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AFRICAN UNION

WHO WILL SHAPE AFRICA'S FUTURE?



PAN-AFRICANISM AND WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP
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AFRICA AT THE CROSSROADS: WHAT LEADERSHIP TO REINVENT THE FUTURE?

The year 2025 marks a strategic turning point for the African Union (AU), which stands at a crucial crossroads. As the continent faces major geopolitical and economic challenges, the renewal of elected positions within the AU Commission presents a unique opportunity to reaffirm African ambitions. This moment is not simply an administrative transition, but rather a rethinking of the political and institutional priorities that will shape Africa's future. Regional integration, at the heart of African priorities, is one of the major challenges for the years to come. The African Union has put in place ambitious projects, such as the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), but these are struggling to fully materialize due to persistent political and economic obstacles. The future leadership of the Commission will have to intensify efforts to accelerate the implementation of this integration. It will be crucial to harmonize economic policies and develop transnational infrastructure to foster genuine regional exchange. Better cooperation between Regional Economic Communities (RECs) will also be necessary to avoid duplication of efforts and optimize available resources. Africa needs leadership that can inspire a common vision and ensure that commitments made by Member States are rigorously followed through.

Political instability and armed conflict remain a reality for many regions of the continent. The Sahel, the Horn of Africa and parts of Central Africa are still shaken by violence that hinders development and threatens stability. Although the AU has established peacekeeping mechanisms, such as the African Standby Force, their effectiveness is limited by a lack of funding and real intervention capacities. Future leadership will need to strengthen these mechanisms

and implement more proactive strategies in mediation and diplomacy. Africa must no longer depend on foreign interventions to ensure its own security. Genuine strategic autonomy and pooling of military resources must be major priorities.

Economically, Africa, despite having immense potential, remains too dependent on raw material exports. There is an urgent need to diversify national economies and strengthen intra-African trade. Industrial development, agricultural modernization and investment in renewable energy must become the AU's strategic priorities. At the same time, the inclusion of African youth, who represent more than 60% of the population, is essential. Education, vocational training and entrepreneurship must be integrated into economic and political policies to unleash the full potential of this generation.

Another major challenge for the African Union lies in its financing. Currently, the organization remains largely dependent on international donors, which limits its independence. The future leadership will have to consider endogenous financing solutions, such as the establishment of mandatory contributions from Member States or taxes on certain economic transactions, in order to strengthen the financial autonomy of the organization.

The election of the next President of the Commission will be a key moment in this dynamic of reinvention of the AU. This will not simply be a change of team, but an opportunity to redefine Africa's trajectory towards a future of prosperity, stability and unity. The challenges are many, but the opportunity to address them is unique. Africa's future will depend on this visionary leadership that will be able to meet the expectations of the people and the demands of the 21st century.

AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION **CONTEXT AND CHALLENGES OF THE RENEWAL OF ELECTIVE POSITIONS**





The leadership transition at the African Union Commission (AUC) marks a crucial moment in the history of the continental organization. Once again, history will be written in February 2025, during the 38th African Union (AU) Summit. This electoral process is not merely about a change in personnel; it significantly impacts the AU's political, diplomatic, and institutional direction for the years to come. The renewal of elective positions at the Commission presents an opportunity to reassess the AU's vision and priorities, enhance its effectiveness, and better equip it to address Africa's contemporary challenges.

Context of the Renewal of Elective Positions

The AUC serves as the AU's executive body, responsible for implementing its decisions and coordinating the activities of member states. Its leadership, comprising key positions such as the Chairperson of the Commission, Commissioners, and other senior officials, is renewed every four years. These elections take place during the AU Summit of Heads of State and Government, the organization's highest decision-making body.

«This process is strategic for the future of the AU as it reflects political shifts across the continent,» explains Joseph Banda, a Cameroonian political scientist and university lecturer, in an interview with *Hommes d'Afrique*. «With an increasing number of internal reform initiatives, the way these elections unfold and the individuals elected will have a direct impact on the AU's ability to navigate the geopolitical, economic, and social challenges of the 21st century,» the expert emphasizes. He further adds, «The renewal of elective positions at the Commission provides a glimpse into Africa's future and how the continent seeks to position itself on the global stage.»



Key Issues at Stake

For Louise Kamba, a professor of law, one of the major stakes in the renewal of elective positions at the AUC is the implementation of institutional reforms within the organization. «These reforms aim to enhance the AU's efficiency, transparency, and responsiveness,» Kamba explains. In recent years, discussions have been held on the need to reform the Commission to make it more operational, more credible, and better equipped to meet the needs of African states. The choice of leaders for these positions will influence the success and implementation of these reforms. She further comments, «The elections will determine the direction the AU will take in the coming years regarding the management of its internal affairs, human resource organization, financial transparency, and institutional responsiveness to political, economic, and security crises.»

Strengthening African Solidarity

Strengthening solidarity and cooperation among African states remains central to the AU's mission. The selection of AUC leaders will directly impact the AU's ability to foster this solidarity. Indeed, the

AU faces numerous internal challenges requiring coordinated and collective management, ranging from interstate conflicts to humanitarian crises and global economic challenges.

«The elected leaders will be tasked with reinforcing pan-African cooperation, particularly by facilitating the implementation of regional and community projects and providing a unified response to continental challenges,» says Mokwe Joshua, an economist. «This includes managing political tensions in certain regions, conflict resolution, and promoting economic integration across Africa.»

According to Joshua, the financial autonomy of the AU has been a major objective for several years. One of the organization's main challenges, he observes, has been its reliance on external funding, particularly from foreign powers and international organizations. «The AUC elections will impact the AU's efforts to secure the financial resources needed to fulfill its mission,» he comments.

Echoing this sentiment, Banda adds that one of the AU's key objectives is to establish a more sustainable financial model by implementing independent funding mechanisms. These include increased contributions from member states, regional partnerships, and private sector col-



laborations. «The AU’s leadership must make strategic financial decisions to ensure the organization operates independently, free from external influences.»

For Leonard Momo, a geopolitical strategist, Africa faces a range of geopolitical and environmental challenges that demand a swift and effective AU response. Among these challenges, he highlights security crises in regions such as the Sahel and the Horn of Africa, as well as the fight against climate change, which impacts African economies and exacerbates social inequalities.

«The renewal of positions at the AU Commission will be an opportunity to appoint leaders capable of coordinating regional actions to manage these crises,» he observes. He adds: «In terms of security, the AU must strengthen its peacekeeping capabilities, and the elected leaders will have the responsibility to support and coordinate efforts to protect vulnerable populations. Similarly, in the fight against climate change, AU leaders will need to implement common strategies to reduce environmental impact in Africa and promote sustainable development initiatives.»

African Youth: A Key Driver of Change

The role of African youth is another major issue in the renewal process of AUC positions, Mokwe emphasized. He insists that youth make up the vast majority of the continent’s population, with more than 60% being under the age of 25. «The elected leaders will be responsible for creating a political and economic environment that ensures equitable access to education, employment, and development opportunities for this youth,» the economist explains. «Integrating young people into the

AU’s decision-making processes and the formulation of pan-African policies is essential to ensuring the sustainability of the continent’s development initiatives,» Momo added in an interview with *Hommes d’Afrique*.

«The Commission must establish programs aimed at involving youth in the management of Africa’s affairs, and future leaders will play a key role in this dynamic,» projects the geopolitical strategist. For him, the renewal of elective positions at the AUC is a defining moment for Africa’s future. It represents a pivotal opportunity for the organization and its member states to designate leaders capable of addressing the continent’s current challenges.

And he concludes: «In terms of institutional reforms, regional cooperation, crisis management, and youth empowerment, the choices made in these elections will have profound implications for the AU’s vision and ambition for the coming decades. This electoral process offers Africa a chance to renew its commitment to a more integrated, more united, and more prosperous future.»

**THE FINANCIAL
AUTONOMY OF
THE AU HAS
BEEN A MAJOR
OBJECTIVE FOR
SEVERAL
YEARS.**

Sylvestre Tetchiada

INTEGRATION, PEACE, SECURITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Challenges of the Next AUC Leadership



The upcoming leadership transition at the African Union Commission (AUC) in February marks a strategic turning point for the continental organization. This renewal comes at a time when Africa is facing numerous challenges but also significant opportunities to transform its societies and economies. The new Chairperson of the AU Commission will play a crucial role in shaping the Union's future and addressing the continent's most pressing issues. Among the key priorities, African integration, peace and security, and economic development stand out as essential pillars to ensure a stable, prosperous, and united Africa.

1. African Integration: A Fundamental Issue for Continental Cohesion

African integration has been a central objective of the African Union since its inception. The unity of the

continent is at the heart of the AU's vision, and the next Chairperson of the Commission will be responsible for advancing this project by overcoming both historical and contemporary obstacles. While progress has been made, major challenges remain in achieving true political, economic, and social integration.

a. Implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)

One of the most ambitious integration projects is the creation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), a single market aimed at boosting intra-African trade by eliminating tariff and non-tariff barriers among member states. However, the implementation of AfCFTA faces complex challenges, including differences in national economic policies, inadequate infrastructure to support intra-African trade, and difficulties in establishing common regulatory standards.

The next Chairperson of the AU

Commission will need to ensure that member states uphold their commitments to market liberalization and trade facilitation. Additionally, they must promote the harmonization of economic policies and the development of transnational transport and communication infrastructure to connect different regions of the continent.

b. Development of Pan-African Infrastructure

Infrastructure is the backbone of Africa's integration. The development of transport corridors, energy networks, and interconnected communication systems is essential to facilitating trade and promoting the free movement of people. The Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA) is a notable example of a continental initiative, yet it remains insufficient to meet the continent's growing needs. The new Chairperson will have to ensure the acceleration of ongoing projects and work towards securing

sustainable financing for their implementation.

Africa is composed of several regional economic communities (RECs) such as ECOWAS, SADC, COMESA, and EAC, which play a significant role in promoting integration within the continent. However, these communities often operate independently, with little coordination among them. The next Chairperson of the AU Commission will need to work towards better harmonization of actions among these RECs to avoid duplication of efforts and enhance synergy.

2. Peace and Security: The Essential Challenge of Continental Stability

Peace and security remain fundamental priorities for the African Union. While progress has been made in conflict resolution, Africa continues to face multiple security threats, including armed conflicts, terrorism, coups d'état, and intercommunal violence.

a. Strengthening the AU's Rapid Crisis Response Capacity

The African Union has established mechanisms such as the African Standby Force (ASF) to enable swift intervention in crises. However, these mechanisms frequently encounter funding shortages, coordination issues, and logistical constraints. The next Chairperson of the AU Commission will need to enhance these mechanisms by strengthening cooperation with UN peacekeeping forces and mobilizing resources to ensure effective interventions.

Another challenge is to reinforce the AU's peace and security architecture, particularly by making the Peace and Security Council (PSC) more responsive and autonomous in its decision-making. A key priority will be ensuring the implementation of peace and security resolutions in high-risk regions such as the Sahel, the Lake Chad Basin, and the Horn of Africa.

b. Combating Terrorism and Transnational Armed Groups

Terrorism remains a growing threat across the continent, with groups such as Boko Haram, al-Shabaab, and the Islamic State in West Africa posing significant risks. The next Chairperson must develop continental strategies to counter these threats, enhance intelligence-sharing and military cooperation among African states, and support capacity-building for counterterrorism forces.

c. Promoting Democratic Governance and Preventing Coups

The consolidation of democracy is a crucial factor for long-term peace in Africa. Coups d'état, which conti-

THE NEXT CHAIRPERSON OF THE AU COMMISSION WILL NEED TO ENSURE THAT MEMBER STATES UPHOLD THEIR COMMITMENTS TO MARKET LIBERALIZATION AND TRADE FACILITATION.

nue to challenge political stability, undermine social cohesion. The next Chairperson of the AU Commission must promote democratic processes, support free and transparent elections, and establish conflict-prevention mechanisms to mitigate political instability.

3. Economic Development: A Prosperous and Resilient Africa

Economic development remains at the heart of Africa's leadership agenda. Despite impressive economic growth in recent years, the continent still faces significant structural challenges, including poverty, unemployment, social inequalities, and limited economic diversification.

a. Promoting Economic Diversification and Job Creation

One of the AU's key economic priorities is to reduce Africa's reliance on raw material exports. The next Chairperson must foster investments in strategic sectors such as manufacturing, modern agriculture, and information and communication technologies (ICTs). Additionally, policies must be implemented to stimulate job creation, particularly for young people, who represent the majority of Africa's workforce.

b. Strengthening Intra-African and International Economic Partnerships

Boosting intra-African trade and global partnerships is essential for the continent's economic development. The new Chairperson must continue the implementation of the AfCFTA while promoting strategic partnerships with international economic players to attract foreign direct investment (FDI) and enhance economic cooperation.

c. Sustainable Resource Management and Reducing Inequality

Sustainable resource management is a critical issue for Africa's economic future. The next Chairperson must ensure that natural resources are exploited responsibly, minimizing environmental damage while ensuring that their benefits reach the broader population, especially the most vulnerable communities.

4 Leadership at a Crossroads for Africa's Future

The new leadership of the AU Commission stands at a defining moment for Africa's future. African integration, peace and security, and economic development are deeply interconnected challenges that require strong and coordinated action. The elected Chairperson must navigate these complex issues while steering Africa towards sustainable prosperity and greater unity. Expectations are high, but so are the opportunities to transform challenges into drivers of progress for the entire continent.

S.T.



MAHMOUD ALI YOUSOUF

The Architect of Djiboutian Diplomacy Aiming for the African Union Presidency

Mahmoud Ali Youssouf, Djibouti's Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation since 2005, positions himself as one of the most experienced candidates for the presidency of the African Union Commission (AUC) in 2025. With nearly three decades in diplomacy, he has built an impressive career marked by active advocacy for Djibouti's interests and significant contributions to regional stability and cooperation across the African continent.

His candidacy is based on a rich and diverse career that blends national leadership, multilateral expertise, and humanitarian engagement. A consensus-builder and visionary, Mahmoud Ali Youssouf aims to advance the AU toward greater regional integration and address Africa's strategic challenges in a rapidly changing world.

A Strong Academic Background for an International Career

Born in Djibouti, Mahmoud Ali Youssouf quickly demonstrated an aptitude for languages and international relations—an asset he has leveraged throughout his career. In 1990, he earned a master's degree in applied foreign languages (English/Arabic) from Lyon 2 University in France. He further specialized with several training programs, including a certificate in translation and international relations from Liverpool Business School in the UK (1988) and an Arabic language certificate from the Bourguiba Institute of Modern Languages in Tunisia. In 1995, he enhanced his skills

at the National School of Public Administration (ENAP) in Quebec, where he trained in public management, strengthening his ability to manage complex institutions. Additional training at Oxford and other prestigious institutions further solidified his foundation for tackling modern diplomatic challenges.

The Rise of a High-Caliber Diplomat

Mahmoud Ali Youssouf began his career at Djibouti's Ministry

**AS A CANDIDATE FOR THE
PRESIDENCY
OF THE AFRICAN UNION
COMMISSION,
MAHMOUD ALI
YOUSOUF PRESENTS
AN AMBITIOUS VISION
FOR THE CONTINENT.**

of Foreign Affairs in 1993 as Deputy Director for International Organizations. In this role, he played a key part in coordinating Djibouti's participation in international conferences and forums. This initial experience marked the start of an unwavering commitment to amplifying Djibouti's voice on the global stage.

In 1996, he was promoted to Director of the Arab World, where he strengthened diplomatic

and economic relations between Djibouti and Arab nations. This role paved the way for his appointment as Ambassador to Egypt in 1997. He also served as Djibouti's Permanent Representative to the League of Arab States while simultaneously holding non-resident ambassadorial roles in Lebanon, Libya, Sudan, Syria, and Turkey.

These critical diplomatic missions enabled him to negotiate strategic bilateral and multilateral agreements, represent his country's interests in complex contexts, and enhance regional cooperation, particularly in security and development.

In 2001, he was appointed Minister Delegate for International Cooperation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where he oversaw strategic partnerships and strengthened Djibouti's position in international forums.

