CONGRESSIONAL PROGRAM
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U.S. Foreign Policy in Africa:
Interests, Opportunities, and Challenges

Nairobi, Kenya
August 12-19, 2023

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AGENDA

U.S. participants depart the U.S.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 13:

U.S. participants arrive in Nairobi, Kenya.

6:45 – 9 PM: **Working Dinner**
Seating is arranged to expose participants to a diverse range of views and provide the opportunity for a meaningful exchange of ideas. Scholars and lawmakers are rotated daily.

MONDAY, AUGUST 14:

6:30 – 9 AM: Breakfast

9 – 9:15 AM: Introduction and Framework of the Conference
This conference is organized into roundtable conversations, working lunches, site visits, and pre-dinner remarks. This segment will highlight how the conference will be conducted, how those with questions will be recognized, and how responses will be timed to allow for as much engagement as possible.

Speaker:
Charlie Dent, *Vice President, Aspen Institute;*
Executive Director, Congressional Program

9:15 – 11 AM: **Roundtable Discussion**
Why Africa? Why Kenya?

Although African nations have infrequently been perceived as central partners in the pursuit of U.S. national security and economic interests, currently and in the years to come, the people and countries in Africa will play a critical role in confronting global threats and challenges that are equally vital to America's well-being. Terrorist organizations, including ISIS, Al-Qaeda, and Al-Shabaab, take advantage of pockets of fragility in Africa, and their presence on the continent poses a direct threat to U.S. interests. The region is home to 30 percent of the world's supply of critical minerals, which are viewed as essential for U.S. national, economic, and environmental security. As U.S. competition and confrontation with China and Russia increases, Africa is becoming a focus of this entanglement. Moreover, Russia's invasion of Ukraine has significantly exacerbated food insecurity on the continent, which also affects the U.S.

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Economically, the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), once it is fully operational, will be the world's fifth-largest economy, with a potential GDP of more than $3.4 trillion. Africa is the last, and largest, emerging market and offers the final big supply chain and consumer prospects, with opportunities like the ones Southeast Asia presented 20 years ago. By 2050, it is estimated that the continent will represent 25 percent of the global population and one-in-three working age people will live in Africa. It is the youngest continent in the world with 60 percent of the population under the age of 25.

Speaker:
Margaret Whitman, *U.S. Ambassador to Kenya*

11 – 11:15 AM: **Break**

11:15 AM – 1 PM: Roundtable Discussion
U.S. Role in Africa's Development: The Past and the Road Ahead

The U.N. Development Program characterizes Africa as a "development paradox – a rich continent with poor nations." Africa, however, with significant help from the United States, has experienced substantial improvements over the past 20+ years in economic growth, job creation, private sector expansion, education, and health care. A smaller proportion of Africans now live in extreme poverty and far fewer African countries are classified as low-income than has been the case over the past half century.

Nevertheless, several more recent factors have severely eroded this impressive progress. COVID-19, growing food insecurity, adverse weather conditions, and armed conflict have significantly undermined years of development gains, leading to the presence of multiple peacekeeping missions, large displacement of people, and unprecedented levels of humanitarian aid. Africa's economic growth has been disrupted, inflation has risen, borrowing costs have grown, and demand in major export markets has softened. Among major concerns for the near-term are the heavy burden of debt servicing, instability created by election cycles, geopolitics and war, and the lingering threat of food insecurity.

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) provides significant assistance to African countries to address these challenges. The former USAID administrator will discuss how the U.S. has contributed to Africa's development in the past and how the U.S. should strategize for the future.

Speaker:
Rajiv Shah, *President, The Rockefeller Foundation; former Administrator of USAID*
Donald Kaberuka, *Former President, African Development Bank Group*

1 – 1:50 PM: Working Lunch
Discussion continues between members of Congress and scholars on U.S. development partnership with Africa.

2 – 4:30 PM: Educational Site Visit
PEPFAR/DREAMS

As part of the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), the Determined, Resilient, Empowered, AIDS-free, Mentored and Safe (DREAMS) program launched in 2015 offering a comprehensive, multi-sectoral, age-appropriate package of core interventions to address key factors that make girls and young women particularly vulnerable to HIV. Adolescent girls and young women account for 74 percent of new HIV infections among all adolescents in sub-Saharan Africa, and nearly 1,000 adolescent girls and young women are infected with HIV daily. Social isolation, poverty, discriminatory cultural norms, orphanhood, gender-based violence, and inadequate schooling all contribute to their vulnerability to HIV and a life not lived to its full potential. The DREAMS partnership goes beyond individual health initiatives to address these factors. In countries where DREAMS programs are active, including Kenya, new HIV diagnoses among adolescent girls and young women are 25 percent less than in other parts of the continent.

6 – 7 PM: Pre-Dinner Remarks:
Opportunities for American Businesses in Africa

Speaker:
Maxwell Okello, *CEO, American Chamber of Commerce, Kenya*

7 – 9 PM: Working Dinner with Local Young Entrepreneurs
Seating is arranged to expose participants to a diverse range of views and provide the opportunity for a meaningful exchange of ideas. Scholars and lawmakers are rotated daily. Discussions with the local young entrepreneurs will focus on the challenges of starting new local enterprises in Kenya.

TUESDAY, AUGUST 15:

6:30 – 7:45 AM: Breakfast

7:45 - 8:45 AM: Breakfast Remarks
How Food Security in Africa Impacts Global Geopolitical Stability
Food security in African countries has a wide range of positive impacts globally – including economic growth and job creation, poverty reduction and trade opportunities, all factors in geopolitical stability.

Speaker: Dan Glickman, *former U.S. Secretary of Agriculture*

9 – 11:30 AM: Roundtable Discussion:
U.S. for a Healthy Africa: Addressing Food (In)security and Malnutrition

Food insecurity and malnutrition, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, has increased dramatically in recent years due to multiple factors, including the global pandemic, a deepening climate crisis, high energy and fertilizer costs, weakened supply chains, and protracted conflicts, including the war in Ukraine. According to the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), in 2022, over 20 million people and at least 10 million children faced severe food shortage in Africa following crop failures and four consecutive dry seasons. Diplomats and aid workers believe that Africa is experiencing a food crisis that is bigger and more complex than the continent has ever seen.

One consequence of the rise in food insecurity is the acute degree of malnutrition. In sub-Saharan Africa, the morbidity and mortality rate from malnutrition is increasing more than any other place in the world. Young children especially are experiencing the brunt of the lack of adequate nutrition. Globally, malnutrition is responsible for nearly 3 million lives of children under the age of five, representing nearly half of all deaths of young children. Malnutrition kills more children than malaria, tuberculosis, and HIV/AIDS combined. Moreover, child malnutrition has a lifelong compounding impact on health, society, and economies. Malnourished children are subject to physical and cognitive delays, often impeding them from reaching their complete developmental potential with significant and lifelong health, social, and economic implications.

While the U.S. Government is addressing food security and nutrition challenges through programs such as USAID's Feed the Future and humanitarian food aid support, by far the largest U.S. global health intervention over the past 20 years has been PEPFAR, the signature HIV/AIDS initiative launched in 2004 by President George W. Bush and strongly supported by each subsequent administration. With the majority of PEPFAR resources invested in Africa, the program is credited with saving 25 million lives, placing 20.1 million people on life-saving antiretroviral treatment, and enabling 5.5 million babies to be born HIV-free to mothers living with HIV. The reauthorization of PEPFAR is before Congress this year.

Speakers:
Agnes Kalibata, *President, Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA)*
Saul Guerrero, *Senior Advisor, UNICEF*
Carrie Hessler-Radelet, *President & CEO, Global Communities*

11:30 – 11:40 AM: Break

11:40 AM – 1:20 PM: Roundtable Discussion:
Africa – a Nexus in the U.S.-China Competition

Beginning in the late 1990s, China significantly increased its resources devoted to the African continent, expanding investment, educational and cultural programs, military cooperation, and political influence. Beijing's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), launched in 2013 as a massive global infrastructure program, further ramped up commercial engagement with Africa. Although the United States provides significantly more

development assistance to Africa, China is the continent's leading bilateral trade partner, exceeding that of the U.S. by about four times. China's foreign direct investment in Africa outpaces that from America by two-fold.

Increasingly, China's expanding commercial, diplomatic, and strategic posture in Africa has become intertwined in the power competition as significant tensions between Beijing and Washington evolve globally. More recently, the U.S. appears to be stepping up its own efforts to engage the continent and compete more directly with China. In December 2022 at the U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit, the Biden Administration pledged to invest $55 billion in Africa over the next three years. In the August 2022 "U.S. Strategy Toward Sub-Saharan Africa" proposal, the White House stated that the United States and its allies were committed to advance "high standards, values-driven, and transparent investments in Africa, as well as address political and security crises." In contrast, the Strategy characterized China's engagement on the continent as expanding its own narrow commercial and geopolitical interests that challenged the rules-based order, undercut transparency, and weakened American relations with the people and governments of Africa.

Speakers:
Steve Radelet, *Director, Global Human Development Program, Georgetown University*
Gyude Moore, *former Minister of Public Works, Liberia; Senior Policy Fellow, Center for Global Development*

1:20 – 2:10 PM: Working Lunch
Discussion continues between members of Congress and scholars on U.S. development partnership with Africa.

2:15 – 3:45 PM: Educational Site Visit
Severe Acute Malnutrition Clinic

Severe acute malnutrition (SAM) results from insufficient energy, fat, protein and/or other nutrients (vitamins and minerals) to cover an individual's needs. A common method of treating children with SAM is the use of ready-to-use therapeutic food (RUTF), a highly fortified energy-dense paste. In Kenya, following five consecutive failed rainy seasons and an unyielding drought, especially in the northern and eastern parts of the country, serious food insecurity remains an issue. UNICEF estimates that nearly 250,000 children between the ages of 6 and 59 months living in Kenya are in need of treatment for SAM.

3:45 – 5 PM: Educational Site Visit
Insta Products
Insta Products (Insta), founded in 2002, is on a mission to tackle malnutrition and stunting in Africa with sustainable food solutions. In 2012, the company was acquired by Dhiren Chandaria and family who have made significant strides in streamlining the manufacturing of ready-to-use therapeutic food (RUTF), a critical product for food aid relief efforts throughout Africa. RUTFs and associated supplements are energy-dense,

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mineral- and vitamin-enriched food specifically designed to treat severe acute malnutrition (SAM).

Now Insta stands out as the largest producer of RUTF in East Africa with purchase orders from global food assistance organizations. Insta has a Long Term Arrangement with UNICEF and fills recurring orders from WFP, USAID, and MSF. About 70 percent of the company's therapeutic foods are being used to treat drought-related malnutrition in Somalia, Kenya, South Sudan and Uganda as well as refugees at the Kakuma Camp. Insta is also supporting the development of the groundnut value chain in Turkana county for enhanced economic integration and self-reliance. In August 2023, Chandaria and team are set to open a brand new manufacturing facility in Nairobi, which also aims to meet UN environmental sustainability goals within the next decade.

7 – 9:30 PM: Working Dinner
Seating is arranged to expose participants to a diverse range of views and provide the opportunity for a meaningful exchange of ideas. Scholars and lawmakers are rotated daily. Discussions will focus on the U.S. role in women's empowerment in Africa.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 16:

6 AM: Grab-and-go Breakfast

6:05 - 6:15 AM: Transit to Airport

7:15 - 8 AM: Flight to Maasai Mara National Reserve

8 - 1 PM: Educational Site Visit
Maasai Mara National Reserve

During the site visit, members of Congress will get a better understanding of the critical role conservation and sound natural resource management play in poverty alleviation, sustainable economic development, and regional security for Kenya and other developing countries.

The session will also focus on the role of U.S. investment in the region. While in the reserve, members of Congress will meet with community leaders, government officials, and leading local and U.S.-based conservation organizations. The group will learn about innovative ways U.S. private and public investment in the region provides support to biodiversity conservation and management efforts – while strengthening the ability of local communities to manage and conserve species, habitats, and ecological processes.

There is a crisis in Africa of poaching and international trafficking of wildlife products. The decimation of elephants and other species is threatening to overturn decades of conservation and development gains. The reserve visit will highlight this issue and the implications for U.S. economic and national security interests.

The United States through USAID has invested tens of millions of dollars over the past 20 years in priority conservation areas – including community wildlife conservancies and tourism-based programs that benefit African communities. These programs provide jobs for people in the developing world, sustain economies, and contribute significantly to peace and stability.

1 PM – 3 PM: Working Lunch
The Maasai Mara National Reserve scientists will talk about the process of conservation, its impact on global wildlife, local economy and political stability.

3 - 3:15 PM: Transit to Airport

3:30 – 4:30 PM: Flight to Nairobi and return to hotel

6 – 7 PM: Pre-Dinner Remarks:
Empowering Women in African Communities
Maria Nzomo will address the substantial impact of empowering women who then become change makers that improve health conditions, expand economic opportunity, and reduce poverty in their communities.

Speaker:Maria Nzomo, *Professor, University of Nairobi; former Kenyan Ambassador to the United Nations and World Trade Organization in Geneva*

7 – 8:30 PM: Working Dinner
Seating is arranged to expose participants to a diverse range of views and provide the opportunity for a meaningful exchange of ideas. Scholars and lawmakers are rotated daily. Discussions will focus on conservation efforts in Africa and its worldwide impact.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 17:
Today only there will be two different agendas for Members of Congress and Congressional spouses, foundation representatives, and scholars. Please pay close attention to the agenda for your group.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 17 – AGENDA FOR MEMBERS OF CONGRESS:

6 – 6:45 AM: Breakfast for Members of Congress Traveling to Kakuma Refugee Camp

6:45 – 7 AM: Transit to airport

8 – 9:30 AM: Board flight and travel to Kakuma Refugee Camp

9:30 AM – 3:30 PM Members of Congress Educational Site Visit
Kakuma Refugee Camp

Kakuma Refugee Camp, located in northwestern Kenya, was established in 1992 when the "Lost Boys of Sudan" arrived, fleeing conflict in Darfur. At the same time, large groups of Ethiopians and Somalis fled their country following the fall of the Ethiopian government and growing civil strife in Somalia. Today, the camp is one of the world's largest, housing 250,000 refugees and asylum seekers and supporting children and families from various countries, including South Sudan, Somalia, Ethiopia, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Uganda, and Rwanda.

With such an unprecedented number of refugees in one place, the conditions in Kakuma are harsh. The camp's resources and infrastructure are overtaxed causing rampant malnutrition and the spread of infectious disease. Currently, new arrivals number 12,000, overwhelming the reception center's capacity of 5,000.

The camp is managed by the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) while food support is provided through the U.N.'s World Food Programme (WFP). The United States is a major contributor to UNHCR and WFP, and since 2015, the U.S. government has provided about $790 million in assistance to refugees in Kenya, including Kakuma.

3:30 – 5 PM Members of Congress board plane and travel from Kakuma Refugee Camp back to Nairobi

7 – 9 PM: Working Dinner with the Local Peace Corps Leadership
Members of Congress, their spouses, foundation representatives, and scholars reconvene in the evening for a working dinner. Seating is arranged to expose participants to a diverse range of views and provide the opportunity for a meaningful exchange of ideas. Scholars and lawmakers are rotated daily. Discussions will focus on the Kakuma Refugee Camp and the KILELE project in Embu, Kenya.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 17 – AGENDA FOR CONGRESSIONAL SPOUSES, FOUNDATION REPRESENTATIVES, AND SCHOLARS:

6:30 – 8:30 AM: Breakfast Available

8:30-10 AM: Breakfast Discussion

Speakers:
Lisa McGovern, *Executive Director, Congressional Families Cancer Prevention*
Benda Kithaka, *Executive Director, KILELE Health Association*

Guests:
Mary Nyangasi, *Head of National Cancer Control Program*
Mary Wangai*, Technical Advisor on Thamani Yetu Project*
Jane Kabaki, *Board Member and a Cancer survivor*
Pamela Savai, Cervical Cancer Survivor
Kui Karur, Cancer Survivor

The Congressional Families Cancer Prevention Program is a program funded by the Prevent Cancer Foundation, which also funds KILELE to prevent cervical cancer in Kenyan communities. This session will highlight the Foundation's impactful work and organizations it supports, like KILELE. Lisa McGovern and Benda Kithaka will discuss KILELE's cervical cancer program, which is working to reach 40,000 Kenyans in Mbeere, a rural, resource-poor hard-to-reach part of Embu, Kenya. The program engages with the community and provides human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccinations, cervical cancer screenings and treatment. These efforts also address myths and misconceptions hindering women's access to lifesaving, preventive health care. Cervical cancer is the leading cause of cancer deaths in Kenya, with more than 3,200 dying annually.

10-11:30 AM: Break

11:45 - 1 PM: Lunch Discussion with Mandela Washington Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) Fellows
The Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders is the flagship program of the U.S. Government's Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI). YALI was created in 2010 and celebrated its 10th anniversary in 2020. Established in 2014, the Mandela Washington Fellowship has brought nearly 5,800 young leaders from every country in Sub-Saharan Africa to the United States for academic and leadership training. The Fellows, between the ages of 25 and 35, are accomplished innovators and leaders in their communities and countries.

1:30 PM: Board Bus to Site Visit

1:45 – 3:30 PM: Educational Site Visit to EPZ Exotica - AGOA Macadamia Nut Factory
A site visit to Exotic EPZ is a solely women-owned macadamia nut processing and export company. Over the past five years, the company has become a major exporter of nuts; it currently exports $1m annually to the US and its products can be found at Costco. Exotic employs over 100 workers and sources raw nuts from over 5000 smallholder farmers. Of the company's workers, 85% are women and 75% are youth.

3:30 - 4 PM: Bus Returns to Hotel

7 – 9 PM: Working Dinner with the Local Peace Corps Leadership
Members of Congress, their spouses, foundation representatives, and scholars reconvene in the evening for a working dinner. Seating is arranged to expose participants to a diverse range of views and provide the opportunity for a meaningful exchange of ideas. Scholars and lawmakers are rotated daily. Discussions will focus on the Kakuma Refugee Camp and the KILELE project in Embu, Kenya.

