to take its place in the multilateral system.

- Dr. Bärbel Kofler

A new era of energy has dawned. The energy of values: those of solidarity and of sovereignty, confidently embraced. The energy of dreamers: for no nation has ever been forged without unabashed ambition. The energy of builders, of entrepreneurs, of all who feel the pressing urgency and impatience of getting things done.

- Adébiessi DJOGAN

PANEL 1

HIGH LEVEL DIALOGUE: FROM CRISIS IN MULTILATERALISM TO AN INCLUSIVE INTERNATIONAL ORDER: HOW CAN INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS REDEFINE THEIR CATALYTIC ROLE IN TRANSFORMING NORTH-SOUTH RELATIONS?



**FOULO
BASSE**

Managing Director
Fondation Brazzaville



**H.E. ALBERT PAHIMI
PADACKÉ**

Former Prime minister
Chad



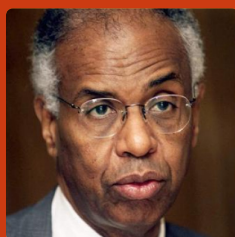
**CAMILLA
BRÜCKNER**

Director of the United Nations/UNDP
Office in Brussels and Representative
of the United Nations System to
the European Union



**JEAN-YVES
OLLIVIER**

Founding Chairman
Fondation Brazzaville



**AHMEDOU
OULD-ABDALLAH**

Former Special Representative of the
United Nations Secretary-General for
West Africa



**H.E. DR. RANIA AL-
MASHAT**

Minister of Planning, Economic
Development and International
Cooperation, Arab Republic of Egypt



**DR. CLARENCE
MONIBA**

President & Founder
MONIBA FOUNDATION

The panel explored how international institutions must evolve to reflect the growing economic influence of the Global South, which will account for 44% of global GDP by 2025 despite having disproportionately little representation in global governance structures. Camilla Bruckner of UNDP highlighted the urgent need to accelerate progress on the Sustainable Development Goals, with only 17% currently on track, and emphasized that reforming the international financial architecture is crucial for making financing more accessible to developing nations. This theme was echoed by Egypt's Planning Minister Dr. Najat Al-Mashat, who stressed that financial justice must be central to any reform efforts.

Former Chadian Prime Minister Albert Pahimi-Padacké and former UN Representative Ahmedou Ould Abdallah provided context from their governmental and multilateral experiences, cautioning against unrealistic expectations while emphasizing the need for meaningful reform. Abdallah noted that we're in unprecedented times, with traditional geopolitical alignments disrupted and international organizations under threat from major powers. Padacké warned against mistaking sovereignty claims by non-democratic regimes as representing genuine popular will. Dr. Clarence Moniba from civil society offered a younger perspective, arguing forcefully that Africa must bring something to the table rather than coming with "empty hands" if it wants to be taken seriously as an equal partner.

The panel converged on the practical necessity of strengthening African unity, improving governance, and demonstrating capacity to address domestic challenges before expecting significant changes in global governance structures. Jean-Yves Ollivier summed up this sentiment, urging realism rather than illusions about a completely unified Africa immediately securing veto power at the UN Security Council. Instead, he advocated for Africa to earn respect by demonstrating its ability to care for its population, address development issues, and strengthen democratic processes that have begun to take root across the continent.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- ✦ **Reform international financial institutions' governance structures** to give developing nations real voting power proportional to their growing economic influence, while making financing more accessible and affordable for African countries.
- ✦ **Address the financing gap for sustainable development** through innovative mechanisms that leverage private capital, such as Egypt's Sharm El-Sheikh Guidebook for Just Financing, which identifies barriers to climate investments and proposes practical solutions.
- ✦ **Review Debt Relief Criteria:** Overhaul IMF/World Bank debt sustainability frameworks to account for climate vulnerability and SDG alignment, not just GDP metrics.
- ✦ **Incorporate non-state actors in multilateral processes** by making room for civil society, religious organizations, and youth representatives, ensuring that multilateralism serves populations rather than just state interests.
- ✦ **Combat illicit financial flows from Africa** continental task forces with AU oversight to repatriate \$100B annually lost to tax evasion and corruption, reinvesting in local infrastructure.

My greatest concern is what's happening in places like Libya and Somalia - when wars last for decades, they transform into business enterprises. The longer these conflicts persist, the more they become economic activities that people have no interest in resolving.

- **Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah**

How can we claim national sovereignty in opposition to third-party states, while trampling on the inherent sovereignty of peoples?

- **Albert Pahimi Padacké**

One cannot be a beggar and demand equality.