Strategic Leadership for Djibouti and Africa

Mahmoud Ali Youssouf's appointment as Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation in 2005 marked a turning point in his career. Over nearly two decades, he has transformed this role into a platform for promoting regional stability, international cooperation, and sustainable development.

Under his leadership, the ministry underwent a major restructuring in 2012 to enhance efficiency and address contemporary challenges. He also founded the Institute of Diplomatic Studies, an institution dedicated to training high-level diplomats and strengthening Djibouti's diplomatic influence.



His tenure has been characterized by active involvement in regional conflict mediation, notably in Somalia and Sudan. In 2008, he facilitated a Somali reconciliation conference, and in 2020, he played a key role in negotiations between Somalia and Somaliland. In 2023, he chaired an IGAD summit on the Sudan crisis, fostering a return to inclusive political dialogue.

Mahmoud Ali Youssouf has also contributed to major multilateral agreements, including the signing of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Protocol in 2019 and the UN Global Compacts on Migration and Refugees.

A Strong Commitment to Community and Humanitarian Causes

Beyond his diplomatic responsibilities, Mahmoud Ali Youssouf actively engages in local development initiatives. In 2017, he founded the village of Sourat, a project provi-

ding 65 homes, a school, a mosque, and essential water and solar energy infrastructure for over 500 residents.

As an honorary president of several associations, including those focused on integrated development and blood donation, he exemplifies a leader committed to addressing the needs of his fellow citizens.

IN 2008, HE FACILITATED A SOMALI RECONCILIATION CONFERENCE, AND IN 2020, HE PLAYED A KEY ROLE IN NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN SOMALIA AND SOMALILAND.

A Vision for Africa

As a candidate for the presidency of the African Union Commission, Mahmoud Ali Youssouf presents an ambitious vision for the continent. He aims to strengthen regional integration, promote sustainable solutions to economic, security, and climate challenges, and position Africa as a key global player.

Fluent in French, English, Arabic, Afar, and Somali, Mahmoud Ali Youssouf combines diplomatic expertise, strategic leadership, and humanitarian dedication. Through his candidacy, he hopes to offer the African Union leadership capable of addressing contemporary challenges while seizing opportunities for a prosperous future for Africa. With such a rich and diverse experience, Mahmoud Ali Youssouf stands out as a key figure in Africa's political and diplomatic landscape, bringing a unifying and ambitious vision for the continent.

Sylvestre Tetchiada

MAHMOUD ALI YOUSSEUF, MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION OF DJIBOUTI, CANDIDATE FOR THE PRESIDENCY OF THE AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION

«I believe I am well-equipped and have the necessary assets to rise to the responsibilities of this position if...»

Your Excellency, you are a candidate for the presidency of the African Union Commission. How do you plan to strengthen the influence of this institution on the global stage?

I would like to emphasize that the African Union faces challenges related to peace and security, as well as development and integration. Africa is striving to secure its rightful place on the international stage, where key global decisions are made. We have already secured a seat within the G20 and are working towards obtaining a permanent seat on the UN Security Council, along with equitable representation on the boards of the World Bank and the IMF. Africa has the policies and capabilities to make its voice heard.

Now, with the upcoming election for the leadership of the AU Commission and the renewal of the Commission's leadership, it is important to understand that this institution is meant to champion Africa's ambitions. It is not just a secretariat but a vast structure entrusted by Heads of State, political bodies, the Executive Council, and the Assembly of Heads of State with the responsibility of implementing decisions, ensuring Africa's voice is heard, securing its rightful place on the global stage, and defending the continent's interests.

The core issue of this election is precisely this: ensuring that Africa attains the position it deserves and that its interests are effectively protected. As a diplomat with three decades of experience, I believe I am well positioned to lead this Commission. My availability, experience, and expertise will





allow me to fulfill this responsibility effectively. Africa needs leadership backed by extensive experience and strong credentials.

How does your vision for the AU differ from previous ones, and what key reforms do you plan to implement to modernize the institution?

The African Union has built on decades of work. The Organization of African Unity (OAU) was established in 1963, and the African Union was created 20 years ago. Structures have been put in place, policies and strategies have been adopted by Heads of State, and priorities have been defined. The key question is: What leadership and governance approach can the new Commission bring to enhance these achievements? There are numerous challenges, particularly in peace and security. Unconstitutional changes of government have increased, internal crises persist, and tensions between countries remain unresolved. Our goal of «silencing the guns» by 2020-2030 has not yet been achieved—we initially aimed for 2020 and had to extend the deadline. Furthermore, since 2019, the African

Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) has been established with several supporting structures. My vision will focus on key priorities, starting with identifying effective ways to silence the guns. How? There are operational gaps in institutions such as early warning and conflict prevention mechanisms within the AU Commission, which operate 24/7 but have not yielded tangible results. We must reassess the dysfunctions within these structures.

Another critical issue is the African Standby Force. Despite its existence, it has not been deployed effectively in crisis zones. The early warning mechanism must become fully functional, and Africa must have a standby force capable of intervening in humanitarian crises, conflicts, and displacement situations - such as the current crisis in Sudan, where millions have been displaced while the continent waits for action.

Financing is another pressing issue. Africa relies heavily on external partners for its development programs. The UN Security Council's Resolution 2719, advocated by African members, was a significant step toward securing UN funding for 75% of AU peacekeeping

operations. However, the remaining 25% must still be mobilized, and even this portion has become a significant challenge for African states.

A 2017 reform required countries to contribute 2% in statutory levies on eligible imports to fund the AU. If this had been fully implemented, the AU would not face financial challenges yet only 17 countries have enforced this measure. Additionally, 40% of the AU's budget is financed by just five countries: Nigeria, Algeria, Morocco, South Africa, and Egypt. This imbalance must be addressed. We need a fairer, more equitable financial distribution among member states to ensure sustainability. Addressing these financial challenges is critical for achieving tangible results and enhancing Africa's performance on the global stage.

What is your strategy for mobilizing resources and investing in critical infrastructure for the continent's development?

The AU has a flagship program, AU-NEPAD, which we will leverage to drive progress. Africa suffers from a lack of infrastructure, both in quantity and quality. Intra-African trade is cur-

rently at 18%, whereas trade between Africa and the rest of the world exceeds 80%. Yet, we aspire to create a single market by 2063.

How do we ensure that intra-African trade meets expectations, generates wealth, and creates jobs - especially for young Africans risking their lives at sea in search of better opportunities?

Infrastructure development between African states is essential. However, there are also non-tariff barriers, border tensions, smuggling, human trafficking, and armed militia activities—such as those in eastern Congo - that disrupt normal economic activities. These barriers must be urgently addressed.

Key infrastructure projects, such as the African high-speed rail network, require significant funding. Some sections, such as Dakar-Bamako, are already operational. We also have plans for an African Space Agency, a continental cybersecurity structure, and a commodities exchange for agricultural and mineral resources.

Currently, prices for key commodities such as cocoa and coffee are set in London. Africa must establish its own institutions to capture more value from its resources.

Additionally, we must develop an African central bank, an African investment bank, and an African monetary fund. These institutions will strengthen intra-African trade and reduce dependence on external entities like the IMF, which often operates with political considerations. Alternative African-led financial mechanisms are essential.

Africa is not lacking in financial resources - it lacks the necessary structures and trust. Building trust between AU member states, the Commission, and regional economic communities will enable us to mobilize resources effectively.

How do you plan to promote good governance and fight corruption within AU member states?

Africa has adopted a Charter on Democracy, Good Governance, and the Rule of Law. Institutions such as the African Commission on Human and People's Rights and the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights exist, but



they must be empowered. Member states must be willing to relinquish some sovereignty in key areas. A continental organization cannot serve the collective interests of African people if each country remains insular and reluctant to share responsibilities.

The AU's anti-corruption institutions, such as the African Union Advisory Board on Corruption, must be granted full operational capacity. If the AU Commission functions effectively, it should be able to persuade member states to allow these institutions to operate without interference, ensuring that

anti-corruption efforts yield concrete results.

What measures do you propose to strengthen Africa's resilience to environmental and climate challenges?

\In September 2023, Africa held a climate summit in Nairobi to harmonize its positions. Africa suffers the most from climate change, experiencing severe droughts, floods, and natural disasters—yet it is not responsible for global pollution.

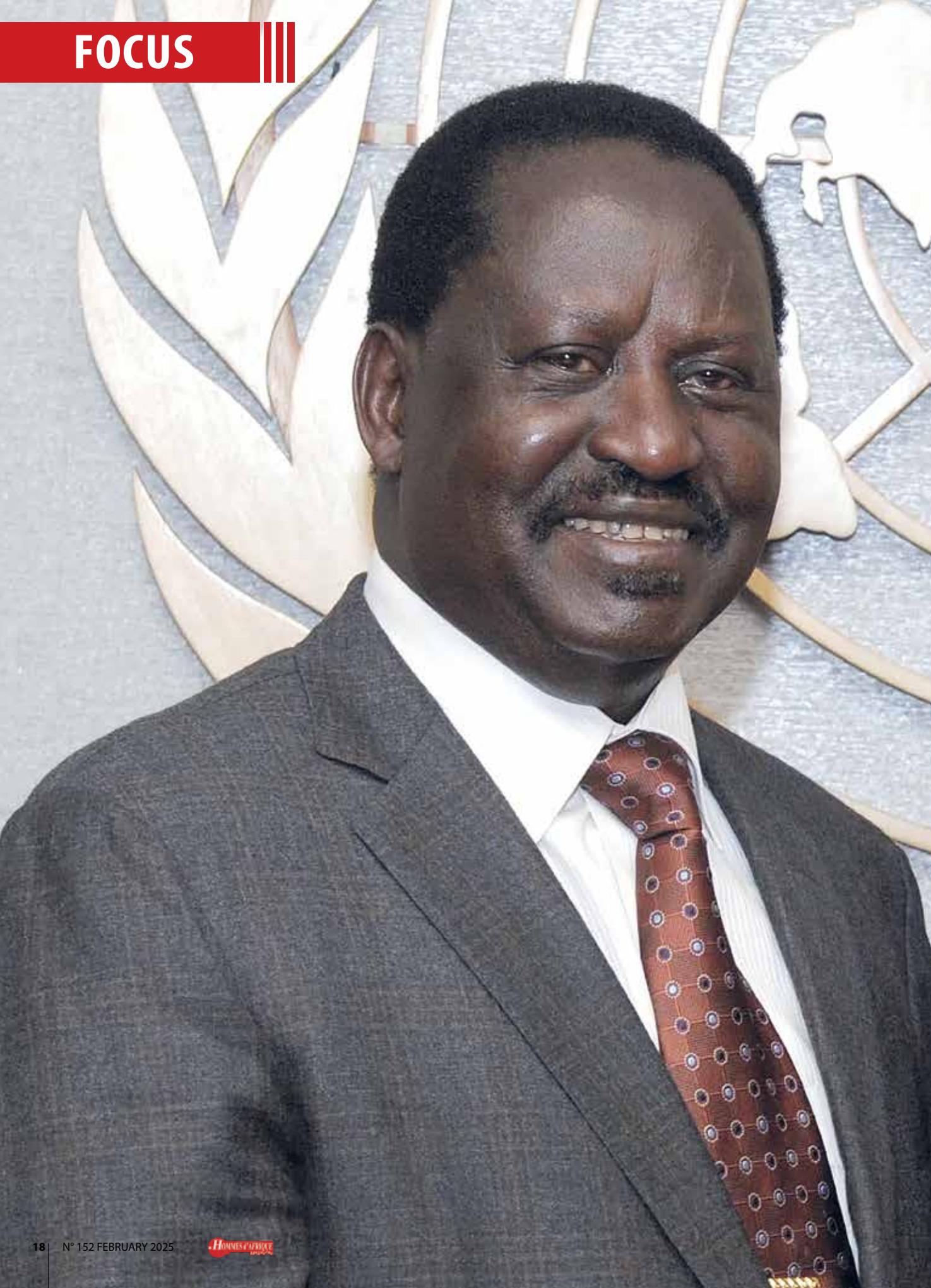
At COP meetings, Africa speaks with one voice, but its demands are often ignored. Despite promises of \$100 billion in climate financing made at the 2015 Paris Summit, not a single dollar has reached Africa. We must hold industrialized nations accountable for their commitments.

Your final words, Minister?

\After over 30 years in diplomacy, I believe the time has come for me to dedicate my experience to Africa. That is why I am running for the presidency of the AU Commission. If African Heads of State elect me in February 2025, I will be fully committed to this mission.

Interview with Samirat Ntiaze

WE MUST DEVELOP AN AFRICAN CENTRAL BANK, AN AFRICAN INVESTMENT BANK, AND AN AFRICAN MONETARY FUND.



RAILA ODINGA

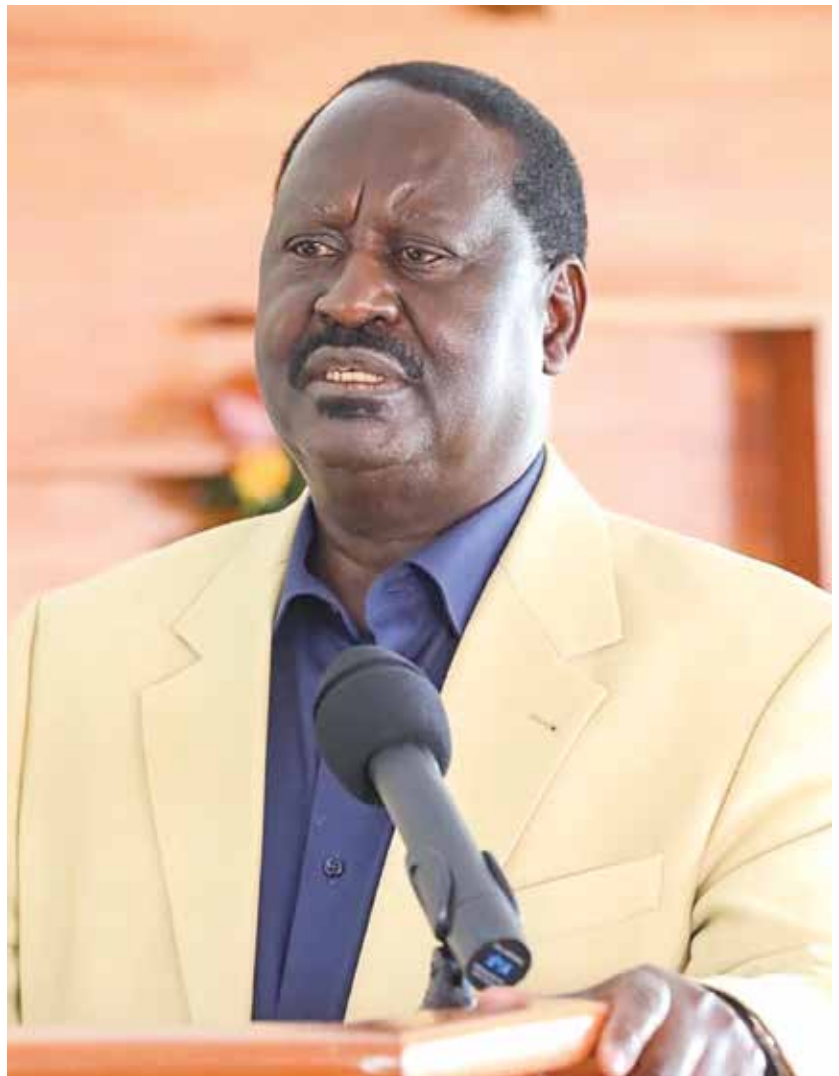
The Champion of The Financial Autonomy of the African Union

The Kenyan candidate for the presidency of the African Union (AU) Commission is an emblematic figure in his country's and pan-African politics. His campaign is based on a dual expertise, business and politics, but also on a vision, centered on economic autonomy and regional solidarity.

A few weeks before the election for the presidency of the AU Commission to be held during the 36th session of the summit of heads of state and government of this pan-African entity, Raila Odinga, one of the most influential figures in Kenyan and pan-African politics, undertook a tour of North Africa to rally new support for his candidacy. With his dual experience, in business and politics, as his hobbyhorse, as well as his unwavering commitment to democracy, continental unity and sustainable development.

