

The Aswan Forum for Sustainable Peace and Development



ASWAN
FORUM
FOR SUSTAINABLE PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT
COURTESY OF PEACE PARTNERSHIP FOR AFRICA

Fourth Edition

Africa in a Changing World: Re-envisioning Global Governance
for Peace and Development

Cairo, 2-3 July 2024

Concept Note



Peace. Progress. Prosperity.



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Background

The world is going through a time of great turbulence and uncertainty with geopolitical tensions and polarization fueling mistrust and hindering collective responses to the “polycrises” confronting it. Increasingly, international politics are turning into a zero-sum game. Conflicts are on the rise worldwide, some with far reaching global impacts and devastating humanitarian consequences such as the Russia-Ukraine war and the war in Gaza. Hard-won development gains are being reversed and the policy and fiscal space available for developing countries is shrinking. Collectively, these developments have laid bare the limitations of existing frameworks of global governance and bring into question their ability to deliver on the promise of sustainable peace and development.

Against this background, a collective strategic reflection is needed to re-envision global governance and multilateralism. A reconfigured global architecture should be front and center of this reflection: one that is more representative, just, equitable and better positioned to achieve peace, security and prosperity for all through integrated and holistic responses. In this regard, the Secretary General’s report “Our Common Agenda” (2021) presented an ambitious vision for the future of global governance, and called for “an inclusive and effective multilateralism that better responds to humanity’s most pressing challenges.” It also called for a “New Agenda for Peace” anchored in a peace continuum that addresses the drivers of conflict and fragility,¹ and seeks to build on the foundational Agenda for Peace” presented by Boutros Boutros-Ghali in 1992, which brought together preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding as a coherent contribution towards achieving peace. This year, the “Summit of the Future” will present an opportunity to enhance international cooperation in order to tackle critical challenges and address gaps in global governance.

Within this global conversation, Africa’s voice is of vital importance. The continent is under-represented in international bodies and fora, such as the UN Security Council and the Bretton Woods institutions, albeit being the most vulnerable to external shocks not of its own making. Due to multiple shocks including the COVID-19

pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine war –among others– growth in Africa’s average gross domestic product (GDP) fell to an estimated 3.2 percent in 2023, from 4.1 percent in 2022.² Costs of borrowing continue to be elevated, whereby 19 out of 35 low-income countries in sub-Saharan Africa were either in debt distress or at high risk of distress at the end of 2023.³

Moreover, Africa continues to be engulfed by conflict and violence. Six of the twelve least-peaceful countries globally in 2023 were in Africa.⁴ In 2023, Africa continued to be the most impacted by terrorism with the Sahel as the most affected region, accounting for almost half of all deaths from terrorism and 26 percent of attacks in 2023.⁵ New and protracted conflicts in Sudan, the Horn of Africa, the Sahel, and Great Lakes region continue to reflect the limitations of African collective security, and its ability to deliver effective and timely responses. More than 25 million people across Sudan, South Sudan and Chad are experiencing deteriorating food security.⁶ The continent also hosts new waves of internal displacements, with 83 percent of new displacements in the first half of 2023 being in Sub-Saharan Africa⁷ putting to test the resilience of local communities and rendering them increasingly vulnerable to networks of traffickers and smugglers. Climate change is also acting as a risk multiplier and a prominent driver of displacement, particularly when compounded with armed conflict, disrupting mobility patterns and spurring further conflict over dwindling resources.⁸

Africa’s contribution to these global conversations,

2 African Development Bank. “Africa’s Macroeconomic Performance and Outlook - January 2024”, February 2024. <https://www.afdb.org/en/documents/africas-macroeconomic-performance-and-outlook-january-2024>

3 International Monetary Fund. “Regional Economic Outlook Sub-Saharan Africa: A Tepid and Pricey Recovery,” April 2024. <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/REO/SSA>