6:30 – 9 AM: Breakfast

9 – 11 AM: Key Conference Takeaways and Policy Reflections (Members of Congress Only)
All attendees can remain in the meeting room, however, this session is only for Members of Congress to discuss ideas and policies
This time is set aside for Members of Congress to reflect on what they learned during the conference and discuss their views on implications for U.S. policy.

11 AM – 2 PM: Educational Site Visit
MAS Intimates
Apparel is the single largest export from Kenya to the United States at approximately $450 million in 2021, more than twice the amount of a decade ago, and representing about two-thirds of total Kenyan exports to the U.S. Roughly 90 percent of Kenya's apparel production is exported to the U.S. market, supplying a wide range of American brands. Kenya's apparel sector is directly supported by the significant trade preferences (duty-free access) provided by the United States under the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA).

MAS Holdings is the largest apparel tech company in South Asia. MAS Intimates, established in 2020 and located in the Athi River Export Processing Zone, takes advantage of the vast supply chain in the region and the existing trade agreements with key customer markets. One of the largest employers in apparel manufacturing in Kenya, MAS Intimates produces clothing for PVH Corp, an American clothing company that owns brands such as Tommy Hilfiger and Calvin Klein. Currently, MAS employs over 1,800 people with plans to expand further as the demand in the American market increases. MAS Intimates partners with USAID and is one example of the U.S. Prosper Africa's goal of increasing trade and investment between African nations and the United States.

OR

11 AM – 2 PM: Educational Site Visit
Kentegra Biotechnology Pyrethrum Processing Facility
Once Kenya's third largest export, pyrethrum is a naturally occurring mixture of chemicals found in chrysanthemums that are extracted and refined into pale refined extract (PRE), an active ingredient used to formulate organic insecticides and pesticides. Kenya contributed more than 80 percent of the global supply and was a major supplier to the U.S. until the late 1990s, with over 300,000 farmers growing chrysanthemums.

Kentegra Biotechnology, a U.S. firm based in Kenya, is at the forefront of the pyrethrum revival. The company has contracted with more than 9,000 farmers growing over 2,000 acres across seven counties and has invested over $4.5 million to build a factory in Athi River. The organization operates two nurseries in Nakuru county. Kentegra's work specifically focuses on increasing the participation of women and youth. Currently,

women make up 44 percent of Kentegra farmers' 70 percent of its nursery staff. Kentegra partners with both USAID and the U.S. Development Finance Corporation.

2 – 3:30 PM: Working Lunch
The lunch discussion will focus on U.S. based firms like Kentegra in Kenya and major African-based exporters to America, like MAS Intimates. What do these types of business investments mean in terms of economic growth and political stability in Africa, as well as U.S. economic growth and our own national security interests?

3 - 6 PM: Check out from the hotel

6:30 – 8:30 PM: Dinner Available

3 – 10:30 PM: Participants depart the hotel for the airport to return to the United States

CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS

MEMBERS OF CONGRESS AND THEIR SPOUSES:

Rep. Jim Baird and Danise Baird

Rep. Ami Bera and Janine Bera

Sen. Tom Carper and Martha Carper

Rep. Steve Cohen

Sen. Chris Coons

Rep. John Curtis and Sue Curtis

Rep. Lloyd Doggett and Libby Doggett

Rep. John Garamendi and Patti Garamendi

Rep. Steven Horsford

Rep. Annie Kuster and Brad Kuster

Rep. Zoe Lofgren

Rep. Tracey Mann and Audrey Mann

Rep. Jim McGovern and Lisa McGovern

Rep. Donald Norcross and Andrea Doran

Rep. Jan Schakowsky and Bob Creamer

Rep. Pete Sessions and Karen Sessions

Rep. Dina Titus and Thomas Wright

Rep. Beth Van Duyne

Rep. Susan Wild

SCHOLARS AND EXPERTS:

Dan Glickman   *Former United States Secretary of Agriculture*

Saul Guerrero   *Senior Advisor, UNICEF*

Carrie Hessler-Radelet   *President & CEO, Global Communities*

Donald Kaberuka   *Former President, African Development Bank Group*

Agnes Kalibata   *President, Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA)*

Gyude Moore   *Former Minister of Public Works, Liberia; Senior Policy Fellow, Center for Global Development*

Maria Nzomo   *Professor, University of Nairobi; former Kenyan Ambassador to the United Nations and World Trade Organization in Geneva*

Maxwell Okello   *CEO, American Chamber of Commerce, Kenya*

Steve Radelet   *Director, Global Human Development Program, Georgetown University*

Rajiv Shah   *President, The Rockefeller Foundation*

Margaret Whitman   *United States Ambassador to Kenya*

RAPPORTEUR:

Larry Nowels   *Co-Chair, Modernizing Foreign Assistance Network*

FOUNDATION REPRESENTATIVES:

Sean Buffington   *Vice President, Henry Luce Foundation*

Sharon Davies   *President and CEO, Kettering Foundation*

William Moore   *CEO, Eleanor Crook Foundation*

Maxine Thomas   *Director of International Programs, Vice President and General Counsel, Kettering Foundation*

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ASPEN INSTITUTE CONGRESSIONAL PROGRAM:

Charlie Dent
  and **Pamela Dent**

Executive Director, Aspen Institute Congressional Program and Vice President, Aspen Institute

Tyler Denton

Deputy Director

Jennifer Harthan

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Kristine Gloria

Fund and Grants Manager

Ketevan Chincharadze

Policy Advisor

Sajan Shah

Volunteer

REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ASPEN INSTITUTE IN EAST AFRICA:

Rosemary Amondi

Regional Director, Aspen Institute, Aspen Network of Development Entrepreneurs (ANDE) East Africa Chapter

Laila Macharia

Director, Aspen Institute Africa Initiative

Grace Wachori

Regional Head, Aspen Institute, Aspen Network of Development Entrepreneurs (ANDE) East Africa Chapter

RAPPORTEUR'S SUMMARY

Larry Nowels

Co-Chair, Modernizing Foreign Assistance Network

Introduction

Between August 13 and 18, 2023, nineteen members of Congress met in Nairobi, Kenya to discuss U.S. foreign policy in Africa and learn about opportunities and challenges American policymakers and locals face on the continent. Members were joined by nearly a dozen scholars, experts, and U.S. government officials who led eight roundtables and conversations on various topics concerning American interests in Africa and the ways to advance U.S.-Africa relations. The program also included a number of site visits that underscored the themes of the discussions and highlighted projects supported by the U.S. government.

Why Africa, Why Kenya?

The conference began with a keynote address by a senior U.S. government official focusing on the importance of Africa, and notably of Kenya, to American foreign policy. She noted that in her previous professional life outside of government, she rarely thought about Africa; but if she were back in the boardroom now, the continent would be constantly on her mind for two reasons: (1) supply chain diversification and (2) net-zero emissions. The official argued that one of the key lessons of the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine was the danger of single-sourcing from any one country. From a business perspective, investing in a country like Kenya, where 93% of electricity generation comes from renewable sources, would go a long way towards reaching climate change mitigation goals. Africa is important, she asserted, for various reasons, including the fact that by 2050, one-fourth of the world's population will reside on the continent. With 60% of its population under 25, Africa is the youngest region and the last and largest emerging market offering opportunities similar to southeast Asia 20 years ago.

Shifting her remarks to Kenya, she noted that the country is the most stable democracy in East Africa, serves as the commercial gateway to the region, maintains a premier technology center that one day may be able to replicate Silicon Valley, and exports the largest amount to the United States. Nevertheless, Kenya needs to confront several significant challenges. Kenya, she argued, should maintain a "consistent, transparent, and fairly administered national tax policy" to attract investment and advance economic development. Although Kenya's level of corruption is not particularly high when

compared with other emerging economies, as measured by the Millennium Challenge Corporation, corruption remains a prominent challenge to accelerating development. A high debt burden limits the country's ability to fund public services and infrastructure, slowing down efforts to grow the economy. While Kenya currently has a solid manufacturing capacity, it needs to expand. The reauthorization of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) in 2025, she asserted, is critical to the continued growth of the country's manufacturing efforts.

Members raised many questions regarding food security, human rights, income growth, climate change, and high birth rates. The senior U.S. official noted that Kenya was not well prepared to address climate change, even though it directly impacts the nation's food security. The official also acknowledged Kenya's history of election violence and riot police, noting that more recent elections had been peaceful, free, and fair. One member, commenting about Kenya sending police support to Haiti, emphasized the need for strong guard rails on how those forces operated in a high-pressure environment.

 Asked about China's role in Kenya and Africa more broadly, the official argued that China is all about business, building infrastructure, but also adding to the debt burden. The U.S., on the other hand, brings opportunities to Kenya in the form of food assistance, PEPFAR, development aid, military training, and other investments in the country.

U.S. Role in Africa's Development: The Past and the Road Ahead

Two scholars led the discussion about the United States previous and future possible contributions to promote economic growth, create jobs, expand the private sector, improve education and health on the continent. One scholar posed two main questions: (1) Should *we* be optimistic for Africa's development or very concerned? – A bit of both, he answered. (2) Can the United States compete with China in Africa? – Yes, but the U.S. needs to change its approach. American engagement and leadership, offered in a respectful way, can make a difference. To meet this goal, this scholar offered several recommendations for American policymakers:

- Scale up Power Africa and other energy investments, a sector where the U.S. can win in its competition with China
- Re-think how the multilateral development banks and the IMF address debt sustainability
- Expand food security and health investments in Africa, including the reauthorization of PEPFAR and a greater focus on pandemic preparedness
- Promote trade with the continent and reauthorize AGOA

A second scholar, speaking as an African, argued that the rapidly growing and youthful population was the single most important factor in why the United States needs to

change its relationship with the continent. He noted that there are 14 new airports in Africa, but Africans are not interested in who builds them. Maintaining respect in its relationships with Africa is critical for the United States: "It's not about what the U.S. can do for Africa, but what the U.S. and Africa can do together."

Energy needs on the continent became a dominant focus of the conversation during the question period. One member expressed skepticism that renewable energy can alone solve Africa's needs by 2050. The scholars agreed that all energy sources needed to be part of the solution, including gas, but with a stronger focus by the United States on renewable energy. Because no single African country can be energy independent, one scholar recommended connecting national energy markets. Another member expressed frustration with how the partisan debate over energy in the United States interfered with helping Africa. One of the scholars noted that energy is a core constraint to growth in Africa; if there is consistent and affordable energy available, job opportunities in manufacturing and tourism will expand.

A member also asked about how best to manage debt on the continent and prepare for defaults. A scholar suggested the need for early debt default arrangements between western and Chinese lenders. Reforming the IMF's debt sustainability model and longer-term debt management tools was another recommendation. The other scholar noted the importance of Congress supporting the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative (MDRI) in 2003 and helping African countries maintain access to commercial markets. In response to one question about population growth and fragility on the continent, a scholar stressed continuing several well-tested, already successful interventions: girls' education, family planning, and economic opportunities.

Opportunities for American Businesses in Africa

In pre-dinner remarks, a leading business executive in Kenya offered perspectives for the expansion of U.S. business investments in Africa. He spoke about several opportunities in the years ahead, for example Africa needs $172 billion in infrastructure by 2025 and Africa trade agreements will reach $16 trillion by 2050. Nevertheless, he asserted, the U.S. has lost considerable competitiveness on the continent with only $44.8 billion in investments. This business executive offered three recommendations for American policymakers:

- Accelerate commercial diplomacy efforts with more trade and investment visits from the U.S. and more programs like Prosper Africa
- Increase access to market intelligence, something necessary for effective decision-making but lacking within the American business community
- Diversify trade frameworks that are heavily tilted toward energy imports to the United States. AGOA is important but the U.S. needs to think about what comes next.

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One member underscored the need for a more predictable and stable tax policy in Kenya and elsewhere. The business leader agreed with it, noting that the problem was not high tax rates but their consistency and predictability.

Another member asked about an educated workforce in Kenya, to which the executive explained that Kenya had a robust education system and a deep, young workforce. The conference participants had the opportunity to meet with young African entrepreneurs and hear from Mandela Washington Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) fellows, who have received academic and leadership training in the U.S. under the U.S. State Department's initiative. The Fellows, between the ages of 25 and 35, were accomplished innovators and leaders in their communities who shared their success story with the audience. It was a unique opportunity for the delegation to learn more about what the local youth can achieve with the U.S. government's help.

In response to another member's question about how to bring more American investors to Kenya and Africa, the business expert recommended utilizing the American Chamber of Commerce in Kenya, which has a "match-making" program for businesses. Corruption and its detrimental impact on investment was raised by another member, with the business executive agreeing that it was a prominent problem in public procurement and the government needed to enforce anti-corruption laws more aggressively.

U.S. for a Healthy Africa: Addressing Food (In)security and Malnutrition

Food insecurity in Africa is a serious and growing challenge. The World Food Programme (WFP) estimates that 345 million Africans face severe hunger, up from 200 million in 2020. Increase in political violence across the continent is up by 30% since 2020, partially because of the lack of food. Despite the rising numbers in Africa encountering food shortages, donors seem to be pulling back, leaving the WFP with 38% less in contributions than a year ago. These are some of the points raised by a scholar who has been a leading U.S. expert on global agriculture for many years. He noted that while Africa is a net importer of food, the continent can feed itself if not for the underperformance of the agriculture sector. He further argued for the need for more research in agriculture, pointing out that China spends twice as much on research as the United States. His biggest worry is the lack of water and the fact that agriculture consumes 70% of global water supplies. One member suggested that hunger is a political matter, and there is not enough political will to elevate the issue. The agriculture expert suggested that the U.S. leadership needs to better explain the severity of hunger to the American people and how the U.S. can assist.

The intersection of food insecurity and climate change was a key theme of another roundtable, led by three scholars with decades of experience in agriculture and nutrition. They called for more investment in adaptation and mitigation immediately and argued that Africa will never be food secure without tackling climate change. One

scholar noted that the new USAID climate strategy is strong and ambitious, but there are no resources assigned to implement it. She proposed another "big idea", like PEPFAR, to address nutrition and climate. Another scholar postured that once humanitarian food aid becomes the major tool in addressing hunger, it will be nearly impossible to reverse this trend. The scholar, with years of experience in dealing with severe malnutrition of children under age five, argued that scientists know what works and policymakers should scale up those interventions immediately: follow the science, do not have annual debates over funding but take a longer-term approach, and increase incentives for national governments to pay more of the costs of ready-to-use therapeutic foods (RUTF), a life-saving treatment for severely malnourished young children.

One member asked what the U.S. should stop doing or not fund to accelerate food security and fight malnutrition in Africa. Shipping fewer American commodities to Africa and promoting the procurement of African produced food instead was what all scholars agreed on. One noted that there needed to be greater flexibility in switching from one commodity to another that does not exist with imported food. Another spoke about the success of the McGovern-Dole school feeding program that purchases food from local farmers. One member, who spoke about the importance of food aid produced by American farmers, raised some concern for this local approach. Scholars agreed that there should be a more nuanced approach between food imports and locally produced commodities and a balance between U.S. and African farmers.

Another member took the discussion in the opposite direction, asking what could be done to address malnutrition if funding could double or triple. One scholar noted that this had already happened through a recent congressional appropriation; with the additional resources, more would be spent on prevention. Another scholar suggested increased investments in private sector solutions to food security and nutrition.

Another member argued that Africa would be unable to solve its food security problem without addressing population growth and climate change. He found it perplexing that Kenyan policies undermined access to birth control by young women unless they were 18 or married.

Russia's contributions to addressing food security in Africa was another topic of discussion. A scholar noted that the war in Ukraine has significantly affected inflation across the continent and triggered severe shortages of fertilizers.

Africa: a Nexus in the U.S.-China Competition

U.S.-China competition in Africa was one of the main topics during the conference. In a session focused on this issue, two scholars argued that the United States needed to change its approach to succeed in this competition. One of the experts argued that American foreign aid should be viewed as a tool that not only benefits Africa, but also

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advances key U.S. national interests; without it, America will cede its global leadership to China. Beijing is looking 20-30 years ahead, he argued, not just about extracting resources but establishing friends and allies. The United States, he asserted, does not maintain a long-term strategy. He told members that the U.S. should stop denigrating China and telling African leaders who they should befriend; instead, the U.S. should better understand what Africans want and find mutual agreements to achieve those goals. He suggested the U.S. needed to "go big" with more funding and a program like China's Belt and Road Initiative that would focus on six major sectors:

- Health, building on PEPFAR
- Education, especially for girls
- Energy, going beyond Power Africa
- Food security
- Trade
- Scholarships for African students to study in the United States.

The other scholar spoke about how China has institutionalized its engagement with Africa while the United States has not. Infrastructure, a major component of Chinese investment in Africa, is visible and tangible, and it is no wonder that Africans have embraced China's vast amount of construction on the continent. He agreed with the other scholar that energy and human capital strengthening were two areas that the U.S. should expand. The United States should help Africa add value to its exports but cannot do so without consistent and reliable electricity. Likewise, bringing more African students to study at American universities is an obvious way to build ties with the people of Africa and advance U.S. leadership. He also observed that there is a large African diaspora living in the United States, which gives the U.S. an advantage over China.

Several members agreed that educating more Africans in the United States was a beneficial policy recommendation, but some wondered where the funding could be found and whether domestic immigration views would get in the way of issuing the necessary visas. In response, one scholar suggested the creation of American educational centers and institutions located in Africa where thousands of students could study without traveling to the United States.

Focusing on the energy sector also resonated with several members, with one noting that the Millennium Challenge Corporation would be an impactful tool to scale up American energy investments on the continent. When asked about African public perception of China and the United States, one scholar answered that it is about the same. The United States, he said, needs to figure out how to better communicate the importance of social investments that make up the greater portion of American assistance.

Witnessing Examples of Successful Partnerships

Throughout the week, members visited several U.S.-supported programs in Kenya that provided real-time examples of topics raised during the roundtable discussions, including women's empowerment, food security and malnutrition, job creation and the private sector, American business opportunities, and U.S. humanitarian interventions.