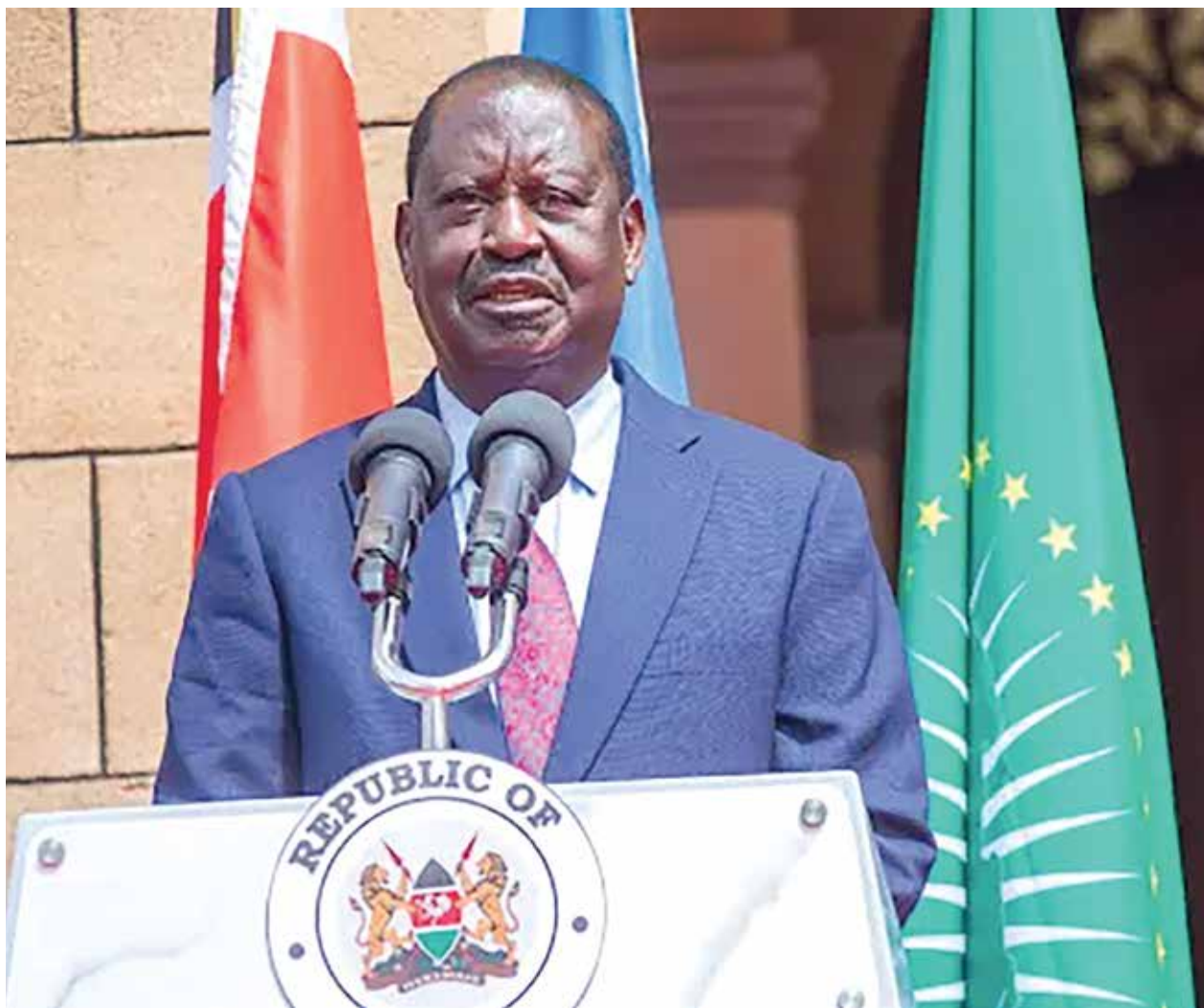
A Leadership Journey for Unity

It could not have been otherwise for this son of Jaramogi Oginga Odinga, hero of Kenya's independence and ardent defender of Pan-Africanism, who was immersed there since his childhood, in Kisumu. After studying in Germany and the United States, Raila returned to Kenya to



engage in politics. His career has been marked by a constant fight for the democratization of the country and for national unity. In 2008, after a major electoral crisis, he played a decisive role

in the formation of a coalition government, helping to stabilize Kenya at a time of deep tensions. His commitment to political reforms, in particular through the constitutional review of 2010,



helped to strengthen decentralization and improve the country's democratic governance. These reforms have enabled Kenya to better respond to contemporary challenges in terms of social justice, inclusiveness and human rights.

Financial Independence of the AU

Candidate for the presidency of the African Union Commission, Raila Odinga proposes a vision based on unity, economic independence and environmental sustainability for the continent.

During his recent visits to North Africa, he stressed the need to strengthen intra-African cooperation and maximize trade through the full implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). In his eyes, this agreement is a crucial lever to increase trade relations between African countries and reduce the continent's dependence on external economies.

In an increasingly interconnected global context, Raila Odinga is convinced that Africa must take charge of its own resources to ensure its development. "Africa must mobilize its own resources

to guarantee the financial independence of the African Union," he said, stressing the importance of freeing the continent from external financial dependence. His program also includes a strong environmental dimension. Committed to the fight against climate change, Raila Odinga supports initiatives such as the Desert to Power project, which harnesses the solar potential of the Sahara to provide energy to the entire continent. This approach aims to promote green economic growth, capable of addressing environmental challenges while supporting Africa's

industrialization.

Youth and Women's involvement

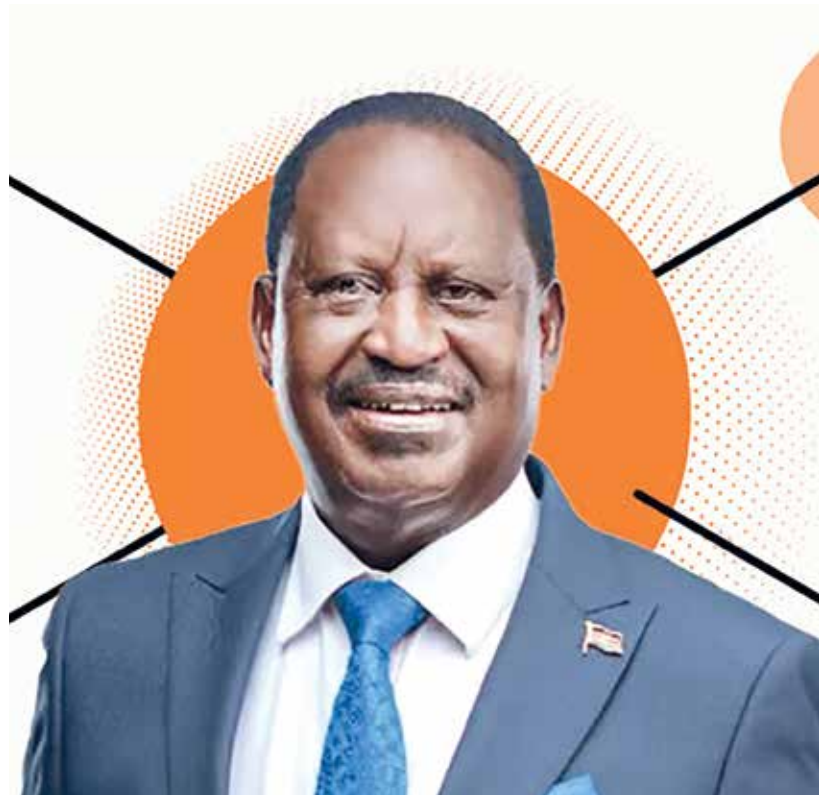
Another priority for Raila Odinga is the inclusion of youth and women in the African economy. "The economic inclusion of youth and women is essential to unlocking the continent's full potential," he said. He advocates for policies that promote access to education, vocational training and entrepreneurship, particularly for these often-marginalized groups.

At the same time, he advocates for the establishment of an economic environment conducive to innovation and job creation, particularly through initiatives aimed at supporting young entrepreneurs and women in the technology and digital sector.

A Champion of Peace and Stability

Raila Odinga is also recognized for his role in promoting peace and stability in Africa. He has played a key role in mediating conflicts in East Africa and beyond, working alongside the African Union to develop African solutions to regional crises. He has supported peace initiatives in Somalia, South Sudan and other parts of the continent, always emphasizing the importance of African solutions to conflicts that directly affect the well-being of populations.

One of his flagship projects, as the African Union High Representative for Infrastructure, is the development of an infrastructure network linking the whole of Africa, including through the Cairo-Cape Town Transcontinental Highway project, designed to facilitate trade



and strengthen regional integration.

A Pan-African Coalition in Support

Raila Odinga enjoys the support of several influential African

Committed to the fight against climate change, Raila Odinga supports initiatives such as the Desert to Power project, which harnesses the solar potential of the Sahara to provide energy to the entire continent.

leaders, a major asset in his quest to lead the African Union Commission. Among these supporters is William Ruto, the current president of Kenya. Paul Kagame, president of Rwanda and recognized for his leadership in development and governance, joins this coalition. The president of Tanzania, Samia Suluhu Hassan, also shares this vision. Convinced of the importance of regional cooperation for the sustainable development of East Africa and the continent as a whole. Beyond East Africa, Raila also benefits from the support of Bassirou Diomaye Faye, who strengthens his credibility with West African countries. The Senegalese particularly welcomes Odinga's vision for a united Africa capable of recovering by its own strength.

Valery Fougbe



VICE PRESIDENCY OF THE AUC

LATIFA AKHARBACH

A Pan-African Vision for the African Union

Latifa Akharchach, former Moroccan ambassador and diplomacy expert, is a key figure in the African political and diplomatic landscape. With over 20 years of experience in government and international spheres, she embodies the image of a visionary leader, resolutely focused on the future of Africa. Her credo: «to lead change within the AUC in the service of a more efficient and influential African Union». Currently a candidate for the position of Vice-President of the African Union (AU) Commission, her career and commitments make her a leading figure in pan-African diplomacy.

An exemplary diplomatic and political career

Latifa Akharchach has held several prestigious positions throughout her career, notably serving as Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, where she effectively advanced Morocco's diplomatic ambitions on the international stage. Her tenure was marked by rare pragmatism and an exceptional ability to build bridges between nations and cultures. As an ambassador, she successfully defended Morocco's interests while strengthening ties with

African and international partners. Her expertise in multilateral diplomacy and crisis management has been widely recognized by her peers.

Beyond her diplomatic roles, Akharchach has also led national and continental institutions, demonstrating a remarkable ability to turn ideas into concrete actions. This transformational leadership has been key to her success in managing major reforms at both national and international levels. Her commitment to good governance and transparency has been a distinctive hallmark throughout her career.

**AKHARBACH
AIMS TO
FACILITATE THE
ACTIVE
PARTICIPATION
OF YOUTH
AND WOMEN IN
AGENDA 2063.**

A Forward-Looking Vision for the African Union

Latifa Akharchach's ambition is to actively contribute to the reform of the African Union Commission, with the goal of transforming it into a more efficient and influential institution. She aims, for instance, to strengthen the AU's financial autonomy by implementing innovative financing mechanisms and optimizing the use of internal resources. Transparency and rigorous financial management would be at the core of her agenda. In her view, a financially autonomous African Union would be better equipped to fulfill its missions and realize the continent's aspirations.

Akharchach also seeks to enhance the AU's decision-making and execution capabilities. She proposes the establishment of a strategic data collection and analysis system to enable swift, informed, and coordinated decision-making. Additionally, she plans to leverage the digitalization of internal processes to improve the efficiency and transparency of the Union's structures.

Youth and Women at the Heart of Her Agenda

Latifa Akharchach's vision goes beyond institutional reform; she



places inclusivity at the center of her priorities. African youth and women hold a prominent place in her program. She believes it is essential to strengthen the connection between the AU and these key demographic groups. Akharbach aims to facilitate the active participation of youth and women in Agenda 2063, an ambitious framework designed to transform Africa by 2063. Her plan includes awareness campaigns targeting young people, the diaspora, and women, encouraging greater involvement in the continent's development process. Moreover, Latifa Akharbach

intends to promote the integration of youth and women into decision-making processes by fostering synergies among the Union's various structures and networks. This inclusive approach will ensure that public policies are better tailored to the specific needs of these groups while securing their active participation in policy implementation.

Pan-African Leadership and a Passionate Advocacy for Women's Rights

Latifa Akharbach is, above all, a staunch advocate for the rights of

African women. Throughout her career, she has not only championed greater inclusion of women in decision-making bodies but has also worked tirelessly to promote Africa's image on the global stage. Her commitment to women's rights is inseparable from her advocacy for women's empowerment, the promotion of gender equality, and the fight against discrimination.

In a continent where women are often relegated to secondary roles, Latifa Akharbach stands as a model of success. Her journey is a testament to the untapped potential of African

women, capable of driving major transformations at both national and continental levels. She embodies the hope of an Africa where women assume leadership roles across all sectors, including governance.

Expertise in the Service of Reform

Another key pillar of Latifa Akharbach's agenda is her determination to implement optimized human resource management within the African Union (AU). She proposes a precise planning of the needs of the Union's various structures to achieve optimal performance based on merit and competence. Akharbach also aims to streamline the division of labor among AU bodies to eliminate inefficiencies that hinder the organization's effectiveness.

Her plan includes the creation of a comprehensive mechanism for monitoring and evaluating the performance of the Union's projects and programs, ensuring that set objectives are met on time and with the desired impact. She thus emphasizes rigor in the implementation of public policies and the measurement of their outcomes.

Leadership Aligned with AU Objectives

Latifa Akharbach's program is fully aligned with the African Union's reform objectives. Her strategic vision for the AU is based on an integrated approach, strengthening coordination among the Union's departments and structures. For her, a more effective and coherent African Union will enable Africa to position itself as a key player on the



international stage, capable of addressing the continent's economic, political, and social challenges.

Latifa Akharbach is an outstanding candidate for the position of Vice President of the African

Union Commission. Her extensive experience in diplomacy and international affairs, transformational leadership, commitment to good governance, and dedication to the empowerment of women and youth in Africa make her an essential figure to lead the AU's reforms. Her election would mark another step toward a stronger, more united, and more determined African Union ready to tackle the challenges of the 21st century.

In this context of transition and reform, Akharbach embodies the promise of a future where Africa fully takes charge of its destiny—a future where the voices of women and youth resonate in all major continental discussions, and where Africa's great ambitions are driven by a team of visionary leaders.

Sylvestre TETCHIADA

HER COMMITMENT FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS IS INSEPARABLE FROM HER ADVOCACY FOR WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT, THE PROMOTION OF GENDER EQUALITY, AND THE FIGHT AGAINST DISCRIMINATION.



ANGOLA / A MORE EQUITABLE AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETY

ONE OF THE PRIORITIES OF PRESIDENT JOAO LOURENCO

On August 9, 2024, Angolan President João Lourenço emphasized his commitment to promoting the empowerment of women during the Conference of the Organization of African First Ladies for Development (OPDAD) held in Luanda.

This initiative, aligned with the African Union's Agenda, seeks to implement in the long term the African Union's Strategy for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, as well as the United Nations' 2030 Agenda.

On the same day, President Lourenço stated that building an ideal model of inclusive and egalitarian societies requires the combined efforts of public institutions, private sectors, and civil society, where women and girls play a crucial role. This statement was made during the OPDAD Conference in Luanda. The President of the Republic of Angola continued his efforts to promote a more equitable and inclusive society by declaring that providing equal opportunities for learning and training to girls and women will equip them with tools to fully harness their potential and contribute to the creation of an inclusive and dynamic society.

By prioritizing a more equitable

and inclusive society in his development agenda, President João Lourenço aims to address a longstanding barrier to Angola's true development. A 2023 Afrobarometer survey clearly revealed the significant persistence of gender-based violence.

João Lourenço, by prioritizing a more equitable and inclusive society in his development program, wants to correct a wound that has long remained a handicap.