4 Institute for Economics & Peace. “Global Peace Index 2023: Measuring Peace in a Complex World,” June 2023. <https://www.economicsandpeace.org/global-peace-index/>

5 Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP). “Global Terrorism Index 2024 - World | ReliefWeb,” February 2024. 1] United Nations. “New Agenda for Peace.” Our Common Agenda: Policy Brief 9 - A New Agenda for Peace”, July 2023. [our-common-agenda-policy-brief-new-agenda-for-peace-en.pdf](https://www.un.org/peace-en.pdf) (un.org)

6 World Food Programme (WFP). “Sudan’s war risks creating the world’s largest hunger crisis, warns WFP Chief,” March 2024. <https://www.wfp.org/news/sudans-war-risks-creating-worlds-largest-hunger-crisis-warns-wfp-chief>.

7 United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, “Mid-Year Trends 2023,” October, 2023. <https://www.unhcr.org/mid-year-trends-report-2023>

8 International Organization for Migration (IOM). “Africa Migration Report (Second edition). Connecting the threads: Linking policy, practice and the welfare of the African migrant.” March 2024. <https://publications.iom.int/books/africa-migration-report-second-edition>

1 United Nations. “New Agenda for Peace.” Our Common Agenda: Policy Brief 9 - A New Agenda for Peace”, July 2023. [our-common-agenda-policy-brief-new-agenda-for-peace-en.pdf](https://www.un.org/peace-en.pdf) (un.org)

however, is not merely based on claims of equity and fairness, but also on the continent's ability to substantively and meaningfully reshape important global discussions that have direct bearing on its peace and prosperity. Africa continues to offer solutions and breakthroughs such as launching the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) in January 2021, representing not only a game changer for Africa's development, but also an ambitious trade liberalization scheme since the establishment of the World Trade Organization (WTO). At COP27, African nations spearheaded international efforts to address the worsening impacts of climate change, including but not limited to the breakthrough agreement on the establishment of the Loss and Damage Fund, and the launch of Climate Responses for Sustaining Peace (CRSP), the first ever COP Presidency initiative to address interlinkages between climate change and sustaining peace.

Africa is also continuing its efforts towards taking greater charge of its peace and security with the finalization of its Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD) Policy, and the move towards greater reliance on African Union-led peace support operations (PSOs) which will now have access to the United Nations assessed contributions in line with United Nations Security Council Resolution 2719 (2023).

At this critical juncture, the Fourth Edition of the Aswan Forum for Sustainable Peace and Development will provide a platform for an African strategic reflection on the future of international cooperation and global governance. It will also present a unique opportunity for forward looking discussions on fostering more effective, integrated, and durable solutions to the peace and security challenges facing Africa, that empower women and youth and accelerate the operationalization of the peace- security-development (PSD) and humanitarian-development-peace (HDP) nexus, a key priority of the Aswan Forum since its launch in 2019.

The timing of the Forum could not be more opportune, ahead of the Summit of the Future and at a time when the AU is marking 60 years since the first African Summit held in Cairo in 1964, and commemorating the 20th anniversary of its Peace and Security Council. The forum also coincides with the transition from the First Ten Year Implementation Plan (FTYIP) of Agenda 2063

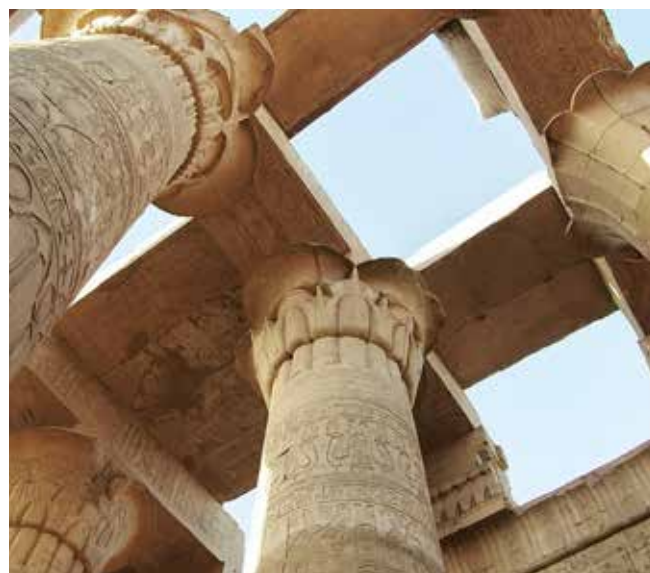
(The Decade of Convergence), towards the Second Ten Year Implementation Plan (STYIP), dubbed the "Decade of Acceleration," while taking stock of progress achieved and drawing lessons learned.