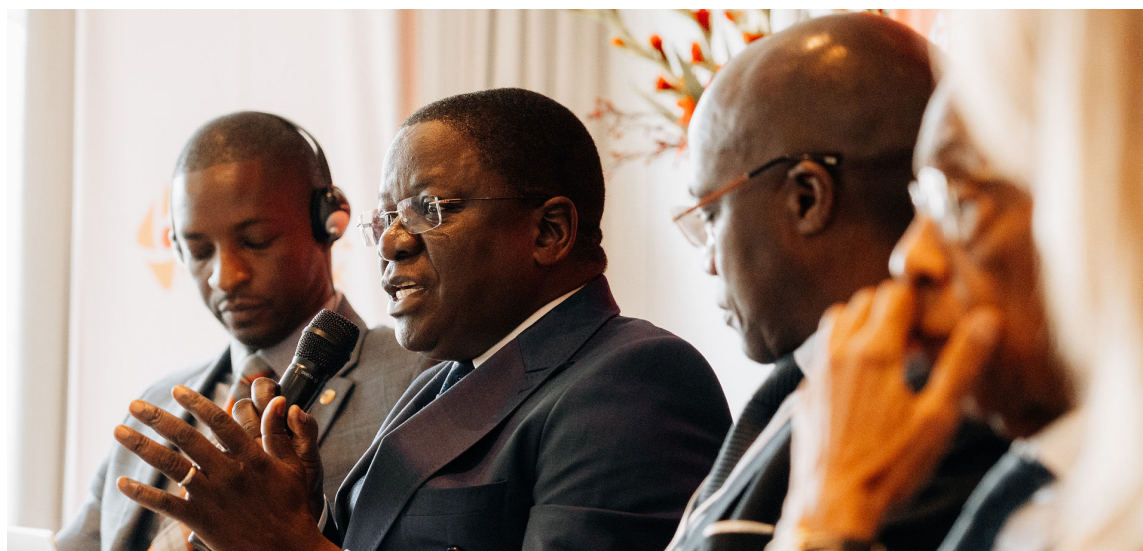
- **Dr. Clarence Moniba**

This is the time to move beyond rhetoric about inclusion and towards the reality of power-sharing.

- **Rania Al-Mashat**

Let's not create the illusion of a completely united, unified, conflict-free Africa. Let's work to earn respect, to ensure that Africa is respected.

- **Jean-Yves Ollivier**



PANEL 2

NEW AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION AND THE VON DER LEYEN II COMMISSION:
COMMON AGENDA, SHARED PRIORITIES



**AYA
BURWEILA**

Founder & Director
Code on the Road



**AMB. CHRISTOPHE
GUILHOU**

France's special envoy for the Sahel



**HON. CHARLES
GOERENS**

Member of the European Parliament
Former Luxembourg Minister for
Cooperation



**MATHIEU
BRIENS**

Deputy Managing Director for Africa
European External Action Service



**HOLY
RANAIVOZANANY**

Deputy Executive Director
Africa-Europe Foundation

The panel focused on Africa-EU relations and the evolving dynamics between the two continents. It began with a powerful perspective on Africa's underpopulation relative to its landmass, challenging common misconceptions about African demographics by comparing the Democratic Republic of Congo's 105 million inhabitants to the 215 million people living in five European countries of equivalent surface area. This framing set the stage for examining the complex relationship between Africa and Europe.

The discussion of the Sahel region revealed the failure of armed interventions to resolve security issues, with Burkina Faso now being the most affected country in the world by Islamist terrorism, followed by Mali and Niger among the top five globally. This security deterioration has contributed to the rise of neo-sovereignism in these countries, with governments distancing themselves from regional organizations like ECOWAS and international bodies like the International Organization of Francophonie.

The panel highlighted a striking financial imbalance in the Africa-EU relationship: while Europe remains Africa's largest commercial partner with four times more investments than China or the US, the African Union remains heavily dependent on European funding, with 90% of two-thirds of the AU's \$650 million budget coming from the EU. This dependency raises questions about Africa's autonomy, particularly when Europeans contribute €414 each to the EU while Africans contribute only 47 cents each to the AU.


To address these challenges, panelists advocated for a more visible European presence in Africa to counter the recognizable faces of China and Russia, while simultaneously developing stronger regional approaches rather than bilateral relationships. The discussion emphasized the need to shift from aid-dependency to investment-based partnerships through initiatives like the Global Gateway's €150 billion investment package, with greater co-creation and African ownership of projects.


The panelists also stressed the importance of acknowledging colonial legacies and their ongoing impact on current politics, while warning against oversimplification of complex historical relationships—noting, for example, how France played both negative and positive roles in Libya's crisis. Looking forward, 2025 was identified as a crucial year for EU-Africa relations, marking the 25th anniversary of their partnership and providing an opportunity to counter disinformation campaigns and build more equitable relationships.


A key thread throughout the discussion was the need to better leverage Africa's own resources, particularly transition minerals critical to the energy transition, while addressing illicit financial flows and creating sustainable financing mechanisms that reduce dependency on external aid. The panel concluded that capturing Africa's demographic dividend through youth programs, skills development and mobility initiatives would be essential for the partnership's future success.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

 **Redefine the Africa-Europe Partnership as Equal Partners.** Move beyond a donor-recipient dynamic by fostering true co-ownership, co-design, and co-creation of initiatives between African and European institutions. Both sides should have equal say in setting priorities and implementing projects, rather than Africa being primarily financed and directed by Europe

 **Strengthen African Financial Autonomy.** Accelerate efforts for the African Union (AU) to achieve financial independence. Currently, AU member states contribute only a third of the AU budget, with the European Union covering the majority of the remainder.

 **Focus on Regional and Local Value Creation.** Prioritize investments and initiatives that build local value chains, especially in sectors like minerals and agri-food systems.

 **Leverage and Update Existing Commitments.** Build on existing roadmaps and strategies (such as the 2030 strategy and Agenda 2063), updating them to reflect new geopolitical realities and ensuring that commitments made at previous summits are delivered with transparency and accountability

The African Union's budget is approximately 650 million dollars. African countries contribute about one-third of this budget, while the remaining two-thirds are covered by international partners, with the European Union being one of the largest contributors—providing around 60–70% of the external funding.