According to the survey, 23% of respondents identified gender-based violence as the most pressing equality issue in Angola between 2021 and 2023, with more than 500 sexual crimes reported during the first quarter of 2022. In response to this situation and with the goal of advancing his country's development, President Lourenço called on the entire community to place special emphasis on issues affecting women, while promoting

values of harmony and coexistence.

«We must always keep in mind the lessons of recent human history, which show us that relationships between men based on the idea of superiority, such as slavery in the past, racism, and religious fundamentalism today, do not contribute in any way to the social harmony needed to unite everyone's efforts in favor of progress and development,» said President João Lourenço during the Conference of African First Ladies for Development (OPDAD) in Luanda in August 2024.

It should be noted that this conference, which was elevated by the presence of the Angolan President João Lourenço, was concluded under the slogan «We Are All Equal.» This slogan marks the beginning of the parity campaign aimed at raising awareness about building a more equitable and inclusive society.

Through this campaign, President João Lourenço urges the implementation of education that promotes respect, equality, and diversity in order to combat gender stereotypes and initiate rational development in Angola.

***Ferdinand GADE,
Special Envoy to Angola***

Morocco: A Driving Force for a Resilient and Integrated Africa



Morocco, a key player in African development, has today emerged as one of the main drivers of the continent's economic and political integration. If Africa aspires to a resilient, prosperous, and interconnected future, the Kingdom of Morocco seems to have found a formula that combines proactive diplomacy, strategic investments, and South-South cooperation. This ambition revolves around several key areas: African diplomacy, industrialization, energy transition, and vocational training. These sectors, where

Morocco plays a leading role, are now seen as crucial levers for building a united and developed Africa.

Proactive Diplomacy in Service of African Unity

Moroccan diplomacy has gradually established itself as a catalyst for Pan-African cooperation. Morocco's return to the African Union (AU) in 2017, after more than three decades of absence, symbolizes the country's desire to actively contribute to the construction of a united Africa. By facilitating dialogues between

states, supporting Pan-African initiatives, and playing a mediation role in numerous conflicts, Morocco has positioned itself as a central actor in the regional integration process.

Saadeddine El Othmani, former Prime Minister of Morocco, highlighted this vision a few years ago, saying: "Morocco has always had a clear vision for Africa, based on solidarity, cooperation, and regional integration. We firmly believe that Africa's future lies in its ability to unite, share its resources, and develop solutions adapted to contemporary challenges." Through its diplo-

macy and strategic partnerships, Morocco is working toward a more cohesive and united continent.

Industrialization: A Vital Challenge for African Development

Industrialization remains a major challenge for Africa, a continent still largely dependent on raw materials. Morocco, through a diversified economic policy, actively supports Africa's industrialization. With major financial institutions such as Attijariwafa Bank and Banque Centrale Populaire, Morocco facilitates access to financing for African businesses. This contribution goes beyond Morocco's borders: its banks have established a presence in many African countries, contributing to financial inclusion.

In the agricultural sector, Morocco also plays a key role. Through the Office Chérifien des Phosphates (OCP), Morocco supports the agriculture of many African countries by providing fertilizers and sharing expertise in irrigation and modern agricultural techniques. Nizar Baraka, Minister of Equipment, Transport, Logistics, and Water, emphasizes: "The industrialization of Africa is essential for its development. Morocco, with its initiatives in renewable energy and agriculture, is showing the way."

In other words, industrialization is not just an economic transformation but a driving force for development across all sectors, from finance to agriculture.

A Model for a Green Africa

Morocco is today a pioneer in the energy transition in Africa. The country has successfully positioned itself as a leader in renewable energy, with emblematic projects such as the Noor Solar Power Plant, one of the largest solar farms in the world. However, this

Moroccan model is not limited to its borders. The Kingdom shares its expertise and technologies with its African neighbors: Mauritania, Senegal, Mali, and Côte d'Ivoire have benefited from solar projects, with Moroccan expertise in the development and management of energy infrastructures.

Morocco's vision of sustainable energy is part of a Pan-African approach. The country supports the continent's energy integration by fostering partnerships and

Morocco's vision for sustainable energy is part of a pan-African approach...

interconnected projects. "South-South cooperation is essential to strengthen the integration of our continent and enable it to develop autonomously," states the Minister Director of AMCI. Through these transnational projects, Morocco is actively contributing to the building of a green and sustainable Africa.

AMCI: Morocco's Agency Serving Vocational Training in Africa

Beyond infrastructure construction and economic partnerships, Morocco has also invested in the training of human resources in Africa. The Moroccan Agency for International Cooperation

(AMCI) is at the heart of this strategy, implementing training programs designed to develop the professional and technical skills of Africans. These programs, which cover areas as varied as public administration, sustainable agriculture, and engineering, are training generations of African leaders capable of addressing development challenges.

Mustapha Baitas, Minister Delegate for Relations with Parliament and Civil Society, highlights the importance of this approach: "Africa must be the driver of its own development. As a country integrated into this collective vision, Morocco focuses on improving transport infrastructure, vocational training, and strategic partnerships to strengthen the resilience of African nations."

This approach allows Africa not to rely solely on external aid but to build a sustainable and autonomous future with local expertise.

Through its proactive diplomacy, strategic investments, and leadership in sectors such as industrialization, sustainable energy, and training, Morocco embodies a model for Africa in the 21st century. Its commitment to strengthening regional integration and promoting South-South cooperation is an example for other African nations to follow. While these initiatives mark a turning point in the continent's development, they also pave the way for a more connected, resilient, and prosperous Africa.

By 2050, it is conceivable that Africa, thanks to economic integration strategies and strengthened partnerships, will become a dynamic and unified region. Morocco, through its concrete actions, demonstrates that this vision is within the continent's reach, provided that collective efforts and sustainable commitments are made.

S.T.

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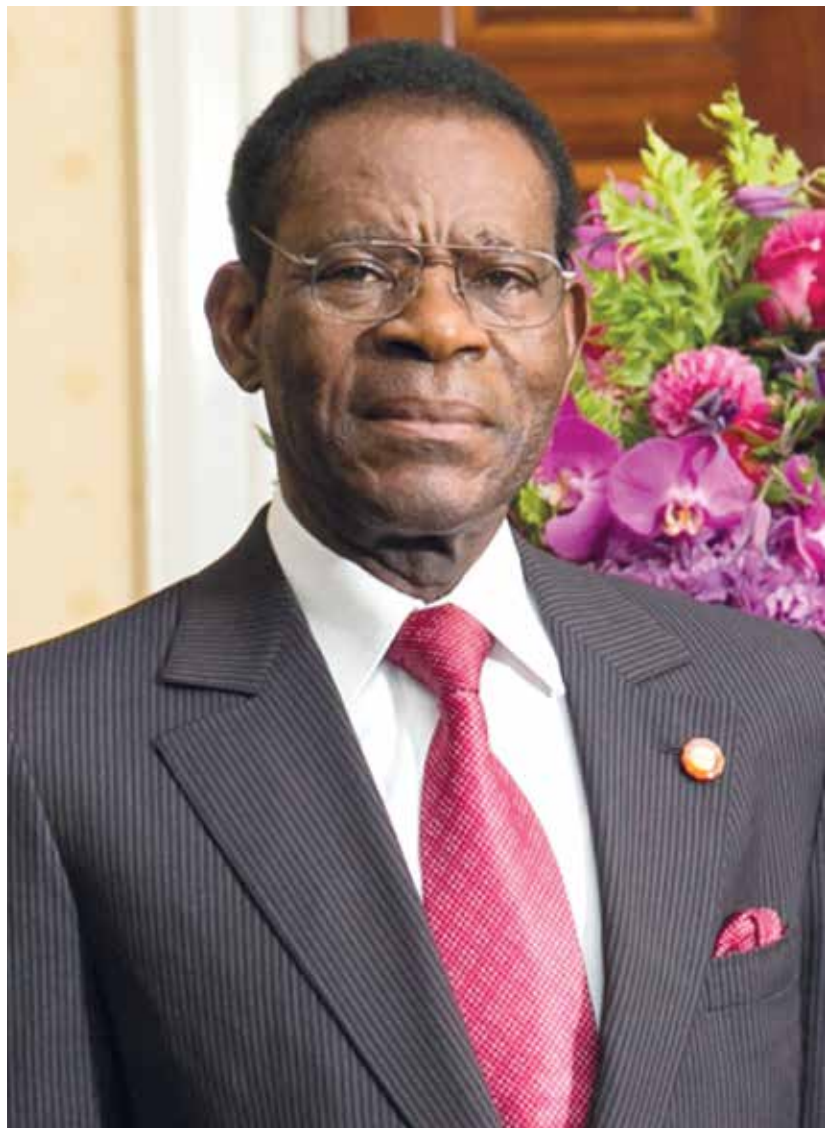
Innovating to Diversify, an African Model in Progress

Equatorial Guinea, located on the west coast of Central Africa, has experienced remarkable economic development since the discovery of oil in the 1990s. However, like many other African nations heavily reliant on natural resources, its economy remains vulnerable to fluctuations in oil prices. To ensure sustainable growth, the state has implemented a series of initiatives aimed at diversifying its economy, particularly through investments in agriculture, infrastructure, tourism, and renewable energy. These efforts make Equatorial Guinea an interesting model for other African countries seeking to reduce their dependence on hydrocarbons and build resilient, inclusive economies.

The country, rich in oil and gas resources, is one of the most prosperous in the region, but also one of the most vulnerable due to its heavy reliance on the oil industry. Oil accounts for approximately 80% of the country's GDP and more than 90% of its exports. This dependence creates instability, particularly in the face of falling global oil prices. After a period of prosperity in the early 2000s, marked by impressive growth rates, Equatorial Guinea began to feel the effects of declining oil prices in the 2010s. Recognizing this, the government understood the need to diversify its economy to ensure a stable and prosperous future for its citizens.

Investments in Agriculture: A Strategic Sector for Food Self-Sufficiency

Agriculture, long neglected in favor of oil extraction, is now one of the government's top priorities. With a favorable cli-



mate, vast arable lands, and a still-significant rural population, Equatorial Guinea has many assets to develop a modern and competitive agricultural sector. However, challenges remain, particularly the lack of infrastructure, training, and

financing. To address this, the state has implemented policies encouraging agriculture, including the creation of agricultural zones and incentive programs for private investors. The government is working to promote the cultivation of

staple products such as rice, cocoa, palm oil, and vegetables to reduce reliance on food imports. At the same time, agro-industrial projects have been launched to locally process agricultural products and create added value. These initiatives aim to increase productivity, improve food security, and create jobs in rural areas. A notable example is the Mongomo Agro-Industrial Park project, which aims to promote value-added agriculture by combining production and processing on-site. This project represents a model of sustainable development that not only diversifies the economy but also fights poverty in rural areas.

Infrastructure: The Foundation for Sustainable Growth

Infrastructure plays a crucial role in the economic diversification of any country. Equatorial Guinea has recognized this challenge and is making substantial investments in the development of its infrastructure to support economic diversification. The government has launched several large-scale projects to modernize transport, energy, and telecommunications networks. The development of the Malabo port and the construction of a new port in Bata are key initiatives aimed at strengthening the country's logistical capabilities and paving the way for regional and international trade expansion. Additionally, investments are being made to modernize the road and rail networks, facilitating the movement of goods and people throughout the country. Improving energy infrastructure, particularly through the construction of new power plants, is also essential to support industrial diversification and attract foreign investment. A more reliable energy sector would enable businesses in non-oil sectors, such as manufacturing and agro-industry, to thrive.

Tourism: A Booming Sector

Tourism is another key sector in Equatorial Guinea's economic diversification strategy. The country, with its diverse landscapes ranging from sandy beaches to lush mountains, holds significant tourism potential. However, the

sector had not been fully exploited until recently due to inadequate infrastructure and low international visibility. The government has undertaken a series of initiatives to transform the tourism sector into an economic growth engine. This includes efforts to improve tourist infrastructure, such as modern hotels, resorts, and tourist complexes in coastal regions. Marketing campaigns have also been launched to attract international tourists, particularly from Africa, Europe, and Asia. Additionally, Equatorial Guinea has implemented reforms to ease access for foreign visitors, including simplifying visa procedures. Tourism development is also seen as a key lever for job creation

THE GOVERNMENT OF EQUATORIAL GUINEA HAS UNDERSTOOD THAT ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION CANNOT BE ACHIEVED ALONE...

in related sectors, such as hospitality, catering, transportation, and local crafts. Environmental preservation and sustainable tourism are another priority of the government, positioning Equatorial Guinea as a potential example of environmentally respectful tourism development.

Renewable Energy: A Vision for the Future

While the country continues to benefit from its oil resources, Equatorial Guinea is also aware of the importance of the energy transition. The country is investing in renewable energy, particularly in hydropower, solar, and wind energy. Equatorial Guinea has considerable natural resources in the field of hydropower, with several projects underway to develop hydroelectric plants. The government has also established

an energy transition plan to reduce dependence on fossil fuels and encourage the adoption of renewable energy. Tax incentives and subsidies are offered to companies investing in solar and wind energy, which could allow the country to diversify its energy sources while contributing to environmental protection.

Government and Private Initiatives: Essential Cooperation

The government of Equatorial Guinea understands that economic diversification cannot be achieved alone. That is why it has actively sought to encourage public-private partnerships (PPPs) to finance major infrastructure and industry projects. Several private companies, both local and international, are involved in financing and managing agricultural, tourism, and energy projects. Equatorial Guinea has also signed several cooperation agreements with foreign countries and international institutions to obtain financing and technical advice. Foreign investments have been attracted by a more favorable business environment, including the creation of special economic zones that offer tax incentives and advantages for investors.

A Model for Africa

Although recent, Equatorial Guinea's efforts at diversification make it a potential example for other African countries that, like it, depend on raw material exports. Through visionary policies, investments in key sectors, and a commitment to a greener and more inclusive economy, Equatorial Guinea demonstrates that it is possible to transition from an oil-dependent economy to a more diversified model. The country still faces challenges, particularly in governance, improving the business environment, and combating poverty. However, its initiatives and diversification strategy offer valuable lessons for other African nations. Equatorial Guinea thus embodies the hope of a more resilient, inclusive, and sustainable economic future for the African continent.

S.T.

EQUATORIAL GUINEA

Infrastructure for Development



Equatorial Guinea has experienced a remarkable transformation of its infrastructure over the past two decades. Far from being an isolated phenomenon, this evolution is part of a broader strategic vision aimed at equipping the country with modern structures capable of supporting its economic diversification. Thanks to oil revenues, the Guinean government has made massive investments in key sectors such as ports, roads, airports, and even ambitious urban projects, including the city of Sipopo. These infrastructures are not only a means of improving the quality of life for citizens but also of strengthening the business climate and promoting inclusive and sustainable development. In this

sense, Equatorial Guinea is gradually establishing itself as a model of urban transformation and infrastructure development in Africa.

Modern Infrastructure Projects: A Strategic Priority

At the heart of Equatorial Guinea's economic diversification policies lies a major infrastructure development program. This ambitious project aims to prepare the country for the post-oil era by diversifying economic activities and providing favorable conditions for the development of non-oil sectors. One of the major initiatives is the modernization of transport infrastructure. The country has built new ports, modern roads, and international airports to facilitate trade and make

economic zones more accessible. These infrastructures have a dual impact: they enhance the country's competitiveness as a commercial hub while supporting the growth of alternative economic sectors such as agriculture, tourism, and industry.

Ports: Strategic Axes for Regional and International Trade

The ports of Equatorial Guinea play a key role in the country's infrastructure strategy. The port of Malabo, the country's economic capital, is one of the major projects in this domain. This port has been expanded and modernized to accommodate large-capacity cargo ships, thereby facilitating international trade. It has become a central hub for trade between Equatorial

Guinea and the rest of the world, particularly Europe and Asia.

Moreover, a new port is under construction in Bata, the country's second-largest city. This port aims to strengthen trade with other African countries while contributing to regional integration, particularly within the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC). These investments in port infrastructure are not only beneficial for the Guinean economy but also position the country as a strategic transit point for goods in the Gulf of Guinea region.