Objectives

Building on the outcomes of the past three editions of the Aswan Forum, the Fourth Edition of the Aswan Forum titled:

"Africa in a Changing World: Re-envisioning Global Governance for Peace and Development" will bring together leaders from governments, regional and international organizations, regional economic communities and regional mechanisms (RECs/RMs), financial institutions, the private sector, and civil society, along with opinion leaders, scholars and key experts, and practitioners for a context-specific, action-oriented, and forward-looking discussion on the new threats and challenges, as well as the opportunities abound. Grounded in Agenda 2063: the Africa We Want and the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and in anticipation of the "Summit of the Future", the Forum seeks to:

- Contribute towards advancing African perspectives on strengthening multilateralism and international cooperation to address complex and interconnected challenges to peace, security, and development;
- Outline priorities and actions for fostering effective, integrated, and durable solutions including through accelerating the operationalization of the nexus;
- Foster dialogue and collaboration through partnerships that are based on principles of equality, mutual respect, and national ownership.





Governance and Organizational Structure

An International Advisory Board of African and global eminent personalities will provide strategic direction and guidance. Furthermore, the Cairo International Center for Conflict Resolution, Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding (CCCCPA), under the guidance of a National Coordination Committee headed by the Egyptian Minister of Foreign Affairs, acts as the Secretariat of the Forum. The Center will collaborate with a coalition of African and international think tanks and knowledge partners.

Preparatory Process

The preparatory process for the upcoming edition of the Forum is designed to be dynamic and closely linked to developments and realities on the ground in Africa. The preparatory process includes a series of expert workshops and webinars aimed at developing action-oriented recommendations for the consideration of African and international leaders in government, regional and international organizations, financial institutions, the private sector and civil society during the Forum. It also features technical insights and lessons learned from the field implementation of the Aswan Conclusions across various contexts in Africa. This will further feed into “Aswan in Practice”, which aims at bridging the gap between policy and practice, as well as taking forward the Aswan Cycle of implementation

through policy engagement, capacity building and research, in collaboration with a broad range of partners to ensure holistic and integrated responses.

Preparatory Workshops

21 March 2023 (Virtual)

Perspectives from Africa on Pathways for Peace: 5 Years of Prevention

30 May - 1 June 2023 (Cairo)

The Review of the African Union Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development Policy

20 June 2023 (New York)

Strengthening Cooperation to Enhance Terrorism Responses in Africa

November 2023 (Cairo)

Multilateral Partnerships on Climate, Peace and Security

30 November - 1 December 2023 (Addis Ababa)

The Operationalization of the HDP Nexus in Africa: State of Play and the Way Forward

13 December 2023 (Addis Ababa)

From Rhetoric to Reality: Placing Women’s Participation at the Heart of Global Peace and Security Governance Reform

16 February 2024 (Munich)

Dawn of a New Era? Resetting the African Peace & Security Architecture in a Changing World

Expected Outcomes

The Aswan Conclusions on Sustainable Peace and Development in Africa. The Aswan Conclusions are implemented through targeted deliverables within the scope of the Aswan Cycle, in collaboration with the Forum’s partners.

Venue and Dates

2-3 July 2024

Cairo, Egypt



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