- *Christophe Guilhou*

Rather than looking only from the perspective of ODA or any other development funding, it's also looking at what we have actually already in Africa. How do we greater leverage the African resources?

- *Holy Ranaivozanany*

What we need are partners from both continents - firmly grounded in their principles, confident in their own knowledge, yet open to mutual learning and exchange.

- *Charles Goerens*

Our role is not to wait for Africans to fully align with our priorities, but to be able to respond to the legitimate interests of the populations of African countries.

- *Mathieu Briens*

PANEL 3

AGRICULTURAL SOVEREIGNTY, ENERGY TRANSITION, SUSTAINABLE INDUSTRIALIZATION: ON THE DAWN OF THE 'GREAT GREEN LEAP'



**MARC
REVERDIN**

President, Reverdin Consulting,
Former Secretary General, Paris Peace
Forum



**MOUCTAR
BAH**

President
Brussels-Africa Hub



**FRÉDÉRIC
RONAL**

Vice-President, Association of
Mediterranean Chambers of Commerce
and Industry



**HILARY
BARRY**

Founder & CEO, LadyAgri Impact
Investment Hub



**H.E. AMB. SHEIKH AL
MOUSTAPHA KOUYATEH**

Ambassador-at-Large for Special Missions /
Special Envoy of the President, Office of the
President of Liberia



**JOSÉ LUIS
DOUGAN**

CEO of Certex and
Founder of ORI Foods

The panel on "Agricultural Sovereignty, Energy Transition, and Sustainable Industrialization" brought together a range of perspectives on Africa's journey toward economic independence by taking control of its agricultural and industrial sectors. Mouctar Bah, in his keynote address, explained Africa's huge infrastructure gap, with less than \$2,000 per capita, compared to \$6,000 globally, and the worrying statistic that nine out of ten infrastructure projects in Africa never get completed.

There was a clear consensus throughout the conversation about the need to shift from reliance on external markets and aid to producing what Africa consumes. Ambassador Kouyateh's statement, "When Africa begins to produce what she consumes, sovereignty begins," became a central theme. This idea tied perfectly with Hilary Barry's work with women in agribusiness, showing that formalizing businesses and creating collective power could double access to credit, even in high-risk markets like Kinshasa. The panel also identified the crippling interest rates (27-35%) as a key obstacle to agricultural growth, with solutions such as blended finance mechanisms and national agricultural funds suggested to tackle this issue.

The discussion went beyond food self-sufficiency and explored the value created in global supply chains. Ambassador Kouyateh raised a provocative question about why Belgium produces "Belgian chocolate" without growing cocoa, arguing that Africa should be processing at least 10% of its agricultural products. This idea aligned with José Luis Dougan's call for long-term strategic knowledge transfer in partnerships with international companies. Frédéric Ronal also pointed out the untapped potential of intra-African trade through the African Continental Free Trade Area, emphasizing how Africa's diverse agricultural zones could complement one another if connected by the right infrastructure and cold chain solutions.

As the conversation shifted from big-picture policy to grassroots action, practical solutions emerged, including combining formal banking systems, public-private partnerships, technical assistance, and investments in small-scale infrastructure. The panelists shared a vision of Africa leveraging its agricultural potential not just for self-sufficiency but as "the wheat basket of the world," a vision that requires political will, entrepreneurial energy, and the right financing, mentorship, and value-retention strategies.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Group SMEs for Bank Financing:** Group structured SMEs together to cut down on costs and speed up funding. Use public money to create blended finance that lowers interest rates and focuses on equipment as collateral.
- Create National Agricultural Funds:** Establish government-led funds that unite local farmers, investors, and public resources to boost domestic food production and build local processing facilities.
- Invest in Small-Scale Infrastructure:** Direct funds to essential infrastructure like cold storage and market hubs to reduce post-harvest losses and extend product shelf life.
- Prioritize Intra-African Trade:** Expand AfCFTA by developing regional trade corridors and investing in border infrastructure to eliminate tariffs and bureaucratic barriers.
- Pair Financing with Mentorship:** Include business mentorship and technical assistance with funding, ensuring long-term technology transfer and skills development.
- Empower women in agriculture:** To provide technical assistance, to support the formalization of cooperatives, and to facilitate access to financing to enhance their participation in food value chains.

Trust entrepreneurs. They know how to grow their businesses. What they need is the right push to enter the virtuous circle of growth.

- *Frédéric Ronal*

Formalized agribusiness plans are essential to convincing banks and ensuring consistency in quality.

- *Hilary Barry*

Access to finance is important, but mentorship is even more crucial. Entrepreneurs must understand how to manage their businesses effectively.

- *José Luis Dougan*

If Europe, let's say Belgium wants to have coffee from Liberia, and they have a manufacturing plant there for cocoa, what is it that Belgium cannot have 10% of their cocoa being produced in Liberia? ... And that cocoa would be called Liberian chocolate. But Belgium does not produce cocoa. And you have Belgium chocolate. How can you produce something you don't have?

- *Sheikh Al Moustapha Kouyateh*

Don't look outside the African continent to find a solution. It's within the African continent.