PEPFAR and the DREAMS Program. Beginning in 2015, PEPFAR launched the DREAMS Program (Determined, Resilient, Empowered, AIDS-free, Mentored and Safe) aimed at lowering the risk of HIV infection among vulnerable girls and young women. DREAMS interventions seek to empower adolescent girls and young women and reduce risk through youth-friendly reproductive health care and social asset building while mobilizing communities for change with school- and community-based HIV and violence prevention.

Members visited the Kangemi neighborhood, one of Nairobi's several slum communities, where a local faith-based organization, Beacon of Hope, provided an overview of the DREAMS program, its objectives, and results. Following this introduction, members toured several sites in the neighborhood where girls and young women received vocational training in hairdressing, baking, and weaving, learning skills that helped them secure a job, elevate their independence, and strengthen their self-esteem. Members also visited two centers where DREAMS participants learned about and received mentoring on how to lead a more healthy and safe life. Throughout the visit, members interacted with many girls and young women, hearing their inspiring stories and the impact of the DREAMS program on their lives.

The importance of women's education and involvement in African communities and politics was further emphasized by an academic and former Kenyan diplomat in her pre-dinner remarks. She argued that the lack of women's political influence was not just an African problem but a global one. In 2023, only 31 countries had female heads of state, just 23% of cabinet positions were held by women, and only six countries had achieved parity between men and women in their parliaments. While she noted that Kenya maintained a very strong patriarchal system, some advances had taken place. During the 1990s, no women served in Kenya's parliament. Today, 21% of the seats are held by females and seven Governors are women. She concluded by stressing that women elected to public office in Kenya and elsewhere in Africa must establish a strong action-oriented agenda in order to hold their own alongside their male colleagues.

Severe Acute Malnutrition Clinics and the Insta Production Facility.
Following an earlier roundtable discussion on food security and malnutrition, members traveled to four severe acute malnutrition clinics where they met with mothers and their severely malnourished young children. They witnessed how treatment provided at the

clinics restored the health of the children. In particular, members learned about the significant benefits of ready-to-use therapeutic food (RUTF), an energy-dense, mineral and vitamin enriched product used extensively in Africa to treat severe acute malnutrition.

Members then moved to tour Insta Products, a production facility that is the largest producer of RUTF in East Africa. Insta is a major supplier of therapeutic foods for UNICEF, the World Food Programme, and USAID, serving their operations in drought-related malnutrition treatment throughout the region and in the Kakuma Refugee Camp in northern Kenya. Insta has reached 1.8 million children in Africa since it was founded in 2002. Members also toured Insta's new production facility, set to begin operations the following week (late August 2023), that will significantly scale-up the manufacturing of RUTF for distribution throughout the continent.

The Congressional Families Cancer Prevention Program and KILELE Health Association. Congressional family members and scholars had the opportunity to meet with KILELE Health founder and listen to cancer survivors' stories. KILELE is a program funded by the Prevent Cancer Foundation which also funds the Congressional Families Cancer Prevention program. The executive directors of Congressional Families Cancer Prevention and KILELE highlighted the Foundation's impactful work and talked about KILELE's successful cervical cancer program, which is working to reach 40,000 Kenyans in Mbeere, a rural, resource-poor hard-to-reach part of Embu, Kenya. KILELE engages with the community and provides human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccinations, cervical cancer screenings and treatment. These efforts also address myths and misconceptions hindering women's access to lifesaving, preventive health care.

The conference participants learned that cervical cancer is the leading cause of cancer deaths in Kenya, with more than 3,200 dying annually. While this is a preventable form of cancer through HPV vaccination, the vaccines are not affordable. This information motivated members of Congress to engage American pharmaceutical companies and find ways to make HPV vaccines more accessible in Africa.

Kakuma Refugee Camp. Situated in the north-west region of Kenya, the Kakuma Refugee camp is home to over 279,000 people, coming from more than 20 countries with the majority fleeing South Sudan. Because of the protracted refugee situation and arid conditions, the camp relies mostly on humanitarian assistance provided by and managed through the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the U.N. World Food Programme. Refugees and local communities alike live in marginal locations facing resource challenges, including lack of water for agriculture and households as well as minimal economic opportunities.

Members spent an entire day visiting the camp, learning about services provided and hearing refugees' emotional stories about their reasons to come to Kakuma and everyday lives in the camp. Members were briefed by UNHCR officials at the Kakuma Reception Center where newly arrived refugees are registered and await relocation to temporary and permanent housing elsewhere in the camp. Due to financial shortfalls to construct new housing, some have been living in the Reception Center for six months in a facility designed for 5,000, but now with a population of 12,000. The delegation then moved to the WFP food distribution operation where during the first week of each month food is allocated to camp households.

Members also visited the Kakuma hospital where they learned about the significant rise in recent months of severe malnutrition among very young children. The vocational and livelihood training center was the next stop where Members interacted with refugees learning computer, solar electric, and other skills. Members concluded the Kakuma camp program with visits to refugee homes, speaking directly with households about how they had come to Kakuma, challenges of living in the camp, and what they saw for their future.

Wildlife Conservation Programs. Members traveled to the Maasai Mara, one of Kenya's National Reserves, where they were briefed on the importance of wildlife conservation and efforts to manage the often tense human-animal relationship throughout Africa and Kenya, in particular. It has been demonstrated that investments in conservation lead to greater food security and regional stability. A representative from the International Conservation Caucus Foundation (ICCF) spoke about the organization's nonpartisan work to advance leadership in conservation by building political will among legislatures in 25 countries to strengthen efforts in managing protected areas. One member discussed with his colleagues pending legislation – the United States Foundation for International Conservation Act – that would create a public-private partnership to advance long-term planning for global conservation and support local communities to effectively manage protected and conserved areas. Finally, members heard from a representative of the Maasai Mara Wildlife Conservation Association (MMWCA), an organization, with support from USAID, that brings together 24 environmental conservancies composed of individual landowners. The program helps generate income and jobs within the local communities, provides land security for people living in the conservancies, and reduces human-wildlife conflict. It also contributes to women's economic empowerment by supporting women-led community-based groups that operate nature-based enterprises and other economic ventures.

The Peace Corps in Kenya. Several members of the Peace Corps leadership joined the conference for informal discussions over dinner about Peace Corps activities in

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Kenya, the challenge of reestablishing the program following the pandemic, and what the time abroad and community service meant to Peace Corps volunteers. One member in the congressional delegation who is a returned Peace Corps volunteer, provided his perspective of what the experience meant for his professional development and introduced the current Country Director who offered brief opening remarks. Over dinner, members continued their individual conversations with the Peace Corps guests.

Kentegra Biotechnology. Kentegra is an American biotechnology firm based in Kenya specializing in the production of the organic insecticide, pyrethrum, for home biocide agriculture and pharmaceutical pesticide markets. In the past, Kenya had been a leading global exporter of pyrethrum, a naturally occurring substance found in chrysanthemums and when refined, becomes an active ingredient in organic insecticides and pesticides. At its peak thirty years ago, 300,000 farmers were involved in growing chrysanthemums. Mismanagement and the introduction of synthetic pesticides, however, devastated the Kenyan export market of pyrethrum. Kentegra, founded in 2017, has been instrumental in the revival of Kenya's pyrethrum production, working with over 9,000 farmers, many of them women. Members traveled to Athi River, home of Kentegra's production center where they toured the factory and learned about the company's business model. They also discussed with several farmers growing chrysanthemums the benefits of working with Kentegra, what it has meant for their household income, and how it has impacted their families.

MAS Intimates. Members traveled to the Export Processing Zone in Athi River, where the delegation toured the MAS Intimates apparel factory and learned about the importance of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) for stimulating increased manufacturing in Kenya and across Africa, creating thousands of well-paid jobs, and providing a diverse supply chain for American buyers. AGOA, which offers duty-free access to African made textiles, is up for reauthorization by Congress in 2025. MAS Holdings, the largest apparel producer in South Asia, was asked by PVH Corp, an American company selling brands such as Tommy Hilfiger and Calvin Klein, to establish operations in Kenya to take advantage of a skilled workforce and trade benefits extended through AGOA. Members learned about the MAS business model and how a partnership with USAID's Prosper Africa Initiative has led to increased exports and jobs for young Kenyans, including women. MAS currently employs 1,800 workers but hopes to expand by 2025 to 7,500. Members toured the factory floor, spoke directly with workers, and learned about the benefits package offered by MAS that includes in-house meals during the workday, an on-site health clinic, health insurance, and a day care facility.

Conclusion

Africa, with help from the United States, has experienced substantial improvements over the past 20+ years in economic growth, job creation, private sector expansion, education, and health care. Several more recent factors, however, have eroded some of this impressive progress. Covid-19, growing food insecurity, and armed conflict and terrorism have significantly undermined years of development gains, leading to the presence of multiple peacekeeping missions, large displacement of people, and unprecedented levels of humanitarian aid. Yet, there are also significant opportunities for reversing these trends and accelerating economic development, expanding investment and trade, increasing access to reliable energy, addressing climate change, and strengthening social services available to the people of Africa. Throughout the week of the Aspen Institute conference, members of Congress learned from scholars and experts about many of these challenges and opportunities, debated among themselves as to which U.S. policy adjustments would best advance American and African interests, and saw first-hand many examples of where U.S.-African partnerships making a positive difference for the future of the continent.

POLICY ACTION MEMORANDUM FOR
MEMBERS OF CONGRESS[1]

Recommendations for the U.S. Foreign Policy Strategy:

- The U.S. leadership should recognize Kenya's great potential for technological development and green energy transition, with over 65,000 developers creating open-source platforms and 93% electricity coming from renewable sources. The U.S. should focus on economic diplomacy in Kenya and wider Africa.

- The U.S. government should create incentives for American businesses to invest in Africa, allowing the country to create long-term sustainable economic opportunities on the continent and reducing Africa's dependence on foreign aid. Creating local jobs will bring stable incomes to African families, stabilize population growth, reduce migration rate, and disincentivize youth to engage in terrorism.

- Starvation is not a scientific challenge, it is a political one. The U.S. government should demonstrate a more significant will, perhaps by increased funding, to solve this problem.

- To address the severe malnutrition of children under age five policymakers should follow the science that already offers empirical approaches that work, move away from annual debates over funding to a longer-term approach, and increase incentives for African governments to provide RUTF, prenatal vitamins, vitamin A supplements, breastfeeding support, and education for mothers.

- The U.S. government should stop demonizing China and instructing African leaders how to conduct diplomacy with their partners. China brings tangible and visible benefits to the continent, such as infrastructure, which justifies Africa's continuous interest in cooperating with China. Criticizing African governments for participating in China' Belt and Road Initiative has no benefit if the U.S. does not offer an alternative.

- To compete with China, the U.S. has the opportunity to provide access to power throughout the continent. Such a crucial project will boost America's reputation on the continent.

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[1] *Note: This policy action memorandum is compiled for Congressional participants and depicts policy ideas that emerged during the conference sessions in Nairobi, Kenya. The Aspen Institute is a neutral convener. We do not advocate any of these policies; we merely catalog the ideas that came forth.*

- U.S.-African partnerships should be institutionalized. The U.S.-Africa Summit took a long break between 2014-2022, while China has been hosting the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation. The U.S. government should continue using multilateral platforms more regularly to boost its cooperation with Africa.

Congressional Reflections:

- Africa is not a problem to solve, rather it is a tremendous opportunity for American foreign policy and businesses. It is not about what the U.S. can do for Africa, but what the two can do together – this should be the core of U.S. strategy in Africa.

- President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) has saved millions of lives on the continent. Congress should reauthorize this program to save many more.

- The U.S. spends less than 1% of the federal budget on foreign assistance. These efforts should be doubled to guarantee a better future for the planet's population.

- Congress should allow the U.S. aid to focus on water, food, and energy throughout Africa. Meanwhile, U.S. diplomacy should focus on enhancing economic partnerships and creating more job opportunities in African communities for sustainable growth.

- Congress should help the Kakuma refugee camp find ways to obtain several solar panels that can generate power for the community and allow households to use refrigerators. It will make a big difference at a small cost.

- The Kakuma camp should be treated as a permanent facility for refugees as opposed to a temporary one to help the community establish a self-sustaining system. The U.S. should increase support for UNHCR and the World Food Programme to maintain refugee camps like Kakuma throughout the continent.

- Cervical cancer, which is preventable through HPV vaccination, is a leading cause of all cancer deaths in Kenya with over 3,000 women dying every year. Congress should find a way to incentivize pharmaceutical companies to make HPV vaccines more affordable and accessible for African women.

- The U.S. has one of the strongest educations, Africa has the most young people – there is a clear need for cooperation in education. Regardless, around 60% of African students are denied F1 visas per year. Having American-educated leaders and youth in Africa will help the continent' development and the partnerships with the U.S. The U.S. government should recognize this pattern and grant more student visas to Africans.

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SCHOLARS' ESSAYS

Innovating U.S. Trade Policy to Drive U.S. Private Sector Leadership in Africa

Maxwell Okello

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Trade and investment are crucial components of the relationship between the United States and Africa. On one hand, it spurs economic activity creating thousands of jobs in African countries and reduces overreliance on development assistance. On the other, it supports market demand for products in the U.S., provides new markets for U.S. companies, and maintains U.S. economic stability and resilience.

U.S. trade and investment with Africa has lagged behind its potential with relatively fewer U.S. companies active on the continent compared to other regions. Data released in July 2022 by the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis on U.S. Direct Investment Abroad in 2021, placed investment in Africa last, valued at $44.8 billion.[2] This is against U.S. investment in other regions such as Europe valued at $3, 981.4 billion and Asia $957.5 billion in that same year.[3] U.S. goods and services traded with Africa totalled $83.6 billion in 2021.[4]

Since its enactment in 2000, the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) has been at the core of U.S. economic policy and commercial engagement with Africa. AGOA provides eligible sub-Saharan African countries with duty-free access to the U.S. market for over 1,800 products, in addition to the more than 5,000 products that are eligible for duty-free access under the Generalized System of Preferences program.[5] AGOA has been

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[2]Bureau of Economic Analysis, "Direct Investment by Country and Industry, 2021", News Release, U.S. Department of Commerce, July 21, 2022, https://www.bea.gov/sites/default/files/2022-07/dici0722.pdf

[3]Bureau of Economic Analysis, "Direct Investment by Country and Industry, 2021", News Release, U.S. Department of Commerce, July 21, 2022, https://www.bea.gov/sites/default/files/2022-07/dici0722.pdf

[4] The White House, "U.S.- Africa Partnership in Promoting Two-Way Trade and Investment in Africa", Fact Sheet, Last Modified December 14, 2022, https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/12/14/fact-sheet-u-s-africa-partnership-in-promoting-two-way-trade-and-investment-in-africa/

[5] Office of the United States Trade Representative (2023) African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA). (https://ustr.gov/issue-areas/trade-development/preference-programs/african-growth-and-opportunity-act-agoa)

instrumental in promoting trade, investment, and economic growth in Africa, although its effectiveness has varied across different countries.

Over the past 20 years, AGOA has led to the creation of hundreds of thousands of jobs in Africa, especially in Southern and Eastern Africa, and has also played an important role in increasing U.S. trade with Africa, increasing African integration into global value chains, and diversifying sub-Saharan African economies. Exports from AGOA beneficiaries increased over 500% under the first 10 years of the program, with total U.S. AGOA imports valued at $9.4 billion in 2022, up 57% from $6.0 billion in 2021.[6] This is against total two-way trade in goods and services between the United States and sub-Saharan Africa valued at $83.6 billion in 2021.[7]

AGOA utilization rates vary significantly by country, and some benefits under the program have been used to a greater degree than others. Lesotho and Kenya for example, have had the highest AGOA utilization rates: "Between 2010 and 2020, apparel products from Kenya accounted for 88 percent of the country's total exports to the United States under AGOA ($3.6 billion in value); apparel products from Lesotho accounted for 99 percent of the same ($3.2 billion)".[8] Almost half of all beneficiary countries, however, had a utilization rate of 2 percent or lower during the same period.[9]

Africa has tremendous economic potential and offers rewarding commercial opportunities with some of the highest returns. With Africa's integration into a single continent-wide market of 1.3 billion people and $3.4 trillion under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), the continent is poised to become the

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[6] Congressional Research Service, "African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA)", In Focus, Updated May 5, 2023
https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IF/IF10149#:~:text=of%20the%20program.-,U.S.%20Imports%20Under%20AGOA,industries%2C%20but%20diversification%20has%20grown.

[7] The White House, "U.S.- Africa Partnership in Promoting Two-Way Trade and Investment in Africa", Fact Sheet, Last Modified December 14, 2022,
https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/12/14/fact-sheet-u-s-africa-partnership-in-promoting-two-way-trade-and-investment-in-africa/

[8] Schneidman, W., McNulty, K., & Dicharry, N. (2021, November 15). How the Biden administration can make AGOA more effective.
(https://www.brookings.edu/blog/africa-in-focus/2021/11/15/how-the-bidenadministration-can-make-agoa-more-effective/)

[9] Schneidman, W., McNulty, K., & Dicharry, N. (2021, November 15). How the Biden administration can make AGOA more effective.
(https://www.brookings.edu/blog/africa-in-focus/2021/11/15/how-the-bidenadministration-can-make-agoa-more-effective/)

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fifth-largest economy in the world. [10] It is estimated that with the successful implementation of the AfCFTA Africa will have a combined consumer and business spending of $6.7 trillion by 2030 and $16.12 trillion by 2050, creating a unique opportunity for people and businesses[11]—meaning the region can be the next big market for American goods and services.

For this to happen however, a new innovative approach to commercial engagement with the continent beyond AGOA in its current form is critical.

Commercial Diplomacy

Commercial Diplomacy, a powerful strategic tool for enhancing commercial engagement, is the first cornerstone of an innovative trade policy framework to advance U.S. private sector leadership in Africa. Government to government engagement can support overcoming regulatory obstacles and help improve the competitiveness of American companies in the region.