Modern Roads and Airports: Connecting the Country and Stimulating Investment

In parallel with these port projects, the country has launched a series of road and airport infrastructure works. The national road network has been significantly improved to facilitate travel within the country, particularly to rural areas, and to encourage domestic tourism. Modern roads enable smoother transportation of goods and people, directly contributing to the growth of the private sector and reducing transportation costs.

As for airports, Equatorial Guinea has made great strides with the modernization of Malabo International Airport and the construction of a new airport in Bata. These infrastructures allow the country to better connect with the rest of the world, attract foreign investments, and facilitate tourism flows. Renovated and expanded, Malabo International Airport is now capable of handling a larger number of passengers and meeting international security and comfort standards. It plays a crucial role in the growth of tourism and business.

Sipopo: A Model of Modern and Sustainable City

Among the most emblematic projects of Equatorial Guinea is the city of Sipopo, an urban development designed to embody modernity and sustainable development. Located near Malabo, this new city was built to accommodate

modern infrastructure and a pleasant living environment, with residential neighborhoods, luxury hotels, offices, as well as recreational and commercial facilities. Sipopo is now the symbol of an Equatorial Guinea undergoing transformation.

The city was conceived as an economic and tourist hub, diversifying the country's activities and attracting investments. The project was initiated with the goal of offering a higher quality of life to the population and creating a

THE REHABILITATED ROADS MAKE TRAVEL EASIER AND REDUCE TRAVEL TIMES.

business-friendly environment. Sipopo, therefore, represents more than just urban expansion; it is a true laboratory for the country's economic transition.

Concrete Impact on Daily Life

Citizens and entrepreneurs in Equatorial Guinea often testify to the positive impact of infrastructure projects on their daily lives. For citizens, the modernization of transport and communication infrastructure has improved accessibility to public services and urban areas. Rehabilitated roads facilitate travel, reduce travel times, and improve market access for local producers, which has a direct impact on their productivity and well-being.

For entrepreneurs, the new infrastructures have created a more favorable investment environment. The modernization of ports and airports enables smoother trade exchanges, and spe-

cial economic zones offer attractive tax incentives for both local and foreign investors. An entrepreneur in the tourism sector, for example, noted that the construction of modern hotels and the facilitation of air travel have attracted an increasing number of tourists, thus stimulating his business and that of other local companies.

Infrastructures also allow businesses to reduce logistical costs, improve the competitiveness of their products, and access new markets. These testimonials illustrate the tangible impact of infrastructure projects on the country's economic development and on the lives of citizens.

A Model of Urban Transformation in Africa

The infrastructure projects in Equatorial Guinea position the country as a model for urban transformation in Africa. Far from being a simple accumulation of isolated projects, these infrastructures aim to create a coherent ecosystem where economic development, improved living conditions, and sustainability are the cornerstones of progress.

Equatorial Guinea thus shows the way for other African countries facing similar challenges. By adopting an integrated approach that combines infrastructure modernization with economic development, the country has succeeded in creating conditions favorable to sustainable growth. If Equatorial Guinea can maintain this momentum and build on its recent successes, it could become an example of urban transformation and infrastructure development for the entire sub-Saharan region.

Massive investments in infrastructure, combined with a clear vision for the future, enable Equatorial Guinea to position itself among the leaders in urban transformation in Africa. This demonstrates that with coherent policies and strong government commitment, countries with limited resources can achieve a true economic and social metamorphosis.

S.T.



African Fintechs Attracted 47% of Global Funds Raised in 2024

With USD 1.034 billion raised in 2024, start-ups operating in financial technology continue to dominate fundraising in Africa. They represent 47% of the capital captured by the continental ecosystem, compared to 42% in 2023, according to data from Africa: The Big Deal published on Monday, January 13, 2025. These performances place Fintech in the lead, ahead of the energy (USD 440 million) and transport/logistics (USD 288 million) sectors. However, the year 2024 has started off with difficulty for fintechs. In the first quarter, they had only attracted 23% of the funds raised, or USD 105 million. A figure that has fallen slightly to 22% (\$185 million) in the first half of the year. This decline coincided with significant fundraising in the transport and logistics sector, with \$100 million raised by Nigerian Moove and \$50 million raised by Benin's Spiro.

It was in the second half of the year that fintechs reversed the trend, driven by major operations, including \$110 million for Nigerian Moniepoint, \$157.5 million for Egyptian MNT-Halan and \$250 million for South African Tyme. These fundraisings are among the largest of the

year. But despite this resilience, African fintech has been facing a continued decline in capital raised since 2021.

That year, start-ups in the sector attracted \$2.4 billion, a figure that fell to \$1.8 billion in 2022, then to \$1.2 billion in 2023. This trend raises questions about the evolution of the sector. While fintechs remain attractive thanks to their key role in financial inclusion and innovation, they must deal with a more competitive environment and more selective investors. In addition, the rise of other sectors, such as energy and transport, could redefine investment priorities in Africa.

Thus, to maintain their attractiveness, African fintechs will have to innovate more, strengthen their profitability and explore new markets. This dynamic will be decisive for the future of the start-up ecosystem on the continent.

TO MAINTAIN THEIR ATTRACTIVENESS, AFRICAN FINTECHS WILL HAVE TO INNOVATE MORE, STRENGTHEN THEIR PROFITABILITY AND EXPLORE NEW MARKETS.

Bangda Bernard

CHINA-AFRICA

In 2024, Trade Exchanges Increase by 4.8%

There has also been a slight reduction in Africa's trade deficit with China. This does not reflect a change in the structure of African products exported to China, but rather is explained by the rise in prices of certain raw materials such as gold, copper, and coffee.

In 2024, the value of trade between China and Africa reached USD 295.56 billion, a 4.8% increase compared to 2023, according to data published by the General Administration of Customs of China.

The report reveals that "exports from China to African countries increased by 3.5% in the past year, reaching USD 178.76 billion, while Chinese imports from the continent totaled USD 116.79 billion, marking a 6.9% increase compared to 2023."

These figures also indicate that Africa's trade deficit with the Asian giant decreased to USD 61.93 billion in 2024, down from USD 64 billion in 2023. A closer analysis of the Chinese customs data shows that the structural imbalances characterizing bilateral trade relations persist. The reduction in the trade deficit is mainly due to the rise in the value of Chinese imports of certain raw materials, while African countries have been calling for more imports of processed goods in recent years. During the 9th edition of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, for example, urged Beijing to work on rebalancing its trade relations with the continent by addressing the structure of its imports.

In the English-language Chinese daily South China Morning Post,



Lauren Johnston, a China and Africa specialist and associate professor at the China Studies Centre of the University of Sydney, explained that "the rise in Chinese imports from African countries last year is primarily due to the increase in the prices of certain raw materials that are in high demand by China."

"The prices of gold, copper, cocoa, and coffee have risen. Last year, coffee reached its highest price since 1977, due to a combination of increased demand and adverse weather conditions in Brazil and Vietnam," she highlighted.

Tariff Reductions

China has also increased its imports of agricultural products from Africa, including avocados, soybeans, pineapples, chili peppers, cashew nuts, sesame seeds, and spices.

Chinese exports to Africa are primarily composed of finished products (textiles, clothing, machinery, electronics, etc.), while African imports to China are dominated by raw mate-

rials such as crude oil, copper, cobalt, and iron ore, resulting in a chronic trade surplus in favor of China.

In an effort to address this trade imbalance, Beijing has removed tariffs on 98% of products imported from 21 African countries, including Ethiopia, Guinea, Mozambique, Rwanda, and Togo. Since Sunday, December 1, 2024, China has also applied a zero tariff treatment on 100% of its imports from the least developed countries (LDCs) with which it has diplomatic relations, including 33 African countries. These successive tariff reductions follow the announcement by Chinese President Xi Jinping during the 8th Ministerial Conference of FOCAC held in Dakar in November 2021 that China intends to increase its imports of African agricultural products. The Chinese leader had then stated that the goal is to raise the total value of Chinese imports from Africa to USD 100 billion per year starting in 2022, and to USD 300 billion per year by 2035.

B.B

18TH SESSION OF DIRECTORS GENERAL OF STATISTICS IN BANJUL

Strong Recommendations Before the Evaluation in Cape Verde



One of the highlights of this meeting was the publication of the document called “Revenue Statistics in Africa 2024. Co-produced by the OECD, the African Union Commission through STATAFRIC and the African Tax Administration Forum (ATAF), “Revenue Statistics in Africa” is intended to be a rigorous publication aimed at providing reliable and comprehensive statistical data. Its first quality is that it presents truly detailed, harmonized and internationally comparable data.

Then, this publication presents a set of indicators that can “be used to measure the progress made by countries in mobilizing their domestic resources and developing their tax policy reforms,” indicate the designers. In the medium and long term, this publication intends to help African States perform in the implementation of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the African Union’s Agenda 2063. While all African countries are called upon to do so, the 2024 edition stipulates that the research and collection involved around thirty African countries. In the document,

statisticians will be able to view data on 36 countries: South Africa, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Cameroon, Ivory Coast, Equatorial Guinea, Egypt, Eswatini, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Morocco, Mauritius, Mauritania, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Uganda, DRC, Congo, Rwanda, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Chad, Togo, Tunisia and Zambia. Several recommendations were made at the end of the meeting with the hope of seeing things improve before the next meeting of the DGs of statistics

of African countries. Cape Verde offered to host the next meeting

The Vice President of Gambia opened the work of the 18th Session of the Committee of Directors General of National Statistical Offices

His Excellency Muhammed Jallow, Vice President of Gambia, enhanced the opening of the 18th session of the Committee of Directors General of National Statistical Offices of Africa with his presence. Taking the floor, he indicated that it was important for Africa to have its own statistics to face development challenges. According to Vice President Jallow, the theme of this session amply demonstrates the need to have figures and data specific to Africa. He recommended modernizing the statistics ecosystem in Africa to have reliable data to find solutions for efficient education.

Before him, several experts on the issue took turns at the podium. Director of Statistics in Gambia, Mr. Nyakassi B. Sanyang recalled that the role of statisticians is central today for the development of African societies. He therefore asked his peers to maintain high standards of work in order to preserve their leadership in the field. For him, this session will consist of putting in place the means to produce reliable statistics for resilient education in Africa. To this end, he welcomed the interactions with partners such as the United Nations and the World Bank. After him, the Director of Statistics in the Central African Republic, Oliver Chinganya, had his message delivered by a representative. In his speech, the latter praised the enormous progress recorded in the past decade. This meeting, he said, aims to improve what is done well and to find other avenues for solutions. He warned that if Africa does not get to work to find its statistics, Artificial Intelligence risks doing it for it. He recommended sharing experiences to do this.

Representing the AfDB, Mr. Samson Babatunse, echoed the same sentiment. According to him,



Africa cannot do without having its own statistics. He therefore recommended that the Directors General of Statistics do everything possible to set up a clear system providing flawless African data. In this quest, he reiterated the AfDB's support for STATAFRIC. Finally,

AFRICA CANNOT DO WITHOUT HAVING ITS OWN STATISTICS...

he called for a pooling of efforts to have «the Africa we want». Ms. Bozo Kebabonye, Acting Director of STATAFRIC, closed the series of interventions by highlighting the painstaking work of STATAFRIC. A grueling work but one that is beginning to bear fruit. In relation to the theme, she said that the organization she heads is making great efforts to fulfill the wish of Africans, namely to have statistics specific to Africa. This is the guarantee, for education for example, of a rational approach, in order to build well-trained citizens for tomorrow. The role of the press is essential in this process, she said. The first day was filled with several presentations including a report read and presented by Mr. Jose Awong Alene, Deputy Head of Coordination and Innovation of Statistical Systems at STATAFRIC.

*Valery FOUNGBE,
Special Envoy to Banjul*

DR JOSE AWONGA ALENE, DEPUTY HEAD OF STATISTICAL SYSTEMS COORDINATION AND INNOVATION AT STATAFRIC

«This year, we have developed the terms of reference that will help this group achieve the objectives of Sasha which aim to harmonize the production of statistics in Africa»

Dr. José, you organized the 18th session of the meeting of Directors General of Statistics in Africa. What are your thoughts on it?

I'm glad you asked me this question. Each year, we choose a theme linked to that of the African Union. For instance, in 2018, we focused on corruption, and this year, the focus was on education because we need to strengthen education on our continent, particularly in our schools.

How can this be achieved with statistics?

In the continental strategies we are implementing, we have a technical group related to education, science, and technology. This year, we developed terms of reference to help this group achieve the goals of the Sacha, which aims to harmonize the production of statistics in Africa, particularly in education. So, we want African Union member states to produce harmonized statistics in the education sector. For that, we presented these terms of reference this year to be adopted by the Committee of General Directors of Statistics in Africa.

After adoption, what are the good and bad performers in terms of education statistics production in Africa?

Among the champions, without being exhaustive, we can mention Gambia, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, Cameroon, and Côte d'Ivoire. Many countries on the continent are making efforts, but generally, there is a need to improve data collection, not only in education but across the board.

What problems do countries that produce good data face?

Most of them ask for technical and financial support. Overall, countries lack fun-



of their revenues for statistics. What is the current level of implementation of this decision?

It is difficult to establish a list on this matter. This is a decision from our heads of state and government to encourage countries to allocate a small budget for this cause. In terms of results, we have recognized that about twenty African countries are adhering to this decision. Other countries have already developed plans regarding this. Overall, we are progressing towards the effective implementation of this recommendation on the continent.

After this StatAfrique session, what needs to be improved in Africa, and what do you foresee for the meeting in São Tomé?

As a pan-African organization, we need to improve coordination both at our level and at the national level. We are aware that good national coordination impacts continental coordination. For São Tomé, after analyzing the report from the local organizing committee, we need to improve certain aspects based on the requests from our Directors General present here in Banjul. Our goal is to achieve these objectives by the end of 2025.

ding to implement their statistical policies in the education sector. Governments do not always allocate funds for the production of these data, or even for other sectors. That being said, on the technical side, we are always ready to assist these countries in data production in the education sector. However, we can never take the initiative on our own, as it is up to the countries to express their needs, as was the case with Malawi and Gabon for the 2024 population census.

In the Sacha document, it was decided that states should allocate 0.15%

Interview conducted by Valery FOUNGBE

RIPAMA TOGBO, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF STATISTICS AND DEMOGRAPHY OF BURKINA FASO

«Provide the various NSIs with statistics development funds, a guarantee of a certain independence in the production of statistics»

What is your perspective on the topics discussed?

The themes of database management, agriculture, education, etc., were discussed in Banjul. We capitalized on the exchange of national experiences. These experiences are not the same everywhere, nor within the subregions of our continent. We exchanged, in particular, on best practices to evolve together with the shared goal of improving statistical production in Africa. With Stat'Afrique in the lead, we were informed of the latest developments in best practices in statistics.

How do the statistics produced in your country help improve the quality of basic services (education, health, and agriculture)?

At first glance, we can say that there has been progress in recent years. Recently, on the occasion of African Statistics Day, as part of the Fasao project, with financial support from the World Bank, we were able to provide 1,184 computers to the Ministry of Education to improve the quality of statistical production in order to make informed decisions in the sector. These tools will reach the lowest levels of decentralization in the country, namely the Basic Education Circuits (CEB). At this level, the data collected should now flow smoothly to the central level. This will avoid long data transmission chains because the data collected at the CEB level is directly entered into the central server. With this system, we have taken a significant step in the production and use of educational data.

And in the health sector?

The situation is better than in education. In health, we practice decentralized data entry. At the health and social promo-



tion centers (CSPS), all monthly activity reports, which were once entered and sent to health districts, are now entered directly into smartphones. This data is then directly recorded in ANDOS and transmitted. At the health district level, only the quality and consistency are verified before being implemented directly into ANDOS, which is the national health database.

What about the agriculture sector, particularly in terms of mapping and addressing the insecurity faced by producers?

Indeed, we have a difficult security situation, but it is improving over time. What is being done with agricultural statistics mirrors what is done in education and health. Everything starts from the villages and flows to the central level, passing through municipalities with the support of

the personnel assigned to this task.

At the end of this meeting, what do you recommend for improving the reliability of statistical data in Africa?