- *Mouctar Bah*



IN CONVERSION WITH

SECURITY SITUATION IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO AND THE
GREAT LAKES REGION: PROSPECTS FOR CRISIS RESOLUTION



**VIWANOU
GNASSOUNOU**

Former Deputy Secretary General of the
Organization of African, Caribbean and
Pacific States (OACPS),
Chairman of the Africa Political Outlook
Steering Committee



**OLIVIER
KAMITATU ETSU**

Former President of the National Assembly
Former Minister of Planning
Democratic Republic of Congo



**HON. KALVIN
SOIRESSE NJALL**

Brussels MP
Co-Chairman of the Ecolo Brussels Group

When 95% of your mineral resources are under your management, but you leave your population in this shameful state, you bear a degrading share of responsibility in the failure of Congo, including the fact that foreign armies come to police in your place.

- Olivier Kamitatu

The discussion centered around the Democratic Republic of Congo's past, present, and future. Kamitatu began by reflecting on the DRC's situation 25 years ago compared to today, noting that despite some changes, many fundamental challenges remain the same. He highlighted that 75% of the population still lives in extreme poverty, energy infrastructure has barely improved, and security issues persist with foreign armies still on Congolese soil.

For the next 25 years, Kamitatu emphasized the need to restore state legitimacy, rebuild security forces, establish a functioning justice system, foster political dialogue, and develop a common vision for the country's future. He stressed that without restoring the Congolese state, the country's mineral wealth would continue to be exploited without benefiting the Congolese people.

Soiresse, speaking both as a Belgian politician and pan-Africanist, highlighted the Congo's critical role as the world's primary climate regulator and emphasized the importance of respecting Congolese sovereignty. He advocated for reforming international institutions, particularly the UN Security Council, to give Africa a stronger voice, and discussed Belgium's responsibility to support Congo in reclaiming its full sovereignty.

Both speakers touched on the importance of good governance, fighting corruption, and ensuring that Congo's vast resources benefit its people rather than being exploited through illegal channels.

I am deeply convinced as a politician, as a political analyst for several years, that Africa will not succeed without its heart, which is in Congo. And I also say that the Congolese will not succeed without Africans, because the place this country occupies at the heart of the continent is phenomenal.

- Kalvin Soiresse

PANEL 4

THE FUTURE OF INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT:
SHIFTING PARADIGMS, UPDATING THE FRAMEWORK



**SÉBASTIEN
F.W. BRACK**

Senior Advisor to the
Kofi Annan Foundation



**FIONA
HILL, CBE**

Founder, Future Resilience Forum and
former Downing Street Chief-of-Staff



**MAHMOUD
BAH**

Chief Operating Officer
Corus International



**KIRSTEN
SCHUETTLER**

Chief Economist for Africa
Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale
Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)



**PAPA AMADOU
SARR**

Former Minister,
Executive Director, Mobilization,
Partnership and Communication
Department - Agence française de
développement (AFD)



**ASAD
BEG**

Senior Pan-African Affairs Expert
European External Action Service

The panel examined the significant paradigm shift occurring in international development assistance, revealing both challenges and opportunities in the evolving landscape. Traditional aid models face growing scrutiny amid budget cuts in major donor countries and shifting geopolitical priorities. Fiona Hill challenged the notion that defense and development objectives should compete, arguing they are interconnected elements of effective foreign policy where "Africa's security is Europe's security." She called for a multilateral system that better reflects today's multipolar world where the "New South" commands growing economic influence without corresponding institutional power.

Both Kirsten Schuettler and Papa Amadou Sarr offered nuanced perspectives on aid effectiveness. Schuettler provided evidence that traditional ODA has contributed to measurable improvements in health and education indicators across Africa, including declining child mortality rates and increased primary school enrollment. Yet Sarr suggested that aid often creates dependency and can be counterproductive when it discourages countries from mobilizing domestic resources. The panel highlighted a stark contrast in implementation approaches, with Sarr noting that EU feasibility studies might take six years while Chinese contractors complete entire projects in two to three years, a reality that has made China's infrastructure investments increasingly attractive to African nations.

Asad Beg presented the EU's Global Gateway initiative as a strategic response designed to compete through infrastructure, digital technology, and energy investments combining public and private funding. However, as moderator Sebastien Brack pointed out, questions remain about Europe's ability to attract sufficient private investment given political instability concerns. Mahmoud Bah delivered perhaps the most forceful critique, arguing that African countries need to reprioritize their own budgets and eliminate wasteful spending rather than lamenting reduced foreign aid. He emphasized that private sector investment would naturally flow to good projects with proper regulatory frameworks, with Schuettler adding that blended finance approaches could help address risk perception issues.

Throughout the discussion, speakers converged on the need for greater African ownership of development priorities and faster project implementation. Despite tensions between advocates for traditional aid's role in social sectors versus investment-driven approaches prioritizing private sector involvement, Schuettler and Sarr agreed that a complementary approach utilizing both strategies would be most effective. As Beg noted, the multilateral system requires a "warming of the head" to move beyond donor-recipient dynamics toward true partnerships built on co-creation, where African expertise drives locally-identified solutions and external support accelerates rather than dictates the continent's development trajectory.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Reform Multilateral Institutions for a Multipolar World :** Redesign global governance structures to give Africa and the "New South" appropriate representation and decision-making power that matches their growing economic importance.
- Blend Public and Private Finance:** Leverage blended finance models that combine public aid with private sector investment, especially for infrastructure and major projects. Use aid strategically for social sectors and as a catalyst for larger private investments, with a focus on risk-sharing and concessional lending
- Accelerate Project Delivery:** Streamline European processes to match the speed and decisiveness of partners like China and Turkey, reducing bureaucracy and long feasibility studies to deliver infrastructure and development projects more rapidly.
- Direct Aid towards Social and humanitarian Sectors:** Use aid intervention for non-profitable but essential sectors—such as health, education, and social protection—where private investment is unlikely to flow, ensuring these areas are not neglected in the shift toward private sector-led development.
- Invest in Youth and Digital Future:** Focus investments on education, digital infrastructure, and entrepreneurship to harness Africa's demographic advantage and prepare for the economy of the future.