This can take various forms from prioritization of commercial engagements in administration trips and delegations to technical assistance and capacity-building programs, especially in development of policy and regulation that is aligned with international best practices and that nurtures, supports, and preserves business, new technologies, and innovation.

The impact of greater government involvement in supporting private sector to identify and close deals is clear. Since 2021, the U.S. Government helped close more than 800 two-way trade and investment deals across 47 African countries for a total estimated value of over $18 billion. In contrast, U.S. private sector driven investment deals in Africa closed during the same period were valued at $8.6 billion.[12]

U.S. private sector can also play a huge role in supporting commercial diplomacy efforts. One of the recommendations contained in the President's Advisory Council on Doing Business in Africa (PAC-DBIA) April 2023 report, is for U.S. government to engage and include U.S. private sector represented by PAC-DBIA in delegation trips utilizing their

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[10] The White House, "U.S.- Africa Partnership in Promoting Two-Way Trade and Investment in Africa", Fact Sheet, Last Modified December 14, 2022, https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/12/14/fact-sheet-u-s-africa-partnership-in-promoting-two-way-trade-and-investment-in-africa/

[11] Landry Signé, Unlocking Africa's business potential: Trends, opportunities, risks, and strategies (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2020).

[12] The White House, "U.S.- Africa Partnership in Promoting Two-Way Trade and Investment in Africa", Fact Sheet, Last Modified December 14, 2022, https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/12/14/fact-sheet-u-s-africa-partnership-in-promoting-two-way-trade-and-investment-in-africa/

experience, expertise and positioning as representatives of U.S. private sector commitment to business in Africa, in mapping out how to best showcase and advance U.S. investment and engagement in Africa pre- and post-travel.[13]

This engagement should also be expanded to include participation and engagement with other U.S. private sector companies operating in Africa, as represented by the 20 American Chambers of Commerce (AmChams) present in the region. AmChams play an important role as links between the private sector and the governments in their host countries and in the United States. Their unique positioning enables them to effectively lobby for the interests and needs of their members and lead advocacy efforts to enhance the business environment for U.S. companies in their host countries.

Comprehensive Trade Frameworks

Learnings from AGOA demonstrate the challenge of ensuring lasting export diversification in African countries, which has impacted AGOA utilization rates and sustainable economic growth and development, with exports of energy related products continuing to account for almost 90% of U.S. imports from Sub-Saharan Africa, at a value of $30 billion.[14]

Comprehensive trade frameworks would, by allowing inclusion of other high potential sectors on the continent such as digital trade, trade in services including financial services and trade in industrial finished goods, drive diversification beyond exports, spurring commercial activity by U.S. companies on the continent.

The reciprocity obligations inherent in comprehensive trade frameworks would also expand opportunity for U.S. products on the continent, making U.S. goods and services more competitive compared to products from Europe that currently receive preferential treatment under various Economic Partnership Agreements on the continent.

AGOA by its nature and design also failed to ensure predictability, a critical driver of investment decisions, dampening U.S. investor interest in production of goods in African countries for both local consumption and export to the U.S. market. As of January 2023, 45 countries were eligible for the AGOA program. However, with eligibility determined on an annual basis, therefore unpredictable from year to year, 16

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[13] The President's Advisory Council on Doing Business in Africa, Recommendations Report, April 13, 2023, https://www.trade.gov/sites/default/files/2023-04/PAC-DBIA%20Report_Apr%202023.pdf
[14] "Páez, Laura.; United Nations. Economic Commission for Africa.; United Nations. Economic Commission for Africa. African Trade Policy Centre (2010). A Decade (2000-2010) of African-US Trade under the African Growth Opportunities Act (AGOA): Challenges, Opportunities and a Framework for Post AGOA Engagement. ATPC work in progress;. No.81, vii, 31 p.. Addis Ababa:. © UN. ECA,. https://hdl.handle.net/10855/29212"

AGOA eligible Sub-Saharan countries have in the past lost AGOA benefits for failure to meet one or more of the benefits eligibility requirements for various lengths of time.[15]

In addition, AGOA faces a looming expiration in 2025, if not renewed by the U.S. Congress. A comprehensive trade framework will enhance predictability in U.S.-Africa commercial relations, mitigating the uncertainty associated with the annual eligibility review process under AGOA.

Other issues related to the business environment in Africa that have hindered the participation of U.S. companies such as lack of transparency, unfavourable regulatory practices, and limited intellectual property protections can also be addressed through comprehensive high-standard frameworks with obligations on anticorruption and better government procurement practices.

Enhancing Access to Market Information

Access to accurate and timely market information plays a crucial role in facilitating private sector investment. Limited access to reliable market information has posed significant challenges for U.S businesses seeking to invest in the continent, hindering investment decision-making processes and undermining the ability of U.S. companies to clearly assess opportunities and risks in African markets.[16] Without comprehensive market insights, potential investors face challenges in assessing demand, understanding the competitive landscape, identifying viable business models, conducting accurate risk assessments, and securing financing.

Inadequate access to market information can also lead to increased transaction costs and operational inefficiencies due to lack of data on suppliers, distribution channels, and logistics. Such inefficiencies erode investor confidence, heightening perceived risk and as a result hinder market entry and impede expansion strategies.

A multistakeholder approach is necessary to bridge information gaps, with opportunity for the U.S. government to provide technical assistance to regional governments and supporting initiatives in improving data collection mechanisms and disseminating market information. Collaboration with industry associations to develop comprehensive market reports providing insights on consumer behavior, market trends, and regulatory

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[15] African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA): Program Usage, Trends, and Sectoral Highlights (Inv. No. 332-589, USITC Publication 5419, March 2023) is available on the USITC website at https://www.usitc.gov/sites/default/files/publications/332/pub5419.pdf .
[16] U.S. International Trade Commission (USITC). (2020). Trade and Investment between the United States and sub-Saharan Africa: Recent Trends and New Developments. Retrieved from https://www.usitc.gov/publications/332/pub5043.pdf

frameworks and leveraging technology-driven solutions such as online portals and databases can also significantly enhance access to market information.

Conclusion

By innovating its trade policy with Africa through more robust commercial diplomacy that involves and includes U.S. private sector operating in the region, as well as comprehensive trade frameworks, and multi-stakeholder collaborative efforts to enhance access to market information, U.S. commercial engagement with Africa can see more concrete outcomes, creating more robust opportunities for U.S. companies and expanding U.S. private sector participation and leadership in Africa.

A Decade of Action: Driving Africa's Food Systems Transformation

Agnes Kalibata

President, AGRA

Today, Africa's food systems face many challenges, and these challenges are expected to grow as demand for food increases and climate change challenges production. Africa has a net import bill of roughly $50 billion for all food products, with a $22 billion net import bill for sub-Saharan Africa. This bill could grow by at least 50-60 percent and potentially double over the next 10 years.[17] African food systems are under enormous strain. Climate change is rapidly intensifying. Across Africa, agricultural productivity has declined by 34 percent since 1961 due to climate change, which is more than in any other region.[18] According to a recent report, the total African population exposed to at least one form of climate hazard (drought, heat, water stress, flooding, etc.) will double, increasing from 460 million to almost 900 million people by 2050, in a 2°C warming scenario.[19] The Malabo Montpellier Panel (2022) further projects that if the current trend continues, climate change will lead to an annual 10-20 percent GDP loss in Africa.[20] On the other hand, IFPRI's 2023 Global Food Policy Report highlights that global price shocks have caused national poverty to rise by 7.7 percent and undernourishment by 4.4 percent.[21]

Despite the several challenges, the African agricultural economy is the fastest growing across all continents with a 4.1 percent growth from 2000-2020 compared to 2.7 percent worldwide. By 2030, Africa will be a $1 trillion food market with consumption in cities driving the demand for more products.[22] The continent has the potential and natural assets to significantly increase staple food production and achieve resilient and secure food supply. For instance, sub-Saharan Africa already produces about as much maize as it consumes, with some countries already exporting (Tanzania, Uganda, Malawi, and Zambia). Similarly, while SSA is a net importer of wheat, some countries are close to self-sufficiency (e.g., Ethiopia) or surplus production (e.g., Zambia in some years) that could be exported to other regions within Africa.

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[17] African Union Commission (2023), a report on "Building Sustainable and Resilient Food Systems in Africa". Commission on Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy, and Sustainable Environment (ARBE), Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

[18] IPCC 6th Assessment report: https://www.ipcc.ch/report/sixth-assessment-report-cycle/.

[19] McKinsey Global Institute (2023), Reimagining economic growth in Africa: Turning diversity into opportunity.

[20] Malabo Montpellier Panel report (2022). Policy innovations to unlock climate finance for resilient food systems in Africa.

[21] IFPRI (2023). Global food policy report 2023: Rethinking food crisis responses.

[22] World Bank (2022), Seizing the Agri-Food Opportunity in Eastern and Southern Africa.

There is an increasing confidence that with the right investments, the continent will begin to reinvigorate the upward momentum, which was derailed by the pandemic and other global shocks. In this essay, I share some of the progress made and highlight promising initiatives, focusing mostly on how the organization I lead, AGRA, has been involved across the continent.

Gearing African Institutions to Drive Sustainable Agri-Food Systems Transformation

For a continent that has historically faced several developmental challenges, achieving transformation seems like an insurmountable task. Indeed, the African continent, particularly the sub-Saharan region, has faced the greatest food and nutrition security challenges in recent times. Projections show that the continent's population will more than double by 2050, while demand for cereals will approximately triple.[23] An important question, therefore, is whether sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) can bolster its productive capacity, to meet this vast increase in cereal demand and progressively reduce its ballooning import bill, while staying with critical environmental limits. Institutions are at the center of facilitating and driving the transformation agenda. They have the functions of ensuring designing of the right policies and delivering transformational programs. While it is true that a lack of institutional capacities generally defines the African landscape (both public and private), the importance of identifying transformative institutions and strengthening their delivery capacities cannot be overemphasized. In the African context, strengthening institutions for transformation of agri-food systems is essentially about nurturing and harnessing strategic leadership at all levels (sub-national, national, regional, and continental levels).

For instance, AGRA, together with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the UN's International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) established the African Agricultural Transformation Initiative (AATI) with the mandate to foster inclusive and sustainable agricultural transformation across Africa by creating and strengthening national agencies that deliver agricultural development policies and programs. The aim is to bridge the gap between strategy formulation and execution in agriculture through tailored support models for delivery in target countries. Both founding partners recognize the centrality of national governments in driving and leading the transformation journey. To reach agri-food transformation goals, Africa needs strong sector vision and leadership, policies, institutions, functional coordination mechanisms, and robust mutual accountability mechanisms.

Similarly, with support by the German Development Cooperation through KfW Development Bank, AGRA established the Centre for African Leaders in Agriculture (CALA) to support leaders to deliver on top national priorities in African agriculture and

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[23] FAO (2009). How to Feed the World in 2050.

nutrition security. Benefiting from an advanced and collaborative leadership program, leaders selected for this initiative represent a wide range of key actors across the government, private sector, and civil society. These are a few examples of the initiatives that complement AGRA's core strategic support to state capability across Africa. AGRA's investments in this area aim at building capable states and strategic partnerships to establish an environment in which the private sector can grow and thrive.

Today, I lead AGRA, an African institution established in 2006, whose vision is to drive inclusive, resilient, and sustainable agriculture and food systems transformation on the continent, changing the lives and livelihoods of millions of smallholder farmers. Over the years, AGRA has evolved into a trusted go-to partner for governments across the continent, helping address constraints in core agricultural systems to catalyze impact at the farm level.[24]

AGRA employs more than 200 staff from at least 27 countries, with the vast majority being from Africa. The organization is also privileged to have a dedicated 14-member Board of Directors that is chaired by His Excellency Hailemariam Dessalegn, the former Prime Minister of Ethiopia and a champion of transformation. AGRA has been deliberate to ensure that members of the Board, not just the Chair, are passionate about agriculture and limiting poverty in Africa and are influential enough to help AGRA move things forward. We have many partners and generous donors across the globe helping us reach our goals, including the United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Environment Programme, USAID, FCDO/UKAid, German Development Bank, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation, Mastercard Foundation, IKEA Foundation, and many others. I take pride in ensuring that we are a well-run African institution.

Strengthening Systems for Africa's Agri-Food Sector Transformation

There is a perception that Africa does not have capable and efficient systems in place. At AGRA, we have demonstrated that homegrown solutions work. During our first 10 years alone, we trained 680 scientists from national research systems at PhD and master's levels, in plant breeding, soil sciences, and agronomy. We also supported the development and release of 562 new crop varieties. 60 percent of these varieties are commercialized by 119 seed companies, which were established with AGRA's support. About 36 percent of the varieties are climate adaptive.

Our journey, as an institution, has been remarkable. We have demonstrated that agriculture transformation on the continent is possible and there are models and transferable assets that can be scaled across the continent. During AGRA's first decade, we focused more on addressing barriers to providing farmers with the improved inputs

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[24] AGRA corporate report (2017-2021):
https://agra.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/AGRA-Life-of-Strategy-Report-2017-2021.pdf

they would need to boost productivity. In early 2017, we broadened our lens and made more systems-level investments, targeting and strengthening the key elements of the agricultural ecosystem necessary for transformation. We have seen 62 percent of our supported farmers change their practice, largely due to our work at systems level. There is emerging evidence that farmers are adopting technologies, seeing increases in yields, bringing more produce to market, and increasing their incomes.

Moving forward, we need to scale and sustain these efforts, while mainstreaming a strong food system perspective in our programming at all levels. The African Common position paper on food systems outlines key priorities and ambitions on key issues shaping Africa's food systems. To this effect, AGRA has been working with the African Union Commission (AUC) and the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEDPA) to develop guidelines for domestication of food systems priorities into the existing continental framework, namely the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), and the national agricultural investment plans. Simultaneously, a set of indicators are being developed to track progress across the continent.

Setting the Agenda for Food Systems Transformation

When the Secretary General of the UN launched the Food systems dialogues in 2019, the agricultural sector in many countries of the world was facing unprecedented challenges that needed urgent attention. For many developing countries, beyond the traditional challenges like inadequate access to affordable farm inputs and output markets, the unprecedented challenges include the increasing threat of climate change and worsening inequality , pests (more specifically locusts, fall armyworms), and diseases (for example, African swine fever, avian flu, foot and mouth disease, among others that have (re)appeared as a result of warmer temperatures).

One of the biggest milestones of the entire UNFSS process was seeing a paradigm shift in how we think about food and the urgency for the need for food systems transformation as a pathway to achieving the 2030 Agenda. Equally successful and important was the mobilization of the world behind the need to transform food systems across different levels of society's stakeholders that were engaged in dialogues and stepped forward to make commitments. We were able to foster political will to address the pressing challenges facing our food systems today.

Africa came forward with a clear continental vision though the common framework on challenges and opportunities within the food systems. The world has an opportunity to support countries in Africa and other parts of the world to keep the momentum and deliver on the promise of the U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit.

Key priorities include the following:
- We need to repurpose our food and agricultural policies, including equipping policymakers to adopt a scientific approach to challenges, supporting innovative minds to find solutions, fostering creativity, and helping businesses to thrive.
- While evidence-based policy, anchored in science and local context, will be a critical lever for transformation, digital technologies are going to reshape food systems in a more fundamental way over the next decade. Therefore, governments should support investments in digital technologies in local agri-food systems e-commerce platforms to create robust, distributed food system networks, and open markets for smallholder producers.
- On-farm and off-farm technological advancement is critical for inclusive food system transformation, and AGRA has been investing significantly in seed systems, fertilizer systems, extension systems, market systems, and inclusive finance models to support wider adoption of farm and off-farm technologies by smallholder farmers.
- The FAO's 2023 Status of Women in Agrifood Systems report has just reminded us that closing the gender gap in farm productivity and the wage gap in agrifood systems would increase global Gross Domestic Product by 1 percent (roughly $1 trillion) and reduce global food insecurity by about 2 percent, which would reduce the number of food-insecure people by 45 million.[25]
- Increasingly, improving availability of technologies and functional markets for Africa's women will be a game changer given that women are involved in the production of approximately 70 percent of Africa's food.
- On trade, we should focus on strengthening and building "food-baskets" – regions where we believe food production can be sustainably increased to meet the growing needs of Africa, while preserving the environment. Investments will be needed to strengthen existing supply sheds, trade corridors and connecting to demand centers, while investing to build new food-baskets in high potential areas in a sustainable manner.
- Investments in road and rail infrastructure will effectively connect fragmented markets, enhance efficiency in the movement of fertilizer inputs across the continent and, hence, alleviate supply shortages. For instance, natural gas from Mozambique could go by rail to a fertilizer plant elsewhere in Southern Africa.

The upcoming food systems stocktake meeting is a good moment to assess progress that has been made globally. For Africa, the number of people embracing adaptation and the associated opportunities is increasing. We want to see more local food system solutions that ensure that producers, indigenous people, and others can survive climate change and are building coping and resilience capabilities as a result of local food systems transformation. In drought-affected countries that AGRA work with such as Kenya, Nigeria, and Burkina Faso, we see far more farmers rebuilding soil carbon, and

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[25] FAO (2023). The Status of Women in Agrifood Systems report (https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/cc5060en).

regenerating landscapes through adoption and implementation of sustainable farming practices. As a continent, Africa aims at achieving some big wins for the 2030 agenda as a result of embracing and scaling food systems solutions that have demonstrated to work.

Food Systems Transformation Will Not Be a Straightforward Journey

Africa's food systems are at an important juncture. The deleterious impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the disruptive effects of the Russia-Ukraine crisis and worsening impacts of climate change have further compounded the challenges in Africa's food systems. At the same time, renewed urgency and engagement at the continental and global levels have created an opportunity to strengthen Africa's food security and jump start its transformation to more resilient and sustainable agriculture and food systems.