We would like to call on regional and sub-regional organizations to focus on raising awareness among National Statistical Institutes (NSIs). Advocacy should also be directed at national authorities because we notice that several countries have not yet ratified the African Union's charter on statistics. Even for those that have ratified it, the focus should be on providing NSIs with funding for the development of statistics, which is crucial for ensuring a degree of independence in statistical production.

*Interview conducted by
Valery FOUNGBE*

PAUL HENRY NGUEMA MEYE, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF AFRISTAT

«We therefore have the ambition to ensure that statistics are produced early enough»

Could you provide a synoptic description of the institution you represent?

=Afristat is an intergovernmental organization based in Mali, with 22 member states in Sub-Saharan Africa. Our mandate is to provide technical support in terms of strengthening statistical capacity to our member states, particularly to those working in the statistical systems of the National Statistical Institutes (NSIs).

We were invited to the meeting of the Directors-General Committee of the NSI of the African Union member states as a major actor in statistics in Africa.

The importance of this type of event is multifaceted. First, it gives us the opportunity to coordinate our actions. Since we are many actors operating in the same countries, it is important that we know what others are planning to do so we can, where possible, avoid duplicating efforts. Financial and material resources are limited, so it's always better to rationalize their use.

Secondly, we have used our presence here to establish contacts, form technical and financial partnerships with other organizations. Some organizations, although not directly involved in statistics, have resources and can be facilitators in helping countries progress.

The last benefit is the opportunity that such meetings offer to work with international organizations on policy matters related to statistical production. We work with the African Union, the African Development Bank, and the UN Economic Commission for Africa to see how they can act as facilitators for decision-making at a high level, thus easing the workload of national experts.



How does Afristat implement the theme of this meeting?

For this theme, what interests us is our perspective as statisticians. Our role, as such, is to provide our decision-makers with the most relevant information to help them make the best decisions.

The issue, as we see it, is that we face significant challenges in producing education statistics.

Firstly, in terms of timing, because, as of 2024, there are countries where the most recent statistics date back to 2020, 2018, or even 2021. Our ambition is to ensure that statistics

are produced in a timely manner. The second challenge lies in quality. Indeed, many of our member states still produce partial statistics. It's always better to have them in their entirety, because in many of our member states, we have entered a decentralization process.

Decisions must now be made at the population level. However, if we base decisions on partial statistics, we may not take into account the concerns of some citizens.

Interview conducted by Valéry FOUNGBE

ANDRÉ MARIE KAZADI, COORDINATOR IN CHARGE OF TECHNICAL ISSUES FOR THE SECOND GENERAL POPULATION AND HOUSING CENSUS OF THE DRC

«If Africa wants to have quality statistics, with regular production, our governments should allocate substantial resources, as recommended by the African Charter on the matter.»

“Building Strong Statistics for Education in Africa” is the theme of this meeting. What is its relevance for your country?

It is very important for our country, the second largest country in Africa. I would like to note first that I am participating in this work on behalf of the Director General of the National Statistical Institute (INS).

The availability of statistics for education, one of the key development factors, is crucial. Through our participation, we are here to share our experience and benefit from the experiences of other countries to develop this sector, providing decision-makers with the essential information they need to facilitate decision-making.

How do statistics contribute to stronger education in the DRC?

By making information available, as I mentioned earlier, statistics facilitate decision-making. The role of statistics is to gather the information where it is found and bring it to the decision-makers. This is how the INS in my country contributes to improving the quality of education in the DRC.

During one of your presentations, you mentioned that since 1984, the DRC has not conducted a general population and housing census. What was the reason for this, and how does the country plan to address it?

Regarding this situation, the challenges remain significant. One of the first is gathering the necessary resources, especially financial resources, to carry out this activity. Insecurity in certain parts of the country is also one of the challenges



to overcome. Other challenges exist, but these two are the main ones. To address them, the government has been working for several years to make demographic data available through the resumption of the general population and housing census. This commitment was reaffirmed in 2024 through the Ministerial Councils, where the President of the Republic clearly expressed the necessity and urgency of conducting this census. He announced that measures were being taken to resolve the initial challenges related to resource availability and insecurity in the eastern part of the country through various meetings, including those in Luanda.

In your opinion, how long is this census expected to take?

At this stage, we expect it to take about three years, divided into one year for mapping, one year for enumeration, and the final year for processing, analyzing, and disseminating the results.

Looking at the themes of the meetings and observing the situation, Africa has a problem of harmonization, and thus reliability, of its statistics. What is the solution for the continent to have its own data?

In my view, the meetings where the harmonization of statistics in Africa is discussed are a good thing. They allow for better comparability of data across Africa and sub-regions. These meetings help us agree on what needs to be done.

However, more effort must come from our governments because, as you know, statistics are information. And information requires resources. If Africa wants to have quality statistics with regular production, our governments must allocate substantial resources, as recommended by the African Charter, which states that 0.15% of national budgets should be dedicated to supporting statistical production. Implementing this decision from the heads of state and government should ensure regular statistical data production, resulting in greater financial independence from our partners, whose support we greatly appreciate.

Interview conducted by Valéry FOUNGBE

DR. STEVE BERTRAND BOKO IBARA, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF STATISTICS (INS) OF THE REPUBLIC OF CONGO «I discovered that there is a range of partners who finance statistical activity in Africa»

What do you remember from this 18th session of the CODGs?

It was a first for me as DG of the INS of my country. It was a rich session. I discovered that there is a range of partners who finance statistical activity in Africa. Which leads me to call on other countries to join us because the statistical system in Africa is not alone. There is the support of the African Union.

What particularly struck me at this session was the large number of partners who came and informed us of the availability of their funding and the technical assistance that they can provide most of the time, free of charge.

In this vein, we followed a very good presentation by the World Bank on its statistics development program for the next five years. This program is accompanied by very substantial funding to truly renovate national statistics systems.

Another thing that moved me was knowing that the World Bank now had an indicator to measure the performance of national statistical systems but a tool that serves to improve the competitiveness of these systems. This instrument also makes it possible to evaluate the developments of countries by indicating the measures to be applied to improve the performance of each. In short, the World Bank has set up a tool to support African countries in the production of statistics.



How do statistics help boost your country's education system?

This is very much in line with the theme of this session of the Committee of DGs of the African Union's NSIs. It must be said that statistics are the key to the development not only of the education sector but also of the overall development of our States. This is because they allow us to situate ourselves on the level of develop-

ment that is ours by providing precise figures.

As for my country, the statistics that we produce through general censuses are a common denominator for establishing indicators for all education. The figure for the overall population is used as the keystone of the statistics kept by the education sector with the support of the INS.

Interview by Valery FOUNGBE

Electrification of Africa: An Investment of 400 Billion USD by 2050

These needs are expressed while access to electricity remains one of the main challenges in Africa where only 43% of the population has reliable access to electricity. A situation that hinders economic development and limits the adoption of digital technologies essential to the transformation of the continent.

Africa will need \$400 billion by 2050 to modernize and expand its electricity transmission and distribution infrastructure. This information is revealed by the new report «Foresight Africa 2025-2030» from Brookings Institution. The document also underlines that «without this massive investment, many African countries risk not achieving universal access to energy by this deadline».

In 2024, according to the World Bank, USD 345 billion would be needed by 2040 to cover electricity transmission and distribution needs in sub-Saharan Africa.

This need contrasts sharply with energy investments made over the last ten years, which totaled only USD 41 billion across the entire energy value chain. This highlights the scale of the challenges related to the specific financing of transmission infrastructure.

While in recent years, several African states have made greater efforts to increase electricity production capacity, distribution and transmission infrastructure has not kept pace. In addition, sub-Saharan Africa, in particular, suffers from a limited and aging electricity grid, unable to meet the growing needs of its population.

As an illustration, in West Africa, the development of electrification is hampered by failing electricity transmission and distribution



networks. In Nigeria, for example, the installed electricity capacity is 13,000 MW, exceeding that of all other countries in the sub-region combined. However, the actual electricity capacity available on the grid is only 5,500 MW.

To address this energy crisis, significant investments in improving and modernizing distribution networks are essential. Initiatives such as the Mission 300 program, led by the World Bank and the African Development Bank, aim to provide access to electricity to 300 million people in sub-Saharan Africa. This project focuses on improving transmission infrastructure and could cover almost half of the continent's current electricity needs. However, these efforts, while encouraging, remain insufficient to meet the scale

of the needs.

In parallel, institutions such as Afreximbank are supporting various energy infrastructure projects across Africa. These initiatives, combined with local and international investments, play a crucial role in the electrification of the continent, but they require increased support to truly transform the energy landscape. It is imperative to mobilize innovative financing and adopt inclusive policies to ensure optimal access to electricity for African populations by 2050. Governments must also accelerate structural reforms, particularly in the management of electricity networks, in order to modernize and optimize energy transmission and distribution.

B.B.

FROM AGOA TO AFCFTA

A Fork in Africa's Trade Road



Ah, Africa. A land of boundless opportunity, endless potential – and, sadly, perpetual meddling by foreign powers with grandiose promises. Take the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), for example. When it arrived in 2000, Washington painted it as a golden ticket for Africa's economic renaissance. Twenty-plus years later, we're left asking: did it really deliver? Or was it just another chapter

in the long tale of Africa being a pawn in someone else's game?

AGOA: A Gift with Strings Attached

AGOA was supposed to be transformative, offering duty-free access to U.S. markets for African countries. And sure, it did some good. Kenya's textile factories hummed with new orders, Lesotho's apparel wor-

kers had steady jobs, and a few other nations saw benefits. But let's not kid ourselves: most of the action came from oil and raw materials—stuff Africa already exports by the bucketload. And here's the rub: AGOA didn't industrialize Africa or diversify its economies. It left the continent still reliant on commodities, dancing to the tune of global markets and Washington politics. Ethiopia knows this all too well. When its AGOA

eligibility was revoked in 2022, its burgeoning textile industry came to a screeching halt. Thousands of workers? Out of jobs. Businesses? In shambles. That's what happens when your economic lifeline depends on the whims of someone thousands of miles away.

Now, with Donald Trump back in the White House, AGOA's vulnerabilities are laid bare. Trump isn't exactly a fan of multilateralism, and under his "America First" playbook, Africa might find itself relegated even further down the list of U.S. priorities. AGOA's limited developmental goals could be replaced with outright transactionalism: "What's in it for us?"

If Africa wants to break this cycle, it needs to stop waiting for Washington to hand over solutions and start building its own. That's where the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) comes in.

AfCFTA: Africa's Do-Over

Unlike AGOA, AfCFTA isn't about pleasing faraway powers – it's about Africans trading with Africans. The idea is simple: reduce tariffs, build regional value chains, and finally unleash the continent's industrial potential. But, as usual, the devil is in the details.

Weak infrastructure, fragmented supply chains, and the ever-present menace of non-tariff barriers loom large. And let's not forget the lesson AGOA taught us: inclusivity matters. Francophone and Lusophone countries didn't get much out of AGOA, thanks to language barriers and lack of technical support. If AfCFTA doesn't fix this, it risks repeating those same mistakes, leaving

certain regions behind.

Here's another challenge: AGOA and AfCFTA might not play well together. AGOA gives duty-free access to U.S. markets, while AfCFTA pushes for rules of origin to strengthen regional industries. What happens when a country realizes it can make more money shipping raw materials to America than investing in Africa's supply chains? That's a tension Africa can't afford to ignore.

Trump 2.0: What's in Store for Africa

Trump's back, and you know what that means: unpredictability. His first term showed a clear

**WEAK
INFRASTRUCTURE,
FRAGMENTED
SUPPLY CHAINS,
AND THE
EVERPRESENT
MENACE OF
NON-TARIFF
BARRIERS
LOOM LARGE.**

preference for bilateral deals over multilateral ones. The strategic partnership with Kenya was a taste of what's to come—working with nations that align with U.S. interests while sidelining the rest. Countries that don't toe the line could find themselves frozen out of AGOA altogether. Then there's Trump's obsession with countering China. Africa might see new invest-

ments in critical minerals or energy projects, but don't mistake this for altruism. This is about Washington jockeying for influence, not helping Africa achieve self-reliance. And if Trump's protectionist instincts kick in, African exports to the U.S. could face new tariffs, gutting industries that rely on AGOA's privileges.

The Road Ahead

So, what's Africa to do? First, stop waiting for a white knight to come galloping in. AfCFTA is Africa's best chance to build an economic fortress from within. Strengthen regional trade. Build factories that add value to Africa's resources instead of shipping them out raw. Invest in infrastructure and education. In short, take control.

Second, play the game wisely. Africa should push for AGOA's renewal but on terms that align with AfCFTA's goals. Relaxing rules of origin, for instance, could help build regional supply chains. And finally, diversify partnerships. Whether it's China, India, or Brazil, Africa must hedge its bets to avoid becoming overly dependent on any single player.

Africa has been here before – at the crossroads of hope and exploitation. This time, it must choose its own path, one that prioritizes African interests above all else. AfCFTA has the potential to transform Africa into a global economic powerhouse, but only if the continent seizes the moment. No more waiting. No more handouts. The time to act is now.

By Kebour Ghenna



THE DRIVING FORCE OF AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT

Education Crisis in Africa - A Defining Challenge for the Future of the Continent

Africa stands at a decisive crossroads. Home to the world's fastest-growing population and a youth demographic brimming with potential, the richest continent of the globe is poised to become a key global player in the coming decades. However, this promise is overshadowed by a pressing crisis that

threatens to stall progress: the chronic underdevelopment of the education systems of the continent. For far too long, education has been a secondary priority in policy discussions, treated as an issue to be addressed in isolation rather than as the foundation upon which all other pillars of development rest.

The numbers paint a sobering picture. Despite various educational reforms and international support initiatives, millions of African children and young adults remain out of school, while those who do attend often receive an education that is misaligned with the realities of the 21st-century world. The consequences are dire—an underprepared workforce, stifled economic growth, and a widening digital divide that threatens to leave Africa behind in the global knowledge economy. Institutions of higher education, too, struggle to adapt to modern demands. Universities and vocational training centers across the continent suffer from outdated curricula, limited infrastructure, and a gap between academic learning and employability.

If Africa is to rise, to realize its full potential, education must be at the very core of its development agenda. It cannot be an afterthought or a box to check in policy reports; it must be the foundation upon which Africa builds its future. The time has come for bold action, for a coordinated, continent-wide commitment to educational transformation. This is why the Tamkine Foundation is calling for the establishment of an African Education Decade (2026-2036)—an initiative designed to ensure that education is not just a policy priority, but a pan-African mission to drive sustainable development.

Why an African Education Decade (2026-2036)?

The African Education Decade is born out of a simple but powerful realization: piecemeal reforms and sporadic invest-



ments in education will never be enough to meet the immense challenges the continent faces. Africa cannot afford to approach education in a fragmented man-

ner, where efforts are short-term, uncoordinated, and inconsistently funded. The continent needs a structured, decade-long commitment that ensures education is treated as a strategic imperative, with concrete goals, milestones and policies that can be measured and improved over time.

This initiative is not just about expanding access to education; it is about ensuring that education transforms lives and economies. We must reimagine our education systems to produce graduates who are not just degree holders, but innovators, entrepreneurs, and leaders. The focus must shift from rote learning to critical thinking, from passive consumption of knowledge

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to active problem-solving, and from traditional education models to dynamic, technology-driven learning environments. To achieve this transformation, the African Education Decade must address several core priorities. First, we must standardize and enhance the quality of education across the continent, ensuring that all African students receive an education that meets global standards. Second, we must bridge the digital divide by integrating technology and artificial intelligence into learning environments, making quality education more accessible to students in rural and underserved communities. Third, we must strengthen edu-

cational governance by promoting transparency, accountability, and data-driven policymaking. Fourth, we must encourage partnerships between governments, businesses, and academic institutions to fund innovative education models that align with Africa's workforce needs. And finally, we must ensure that education remains inclusive and equitable, providing opportunities for all, regardless of gender, socioeconomic background, or geographic location. The success of Africa's economic and political ambitions depends on this decade-long commitment. Without it, the continent risks falling farther behind in the global knowledge economy.

The question is no longer whether Africa needs to invest in education—it is whether we can afford not to.