Africa's security is Europe's security. But how can we work in partnership with Africa to achieve our goals and collective security objectives? First and foremost, the multilateral system must adapt to the needs of a multipolar world.

- *Fiona Hill*

For Europe to do the feasibility study in the logical framework, it takes six years. If you go to China or Turkey, they will do it in two, three years.

- *Papa Amadou Sarr*

Looking at Africa, we see significant improvements across many indicators of human capital. Aid has certainly made a contribution. We've always worked with the assumption that development aid is no longer the right term, and we've long talked about development cooperation instead.

- *Kirsten Schuettler*

The EU needs to be much faster. We need higher standards from the African partners, and together, we will be stronger.

- *Asad Beg*

The private sector has enough money. Today, the place where the world has seen the greatest development is on Wall Street - trillions of euros. There is money that needs a place to live. All they need is a good project.

- *Mahmoud Bah*



PANEL 5

THE FUTURE OF HEALTHCARE IN AFRICA - BEYOND RESILIENCE:
INNOVATION, PRIVATE SECTOR AND NEW MODELS



**SUE
BIRD**

Manager, Mbedza



**FOULO
BASSE**

Managing Director
Fondation Brazzaville



**DR. ENRIQUE
PAZ**

Senior Director, Corus International
Former Bolivian Minister of Health, Sports
and Social Protection



**DR. MOHAMED M.
ABURAWI**

CEO SpeetarHealth
Researcher at MIT



**PROF. THIERRY
AMOUGOU**

Economist and Expert in Just Transition
Professor at the Faculty of Economic,
Social and Political Sciences of the Catholic
University of Louvain, Associate Researcher
at the Centre tricontinental - CETRI

The panel wove together several interconnected themes addressing Africa's healthcare challenges while highlighting promising pathways forward. A central thread connected the continent's dual reality: critical shortages in healthcare infrastructure and personnel alongside remarkable innovation opportunities. The conversation revealed how Africa's healthcare transformation must balance technological leaps with sustainable domestic solutions, bridging modern advancements with traditional knowledge systems.

Dr. Mohamed Aburawi's framing of healthcare as "economic infrastructure" rather than merely a humanitarian concern resonated throughout the discussion, with panelists building on this concept through various lenses. This perspective aligned with Dr. Basse's historical context of healthcare as a fundamental African priority since 1963, highlighting a troubling paradox: despite increased national budgets, healthcare financing has experienced governmental disengagement, creating dangerous dependencies on international partners.

The COVID-19 pandemic emerged as a pivotal moment that exposed both vulnerabilities and strengths. Professor Amougou's observation that Africa maintained its "reflex of care" while Western systems prioritized securitization sparked a deeper exploration of Africa's traditional knowledge systems. His vision of integrating the "pharmacy of the forest" with modern science found practical complement in Dr. Paz's examples from Latin America, where countries like Peru achieved vaccine self-sufficiency through similar integration approaches.

Technology emerged as a critical bridge across geographic, infrastructure and personnel gaps. The panel demonstrated how telemedicine, drone delivery systems, and AI-powered diagnostics represent not just adaptations but potentially transformative leapfrog solutions tailored to African realities. These innovations connect to broader themes of sovereignty and sustainability, with panelists highlighting how technological solutions must be developed through knowledge transfer, local capacity building, and South-South cooperation.

The discussion ultimately converged on a vision of African healthcare that transcends traditional development models. By reimagining healthcare not as a pure economic commodity but as an embodied system of care rooted in local contexts yet enhanced by global partnerships, Africa has the opportunity to pioneer healthcare models that are simultaneously more sovereign, sustainable, and human-centered than existing systems worldwide.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

-  **Establish Sustainable Domestic Healthcare Financing:** African nations should continue the implementation of the Abuja Declaration targeting an allocation of 15% of public expenditure to healthcare while developing alternative domestic financing mechanisms.
-  **Integrate Traditional and Modern Medicine Systems:** Create research and development programs to scientifically validate and standardize traditional African remedies, making them more accessible and affordable.
-  **Invest in Technology-Enabled Healthcare Solutions:** Prioritize development of telemedicine, AI diagnostics, and drone delivery systems to overcome infrastructure gaps and improve healthcare access in remote areas.
-  **Develop Local Pharmaceutical Production Capacity:** Establish regional manufacturing hubs for essential medicines and vaccines to reduce dependency on imports and address the challenge of counterfeit drugs.
-  **Implement Comprehensive Anti-Counterfeit Medicine Strategies:** Adopt national plans following the Lomé Initiative model that addresses patient pathways, medicine supply chains, and community education on quality medicine.