Overall, food systems transformation will not be a straightforward journey. The process is complex, the problem is too big, and the resource demands are too great. Transformation cannot be driven solely by AGRA or any other individual actor. A broad range of partners is necessary to effect change, and they must be coordinated in a complementary manner to offer the right technical and financial resources, directed in the right ways and deployed at the right time. AGRA's Partnership for Inclusive Agricultural Transformation in Africa (PIATA) that includes USAID, BMZ/KfW, The Rockefeller Foundation, The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and FCDO has demonstrated the value of collective effort to reduce duplication and ensure greater impact.

The overarching challenge on our hands is not only to find ways to feed a growing number of people, but to do so while also reducing environmental impact and delivering the 2030 agenda. We should look at the right balance between health, people, and the planet, producing the right food while keeping the environment safe.

Breaking the "Grass Ceiling": Why Strategic Investment in Gender-Smart Food Security and Nutrition Will Help Ensure a Better African Tomorrow

Carrie Hessler-Radelet

President & CEO, Global Communities

Dasa is the mother of three in a small village South Omo, in southern Ethiopia, near the border with Kenya. The land surrounding her village is flat and dry, and savannah grasslands dominate the landscape. For millennia, these grasslands have provided grazing areas for wildlife and livestock, and Dasa and her tribe, the Hamar people, have traditionally practiced agriculture and pastoralism, relying on the land and its resources for their livelihoods.

But Ethiopia, especially the lowlands region where Dasa lives, is under growing threat, as economic stagnation, climate change, and ethnic conflict have brought increasing stress and strain on its agro-pastoralist communities already living in deep poverty. Over the past few years, drought, human and animal disease, and pests like locusts have devastated these rural communities and livestock production. As a result, the leading source of food and income for the pastoralists has been severely compromised, creating scarcity, fostering inter-ethnic conflict and making life difficult for women like Dasa and her community.

Under the Resilience in Pastoralist Areas (RIPA) Project, USAID has prioritized a gender-smart, systems-based approach to improve the resilience of households, markets and governance institutions in South Omo. Under RIPA, USAID and its implementing partners employ an integrated set of targeted sustainable development interventions – training pastoralist farmers in regenerative grazing practices to improve soil health and regenerate formerly degraded grasslands; agriculture programs to teach male and female farmers how to plant quick-growing, drought resistant fodder; nutrition programs to promote breastfeeding and improve dietary diversity; water and sanitation; and emergency food, seed and multi-purpose cash assistance to support communities at highest risk.

With the evidence that women are key to addressing poverty, RIPA has prioritized the active engagement of women in all elements of the project, complimented by a Women Empowered program to promote the economic and social empowerment of women through the formation of self-managed and self-sustaining savings groups. Regular group meetings provide a platform for social support and individual leadership

development, giving women the skills to become powerful agents of food security, economic and social change within their communities, equipping women like Dasa with the capacity to elevate themselves and their families out of poverty.

Dasa started saving money, borrowing and lending with Women Empowered over 3 years ago, along with other women in her village. Her group is now completely self-sustaining. She started her own fodder business with the loans she took from WE, and the profits enabled her to buy a herd of goats, start her own yogurt business, diversify her family's diet, send her kids to school, and improve her house. She is now looking to expand her business to a nearby village and hire a few women to help her with her business.

This might not sound like a big deal, but it is. In most villages of South Omo, apart from chickens, only men are allowed to own animals. Dasa broke that "grass ceiling" in her small village, opening the way for women to become livestock and business owners. The fact that she owns her own business, herds her own livestock, and has the only bank account in her family is transformational. Although Dasa has never been to school, she manages her business, understands interest rates and inflation, coaches other women and men in her village, and invests in her community. Women like Dasa are key to unlocking Africa's food security and nutrition potential.

What Does the U.S. Do about Food Insecurity and Why Should It Care?

USAID, and other U.S. government programs (U.S. Department of Agriculture, State Department and the Millennium Challenge Corporation) have long been committed to addressing food insecurity and malnutrition in Africa and beyond, funding global programs like Feed the Future and bilateral programs like RIPA that reach millions of children, families, and communities – partnering with them to save lives, advance equity, and secure strong futures.

Historically, food security and nutrition programs were largely separate, managed by different government bureaus with different funding sources and different approaches. The U.S. Global Food Security Strategy 2022-26 aims to change that, focusing on an integrated, whole of government approach to ending global hunger, poverty, and malnutrition through the Feed the Future Initiative, focusing on three main objectives:

1. Inclusive and sustainable agriculture-led economic growth
2. Strengthened resilience among people and systems; and
3. A well-nourished population, particularly women and children.

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The time is right for such an initiative. As we prepare to gather in Kenya, the Horn of Africa is in the midst of one of the longest droughts on record, creating a compounding food crisis for people whose livelihoods depend on rangelands to feed their families and livestock.

The FAO[26] reports that the humanitarian crisis in the Horn of Africa is deepening after five consecutive failed and below-average rains, and the 2022 rainy season was recorded as the driest in over 40 years. According to the World Food Programme (WFP), "Regardless of how the 2023 rains perform, extremely high humanitarian needs will persist through 2023 while a full recovery from a drought of this magnitude will take years."[27]

According to the report, mutually reinforcing and interconnected economic shocks, skyrocketing food prices, conflict and weather extremes are driving acute food insecurity. Today, as many as 25 million people in the Horn of Africa are at risk of malnutrition and disease. Households and communities, like Dasa's, are struggling to cope with growing hunger. Many fear that donor fatigue and multiple crises worldwide could reduce the funding available for the Horn of Africa in 2023-24.

These deteriorating conditions have led to a severe increase in malnutrition over the past decade, raising concerns about whether the region can achieve Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2 of food security and nutrition. According to the FAO,[28] the percentage of undernourished people in Africa relative to the rest of the world rose from 32.8 percent to 36.3 percent between 2014 and 2020. Meanwhile, as of 2020, the prevalence of severe food insecurity stands at nearly 23 percent of the continent's total population, more than twice the global average of 11 percent. The stunting among children under five, although it has been decreasing, also remains far above the world average. It is estimated that as of 2020, 31 percent of African children were stunted compared to 22 percent globally.

Women and girls fare particularly poorly. Much of Africa is burdened by gender inequality and inequity ranging from discriminatory laws and norms to practices that persistently negatively affect women's outcomes.[29] For example, African women own only 12 percent of the agricultural land, despite constituting roughly half of the

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[26] FAO. *Global Report on Food Crisis 2023*. FAO; Rome, Italy, 2023

[27] World Food Programme. *Regional Drought Response Plan for the Horn of Africa*. WFP Regional Bureau for Eastern Africa; Nairobi, Kenya: 2023

[28] FAO. ECA. AUC . *Africa-Regional Overview of Food Security and Nutrition 2021: Statistics and Trends*. FAO-Africa; Accra, Ghana: 2021

[29] OECD. *Social Institutions and Gender Index SIGI 2021 Regional Report for Africa*. OECD; Paris, France: 2021

agricultural workforce. The OECD reports that Africa has an approximately USD $42 billion financial gender gap, with 70 percent of all women being financially excluded.

Beyond the continent, hunger has reached unprecedented levels globally, and women are disproportionally affected. According to WFP, women and girls account for approximately 60 percent of the world's chronically hungry. Factors such as limited access to resources, discriminatory laws, and unequal opportunities contribute to this disparity. Addressing the specific needs and challenges faced by women and girls in relation to food security and nutrition is critical to achieving sustainable development and ending hunger.

What Are the Risks of Not Investing in Food Security and Nutrition in Africa?

Let's define the difference between food insecurity and malnutrition. Food insecurity refers to limited or unreliable access to nutritious and safe food in quantities and quality sufficient to support a healthy and active life. It is caused by various factors, including poverty, sub-optimal supply chains, climate change, conflicts, and economic instability.

Malnutrition is a condition that arises from an inadequate or imbalanced intake of essential nutrients. It results from insufficient food consumption, poor dietary diversity, or inadequate absorption of nutrients. Malnutrition can take different forms, including undernutrition, overnutrition, and micronutrient deficiencies.

In the Horn of Africa, four years of drought has evaporated water sources, reduced green pastureland, increased livestock mortality, and forced many people to flee their homes in search of food, water, and pastures for their livestock. Food prices have soared, partly as a result of the war in Ukraine, making it challenging for rural and urban alike. The inevitable result is increased tension and rising malnutrition rates, particularly among women and children.

Food insecurity and malnutrition can have significant economic costs, and together, they create a vicious cycle. They can reduce labor productivity, increase healthcare costs, and compromise economic growth. Malnutrition weakens the immune system and increases susceptibility to disease, further exacerbating the effects of food insecurity. Malnutrition can also affect cognitive development, productivity, and economic potential, perpetuating the cycle of poverty and food insecurity.

Those who live in food insecure environments may be forced to practice unsustainable agricultural practices that contribute to environmental degradation. To feed their

families, people may resort to excessive use of chemical fertilizers, overgrazing and deforestation, further compounding the effects of food insecurity and climate change.

In cities, the urban poor often face tremendous pressure from fluctuating food prices, and price hikes can quickly become a political issue leading to violence, as is currently happening in Kenya today.

In extreme cases, food insecurity can lead to mass migration and displacement, where people are forced to leave their homes in search of better opportunities in cities, camps for internally displaced persons within their own countries or neighboring countries. This can lead to overcrowding, competition for resources, violence, and increased vulnerability to exploitation and abuse. UNHCR estimates that there are millions of internally displaced persons and refugees in the Horn of Africa, many driven by food insecurity.

Addressing food insecurity and famine in the Horn of Africa is central to preventing further displacement and ensuring the health, well-being, and stability of its people.

Why Should We Focus on Women?

Gender-smart development refers to practices and policies that consider the roles, priorities, and needs of both men and women to promote gender equality and empower women in development. The rationale for centering food security and nutrition programming particularly on women is based on the evidence that when women are empowered, social and economic improvements are more likely to occur.[30]

Women can become more productive and have a greater say food production, distribution and nutrition when they are provided access to key resources such as land, credit, agricultural inputs, and education. Evidence shows that women's economic empowerment is one of the best ways to improve household living standards (including nutritional status), since women typically devote a larger share of their incomes to their families.[31]

In addition, African women, like Dasa, play a significant role in agricultural production. They are involved in activities such as crop cultivation, gardening, and value-added production. Addressing women's needs and empowering them in agriculture can enhance overall food security.

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[30] Baig I.A., Batool Z., Ali A., Baig S.A., Hashim M., Zia-ur-Rehman M. Impact of Women Empowerment on Rural Development in Southern Punjab, Pakistan. *Qual. Quant.* 2017;**52**:1861–1872. doi: 10.1007/s11135-017-0572-x
[31] Opata P.I., Ezeibe A.B., Ume C.O. Impact of women's share of income on household expenditure in Southeast Nigeria. *Afr. J. Agric. Resour. Econ.* 2020;**15**:51–64. doi: 10.53936/afjare.2020.15(1).04.

Women also play a central role in providing and preparing food for their families. They make decisions about what food to buy, cook, and feed their children. By targeting women in food security initiatives, it becomes possible to improve household nutrition and ensure that children and other family members receive adequate and diverse diets.

Women have specific nutritional needs during pregnancy and breastfeeding and ensuring access to nutritious food is critically important for their health and the health of their infants. Prioritizing women's nutrition can contribute to reducing stunting and improving child survival rates.

Finally, investing in gender-smart programming has a multiplier effect on society. When programs seek to advance equity and women are given greater access to resources, they are more likely to invest in the health and education of their children, leading to longer term generational well-being and productivity.

Enhancing Food Security and Nutrition through Gender-Smart Programs

African women play a vital role in agriculture, food production, and household nutrition, yet they face numerous obstacles that limit their potential and hinder our collective efforts towards enabling Africa to achieve a stable and reliable food supply.

In furtherance of the U.S. Global Food Security Strategy, one strong path forward is to engage women and other local stakeholders in the design of gender-smart programs from the very beginning. Such an approach will amplify our country's commitment to locally-led development, with a laser focus on helping women like Dasa access resources, improve livelihoods, and ensure food security for themselves and their families through an integrated and multi-sectoral approach that recognizes their unique needs, roles, contributions, and challenges.

It will require investment: in providing women like Dasa with skills training in agriculture, business, technology, and financial literacy, as well as supporting their access to land, credit, technology, and markets. It will mean enhancing food systems by more purposively helping women access supply chains, reduce post-harvest losses, and improve market access to ensure a stable and reliable market for women producers. It will mean promoting women's empowerment, leadership, and decision-making in U.S.-funded projects, cooperatives, businesses, and organizations through capacity-building, training, and digital literacy.

Enhancing nutrition education, promoting breastfeeding, and raising awareness about the importance of dietary diversity and healthy nutrition practices are other key

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elements. And when crisis strikes, it will mean implementing cash transfers, school feeding programs, targeted nutrition interventions, and other social protection programs to help women and other vulnerable populations access adequate and nutritious food.

Undergirding it all are the enabling gender-smart policies and governance structures to nurture women's engagement, complete with robust monitoring and evaluation systems to track the impact of food security and nutrition programs on women's and family wellbeing.

By integrating these gender-smart strategies into food security and nutrition programs, the U.S. can make significant progress in addressing hunger, malnutrition, and poverty, while empowering women as key agents of change.

Investing in women like Dasa

Dasa's example demonstrates that empowering women farmers is not only essential for addressing Africa's poverty – it is also key to unlocking the continent's agricultural potential. The consequences of food insecurity and malnutrition extend far beyond communities like Dasa's. They have significant implications for global stability, security, and economic prosperity. Africa's population is projected to double by 2050, and ensuring food security is crucial for preventing social unrest, migration, and conflicts arising from resource scarcity. By supporting programs like RIPA and helping African nations combat food insecurity and malnutrition, the U.S. can contribute to a more stable and peaceful world.

African Development, the United States, and China

Steven Radelet

Director, Global Human Development Program, Georgetown University

Many countries across Sub-Saharan Africa have made significant progress in increasing incomes, reducing poverty, improving health and education, and expanding democracy. The United States has played a key supporting role in these efforts. However, progress has begun to stall and, in some cases, reverse since 2016. Moreover, China has substantially expanded its influence across the region, while U.S. influence has declined. If the U.S. wants to regain its leadership and influence, it should substantially increase its efforts and levels of support across the region.

Development Progress in Africa

Since 2000 there has been significant progress in many, but not all, countries in SSA:
- The share of people living in extreme poverty (less than $2.10/day) has fallen by more than one-third from 57 percent to 35 percent.[32]
- The share of girls completing primary school has jumped from 49 percent to nearly 70 percent. This bodes well for the future: when girls have access to education, in their later lives they have higher income, better health, and fewer children; and those children have higher incomes, better health, and expanded education opportunities.
- The rate of death among children under five years old has fallen by more than half from 15 percent to around 7 percent, saving millions of lives. Most impressively, child mortality rates have fallen in *every single country* in SSA since 2000.
- Life expectancy has grown from 51 years to 60 years. Despite the tragic impacts of HIV/AIDS, malaria, Covid-19, and other diseases, more people have access to health care, and overall health has improved.
- Average income per person (after inflation) has grown by 33 percent. Economic growth has averaged 3.8 percent per year since 2000 (after inflation), and total GDP has more than doubled. However, these figures represent averages: the incomes of some people have grown by much more, while for other people incomes have grown little or not at all.
- The number of electoral democracies in SSA surged from just 4 in 1990 to 21 in 2000 following the end of the Cold War and the apartheid regime. Nearly half the countries in the region shifted from dictatorship to democracy. The number of

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[32] All data are from the World Bank's *World Development Indicators.*

democracies was still 22 in 2016, but since then, it has declined to 15. The most important country to recede from electoral democracy is Nigeria.[33]

While this progress is a welcome, there are three important caveats.
- *First, progress is uneven.* Many countries have experienced steady growth and development, while others have stagnated. Average income (after inflation) has risen by 40 percent or more in 19 countries since 2000, but declined in 9 others.
- *Second, it is not enough.* More than 350 million Africans still live in extreme poverty, millions of children still die in childbirth, and many girls still do not get to go to school or earn their own income.
- *Third, this progress is under threat.* GDP per capita started to fall in 2016, and declined sharply following the pandemic and Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The number of democracies started to decline in the same year. The impacts of climate change and growing debt problems threaten to further stall progress.

Support from the United States

The credit for Africa's development progress belongs primarily with Africans themselves. The reductions in poverty, improvements in health and education, and increases in income are the result of the hard work, determination, sacrifices, and courageous decisions of millions of African people and a new generation of leaders.

At the same time, the US and other donors played an important supporting role. The most important US program has been PEPFAR which (along with the Global Fund) has led the fight against HIV/AIDS. PEPFAR has saved 25 million lives since its inception-- a remarkable achievement. It is hard to think of a better example than PEPFAR of the potential for the United States to do good in the world.

Alongside PEPFAR, the President's Malaria Initiative has saved more than 11 million lives and prevented more than 2 billion infections since 2000.[34] Feed the Future has helped millions of farmers increase their incomes, helped lift families out of poverty, substantially improved nutrition, and reduced child stunting. Other U.S. programs have also been important, including child vaccination programs, education programs that have dramatically increased school enrollment, the Millennium Challenge Corporation, Power Africa, and programs to expand women's economic empowerment.

These programs have been important, not just in supporting Africa's progress, but in affecting the way that the United States has been viewed, its strategic alliances, and the influence the U.S. has had across the continent. Since the end of the Cold War – at least

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[33] Freedom House, *Freedom in the World*, various issues.
[34] USAID (2023). *PMI: 17th Annual Report to Congress*.

up until a few years ago – the United States was seen as the key leader in supporting both development and democracy. Importantly, these programs received broad bipartisan support. Thus, these programs have been important both for people in Africa and for the people of the United States.

Why Africa's Progress Matters for the United States

Further strengthening relationships and alliances with African countries will help the United States achieve some of its most important goals related to security, pandemic disease, climate change, migration, and access to important resources, while also moderating the influence of China, Russia, and other countries.

For starters, broad based development enhances global security. Sustained development strengthens local government institutions and allows countries to be more effective in working with the U.S. to fight terrorist groups and criminal networks such as Boko Haram, Al-Shabab, and Al-Qaeda. Al-Qaeda launched its first major terrorist attacks against the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania from its base in Sudan 25 years ago this month, and it was able to do so in part because of weak government institutions in all three countries.