The Tamkine Foundation's Role: A Decade of On-the-Ground Experience & the Tamkine Equation for Qualitative Improvement of Education

For almost ten years, the Tamkine Foundation has been deeply engaged in the qualitative improvement of education in Morocco, Africa and all over the world, working directly with students, educators, institutions, and policymakers to address the fundamental challenges facing the sector. Our work has not been limited to theoretical discussions or high-level policy

recommendations; instead, it has been rooted in actionable solutions, measurable impact, and a commitment to innovation.

At the core of our approach is the Tamkine Equation for Qualitative Improvement of Education, a comprehensive framework that ensures every intervention we implement is designed to create lasting, systemic change. This equation is based on a holistic model that integrates student-centered learning, teacher empowerment, technological advancements, and governance reforms, working with all the stakeholders of the educational sphere to create an education system that is efficient, adaptable, and future-ready.

Our initiatives include cutting-edge digital learning solutions, ensuring that high-quality education reaches even the most remote parts of the continent. Through our extensive teacher and educator training programs, we have equipped African educators with modern pedagogical skills that emphasize critical thinking, student engagement, and innovative instructional techniques. Recognizing that education must be linked directly to employability, we have fostered public-private partnerships that align academic learning with the demands of the job market, preparing students for the digital economy and entrepreneurial opportunities.

Our work has also extended into policy advocacy, where we have engaged with governments, think tanks, and international organizations to influence educational policies and push for structural reforms that prioritize quality education.

A Call to Action: Education as a Collective Responsibility

In our mission to make the African Education Decade a continental priority, the Tamkine Foundation has undertaken high-level diplomatic and institutional engagements to rally leaders around this cause. One of the most significant moments in this journey was our January 2025 trip to Gabon, where we had the honor of meeting His Excellency Brice Oligui Nguema, the President of the Republic. During our discussion, we formally submitted a letter to the President, urging

THE SUCCESS OF AFRICA'S ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL AMBITIONS DEPENDS ON THIS DECADE-LONG COMMITMENT.

him to take leadership in this call and become an advocate for the African Education Decade. His role as a key figure in African governance provides an opportunity to elevate this initiative to a continental level and gain the necessary support from other African heads of state.

Following this, we engaged with CAFRAD (The African Training and Research

Centre in Administration for Development), where we met with the Director General, Dr. Coffi Dieudonné Assouvi, to discuss how the transformation of education must be at the core of Africa's development strategies. We submitted a letter calling for CAFRAD's support, emphasizing the necessity of policy reforms, capacity-building initiatives, and a structured approach to education governance across African institutions.

The African Education Decade is not just a vision—it is a responsibility. It is a call for governments, businesses, educators, and development organizations to unite in a shared mission. We urge African governments to commit to decade-long investments in education, ensuring that policies are designed for long-term impact rather than short-term political cycles. We invite business leaders to invest in education as a key driver of economic growth and workforce development. We call on international organizations to provide technical and financial support to ensure sustainable, high-impact educational reforms. We also call on the United Nations and its General Secretary to support this call and to join the dynamic.

Africa has everything it needs to become a leader in the global knowledge economy—but only if we make education our collective priority. The time is now, and the choice is ours to make all together.

#Tamkine_together_we_will_succeed

**By Dr. Abdelilah Kadili,
President of the Tamkine
Foundation**

DR COFFI DIEUDONNÉ ASSOUVI, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE AFRICAN TRAINING AND RESEARCH CENTRE IN ADMINISTRATION FOR DEVELOPMENT (CAFRAD)

«A new State and a new Public Administration require well-trained leaders»

Dr. Coffi Dieudonné ASSOUVI is also a specialist in public policy shifts, territorial transitions, sustainable business transformations, economic-climatic governance, the new structural economy, and global security. Furthermore, he is a Beninese diplomat, Minister Plenipotentiary of Foreign Affairs of exceptional rank, but now an African and an Africanist.

What can we hear by Cafrad that you have been running since July 2024?

I was elected director general of the African Center for Administrative Training and Research for Development (CAFRAD) during the 59th ordinary session of the Board of Directors, which was held on July 9, 2024 in Rabat, Morocco. Among 19 candidates from 13 member countries, my selection is the result of a rigorous process, including several assessments and two large orals, which have led to large support from the Member States. I want to express my deep gratitude to the latter for their renewed confidence and their massive support for my candidacy.

I also wish to seize this opportunity to thank His Majesty the King of Morocco, as well as the Moroccan government and the people, for the benevolent and warm welcome they have reserved in the kingdom.

The Cafrad was founded in 1964, when Africa was in the midst of independence. The objective was to support the construction of viable states, the integration of the continent, socio-economic development, and Africanization of public administra-



tions. At that time, the Organization of African Unity (Oua), now an African Union, was created, and the African Development Bank (BAD) was born in 1963. Cafrad, created in 1964 on the initiative of several African countries, supported by UNESCO, aimed to

strengthen administrative capacities for the development of African countries.

Today, CAFRAD continues to play a crucial role in supporting African States for the modernization of public administration and governance, and

in support of the socio-economic development of the continent through training actions and research.

What is the mission of the Cafrad?

The African Administrative Training and Research Center for Development (CAFRAD) was created on the initiative of the King of Morocco to transform public services into engines of sustainable and inclusive development in Africa. This Pan -African intergovernmental organization aims to strengthen human capacities and promote innovation in governance and public services. Its main missions include support for governments 'development strategies to improve public services' performance, promoting modern and fair governance, and research on African development challenges. CAFRAD is also a key player in improving public administration systems through interdisciplinary training and research. It supports regional integration and inter -African cooperation, by offering technical assistance, continuing education and advice services. The fields of intervention of the CAFRAD include good economic governance, budgetary management, transparency, the fight against corruption and the development of administrative skills, thus contributing to the implementation of public policies for socio-economic and cultural development of Africa.

What is the current state of this major center or its current assessment?

The CAFRAD (African Centre for Training and Research in Public Administration) has played a pivotal role in training and strengthening the capacities of African leaders, supporting the development and modernization of public administrations across Africa. In its 60 years of existence, it has contributed to establishing a culture of responsible and effective governance, serving sustainable and inclusive development. However, despite its successes, CAFRAD faces challenges, including securing sustainable funding and strengthening its

institutional and human capacities. In a rapidly changing global context, CAFRAD must update its strategic priorities to promote effective economic governance, enhance the culture of public policy evaluation, and encourage accountability. The center has organized several major events, such as the Pan-African Conference of Public Service Ministers, but it must overcome visibility challenges, which have led to the demobilization of certain partners. Therefore, CAFRAD needs to redefine its priorities to adapt to the new demands of global public administration.

How would CAFRAD still be useful to contributing countries?

The CAFRAD was created by the contributing states to meet their needs. In international law, when two

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GOVERNANCE TO SECURE
AFRICA'S FUTURE."**

or more countries agree to create an organization, it is because they share a common interest, a collective project to generate together—what internationalists call the project of international interest, international collective action, and a public good emerging in a world where problems are interdependent and complex.

To return to your question, yes, CAFRAD has been and remains useful in ensuring continuous training for senior government officials. To prepare Africa for the challenges of tomorrow's public action, CAFRAD remains highly relevant to its member

states. In a postmodern, VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex, ambiguous) environment, where all governments (and even the state itself is being reinvented) have committed to large-scale structural reforms, the initial training obtained at the end of studies by civil servants is no longer enough to cover the technological evolution over several decades. Indeed, we live today in a globalized world of perpetual changes, and the transformations brought about by globalization, the knowledge economy, the information economy, neo-regionalism, New Public Management (performance-driven public management), technological development, the fourth (industry 4.0), and fifth (industry 5.0) industrial revolutions, and generative artificial intelligence are shaping a new type of individual who must acquire new skills suited to their professional environment marked by globalization, digitalization, and economic deregulation. Therefore, training myself on the issues of tomorrow's public action seems like an existential and professional necessity to keep up with the transformations of public service and the dynamics of capacities.

Do you think there are ways to improve the image of this Center?

While CAFRAD has maintained relevant missions since its establishment in the 1960s, it is now facing complex and interconnected challenges, including digital transformation, innovation, and ecological change. The African continent faces challenges such as public administration reform, accelerating sustainable development, adoption of information technologies, and the establishment of effective democratic governance. These challenges require a strategic vision that values Africa's strengths: its natural and human resources, industrialization potential, and regional integration. It is crucial to promote sustainable economic growth, strengthen cooperation among African states, and reduce social inequalities.

In this context, CAFRAD plays a key role in Africa's transformation. The

organization must become a regional center of excellence for the production and dissemination of knowledge in public administration, governance, and development. To succeed, CAFRAD must undergo a comprehensive reform to improve its legal, institutional, and financial structure. This reform aims to make CAFRAD a central actor in modernizing African public administrations and facilitating digital transition. The goal is to build a modern, responsible, intelligent, and resilient public administration that fosters sustainable development, regional integration, and Africa's emergence. The overhaul of its foundational texts and the reform of training and research programs will be essential steps to meet the needs of member states.

What is the operational mechanism of CAFRAD?

The CAFRAD (African Centre for Training and Research in Public Administration) is structured around several key bodies essential for its operation. The Board of Directors, consisting of Ministers responsible for Public Administration Training and Research from the 36 member states, has the authority to define the program, establish the budget, and forge partnerships with other organizations. It also includes observers from non-member states and cooperation agencies. The Executive Committee, made up of the Chair of the Board and representatives from the five African sub-regions, provides guidance on the documents to be submitted to the Board. The General Directorate, under the responsibility of a Director General elected for a four-year term, ensures the implementation of the Board's decisions, manages activities, mobilizes funds, and oversees human, financial, and technological resources. Lastly, the Scientific Council, composed of three to five external experts, reviews and approves CAFRAD's scientific programs. These bodies work in concert to ensure that CAFRAD effectively fulfills its mission of promoting training and research in public adminis-



tration, while addressing development challenges in Africa.

What do you say about your budget and continuous training?

The CAFRAD budget is primarily financed by the annual contributions from its 36 member states, with additional support coming from resources generated by its activities. Regarding continuous training, CAFRAD offers two types of programs: short, certifying or qualifying courses, and long-term training, which will be launched next year. These courses will become fee-based in order to strengthen the Center's resources. The training is open to a wide range of target groups, including parliamentarians,

ministers, senior officials, governors, judges, diplomats, military personnel, managers, civil society actors, women leaders, academics, researchers, as well as journalists, trade unionists, and engaged youth. The aim of these programs is to enhance the competencies of key public and private sector development actors in Africa.

What are your modes of intervention?

The interventions of CAFRAD consist of several strategic actions aimed at fostering the transformation and optimization of African public administrations. Among these, we find the organization of seminars, workshops, conferences, forums, symposia, courses, and webinars, which provide spaces for discussion and continuous training. Additionally, research, studies, diagnostics, and surveys are conducted to provide relevant analyses of contemporary issues. CAFRAD also carries out comparative research and offers consulting and personalized support services to policymakers, to assist them in the structural and systemic transformation of the state. Knowledge and best practices are disseminated through publications, while mentoring, coaching, and tutoring sessions are offered for personalized development. Lastly,

"CAFRAD IS AT THE HEART OF AFRICA'S TRANSFORMATION, DRIVING PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION MODERNIZATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ACROSS THE CONTINENT."

CAFRAD leverages the internet to share information via its website, database, and networked work.

What are the prospects for CAFRAD to meet the governance requirements in the digital age?

The mandate I hold focuses on the digital, intelligent, and sustainable transformation of public and private administrations in Africa. The objective is to support member states through two main axes: assisting in the implementation of digitalization projects (e-government, e-services, e-administration, e-commerce) and promoting the digital economy, while integrating these transformations into university curricula. It is imperative that no university or school graduate in Africa is digitally illiterate in the 21st century. It becomes crucial to train digital talents and secure technological infrastructures, with a focus on cybersecurity, cloud computing, and connectivity.

With the advent of the fourth and fifth industrial revolutions, marked by generative artificial intelligence, quantum computing, and transhumanism, Africa must adapt in order not to be left behind. Adapting education to these technological challenges is essential to enable African youth to actively participate in global challenges and ensure the continent's development. African leadership, as emphasized by Emmanuel Macron and Kwame Nkrumah, requires a radical overhaul of the training of senior civil servants, in order to build an autonomous Africa, governed by competent, honest citizens devoted to their nation.

What can you say to conclude this interview?

CAFRAD, an excellence center and leader in postmodern public action, positions itself as the main actor in the production of innovative ideas, skills, and talents in Africa. It supports the implementation of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals and the African Union's initiatives, such as Agenda 2063, as well



as national development programs. It is crucial that member states, the African Union, Regional Economic Communities, African banks, academics, and other stakeholders recognize the importance of CAFRAD in a transforming continent. CAFRAD is committed to transforming public and private administrations in favor of citizens' well-being, promoting peace, good governance, and development

through training, research, public innovation, and consulting. As Peter Drucker highlighted, "Social and economic development is the result of management," and according to the World Bank, "Good governance is not a luxury, it is an essential condition for development."

*Interview conducted by
Ferdinand Gade*

ABIY AHMED, ETHIOPIAN PRIME MINISTER

Between Fragile Peace and Reform Ambitions

Since receiving the Nobel Peace Prize in 2019, Abiy Ahmed, the Prime Minister of Ethiopia, has embodied a hope for transformation in his country and East Africa. His rise was marked by bold reforms and a peace rhetoric that initially captivated the world. However, the evolution of his leadership reveals a man caught between his ambitions to modernize his country and the complex challenges he faces. While Ethiopia is a key player in the stability of the Horn of Africa, Abiy Ahmed finds himself facing fragile peace and a difficult internal situation that could call into question his legacy and future.

Promising Beginnings: A Breeze of Reforms and Reconciliation

Abiy Ahmed was appointed Prime Minister in April 2018 at a pivotal moment for Ethiopia. He quickly introduced an ambitious reform agenda promising to modernize the economy, strengthen political freedoms, and address the ethnic conflicts that had been shaking the country. One of his most notable early initiatives was the signing of a historic peace agreement with Eritrea, ending a 20-year war that had scarred the region. This gesture earned him the Nobel Peace Prize, a global recognition of his role in promoting peace and diplomacy in Africa.

His domestic reforms included the partial liberalization of the economy, opening the market to private investment, and revising Ethiopia's political structures. He also facilitated the release of hundreds of political prisoners, expanded freedom of expression, and brought hope for democracy. This commitment to transformation



was widely praised, particularly on the international stage, where Abiy Ahmed was seen as a visionary capable of reconciling the country with itself and with its neighbors.

Internal Fractures: A Difficult Modernization Process

However, while the reforms brought a breeze of change, they also exacerbated certain internal tensions. Ethiopia, a multiethnic country with over 80 different ethnic groups, has always been a battleground for tensions between these communities. Abiy's reforms, while granting more freedom to individuals, also paved the way for power

struggles between ethnic groups. The feeling of marginalization resurfaced, particularly in the peripheral regions of the country.

In particular, the conflict between the central government and the Tigray region became a focal point of instability. The Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), a former ally of the federal government, accused Abiy Ahmed of centralizing power and reducing the region's autonomy. In November 2020, tensions erupted into open war, a bloody conflict that caused thousands of deaths and millions of displaced persons. While the Ethiopian government declared victo-

ry in the war, the humanitarian situation in Tigray is catastrophic, and the country's stability remains precarious.

The Paradox of Fragile Peace

The Tigray war revealed the depth of the challenges Abiy Ahmed must face. While at the beginning of his tenure he was seen as a leader of national unity, the war highlighted the fragility of that unity and dealt a blow to his image. International criticism regarding human rights violations and the humanitarian impact of the conflict tarnished his image as a progressive reformer. Although a ceasefire was signed in November 2022 and the situation seems to be slowly improving, the wounds left by the war are deep, and reconciliation remains a distant goal.

This paradox between the peace he has managed to establish on some fronts (notably with Eritrea) and the internal war tearing his own country apart raises the question of the sustainability of his reforms. Is Abiy Ahmed capable of restoring internal peace and stabilizing a country that, despite its aspirations to modernize its political structures, remains divided by ethnic and regional conflicts?