Health care needs to be looked at as an investment, not just as a cost. It's not just a humanitarian imperative, it's economic infrastructure.

- **Mohamed Aburawi**

Health has been always, as education, too important a bridge for peace. And I think this is an opportunity for NGOs, for governments, for agencies, for corporations, institutions, foundations, to use that vehicle.

- **Enrique Paz**

Building sovereignty in terms of health also means promoting this natural agriculture, which allows Africans not only to eat well and be healthy, but also to live in harmony with the environment.

- **Thierry Amougou**

When international financial partners withdraw abruptly, it leads to national catastrophe. This is why we must think about sustainable financial autonomy for our health systems.

- **Foulo Basse**

PANEL 6

AFRICA IN THE NEW AI AND DIGITAL ERA:
AFRICAN YOUTH AS A FORCE FOR INNOVATION



**SÉBASTIEN
F.W. BRACK**

Senior Advisor to the Kofi Annan
Foundation



**H.E. AMB. MICALLEF
RONALD**

Maltese Ambassador to Addis Ababa,
covering Ethiopia, Rwanda, Djibouti and
the African Union



**H.E. AMB. PROF. ELIJAH
BITANGE NDEMO**

Ambassador of Kenya to the Kingdom of
Belgium and the European Union



**HICHAM
EL MERINI**

President, SMZE
Vice President, Africalinks



**SAMSON
ITODO**

Member of the African Union Advisory
Group on AI and Founder of Yaga Africa

The panel discussion highlighted Africa's significant advances in AI adoption, countering the misconception of the continent as technologically lagging. Ambassador Ndemo emphasized that Africa is not a monolith, with countries like South Africa, Nigeria, Kenya, Ghana, and Rwanda making considerable progress in deploying AI across sectors including health, agriculture, education, and financial services. He challenged the focus on infrastructural challenges, noting that solutions like satellite connectivity are already providing alternatives to traditional broadband.

Ambassador Ronald reinforced this optimistic view, describing Africa's glass as "three quarters full" regarding AI innovation. He showcased impressive African AI enterprises already operational, including Zipline Rwanda (logistics), Flutterwave (fintech), 4G Capital (microfinance), and Koniku (security), noting that many African innovations predate similar European developments. While acknowledging the African Union's comprehensive policy framework for AI development, he identified financing as a critical gap, cautioning against Africa becoming merely a "passive donor of data rather than an active producer of knowledge."

Hicham El Merini shared how AfricaLinks bridges Europe and Africa to support young African entrepreneurs with groundbreaking innovations. He cited examples like a young African who developed an AI component that consumes 100 times less energy than current technologies. Addressing the financial barriers facing African startups, El Merini described how AfricaLinks established its own investment fund to provide seed capital and mentorship for young entrepreneurs, demonstrating a commitment to concrete action rather than just words.

As the discussion turned to funding prospects like the Global Gateway initiative, Ambassador Ndemo delivered a sobering perspective that "the age of aid has gone" and urged Africa to mobilize internal resources and diaspora investments rather than waiting for external financing. Ambassador Ronald highlighted Africa's strategic advantages in hosting AI infrastructure due to its abundant energy and water resources, positioning the continent as an essential business partner for Europe rather than aid recipient.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- 🔥 **Prioritize AI in Pan-African Development Policies:** Enhance African Union frameworks to position AI as a strategic resource equivalent to natural resources in importance for economic growth.
- 🔥 **Create Specialized Micro-Financing Mechanisms for Tech Entrepreneurs:** Develop financial instruments specifically designed for smaller investments (€10,000-€50,000) with appropriate guarantees to support early-stage African tech startups.
- 🔥 **Establish Africa-Europe Technology Knowledge Corridors:** Build structured pathways for African entrepreneurs to access European markets for capital while maintaining business operations in Africa.
- 🔥 **Invest in African Data Centers and Data Sovereignty:** Develop infrastructure that allows Africa to maintain control of its data while leveraging abundant energy and water resources for competitive advantage.
- 🔥 **Mobilize African Diaspora Tech Expertise:** Create incentives for skilled African tech professionals abroad to contribute to the continent's digital transformation through investment and knowledge transfer.

The age of aid has gone. I can bet here that it's not going to be there in the coming days. We must begin to think differently as Africa.

- **Bitange Ndemo**

AI requires two components, energy and water. Countries which have the opportunity to radically reform their fundamental economy around AI in a way which makes AI a resource, a mineral, just as important as oil, just as important as tantalum.

- **Micallef Ronald**

Finding millions or tens of millions of euros is very easy. Finding 50,000 euros or 10,000 euros is even worse, it is extremely complicated.

- **Hicham El Merini**

Africa isn't playing any catch-up because on the continent of Africa we have seen several countries take bold steps to institute national strategies on maximizing artificial intelligence.

- **Samson Itodo**



AFRICA POLITICAL OUTLOOK PRIZE FOR LEADERSHIP, GOVERNANCE & IMPACT



The Africa Political Outlook Prize for Leadership, Governance and Impact has been established to recognize and encourage individuals who have made significant contributions to Africa's development, peace, and prosperity. The jury established the following recipients this year:



**JEAN-YVES
OLLIVIER**

Founding Chairman
Fondation Brazzaville

Jean-Yves Ollivier (President of the Brazzaville Foundation)

- Received the Grand Prix for his work as a mediator in major conflicts, including efforts to end apartheid, peace in the DRC, and recent mediation attempts in the Russia-Ukraine conflict.