Development also builds government capacities to fight pandemic disease. As African countries grow wealthier, they are increasingly able to carry a larger share of the load in fighting HIV/AIDS, malaria, COVID-19, Ebola, and other diseases, and helping to ensure they do not spread beyond their borders. At the same time, more effective governments in Africa can help fight climate change. For example, African forests are among the world's largest carbon sinks, and managing those effectively will play an important role in managing climate change.

Economic growth in Africa also benefits the U.S. economy by creating new markets for American businesses and new sources of natural resources. For example, in 2011, Walmart spent $2.4 billion to acquire a controlling share of Massmart Holdings, which operates more than 350 retail stores in South Africa and 11 other African countries, signaling a level of interest in African consumers that would have been unimaginable two decades ago. Moreover, African countries are important sources of oil, copper, and iron ore, alongside increasingly important rare minerals such as cobalt, lithium, and uranium.

As population growth rates fall in most parts of the world, Africa's population is projected to double by 2050. Africa will be home to one-quarter of the world's people. Nigeria will become the world's third largest country – larger than the U.S. This population growth could lead to larger markets and stronger alliances, or to greater

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instability and poverty – depending on the extent of broad-based economic growth and development.

China's Growing Influence in Africa

China has substantially expanded its influence in Africa over the last two decades, and especially since the launch of the Belt and Road Initiative in 2013. (Other countries have done so as well, including Saudi Arabia, Russia, Turkey, Kuwait, and the UAE).

China has a wide range of economic and political interests in Africa. Economically, it wants to secure natural resources – just like every other country with interests in Africa. China has major oil investments in Sudan, Nigeria, and Angola as well as copper interests in Zambia, and palm oil investments across the continent. It wants to secure precious minerals needed for new technologies, such as cobalt in Congo. It is also interested in expanding export markets for manufactured goods and, in some cases, shifting its manufacturing facilities to Africa.

Politically, it wants greater influence on a wide range of global issues. It seeks to enhance its political legitimacy as a global leader. It wants support for its "One China" policy, and for its territorial disputes in East and Southeast Asia. It wants to build diplomatic relationships and alliances with low- and middle-income countries around the world and strengthen its influence in international bodies such as the UN to further its own policy interests.

Consider the following:
- Two-thirds of Chinese development financing goes to infrastructure projects, a far larger share than western donors.
- Close to half of the ports in SSA were built or are operated by China.
- African trade with China totaled $261 billion in 2022; African trade with the U.S. was $64 billion.
- Between 2012 and 2021, China's foreign direct investment (FDI) to African countries averaged $3.6 billion per year, while FDI from the U.S. averaged $0.2 billion.[35]
- Huawei has established seven training centers in Angola, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Kenya, Morocco, Nigeria, and South Africa and has sponsored training programs throughout the continent. The company reports that it provides training to 12,000 African students each year.[36]

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[35] Johns Hopkins China-Africa Research Initiative, Chinese Investment in Africa database. http://www.sais-cari.org/chinese-investment-in-africa
[36] Tsui, Benjamin (2016). "Do Huawei's training Programs and Centers Transfer Skills to Africa?" Johns Hopkins China-Africa Research Initiative, Policy Brief No. 14.

For the most part, African countries welcome these investments, especially in infrastructure and technology, which are highly visible and have important economic impacts. They also welcome the diplomatic interactions, since these give them greater political recognition and influence in global discussions. They appreciate that China interacts with less condescension on issues around governance than most Western countries. Some countries also look to China's economic approach as a model to replicate for their own advancement and seek guidance on how they might do so.

However, there are growing concerns about China's influence. Some see China as simply a new example of a colonial relationship based on exploitation of resources with negative long-term consequences. Some civil society leaders believe that China's hands-off approach to governance allows non-democratic leaders to entrench their power. Union leaders are concerned about Chinese workers displacing local workers in the job market, especially in Angola, Zambia, and several other countries.

Perhaps the most important concern at the moment is debt. More than 20 African countries are facing debt distress, especially following the economic downturn following the pandemic and Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The international debt (public and private) of all African countries totals approximately $650 billion, with about 12 percent ($84 billion) owed to China. (The largest creditors are bondholders with 29 percent of the debt; about 1 percent is owed to U.S. private and public lenders).[37] Thus, China plays a key role in any strategy to reduce African debt. So far, it has largely resisted efforts to engage in debt relief, to the growing frustration of many African leaders.

Overall, however, there is little doubt that China's influence among African countries has expanded dramatically during the last two decades, while U.S. influence has waned.

What the U.S. Can Do

If the U.S. wants to regain its influence and strengthen its leadership across Africa, it must seriously step up its game. The U.S. needs to give African countries renewed reasons to want to work more closely with the U.S. in ways that ensure that both sides can achieve their goals.

There are several things that the United States should *not* do. First, the U.S. should not just denigrate China or tell African countries they should not work with China. It does not work, and it frustrates African leaders who want more. Second, the U.S. should not characterize Africa as a "problem" to be solved, which is paternalistic and demeaning. Third, the U.S. should not just follow the status quo in terms of its current diplomatic

[37] World Bank International Debt Statistics (IDS) database.
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presence and amounts of funding. Doing so would assure that the U.S. will continue to lose influence over time.

Instead, to ensure its future leadership and influence, the U.S. needs to change its attitudes and approach. The world has changed and the old approaches are no longer as effective as they were 20 years ago. First and foremost, Africa should be seen as an opportunity – one which will become more important in the future. African governments should be seen as partners, in the true meaning of the word, which should include more serious listening to African countries about what they want to achieve, and how. African countries should be seen as allies and friends for the U.S. to work with to solve issues of mutual concern in which each side can help the other.

To succeed, any new approach should be big enough to grab people's attention and their imagination, to reset the image of the United States as the key global leader and compete with the Belt and Road Initiative. It should be much more than repackaging what the United States already does under a new label – it will require greater attention, diplomacy, and financial resources. It should stress that the U.S. provides grants, not loans. It must be bipartisan.

As an example, the U.S. could establish a big, well-publicized, new approach, called the "U.S.-African Development Partnership" (or something similar) with four key pillars:

1. Health, including PEPFAR, the President's Malaria Initiative, children's vaccination programs, and building health systems to fight pandemic disease. The first step is to re-authorize PEPFAR this year.
2. Education, with a major focus on girls' education, and a new emphasis on improving the quality of education.
3. Electricity, by dramatically expanding Power Africa, and extending its work to include telecommunications. While the United States cannot compete directly with all of China's infrastructure investments, it can compete strongly in both conventional and green energy with a strong role for U.S. private businesses in something that would be visible and helpful to millions of African citizens.
4. Climate resilience, especially through ramped up efforts in agriculture, food security, and nutrition. The United States is the world leader in these areas, which have been mainstays of foreign assistance efforts for decades. In the face of the impacts of climate change, there is an enormous opportunity to expand these efforts.

With an approach along these lines, the U.S. can regain its leadership and expand its influence in Africa, which will be of mutual benefit to the people of Africa and the U.S. and will help the U.S. solve some of its most important international challenges.

What Do Recent U.S. Official Visits to Africa Mean for Africa-U.S. Relations?

(This essay was originally published by the [Center for Global Development](#) on April 20, 2023)

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In March, [Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona led the U.S. delegation to the Democracy Summit in Zambia](#), becoming the sixth high-level U.S. official to visit the continent this year. His visit came on the heels of Vice President Kamala Harris's visit, which itself followed a visit by First Lady Jill Biden. The U.S. ambassador to the United Nations and the secretaries of State and Treasury have already visited the continent this year. High-ranking White House officials have indicated that agencies and departments received guidance to organize substantive engagement with Africa, including visits from their various heads. For the first time in a very long time, the U.S. government bureaucracy has instructions to expand its engagement with Africa. This has raised questions, especially in Africa, about whether these changes mark an inflection point in the relationship between the United States and its African partners.

This flurry of visits draws attention because it is historically unusual. In 1962, Rupert Emerson [described U.S.-Africa relations in terms that are still relevant today:](#)

> The United States is far freer from commitments in Africa south of the Sahara than in any other region of the world. Everywhere else American policy operates in a setting of old-established friendships and understandings... alliances such as those creating NATO, CENTO and SEATO.... In Africa to an unprecedented degree the United States is not bound by established positions or traditions, by fixed agreements or vested interests.

The lack of institutionalization of U.S. engagement in Africa places the relationship disproportionately at the whim of whoever is the current occupant of the White House. U.S.- Africa relations can thus go from a president who [openly mused about shutting down every American embassy on the continent](#) to one who hosts over 50 African presidents and prime ministers at an [official summit](#). That summit itself, however, came after an eight-year hiatus and neither side knows if any such gathering will occur again in this decade.

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High-level visits have not been a regular component of U.S.-Africa relations. In previous U.S. administrations, visits by executive branch officials were dangled as rewards to 'well-behaved' African governments. While U.S. officials have gone to great lengths to avoid comparing their presence in Africa with their geopolitical rival China, that comparison is instructive here. For 33 years, Chinese foreign ministers have made Africa the first stop of their annual overseas travel. This policy has become standard and a part of the normal order of business, so much so that it gets no special media coverage.

There remains a seemingly immutable need to coax the United States into engaging with Africa, more so than with any other region. Seeing no strategic interest in Africa, U.S. policy largely engaged the continent through a prism of perceived risks and problems. Material American presence has thus historically been through Department of Defense deployments and security partnerships, and aid programs like PEPFAR, the President's Malaria Initiative, and the Millennium Challenge Corporation. Commercial American presence was geographically concentrated in South Africa and in extractives elsewhere on the continent. When U.S. officials did visit Africa, they never failed to lecture their hosts on perceived evils—especially corruption. So prevalent were these corruption lectures that Africa, more than any other region, became synonymous with corruption.

In practice, U.S. foreign policy has not treated Africans as partners, unless, of course, in conflict with peer and near-peer competitors. The idea that Africa as a net recipient of American assistance cannot be a partner has permeated American foreign policy making. So, the Biden administration's commitment of the United States as a partner with Africa is a notable and long overdue break from the past. But any expectation that this recent improvement and these high-level visits will have a transformative impact in Africa is premature. This is, at best, a start—a good start to the normalization of the relationship between the United States and the countries of Africa.

Four initial actions to strengthen U.S. engagement with Africa

Outside of these visits, it will be the substance of American policy and the willingness of the U.S. government to expand political capital that will indicate what this shift means. And on the issue of substance, these four policy recommendations are available:

1. Institutionalize the U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit
In the short-term, a suitable departure point could be for the administration to work with Congress to institutionalize engagements in Africa—starting with the U.S.-Africa Leaders summit. The fact that the Biden administration is incapable or unwilling to commit to the next summit is a telling sign of the staying power of these visits. Since 1993, a permanent fixture on the calendar of Japanese and African officials has been the triennial Tokyo International Conference on African Development. Similarly, since

2000 another triennial confab—the Forum on China Africa Cooperation—has been a fixture of the relationship between China and African countries. This is the same with the EU-Africa Union summit, which also occurs every three years. How is the United States the only major partner with haphazard engagement at this level? President Bident's commitment, that the United States is [“all in” on Africa's future,](#) should begin with institutionalizing the U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit.

2. Build support for onward lending of SDRs to the AfDB

Since the COVID-19 outbreak, [the African Development Bank has convincingly argued](#) for large countries without pressing need for their Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) to onward lend them to multilateral institutions like the African Development Bank (AfDB). The AfDB notes that it can leverage SDRs three to four times and is initially seeking SDR 2.5 billion, which comes to about SDR 500 from five donors. Given the current composition of Congress, it will be next to impossible for the U.S. Treasury to get approval for the U.S. to contribute to this. Alternatively, the U.S. can expend its incredible political capital to coral that support from allies. In a follow up to [her visit to Africa, Secretary Yellen](#) can lead the U.S. effort to get support from the likes of Canada, Japan, Norway, South Korea, and the United Kingdom.

3. Increase U.S. presence in financing infrastructure in Africa

There is still a notable lacunae of U.S. presence in the area of the continent's greatest need: infrastructure. No number of high-level visits will elide this omission, since Africa lags the rest of the world on every measure of infrastructure coverage. When the U.S. presence in Africa is compared with China's, infrastructure financing is the measuring rod. It is therefore important for the U.S. to expand its presence in building infrastructure in Africa. Here again, onward lending of SDRs to the AfDB provides an opportunity. When the G20 first proposed recycling $100 billion of SDRs to vulnerable countries, [the initial commitments included $21 billion from the United States](#). That commitment did not receive congressional approval and faced with other domestic policy imperatives, the Biden administration did not press the matter. True partnership with Africa requires willingness to expend valuable political capital to advance policy actions even if they are difficult.

In a [2022 paper](#) on public-private infrastructure in Africa, my CGD colleagues Nancy Lee and Mauricio Cardenas Gonzalez found that "among MDBs, the African Development Bank is the largest source of finance over the period [2007 – 2022], likely a surprise to some who would have expected the World Bank's IFC or IDA to rank first." The quality of the Bank's project selection and procurement processes should answer the question of sustainable lending and white elephants. The AfDB provides the clearest mechanism for the U.S. to finance critical infrastructure but through a process that ensures high quality project selection, preparation, and execution.

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4. Leverage the African diaspora to build ties with the continent

Despite its significant African diaspora, the United States has not leveraged this asset in advancing ties with the continent. Again, the Biden administration has staked out a substantive position here. The Biden-Harris campaign proposed engagement with the African diaspora and is establishing an Advisory Council on diaspora engagement. This is a commendable step, but the administration could go further by doubling the resources of the US African Development Foundation (USADF) by taking its operating budget to $100 million. USADF's $48.57 million operating budget for FY2022 was the largest in the agency's 41-year history. This is a low-hanging fruit that can drive U.S.-Africa relations by leveraging the diaspora to establish stronger people-to-people ties. This increase in the budget would be a boost of the USADF's objective of "partnering with the African diaspora to spur entrepreneurship, knowledge transfer, and investment."

Gender and Governance in Kenya: Women's Journey beyond Numbers[38]

By Maria Nzomo

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Introduction

This chapter is informed by the view that human relations, including gender relations, are fun- damentally organized around power relations. The issues and concerns that arise from those relations revolve around the challenges of sharing power in an equitable and just manner. The gendered power hierarchies that emerge in the allocation of strategic resources and labour are legitimized by a patriarchal social-cultural ideology that is deeply embedded and normalized by many societies. This chapter, therefore, argues that in Kenya as elsewhere, the power question is central to the persisting inequalities between women and men in governance. The chapter thus seeks to analyse the Kenya women's journey on the road towards gender equity, equality and social justice through effective participation in public decision-making structures and processes. It reflects on the significance of the gains made; the hurdles that remain and provokes us to critically reflect on the next steps and what needs to happen; the strategies that need to be deployed and followed through; the kind of critical actors/torch-bearers that need to emerge to guide the next phase(s) of the journey and the outcomes that should be envisaged.

The central argument of the chapter is that attaining the magical 33% minimum threshold of women's presence in public decision-making bodies should be treated as only a first step, as it does not automatically translate numbers into the influence needed to achieve and sustain the desired equity and social justice.

The chapter is informed by my journey as a feminist International Studies scholar, seeking to make sense of the world in which we live; a world characterized by various types of social in- justices and human beings' self-inflicted pain and loss through wars and avoidable conflicts, among others. These largely arise, in my view, from insatiable selfishness and greed; desire for monopoly of power and unwillingness to share it with others. Consequently, those with strategic power, whether economic, social or political,

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resist any efforts to share it. In respect to gender relations, the power question is central to the persisting inequalities between women and men in governance.

Despite increasing knowledge which confirms that it would be in the interests of all women, men and the society as a whole to cooperate, share power and work together as partners to promote the core common goods of development, security and human rights, progress has been slow in engendering and democratizing governance and its outcomes.

Masculinised ideological and socio-cultural norms have in many societies been employed to legitimize gender-based exclusions and marginalization in the public decision-making arena. Centuries of struggle to banish the negative aspects of socio-cultural values, especially patriarchy, continues to face resistance. The problem is further complicated by the dominant economic ideology of international capitalism, that not only lacks a 'human face', but tends to increase rather than decrease gender-based inequalities.

This chapter seeks to analyse Kenya women's journey on the road toward gender equity, equality and social justice, through participation in governance. It reflects on the significance of the gains made this far and the hurdles that remain; but more importantly, it provokes us to critically reflect on the next steps and what needs to happen; the strategies that need to be deployed and followed through; the kind of critical actors/torch-bearers that need to emerge to guide the next phase(s) of the journey and the outcomes that should be envisaged.

The central argument of the chapter is that attaining the magical 33% minimum threshold of women's presence in public decision-making bodies should be treated as only a first step, as it does not automatically translate numbers into the influence needed to achieve and sustain the desired equity and social justice. The chapter also makes the point that whereas the entire society is responsible for transforming and democratizing governance, elected, nominated and appointed leaders, both women and men, bear a special responsibility to represent and deliver on mandates delegated to them by taxpayers.

Thus, notwithstanding the momentous challenges women encounter in accessing public deci- sion-making positions, the journey towards gender equality and social justice remains unfinished until critical actors and gender champions emerge to effectively contribute and sustain the process of eliminating patriarchal and hegemonic governance structures, values and processes that undermine the achievement of sustainable equity and equality for both women and men's enjoyment of human welfare, security and rights.

It is also important to keep in focus that women, just like men, are neither homogenous nor united by only one common ideology or philosophical belief. Beyond their shared biology and experiences with patriarchy, there are some more significant differences of class, ethnicity, race, religion, sexual orientation, political affiliation, etc., which may exert greater influence on wom- en's behaviour in public life.

I note that the journey for women in Kenya thus far indicates incessant pursuit of gender equal- ity in Kenya to participate in governance processes effectively and that some effort has also been made to acquire an influential voice and use the governance platforms to advance gender and other societal interests, on an equal basis with men. These efforts however, are often un- dermined by the low level of societal acceptance and belief in gender equity and equality as a common good. In this connection, the chapter notes that the incremental gains that have been made, especially in developing legal, policy and institutional norms, have yet to make a signifi- cant impact in transforming societal and governance values and outcomes of decision-making, in a democratic direction.