Managing Regional Integration and Continental Projects

Beyond domestic politics, Abiy Ahmed has also focused on regional integration and cooperation with other nations in the Horn of Africa. His role in the peace agreement with Eritrea allowed him to restore his image on the international stage, thereby strengthening Ethiopia's geopolitical position in the region. He has also been a strong advocate for the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam project, a mega-dam on the Blue Nile, which could transform Ethiopia's economy by generating electricity for millions of people while powering industries and energy exports. However, this project has also sparked tensions with Egypt and Sudan, who fear a reduction in their share of Nile water. Within the framework of the African Union (AU), Abiy Ahmed has played



an active role in the peace process in East Africa and the Sahel, striving to promote diplomatic solutions to resolve internal conflicts in other African countries, particularly in Sudan and Somalia. His commitment to a united, prosperous, and self-sufficient Africa has helped strengthen Ethiopia's position on the continent, but his ability to bring lasting stability to his own borders remains crucial to his leadership.

Future Prospects: Toward a Redefined Leadership?

As Abiy Ahmed seeks to redefine Ethiopia's future, his leadership faces complex challenges. The question of peace and reconciliation remains at the heart of his agenda. How can he manage ethnic tensions, the quest for autonomy in certain regions, and the consolidation of a unified national identity? While his economic reforms are on track, the country's modernization could be hindered by unresolved social and political fractures. His management of future crises, particularly how he addresses demands

for decentralization and inclusivity, will be decisive.

Abiy Ahmed will also need to demonstrate his ability to navigate an increasingly complex regional context, with tense relations surrounding the Renaissance Dam and the instability shaking the immediate neighborhood. In the future, he will need to find a delicate balance between democratic openness and maintaining central authority to prevent internal tensions from escalating into open conflict once again.

His leadership will remain a significant figure in East African politics and in Africa as a whole, but his legacy will be inseparable from how he manages to transform the fragile peace he has established into a sustainable process of reconciliation and inclusive development. Time will tell whether Abiy Ahmed can truly embody the vision of a new Ethiopia he promised, or whether his tenure will be defined by the scars of an internal conflict that proves difficult to overcome.

Sylvestre Tetchiada

MAHAMAT IDRISSE DÉBY

Chad in Search of a New Social Contract

Since assuming power in April 2021 following the death of his father Idriss Déby Itno, Mahamat Idriss Déby has marked Chad's history by becoming the leader of a country in transition. Far from settling for the continuation of a military legacy, his rise has been accompanied by promises of political reforms and development, as well as complex challenges. As Chad faces security, economic, and political crises, the question of a new social contract remains central. The challenge for Mahamat Idriss Déby is to reconcile the authority inherited from his father, the popular democratic aspirations, and international pressure for an inclusive transition.

A Military Legacy and Democratic Expectations

Under Idriss Déby Itno's regime, Chad was a pillar of regional stability, especially due to its key role in the fight against terrorist groups in the Sahel. However, this leadership was also marked by an authoritarian regime, with little room for political freedoms, military control over institutions, and constant tensions with the opposition. Following the sudden death of Idriss Déby, killed on the front lines during a military mission against the rebels of the Front for Change and Concord in Chad (FACT), the country found itself in an unstable situation with no clear succession plan.

Mahamat Idriss Déby, his son, then took the reins of the country at the head of a 15-member Transitional Military Council (CMT). The decision to keep the military in power was a strategic move, seen by some as necessary to avoid the collapse of the political order but also as a continuation of mili-



tary rule in a country where the armed forces play a central role. However, this transition has not been without criticism, especially from the opposition and civil society movements, who called for an immediate shift to a civilian and democratic government.

The Inclusive National Dialogue: A Risky Gamble

Faced with growing internal opposition, Mahamat Idriss Déby proposed, in June 2021, an «inclusive national dialogue» bringing together various political forces, opposition groups, and civil society. The goal of this process is to establish a national consensus on

constitutional reform, the organization of free and transparent elections, and the country's political direction for the future. Some saw this initiative as a positive step toward democratization, but others expressed doubts about the sincerity of the process.

The national dialogue began in 2022 and proved to be a major test for Mahamat Idriss Déby. While discussions were held and some parties agreed to participate, tensions remained palpable. On one side, political parties and civil society organizations insisted that the transition should lead to a return to a civilian government, with free and transparent presidential

elections. On the other side, the armed opposition, particularly the FACT, criticized the dialogue, arguing that the security conditions and the military's dominance over the country's politics made the transition illusory.

One of the major challenges remains the participation of armed movements in this dialogue, with some, like the FACT, expressing reservations about the process. Although Mahamat Déby promised that the transition would end with elections within 18 months from 2021, skepticism remains about the duration of this period and the real influence of the military on Chadian politics. A question persists: to what extent can the transition lead to true democratization, or will it simply result in a change of façade, with military influence continuing behind the scenes?

The Security Question and the Challenges of the Sahel

Chad is at the heart of the Sahel crisis, a region ravaged by terrorist groups affiliated with Al-Qaeda and ISIS, inter-ethnic conflicts, and governance crises. The country plays a strategic role in the fight against terrorism by supporting international forces such as Barkhane and the G5 Sahel joint force, but this involvement also places Chad in a delicate position.

Under Mahamat Idriss Déby's presidency, Chad continued to be a key partner in the war against terrorists in the Sahel. However, this situation has exacerbated internal tensions. The Chadian armed forces, often deployed abroad, are also called upon within the country to fight against rebel groups like the FACT. Security tensions have worsened the challenges related to political stability and contributed to the country's economic fragility. Violence and insecurity fuel popular frustration, and managing these crises has become one of the president's major challenges. Chad has also witnessed internal protests and strikes by trade unions and social groups, particularly workers and students, demanding social and political reforms. These demands reflect growing public pressure for substantial



changes in governance.

International Diplomacy and Support for the Transition

International support, particularly from France, the United States, and the European Union, has been crucial for Mahamat Idriss Déby in his efforts to maintain order and stabilize the country. These external actors have praised the dialogue initiative but have also stressed the need for deep democratic reforms to ensure the legitimacy of the Chadian government. In particular, the European Union and France have emphasized the need for a return to democracy, which has been a factor of pressure on the military regime.

Chad's strategic role in African security policies, particularly in the fight

against terrorism, should not be underestimated. However, there is growing recognition that the country's stability cannot rely solely on military security, and that a genuine democratic transition is necessary to avoid a return to instability, as seen in other Sahel countries.

A Questioned Model of Inclusive Governance

To date, Mahamat Idriss Déby has not allowed a full opening of Chad's political system. Despite commitments to reform, the system remains heavily influenced by his father's former military allies, and concerns persist regarding the repression of the opposition and press freedom. Many analysts and international observers question the regime's ability to successfully transition to an inclusive democratic model. Chad thus finds itself at a strategic crossroads, where its political future will largely depend on Mahamat Idriss Déby's ability to reconcile the forces at play: the democratic aspirations of the Chadian people, the demands of the international community, and the internal security realities. The path to inclusive governance will be neither easy nor linear. The question remains: will Mahamat Idriss Déby succeed in completing this transition, or will the country remain under military control, leaving democracy in waiting?

S.T.

CHAD IS AT THE HEART OF THE SAHEL CRISIS, A REGION RAVAGED BY TERRORIST GROUPS AFFILIATED WITH AL-QAEDA AND ISIS.

AFCON 2025

Morocco knows its Opponents and Wants to Overcome the Indian Sign of 1976

The draw for the 2025 Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) groups revealed some great upcoming matches. Legendary clashes that will return, for example between Côte d'Ivoire and Cameroon and Algeria and its nemesis Equatorial Guinea. Host country, Morocco has only one thing in mind: to succeed in the organization's challenge and win the trophy.

Morocco, host country of the TotalEnergies CAF Africa Cup of Nations 2025, will open the 35th edition of the tournament by facing the Comoros on Sunday, December 21, 2025. This was decided by the draw for the 2025 AFCON groups. The draw took place on Monday, January 27, 2025 at the Mohammed V National Theater in Rabat.

The 24 qualified nations are now fixed on their opponents for this new edition of the biggest African sporting event which promises to be spectacular. After the memorable tournament that took place in Ivory Coast, with extraordinary emotions.

The Atlas Lions, who are entering their 20th participation in the TotalEnergies CAF AFCON, have a good chance of ending a 49-year drought. Walid Regragui and his men have only one goal: to break the Indian sign of 1976, the date of Morocco's last and only success at the AFCON in Ethiopia.

The Atlas Lions are presented as the favorites or at least among the favorites. But they will have to prove it on the field. With a talented group under the leadership of Walid Regragui, who led them to the semi-finals of the FIFA World Cup, Morocco must first make an impression during an opening match, which may seem easy but problematic in practice.



Indeed, Morocco's opponents are not just making up the numbers, as the last AFCON CAF TotalEnergies in Côte d'Ivoire proved, with the performances of the teams considered to be of small caliber.

Morocco has a good chance of shining at the AFCON 2025, especially since they will have the advantage of playing at home. The Moroccan team has shown impressive form in recent years, notably by reaching the semi-finals of the 2022 World Cup. They have a solid team with international quality players, such as Achraf Hakimi, Hakim Ziyech, and Yassine Bounou etc...

The challenge of organization...

The question of whether Morocco can surpass Côte d'Ivoire in organizing the AFCON 2025 depends on several factors, including infrastructure, logistical organization, and experience in managing major sporting events.

At this level, it is a truism to say that Morocco is renowned for its ability to

organise high-level competitions, with modern stadiums and experience in hosting events such as the FIFA Club World Cup, the Africa Cup of Nations in 1988, and more recently the Club World Cup.

This country has a solid reputation for managing and implementing quality infrastructure, and it could use these assets to deliver a well-organised and memorable tournament. We will see what happens in December 2025 and January 2026...

The support of their fans and the fact of playing on their home soil can be additional motivating factors. However, as in any competition, they will have to face very competitive teams, and the pressure of a home tournament can also be challenging. Everything will depend on their preparation, match management, and their ability to stay focused under pressure.

Par Valery FOUNGBE

PAPE SECK, SPORTS CONTENT CREATOR, ON THE 2025 AFRICA CUP OF NATIONS

«Infrastructures and Cities of Morocco are Magnificent»

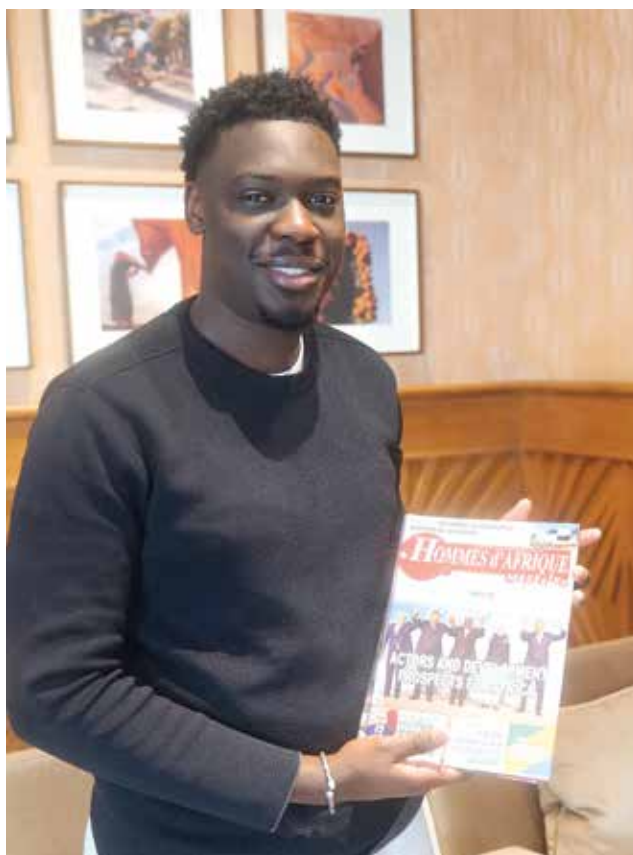
Since 2019, this Senegalese, passionate about African football, has been making his way through the stadiums and media venues of the Africa Cup of Nations. Thanks to his talent and expertise in Information and Communication Technology (ICT), he brings to light all the best moments of the matches online. *Hommes d'Afrique Magazine* had an interview with him in Rabat, following the draw for the upcoming TOTAL Energies Africa Cup of Nations.

Following the recent draw for the next Africa Cup of Nations, could we get your reaction?

I am a sports content creator. On Monday, January 27, I was invited by CAF to create content around the event. Honestly, it was a great event. We ended up in a tough group, but with a good team from Congo and two other weaker teams. We consider ourselves the favorites of the group, but in reality, it's not an easy group to be in.

Considering the evolution of African football impacted by professionalism at different levels, could you make any predictions?

First of all, my prediction is motivated by my heart's choice: Senegal. However, based on recent perfor-



mances and trends, I am watching the Ivory Coast with a solid group of young players, followed by Morocco, which has made many changes by involving younger players. Morocco also has the advantage of the home crowd based on their results.

Is African football today being valued more through the selection of young national talents or professionals playing abroad?

For me, both go hand in hand, but what really matters is the involvement. If you're a great player but don't have strong commitment and engagement,

the results won't follow. A top player matters, as in the case of SADIO MANE, but he's at the end of his career. So, his involvement on and off the field, along with guiding the younger players, will be important.

What curiosities have you had since arriving in Morocco? Any comments on the preparations?

First of all, I have to say that the infrastructures and cities of Morocco are magnificent. It's my first time in Rabat, and honestly, I can say it's a very beautiful city. I was surprised, and it confirms the claims made by others that Morocco wants to organize the «Africa Cup of Nations of the century» in every aspect. In Côte d'Ivoire, we saw a very high level, with a great atmosphere and emotions. We were surprised by

Abidjan, and we hope it will be even more exciting here.

The recurring issue may be the accreditation of African media or journalists, as they are apparently not as numerous compared to some continents.

In my opinion, if this information is true, more journalists from the continent should be accredited. If there are more journalists, the Africa Cup of Nations will make a bigger impact and be more popular.

Interview conducted by Samirat NTIAZE and Sylvain TIMAMO

BONIFACE OJORA BABATUNDE

«I believe that Morocco as the host country is a good favorite...»

Having left Paris for France to cover the draw for the next African Cup of Nations, this media man of Nigerian origin, a sports reporter, kindly agreed to answer the questions of Homme d'AfriqueMagazine.

What is your view of the next African Cup of Nations football in Morocco?

I am a sports reporter and my observation on the patterns of this draw is sufficiently enthusiastic. There is a combination between several rivals, teams that will want to take their revenge on their opponents. The groups formed make me believe that this CAN in Morocco will be fantastic.

Could you venture a few predictions?

I believe that Morocco as the host country is a good favorite. In addition, a retrospective in the archives of this competition shows that the host countries are regularly in the semi-finals or at best in the final. I am a Nigerian national and I think that this team is well prepared to correct the mistakes of Abidjan in Ivory Coast. Ivory Coast also has a fantastic team. I also see among the finalists a country like Egypt. The latter draws its strength from its commendable record, from players like Moussala. To be more precise, I see Egypt, Ivory Coast, Nigeria and Morocco in the semi-finals of this CAN2025.

Finally, what is the general assessment of African football? Any suggestions?

Generally speaking, and taken across the entire planet, we should not take African football apart. During the last Bundesliga season, we recorded Gurasi and Bonefish who were the top scorers. In the same vein, it is still Africans who



are the talented players in the French and English championships. It is the power of

THE GROUPS FORMED MAKE ME BELIEVE THAT THIS CAN IN MOROCCO WILL BE FANTASTIC.

African football that is currently dominating the world championships.

In another sense, you cannot take African footballers apart in the Champions Leagues because the game is collective and technical. They contribute to the influence of this discipline.

This is particularly true on the tactical and technical levels. I am proud to be African and I urge us to always give our best. Dr. Motsepe, president of the African Football Confederation, recalled that the African Cup of Nations football is watched by more than a billion supporters. Who is more authorized than him to say that African football has made great progress and is set to rank as the best in the world.

Interview by Samirat NTIAZE and Sylvain TIMAMO



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