**H.E. DR. RANIA AL-
MASHAT**

Minister of Planning, Economic
Development and International
Cooperation, Arab Republic of Egypt

Dr. Rania Al Machat (Egypt's Minister of Planning and International Cooperation)

- Awarded the Prize for Contribution to Prosperity, recognizing her role in Egypt's economic transformation, her work at the World Bank and IMF, and her leadership in economic diplomacy.



**HON. MYRIAM
DOSSOU**

Vice-President of Togolese Assembly,
former minister of youth and grassroots and
former director general of togo national
institute of health

Hon. Myriam Dossou (Vice-President of Togolese Assembly, former minister of youth and grassroots and former director general of togo national institute of health)

- Received the Prize for Local Development and Fight Against Vulnerability for establishing the institute from scratch in 2012 and successfully leading it for 12 years.

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According to a previous recipient, Dr. Martine Wisman, President of the FinsWins foundation, the APO Prize goes beyond material recognition. It provides legitimacy to the recipient's vision and work, opens doors to international recognition and partnerships, and serves as an instrument of blessing, particularly for civil society organizations working with vulnerable populations.



APO LEADERS BREAKFAST

UNLOCKING EMERGENCE: INNOVATIVE AND ALTERNATIVE FINANCING –
BLENDED FINANCE, CLIMATE FINANCE AND CAPITAL MARKETS



**AMB. MMASEKGOA
MASIRE-MWAMBA**

Ambassador of Botswana to Brussels
Former Commonwealth Deputy Secretary
General



**VIWANOU
GNASSOUNOU**

Former Deputy Secretary General of the
Organization of African, Caribbean and
Pacific States (OACPS),
Chairman of the Africa Political Outlook
Steering Committee



**MAHMOUD
BAH**

Chief Operating Officer
Corus International



**JEAN VAN
WETTER**

CEO of ENABEL, the Belgian
Development Agency



**MOUCTAR
BAH**

President
Brussels-Africa Hub



**HON. MYRIAM
DOSSOU**

Vice-President of Togolese Assembly,
former minister of youth and grassroots and
former director general of togolese national
institute of health

At the APO Leaders Breakfast, speakers converged on a shared concern: Africa's development and climate ambitions are hamstrung by limited access to adequate, sustainable financing. With a \$277 billion annual climate finance need and only a fraction currently mobilized, the session emphasized that the continent must pivot towards innovative, homegrown financial strategies to unlock its full potential.

Viwanou Gnassounou opened by framing the conversation within Africa's macroeconomic realities—a persistent gap between aspiration and available capital. He stressed that dependency on external financing is neither sustainable nor strategic, urging a bold shift toward mobilizing domestic resources. Aligning national policies with instruments like the AfCFTA and empowering regional financial institutions were highlighted as critical first steps toward financial sovereignty and economic resilience. Jean Van Wetter warned of shrinking global aid budgets and urged a rethink of development models. He proposed a solidarity tax on arms profits and stressed the need for strong national governance to drive inclusive growth.

Building on this, Mahmoud Bah emphasized the practical power of blended finance to de-risk investments and attract private capital to fragile markets. Drawing from Corus International's experience, he illustrated how philanthropic and commercial funds can work in tandem—especially in sectors like renewable energy and agriculture. However, he

noted that innovation in deal structuring and proactive public-private dialogue remain necessary to scale these successes continent-wide.

Ambassador Mmasekgoa Masire-Mwamba deepened the discussion by linking financial innovation to Africa's green future. She underscored the continent's opportunity to lead in green growth but warned that underdeveloped financial ecosystems could stall progress. Strengthening regulatory frameworks, improving the capacity of capital markets, and embedding climate finance into diplomatic and multilateral strategies were presented as top priorities.

Rounding out the conversation, Mouctar Bah brought a fresh perspective on tapping non-traditional sources of capital. He advocated for unlocking diaspora investment and leveraging fintech innovations to democratize financing access, particularly for SMEs. He championed the potential of platforms like the African Exchanges Linkage Project (AELP) to connect fragmented markets and drive investment across borders. Diaspora capital, he noted, remains a sleeping giant—one that must be brought into the formal financing architecture.

Myriam Dossou emphasized the importance of investing in Africa's human capital, drawing on her work in youth empowerment and entrepreneurship. She called for policies that prioritized skills development, job creation, and the economic inclusion of young people, especially women.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ✶ Africa must scale blended finance to de-risk projects and draw in private capital.
 - ✶ Domestic capital markets, including pension funds and fintech solutions, are underutilized assets.
 - ✶ The diaspora and digital finance represent emerging frontiers in unlocking inclusive growth.
 - ✶ Coordinated efforts to strengthen regulatory frameworks and harmonize capital markets are essential for long-term, climate-aligned development.
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OUR GRATITUDE TO OUR PARTNERS



GRAND PARTNERS



Corus is a faith-based organization that unites an array of nonprofits and businesses, each with specialized expertise in economic development, impact investing, health, humanitarian assistance, and technology for development. Alongside communities, local partners, and the private sector, our expert teams integrate disciplines, approaches and resources to build opportunities for families and economies to thrive across Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Middle East. Our traditional and nontraditional approaches bring together the localized, holistic solutions needed to develop self-reliance and truly achieve lasting change



Fondation Brazzaville is an independent nonprofit promoting African-led initiatives in peace, health, and the environment. Founded in 2014 by Jean-Yves Ollivier, it works with governments, businesses, and civil society to foster sustainable development and support the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. Through collaborative and localized approaches, it aims to drive lasting change across the continent.