This vexing issue is part of what this chapter attempts to address. The chapter thus examines the extent to which societal behaviour demonstrates and upholds democratic values; the rule and spirit of the law; promotes gender justice and general public good. Guided by the broad feminist theory on which the analysis of this chapter is anchored, the chapter assesses the gains; challenges and prospects as well as the underlying 'drivers' that are likely to determine that the transformation process is moving forward. The chapter starts by reviewing the existing state of knowledge on gender and governance; the debates on the significance of the numerical gains made by women on the journey towards gender equality; international and national norms de- veloped to serve as basis of advancing gender equality and democratic governance; the mile- stones and the challenges encountered on the Kenya women's journey towards equity and social justice and the way forward.

Gender Equality and Democratic Governance: The State of the Art

Governance has been defined in a variety of ways. The World Bank (1989) defined governance as the "sum of the many ways individuals and institutions, public and private, manage their common affairs" (cf.Rittberger & Zangl 2003; The Commission on Global Governance 1995:2). Many generally concur that 'good' (democratic) governance entails open, accountable and trans- parent processes; capacity, effectiveness and efficiency; a professional ethos that combats cor- ruption, exclusion, nepotism and personal gain; and strict financial control and management of public funds. In this chapter, governance is defined as the management of public affairs, in a manner that encompasses the mechanisms, processes, and institutions, through which citizens and

groups articulate their interests, mediate their differences and exercise their rights and obligations.

Many scholars have laid importance on the issue of women's participation in governance. Over two centuries ago, John Stuart Mill pointed out that the participation of both the majority and minority will have to be ensured for a government to be competent and efficient. In his book on Representative Government (originally published in 1861), he advocated bringing intellectual and social diversity into government by extending the franchise to women, noting that the idea of denying suffrage to half of the population and thus losing their talents in society, was *non utilitarian idiocy*; while Rule and Zimmerman (1997) argue that a parliament would fail to recognize or comprehend issues of great importance to women in society, if there were few women members (cited in Reynolds 1999: 547-8). The European Network of Experts (1997:8) also observed that a balanced representation of women and men at all levels of decision-making guarantees better government, informed by a cross-fertilization of inputs of both women and men as biological groups, their own and unique perspectives, experiences and values and ideas on how power should be exercised.

Ekvall (2015) has argued that decisions made and policies implemented by governance institutions shape perceptions of the roles which women and men play in society, as well as determin- ing their access to rights and resources. She also notes that involvement of women in defining these policies and processes, and in influencing the institutions that produce them, make it more likely they will respond to the different needs and situations for both women and men, and contribute to gender equality. Hence, reducing patriarchal norms has an impact on the way governance is carried out by involving women (Ibid; Brody 2009; Pearce 2000) note, ac- cess to decision-making bodies will serve no purpose unless it is part of a broader framework to transform power relations within society and eliminate the discriminations women consistently experience. He thus argues that transforming gender relations must be addressed at every level of society, beginning with the domestic sphere, as "democracy in the home is a precondition for democracy abroad." This should be enjoined by transformation of gender relations in the economic sector and political arena, bearing in mind that mainstreaming women is no longer enough. Annica (2010) also argues that gender relations, being relations of power, define the access and nature of participation in governance that tends to privilege men and masculinity while marginalizing femininity and its concerns. Other research done on the issue of gender and governance has shown a strong correlation between patriarchal norms and poor governance. This research has noted a correlation between an increase in women's empowerment and rights, and significant improvement in overall governance, as manifested in better societal quality

of life; enjoyment of rights and reduced gender-based violence and other forms of violence (Miguel 2007; Ostby 2005; Pinker 2011).

Representation and Democratic Governance

Chowdhury (1994: 21) offers five reasons why increasing women's representation and participation is necessary: (i) it is a democratic and justice imperative; (ii) women's presence in governance gives legitimacy to the State and the democratic process; (iii) women, just like men, are entitled to have representatives to lobby for women-specific needs; (iv) women's increased participation in politics and decision-making bodies facilitates positive democratic change and opens up more spaces for them; and (v) women's representation in governance has a demonstra- tion effect that encourages citizens to appreciate women's leadership capacities.

Pitkin (1967), among other things, has made the case that public democratic governance generally takes the form of a representative government, in which people elect and delegate authority to law- makers (representatives), who should stay accountable to their electors. Representation then should be the instrument through which the majority of citizens, who do not participate directly in the day to day management of public affairs, find voice and effective vehicle for addressing their welfare; chan- nelling their grievances and other matters of concern to them. (Dahl 1989; Fenichel 1967; Reid 1989; Pennock and Chapman 1968; Schwartz 1988; Manin 1997; Rehfeld 2005).
As correctly and succinctly articulated by Pitkin (1967), representation consists of making citi- zens' voices, opinions, and perspectives 'present' in the public policy-making processes. Thus, political representation occurs when political actors speak, advocate, symbolize, and act on behalf of others in the political arena. Pitkin identifies four different types of representation: i) formalistic representation, which consists of formal authorization to represent; ii) Descriptive representation whereby a representative resembles those being represented and is assumed to have common interests and experiences with the represented; iii) Symbolic Representation whereby a representative is perceived as 'standing for' the represented symbolically, regardless of what he/she has done for the represented; and iv) substantive Representation, which entails the actions taken on behalf of and in the interests of, and as a substitute for the represented.

Making Women's Presence in Governance Count: beyond Numbers

Inspired by Pitkin's theory of representation some gender and feminist researchers on 'beyond numbers', suggest that in order to attain a governance framework that promotes gender equality, there is need for a conscious and concerted effort by women in public governance, to set an agenda for change and to follow through with policy impacts, and

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accountability mechanisms and processes linking the state and civil society. Crook (2006 & 2009); Hassim (2003), Nzomo (2002, 2003, 2011, 2012, 2013, and 2014) have also argued that formal access to institutions of governance is an important first step and an essential democratic requirement.

However, formal access and presence in governance institutions is neither an end in itself nor does it necessarily translate into influence and capacity for substantive representation. Numbers, however large for any interest group, do not, on their own, guarantee power and influence. Shirleen, Hassim & Amanda Gouws (2011), in their paper, *Power To Change* also make the case that political systems do not necessarily evolve incrementally in a democratic direction; rather, direct interventions are needed in institutional design and in political cultures to ensure inclusion and participation of all citizens. Formal political institutions provide actors with the opportunities to either change and challenge patriarchal norms, or legitimize the patriarchal status quo and ensure continuity in social and political life characterized by boundaries of inclusion and exclusion (Pierre 1999: 390).

The biases present in formal institutions towards masculine values, actors and processes often en- tail that some groups and ideas are privileged over others, resulting in unequal access to resources (Lowndes 2002: 91). Nzomo (2002, 2003, 2011, 2012, 2013, and 2014) has also made the case that women in political leadership, just like men, should not be expected to represent other women homogenously and to promote a transformative gender agenda. Women just like men have only two shared commonalities - their biological makeup and a shared experience of patriarchy. Beyond this, identity differences (of class, ethnicity, race, religion, sexual orientation, political affiliation, etc.) become ap- parent. Goetz and Hassim (2003), provide a framework (dubbed triple "A's"), for assessing women's political performance, by considering their levels of access, presence and influence across different political arenas - the State, the Political System and Civil Society, across three political processes: Access, Agenda setting and Accountability.

This framework recognizes that women's access to the State does not necessarily lead to a feminist agenda setting and accountability to women as a constituency. Instead, there is a need for critical actors, both women and men to emerge and consciously take on the role of gender champions and feminists within and outside the State and seek to push for gender-responsive governance. In this context, one of the ways to assess performance is by the extent to which critical actors are able to set an agenda that advances actionable gender equality policies followed by tangible outcomes.
All these scholars thus concur that in promoting gender and social justice agenda, the narrative needs to shift from solely numbers to include 'beyond numbers'. The attainment of a threshold of 33% women presence in decision-making does not

guarantee that this 'critical mass' becomes critical actors/representatives, who 'act for' and substantively advance gender and democratic agenda. Many remain symbolic, and/or descriptive representatives who may formally 'stand for' the gender agenda, but substantially have other diverse interests, capacities and interpretations of their role in public decision-making positions. Because of this, women's status and capacity for meaningful political representation is said to largely depend on: (i) the kind of access they have to formal political structures-parliaments, political parties, etc.; (ii) the specific socio- cultural, economic and political contexts that mitigate women leader's capacity/inclination to influence policy and in turn fulfill a transformative gender agenda and remain accountable to the constituent group(s) they represent; (iii) the size of the numerical presence/physical numbers of women in political office and (iv) the nature of the institutional norms and practices pertaining to governance institutions. In addition, this chapter takes cognizance of the diverse and unique values and experiences those women possess and bring into politics as people's representatives; which when joined together with male inputs, can contribute to improving the quality and outcomes of governance (Phillips 1995; Freeman 1975; Tripp 2006; Peterson and Runyan 1993; Bystydienski 1992; Shanley & Pateman 1991; Stanley 1990).

Under the circumstances, the extent to which women can convert formal representation into substantive representation depends only partially on their capacity and determination to succeed. Overall, women enter the political arena carrying the burden of patriarchal cultures and values that privilege masculinity in public governance and undervalue femininity, which is as- signed reproductive rather than public functions. Consequently, the rules, norms and values that underwrite to political engagement, reflect masculine values, as prescribed by culture and tradition. Hence entry into public governance does not eliminate hegemonic masculinity nor alter significantly gender inequality in the division of labour and power, which limits women's engagement in public life and creates gender imbalance in political representational structures and processes. The point is that, even if women were a homogenous interest group (which they are not), the prevailing patriarchy and hegemonic masculinity would still pose a significant challenge on their formal presence in governance to make a substantive difference.

UN Perspective: Numbers and Beyond Numbers

A UN expert group meeting held in Addis Ababa in 2005 noted that it is of utmost importance to have equal numbers of women and men in political office, based on the following: i) the justice argument – women have the right to be represented in equitable numbers with men; ii) the experience argument – women's experiences, just like men's, add value to policy-making and implementation; iii) Group interest argument – interests of men and women are different and thus women are needed in representative

institutions to articulate other women's interests; iv) the critical mass argument – women can only effectively represent other women's interests in governance, when they achieve a minimum 33% numerical level of representation; v) the de- mocracy argument – the equal representation of women and men enhances the democratization of governance; and vi) the role model argument - women are attracted to political life if they have role models in the arena.

While acknowledging the importance and significance of increasing numbers, the experts noted that there is a need to assess the contexts and conditions under which equal presence can become effective in empowering women and men, and thereby sustain democracy. In other words, substantive representation of women must look 'beyond the numbers' of women 'representatives' that claim to speak for women's interests but without tangible outcomes. It has, however, been noted in this regard that within specific political, cultural and social contexts, women representatives do attempt to address women's basic needs and tend to be less corrupt than men and hence bring some credibility to governance (Var- gas and Wieringa 1998). But this finding cannot be generalised. The experts emphasized that it is necessary to go 'beyond numbers' and assess to what degree and under what conditions elected women actually represent and contribute to gender equality.

The experts identified three important conditions that contribute to the ability of women to promote gender equality effectively: i) the presence of critical actors of individual women (and men), who play key roles in the political process; ii) critical structures in the form of political processes and institutions that enhance women's political influence and iii) critical junctures - of certain socio-economic and political moments when forces combine to provide unprecedented opportunities for women to influence policy-making and implementation process.

The case for thinking beyond numbers is thus a call for more nuanced and constructive dialogue and analysis on the how, who and what of attaining a gender responsive and inclusive democratic gover- nance environment, with rules of engagement that facilitate both women and men leaders, provide a level playing field to set and realize desired agenda(s) and outcomes.

It is on the basis of this framework that this chapter analyses Kenya women's journey to date and project on the future, but focus primarily on the post-colonial era. The issues addressed in this chapter focus on the following areas: (i) the status and significance of women's access to State/political institutions (e.g. Parliament, Executive and Judiciary); (ii) the normative (legal, policy and institutional) frame- works put in place to provide guidelines for democratic governance and their efficacy; iii) the gains made in accessing

governance institutions and in engendering and democratizing institutional culture towards morality in statecraft and social responsibility.

International Accountability Norms and Mechanisms for Promoting Gender Equality in Governance

Ideally, international legal, policy and institutional norms should provide a powerful account- ability instrument as well as a mechanism for countering patriarchy and other cultural norms that undermine gender equality in governance. My argument in this section is that Kenya as a member of the international community has adequate international norms and frameworks to anchor the development of its national norms and practices.

Since the UN Charter was promulgated in 1945, numerous legal, policy and institutional norms have been put in place to promote gender and equality across the board. The Charter clearly articulates the commitment of all member states to uphold the principle of gender equity and equality. The 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights further declared that all human be- ings are born equal in dignity and Rights. This was followed in 1965 by the coming into force of the three UN treaties that are normally jointly termed as the International Bill of rights on political, economic and socio-cultural rights.

Many other similar international conventions and treaties were put in place between 1945 - 1995. The most notable treaty that emerged in the intervening period was the 1981 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which is regard- ed as the principal international treaty for promoting gender and women's rights. Article 7 of CEDAW calls upon State parties "to take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country". Further, at the 16th session in 1997, its Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women adopted general recommendations regarding the participation of women in public life and emphasized that State parties should ensure that their constitutions and legislation complied with the principles of the Convention and that they were under an obligation to take all necessary measures, including temporary special measures, to achieve equal representation of women and men in political and public life.

It is also important to note that UN agencies, of which all states are members, carry the man- date of promoting gender equity and equality. The United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (UNCSW) is the key international institution put in place in 1946 to serve as an anchor for all issues related to gender and women's rights. At its forty-first session in 1997 UNCSW adopted Agreed Conclusions (1997/2), which emphasized that

attaining the goal of equal participation of men and women in decision-making, was important for strengthening democracy and achieving the goals of sustainable development.

The United Nations Security Council in its resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security, reaffirmed the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace-building and stressed the importance of their equal participation in decision-making and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security. Furthermore, the UN General Assembly resolution 58/142 of 2003 on women and political participation, urged Governments, the UN system, NGOs and other actors to develop a comprehensive set of policies and programmes to increase women's participation in decision-making, and support and generate political will, serious commitment to the promotion of the advancement of women and the goals of gender equality.

Despite the existence of these and other international norms, the scorecard of State and non-State actors indicates slow progress towards the democratization of the hegemonic and masculinised structures, culture and processes of governance prevailing in many societies, including Kenya.

This concern was well articulated fifty years after the launch of the UN Charter by the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action, which drew attention to the persisting inequality between men and women in decision-making across the world, with Kenya being among the worst offenders. It reaffirmed women's persistent exclusion and marginalization from formal politics and other governance spaces. The Platform noted that this situation undermines the achievement of effetive democratic transformations in governance institutions, including parliaments.

The Beijing Platform for Action emphasized that:

… women's equal participation in decision-making is not only a demand for justice or democracy, but also a necessary condition for women's interests to be taken into account. Without the perspective of women at all levels of decision-making, the goals of equality, development and peace cannot be achieved. (Para. 181)

The Platform, therefore, identified the need to develop implementable strategies to ensure women's equal access to and full participation in power structures and decision-making; as well as increase women's capacity to participate in decision-making and leadership. In this regard, it recommended the following strategic and implementation measures:

i.   to set specific, measurable targets for achieving gender-balanced composition in all governance bodies and committees as well as public administration and judiciary;

ii.   integrate women into elective positions in political parties;

iii.   promote and protect women's political rights;

iv.   reconcile work and family responsibilities for both men and women;

v.   enhance leadership and gender awareness training;

vi.   develop transparent criteria for decision-making positions and vii) create a system of mentoring.

The Kenya National Legal, Policy and Institutional Accountability Mechanisms: Constitution 2010

The 2010 Constitution and the various legal and policy frameworks deriving from it are a key source of norms and accountability mechanisms. These mechanisms include Article 10 of the Constitution that provides for fundamental national values that should form the basis of the gender relations and governance ethos. Chapter 4 that constitutes the Bill of Rights provides a comprehensive template for actualizing and implementing individual and group rights and in particular, gender equity and equality. Chapter 6 on Leadership and integrity sets out strict requirements for those seeking public leadership and prescribes responsibilities of leadership, Conduct of state officers, financial probity etc. The Right of Recall of non-performing elected MPs as provided for under article 104 of the Constitution was expected to force MPs to remain accountable to the electorate. This article, along with the Elections Act, reinforces the provisions of Chapter 6 of the Constitution.

The 2010 Constitution also provided the legal platform for the domestication and adoption of laws and reforms on women's participation in politics. These laws have resulted in an increase in women's representation within all levels of government and, consequently, allowed women to increase their influence in decision-making processes. However, a large gap still exists between commitments pursuant to the ratification of the texts and the reality of women's leadership. Much more needs to be done to guarantee the full realisation of women's rights to representation as envisioned in the international law, the Constitution of Kenya, and in Kenyan law.

Many observers have hailed the Kenya Constitution as one of the most progressive in the world, as it complies with the international and regional obligations arising from treaties and conventions and other commitments signed and or ratified, including the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the 2003 Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women.

The 2010 Constitution has also provided the basic and most fundamental normative framework for guiding the implementation of promoting rights and democratic governance environment. The institutional mechanisms analysed below, all draw their mandates from the 2010 constitution.

Gender Aspects of the Kenyan State Mechanisms of Governance: 2010- 2018

As the analysis below indicates, Kenya is no longer short of legal, policy and institutional mecha- nisms to provide the basis of transforming gender relations and governance in a social justice direction.

a) *Parliament, The National Assembly and the Senate*

Parliament is one of the three arms of government that is charged with the important roles of legislation and oversight of other State organs. Chapter 8 of the Constitution of Kenya establishes the Legislature. Article 93 of the Constitution states that "There is established a Parlia- ment of Kenya, which shall consist of the National Assembly and the Senate." To implement the two-thirds gender rule, Parliament first drafted the Constitutional Amendment Bill, 2015 (the Duale Bill) with provisions for a gender top-up clause like the one applied to county assemblies.