PARTNERS



Enabel is Belgium's federal development agency, responsible for implementing the country's international development policy. Operating in 21 countries, Enabel focuses on sectors such as digitalization, gender, governance, health, sustainable agriculture, and water and sanitation. With a team of approximately 2,000 staff, the agency manages around 170 projects aimed at promoting sustainable development and global citizenship.

INSTITUTIONAL PARTNERS



Public Affairs Africa is a leading public affairs and international development consultancy. Serving public decision-makers, governments, influential leaders, major groups, philanthropic organizations and start-ups who aspire to maximize the impact of their actions for the common good, we deploy a unique combination of expertise to help them know how to preach, know how to act and know how to say.



Initiative For Africa is dedicated to empowering change-makers across the continent to foster a robust private sector that drives sustainable growth. Active from Dakar to Kampala, Gaborone to Abidjan, and Cairo to Kigali, it unites leaders, development institutions, researchers, corporations, and citizens in creating value and promoting optimism.



The Association of the Mediterranean Chambers of Commerce and Industry (ASCAME) is a non-profit international organization representing the private sector across the Mediterranean region. Established in 1982 and headquartered in Barcelona, Spain, ASCAME unites over 300 Chambers of Commerce and Industry from both shores of the Mediterranean. It serves as a unifying force for businesses, advocating their interests and fostering economic cooperation through various projects, international events, and working commissions.



Africalinks organizes or co-organizes about ten business missions annually across Africa and hosts numerous African business delegations. The organization works in partnership with key public and private stakeholders, including Business France, Bpi, Club Top 20, and various regional actors. Africalinks also supports entrepreneurs on both continents through initiatives like Med Innovant Africa and Provence Africa Connect, offering services such as project structuring, strategic support, networking, and financing search.



The European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM) is an independent 'think and do tank' founded in 1986, dedicated to enhancing policies in Europe and Africa for inclusive and sustainable development. With offices in Maastricht, Netherlands, and Brussels, Belgium, ECDPM provides research, advice, and practical support on topics such as EU external affairs, peace and security, migration, food security, economic transformation, and economic diplomacy. It collaborates with various stakeholders, including governments, international organizations, and the private sector, to promote effective international cooperation. ECDPM is funded by multiple European governments, including those of the Netherlands, Belgium, Austria, Ireland, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Sweden, and Luxembourg.



The Policy Center for the New South (PCNS) is a Moroccan think tank focused on improving economic and social policies in Morocco and Africa. It promotes an open, accountable "new South" and supports African policy development through research, dialogue, and global partnerships. PCNS hosts key annual events like the "Atlantic Dialogues" and cultivates future leaders through the Atlantic Dialogues Emerging Leaders program (ADEL), which connects over 420 young professionals.



Reverdin Consulting supports clients in building strategic relationships with governments and political actors while providing expert advice on international public policies. It designs tailored communication strategies to enhance client reputation and key messages. Reverdin Consulting also navigates major global events such as COP, WEF, PPF, G7, G20, and key regional forums, ensuring clients maintain visibility and influence on the international stage.



Mbedza Projects Support is a nonprofit organization in Malawi focused on tackling poverty through community-based initiatives. They distribute fuel-efficient stoves, offer HIV education and testing, provide support for orphans, and promote environmental sustainability through tree planting. Mbedza stands out by integrating health awareness, education, and environmental efforts, making a comprehensive impact on local communities.



The Africa-Europe Foundation (AEF) is dedicated to transforming the relationship between Africa and Europe into a dynamic, equitable partnership. Established in 2020, AEF serves as a platform for leaders and experts from civil society, business, and politics across both continents, with a strong emphasis on youth engagement. By facilitating multi-stakeholder dialogues and fostering partnerships, AEF addresses critical areas such as health, digital innovation, transport, agriculture, and energy. Their goal is to align Africa-Europe relations with shared values and common interests, driving collaborative initiatives that have a tangible impact on both continents.



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.



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 decision-making. 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.



Brussels Etiquette Academy is a specialized institution based in Brussels, dedicated to training in etiquette, protocol, and social skills. It offers tailored programs for individuals, professionals, and organizations, covering areas such as professional etiquette, social decorum, and international customs. With a practical and personalized approach, Brussels Etiquette Academy aims to enhance its clients' confidence and ease in various social and professional settings, equipping them with the necessary tools to excel in demanding environments.



The FINS-WINS ASBL is a movement of reflection and concrete action, working to promote the situation and condition of women in both the North and the South. Its team, of women and men from multi and transdisciplines, brings the reflections together and guides the action on the ground. This team of scientists and experts is headed by Professor Van der Starre, graduate of the Houston Institute and the University of Maastricht, and currently head of the Anaesthetics-Cardiology Unit at Stanford University. The aim of the FINS ASBL is to work as an interface, encouraging women to contribute actively and proactively to resolving the contemporary international issues that drain our democratic systems and destroy or destabilize so many development projects, threatening the peace, the security and the solidarity that exists between peoples.

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3rd EDITION

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