The constitution confers upon Parliament the core roles of legislation and exercise of oversight functions over other state organs. These twin roles give Parliament enormous powers to develop and facilitate the implementation of governance norms; ensure accountability of other state or- gans and promote gender equity and equality in Parliament and other governance institutions. The two Houses of Parliament shall perform their respective functions in accordance with the Constitution as stated in Article 93 (2) of the Constitution.

These mandates confer wide-ranging strategic powers upon Parliament, which it could utilize to advance gender equity and equality and democratize and engender the culture of parliamentary governance. Despite these powers, the Kenyan Parliament has demonstrated to be one of the most masculine and patriarchal governance institutions in Kenya. As a legislative body, Parlia- ment has to-date failed to pass any bill that would implement the two-thirds gender rule. In- deed, the extent of Parliaments' role in the promotion of gender equity and governance can best be assessed against its failure to pass any bill that would implement the two-thirds gender rule.

Parliament first drafted the Constitutional Amendment Bill, 2015 (the Duale Bill) with pro- visions for a gender top-up clause like the one applied to county assemblies. In a move that seemed to contradict the Duale Bill, the Legal Affairs Committee of the

National Assembly also tabled a separate bill – popularly referred to as the Chepkonga Bill– which provided for gradual implementation of the gender rule.

The Chepkonga Bill lengthened the timeline for the implementation and ensured that the Par- liament would not be dissolved if it failed to meet the Supreme Court's August 2015 deadline. In the meantime, another bill was tabled in Senate, similar to the Duale Bill, but also limiting to two the number of terms one can serve as a county woman representative. Yet another bill, known as the Green Amendment, was developed by an informal parliamentary caucus on hu- man rights, proposing to substantively change the Constitution through a referendum. This bill proposed to create twin constituencies to offer additional competitive seats for women.

All these gender focussed initiatives aimed at implementing the two-thirds gender rule failed to garner sufficient votes in parliament, despite receiving endorsements from President Kenyatta and others. In my assessment, the various lame attempts by some MPs to pass their respective versions of the two-thirds gender bill, lacked the seriousness and commitment necessary to provide an implementable/ enabling legislation for implementing the two-thirds gender rule.

The lack of harmony in coming up with one implementing legislation, along with the consistent lack of quorum every time the bill came up for voting, demonstrates lack of political will and entrenched patriarchal governance values that undermine gender equality. (See also, http://www.parliament.go.ke/About_Parliament/)

b)   *Parliamentary Gender Mechanism: KEWOPA*

At the parliamentary level, two female parliamentary caucuses are in existence. These are the Kenya Women Parliamentarians Association (KEWOPA) and the Kenya Women Senators (KE- WOSA). The two contribute to Parliament's work in the area of integrating gender into laws and policies. Similar caucuses are also established in the 47 County Assemblies. These two have, inter alia, jointly with sections of the women's movement, been lobbying and putting pressure within and outside Parliament, for the implementation of the 'two-thirds gender rule'.

The Kenya Women Parliamentarian Association (KEWOPA), of which all women MPs in the National Assembly are automatically members, was launched in 2004. On its website (http:// www.kewopa.org/) KEWOPA states that its vision is that "women and men are equitably represented in Parliament and decision making in public and private spheres to promote sustainable development. It also articulates its mission as being: ... to promote the advancement of parliamentary democracy by enhancing knowledge & understanding of democratic governance and facilitate the networking of women

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parliamentarians for the socio-economic and political development of Kenya (KEWOPA).

It also outlines its contribution in attaining its vision and mission. These include: i) the realization of the family Bills: - Marriage Act 2014 and the Matrimonial Property Act 2013 and Protection Against Domestic Violence; Act ii) Spearheading the push for the realization of the two thirds gender principle as proposed by the Constitutional Amendment Bill 2015 (No. 4), initiated by some KEWOPA members; iii) developed gender-responsive budgeting guidelines for Parliament; iv) developed a Members Handbook on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights. Other legislative KEWOPA contributions include: (i) the Children's Act of 2002; (ii) the Sexual Offences Act of 2006; (iii) the Counter Trafficking in Persons Act of 2010; (iv) the review of the Employment Act of 2007; (v) the Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Act of 2011 and the Breast Milk Substitutes (Regulation and Control) Bill now before Parliament. Women-friendly policy changes initiated by KEWOPA include: (i) the tax waivers for sanitary wear and diapers; (ii) engendering the 2008 revised Standing Orders of the National Assembly;

(iii) securing paid maternity leave for women MPs and female-designated washrooms; (iv) the appointment of women MPs as Chairs or Co-Chairs of five of the standing Parliamentary Com- mittees and (v) the 2008 establishment of the Equal Opportunities Committee (EOC) that moni- tors and promotes equal opportunities for all marginalized groups. KEWOPA has also played a strategic role in engendering the 2010 Constitution making and subsequent implementation processes (Nzomo 2011).

Based on the achievement's scorecard as presented, it can be argued that under KEWOPA, Kenya women in this key governance institution have performed well, despite their numerical minority status and patriarchy-inspired resistance to gender equality encountered from most male MPs. KEWOPA seems to have demonstrated some capacity to set a gender agenda in Parliament.

This has led some to conclude that, if a 'critical mass' of women was attained in Parliament, they would secure more transformative changes in Parliament. That however, is debatable, especially when one examines the demonstrated inability to set an agenda on the vexing governance ques- tion of corruption. KEWOPA members, for example, have consistently voted with male MPs in support of the endless unilaterally determined salary increases in a society, where the majority of Kenyans are wallowing in poverty. My view of what needs to happen for the output of KE- WOPA to change is to put more effort in 'recruiting' and 'converting' hegemonic patriarchs into gender champions/feminists whose alliance can be counted upon in promoting gender equity and equality.

The argument that an increase in the numbers of women MPs would automatically lead to positively influence governance is not supported by evidence of the record of performance of the more than ten African countries where women political representatives have attained and exceeded the 30% threshold. Like KEWOPA, they have also successfully spearheaded the enact- ment of some women and gender-responsive legislation, but have been unable to transform the patriarchal culture and norms of political institutions. Furthermore, the current political stalemate in Kenya occasioned by the male political elites' resistance to the implementation of the 2/3rds gender quota is a clear signal of the power of patriarchy and the likely battle ahead, as patriarchal forces continue to defy and resist gender equality. This reminds us that the Ke- nyan State and other institutions of governance remain gendered and greater physical presence of women will neither automatically alter the dominant masculine culture embedded in those institutions nor the gendered distribution of political power and other resources.

Formal access by Kenya women into governance institutions, without change in the patriarchal institutional norms, hinders women's capacity to set a transformative gender and democratic agenda; and/or strengthen accountability mechanisms. The point therefore is that, a key priority agenda of women political representatives should be to develop better strategies/mechanisms for transforming patriarchal institutional values that normalize inequalities and undermine and render ineffective any legislative successes. This will entail sacrifice, political will and commitment.

c) *Executive Mechanism: State Department for Youth and Gender Affairs*

This State Department on Youth and Gender, domiciled in the Ministry of Public Service, Youth and Gender, which in turn is located in the Presidency - the executive arm of government, is a strategic institution, which if well utilized, can make a significant contribution towards the positive governance change Kenya requires. The department is responsible for developing na- tional policies on gender, creating standards to guide the implementation of policies, making legislative proposals to parliament and providing leadership in that regard. More specifically, it is mandated to:

(i)   Institutionalize gender mainstreaming in ministries, departments and agencies as well as in the devolved county level and private sector;
(ii)   Promote the development and review of gender policies and legislation;
(iii)   Promote research, collection and analysis, storage and dissemination of sex-disag- gregated data to inform programing, and
(iv)   multimedia campaign to promote women leadership as an advocacy tool.

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To-date, the Department scorecard includes: i) revision of the National Policy on Gender and Development to align it with the Constitution so as to realize the participation of women, people with disabilities (PWDs), youth, ethnic and other minorities; ii) development of the National Equality Policy to facilitate implementation of the constitutional equality principles in all sec- tors; iii) the provision of guidance on the application of Article 27 on affirmative action with respect to gender and iv) issuance of a national strategy document to support women in elective politics and guide state and non-state actors on the implementation of programmes to prepare women for elections.

While recognizing the achievements made by the Department and its parent ministry, it is significant to note that the Department has given a scorecard containing only a contribution to- wards the normative policy norms required to realize gender equity and equality. The next, but more challenging step is to initiate implementation programmes and monitor the extent to which such outcomes contribute to the process of total societal change that benefits all.

Change of mind-sets is a crucial part of that process. The Department's programme initiated and launched in August 2018 is a good example in that direction. At the launch of this pro- gramme, the Department recognized and celebrated a few Kenya women heroines, who have distinguished themselves in public service and in particular, blazed the trail in search of gender equity and equality in Kenya. But for this programme to have long-term and sustainable impact, it needs to be integrated and entrenched in all other governance institutions.

d)   *The Office of the Registrar of Political Parties (ORPP)*

Political parties serve as the main conduit for candidates to compete for and attain elected of- fice. The ORPP is the statutory body charged with the main responsibility of creating and enforc- ing regulations on the formation and operations of political parties, as contained in the Political Party's Act (PPA). The PPA is a key accountability tool, for enforcing and monitoring political Parties' compliance ensuring probity, transparency and fairness in the recruitment processes of all political office aspirants. In so doing, ORPP should thus enforce accountability of political parties as provided in the PPA. In particular, ORPP should play a significant role in the imple- mentation of the two crucial gender equality articles of the Kenya 2010 Constitution: Articles 27 and 81(b). For example, those placed on political party lists should be selected based on merit; proven commitment and service to the nation; leadership ability and integrity and in compli- ance with the no more than two-thirds rule. Since its creation, the ORPP lays claim to having completed a number of activities to improve the representation of women in

political parties, including advocating for amendments to the PPA that created more enforcement provisions for

the ORPP. In 2017, the ORPP created a gender-sensitive nomination checklist for political par- ties to guide the drafting of party constitutions, and conducted some auditing of political par- ties for compliance with the Constitution and amended the PPA. The ORPP works directly with the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) to audit nomination lists and regulate parties during the electoral process. The ORPP also lays claim to some positive achievements in ensuring compliance with the two-thirds gender principle.

However, the ORPP could do more to promote women's representation and effective participa- tion in the governance structures and processes of political parties. Though provided with tools for enforcement and sanctions, the ORPP's performance in utilizing its enforcement powers to advance meaningful gender equity and equality in the governance structures and processes within political parties has been negligible. The scorecard indicates glaring masculine and hegemonic party control, which are treated as personal and exclusive political vehicles by their predominantly male owners, unregulated and unsanctioned by ORPP. It has further been noted in this regard, that ORPP has focussed largely on holding meetings and workshops designed to showcase the benefits of women's inclusion, and developing materials to guide the political parties in complying with the law. This is far from adequate. For example, its claim to having contributed to women's greater representation in political parties is not supported by evidence. Although most parties claim to have met the two-thirds gender constitutional requirement in their governing bodies, evidence as recent as 2017, indicates that women still typically occupy low positions, such as women league leaders and deputies to other positions, which do not offer visibility and has minimal influence on party decisions. Furthermore, a gender breakdown of IEBC's candidates list for the 2017 elections revealed that prior to the election, the number of women lagged far behind that of their male counterparts. Of the 14,501 candidates who participated in the 2017 elections, only 8.7% were women, despite the concerted efforts of various actors to increase the pool of aspiring women (NDI & FIDA 2017).

Moving forward, ORPP should, for example, redirect a large chunk of its time and financial re- sources towards more targeted, sustained and comprehensive civic education to raise the civic and gender awareness of both women and men on their rights and responsibilities; their role in contributing to the development of a democratic and gender equitable governance culture and its correlation with the improvement of overall societal welfare. The ORPP could also better col- laborate with the other relevant agencies, such as Directorate of Immigration and Registration of Persons, the National

Council of Persons with Disabilities, and the IEBC, the National Cohe- sion and Integration Commission (NCIC) etc.

Women as members of political parties have their own role to play in enhancing their capacity to influence and promote gender equity and democratic governance. In this connection, it is worth noting that party systems comprising one or two dominant parties such as Kenya, party loyalty and identification is often very strong in parliaments and discourages representatives, both women and men, from forming cross-party alliances. Ultimately, women MPs are often un- able to balance between their accountability to their respective Parties that demand adherence to the party ideology and, on the other hand, their role to champion the gender agenda, whose ideology may be in contrast to that of their respective political parties. Women parliamentarians thus need to address this challenge if they wish to effectively contribute to the transformation of the patriarchal governance culture that prevails in Parliament. Women parliamentarians often face the dilemma of having to follow their party's directive or to articulate demands for women and gender equality.

e)   *National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC)*

The NCIC is a statutory body established under the National Cohesion and Integration Act No.12 of 2008. The establishment of NCIC recognized the need for a national institution to promote national identity and values, mitigate ethno political competition and ethnically motivated violence, eliminate discrimination on ethnic, racial and religious basis and promote national reconciliation and healing. Its core mission is to "develop and sustain processes that alleviate all forms of ethnic discrimination and promote diversity through knowledge' (https://www.cohesion.or.ke/index.php/about-us/ncic-at-a-glance). It also promotes the constitutional national values of professionalism; integrity; accountability and transparency; affirmative action for the marginalized and the minorities; and inclusivity and respect for diversity.

Towards this end, in 2016 the National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC) audited commissions, parastatals, and county public services to determine how diverse they were. The audit showed that women comprised only 12 percent and 33 percent of the chief executive officers of parastatals and national commissions, respectively. These statistics indicated a wide gender gap in the top offices of government despite the law providing for gender equity and equality. In the 2017 general elections, the NCIC generally included women in its mandate for monitoring conflict, but was not specifically focused on women.

NCIC, in my view, is a crucial institution which could greatly improve gender relations and the quality of governance in general if various organs of government desisted from undermining its capacity to implement its mandate. For example, to-date it has been noted that many of the cases of breach or failure to comply with provisions of social cohesion and integration taken to the prosecutory and judicial organs for action have often been undermined by political interference. Again, the challenge here is not an inadequate framework or the norms therein contained. Rather, the key challenge is the dominant institutional culture that undermines the develop- ment of a culture that upholds the rule of law, promotes equity and equality, as well as values of accountability.

f) The Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC)

The IEBC has the constitutional mandate to conduct and supervise referenda and elections of all public bodies. In line with Article 88 it has an obligation to uphold the general principles of the electoral system, including the two-thirds gender rule. IEBC is expected to propose to Par- liament any legislative and regulatory proposals for enactment to guide the delivery of its mandate.

Given its mandate, the IEBC could play a greater role in providing guidelines to political parties to ensure compliance with the two-thirds gender rule. It has been noted that to-date the IEBC appears to have restricted its role to the implementation of the gender rule through party lists only. IEBC needs, inter alia, to work with other stakeholders in carrying out its gender mandate. For example, it should engage in raising awareness around provisions of the Election Code of Conduct among candidates, political parties and their supporters, with a view of creating an environment that is tolerant of inclusive participation and that encourages a free and fair electoral process.

g) The National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC)

The National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC) was established in 2011, under Article 59 (4) of the Constitution that allowed it to be heaved off the Kenya National Human Rights Commission and thereby legalized through the enactment of the National Gender and Equality Commission Act (2011). As the chief parastatal monitoring body for promotion of gender equality, it bears a major responsibility to enforce and ensure compliance and expose non-compliance in respect to leaders' performance in advancing gender equality of all gender-related issues. It is not only mandated to oversee implementation of the constitutional obligations on gender equity but also the inclusion of marginalised groups. The NGEC also has powers to investigate violations relating to its mandate.

According to its self-assessment, the NGEC credits itself with having i) conducted both court and legislative initiatives to implement the two-thirds gender rule; ii) initiated in 2014 the consultations on how to facilitate implementation of the two-thirds gender rule in the 2017 general elections, leading to the eventual amendments to the PPA; iii) filed a case in 2013, challenging IEBC's criteria for allocating elective seats from party candidate lists; iv) Enjoined in 2013, in the legal case of the National Gender and Equality Commission vs. Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission & another [2013], in which it argued that the party lists submitted to the IEBC did not meet constitutional requirements, including the two-thirds gender rule. Since the 2013 elections had already been conducted and the statutory time limit for submitting party lists had passed, the court chose not to nullify the existing party lists but instead asked IEBC to publicise the parties that had qualified to nominate members to the legislature so that individu- als could bring their own challenges. But these party lists were never published. The court also tasked IEBC to establish and publicise criteria for admissibility of party lists.

During the 2017 elections, NGEC deployed election monitors in various parts of the country to collect information on the level of participation of women voters and other marginalised groups. The commission plans to use this information to determine challenges facing women voters or women candidates in the elections. Due to budget constraints, the NGEC could not recruit or deploy a sufficient number of observers during the election, and has had limited breadth of in- formation to work from in its reporting.

The NGEC initiatives to-date are hardly adequate. NGEC is charged with a core gender watchdog and accountability role, which it has poorly performed in the last seven (7) years of its existence.

Civil Society Accountability/Watchdog Institutions

This category includes the Kenya Women's movement, which has for over the past three de- cades, played significant roles in promoting women's and gender rights. Not only has it been a key watchdog and an accountability mechanism for holding public officials to account but it has also been an important vehicle for building the capacity for asserting rights as electors of politi- cal leaders and as candidates seeking access or influence in public decision-making positions. Furthermore, the movement has taken the role of developing gender responsive governance norms as evidenced by its initiative that developed the 2011 National Women's Charter to serve as an accountability tool to hold both female and male political leaders accountable.

The media remains a powerful and important mechanism of holding leaders accountable, for ex- ample, through Opinion Polls, as well as by 'naming and shaming'. Media acts as both an executor and as a protagonist in promoting equal participation of men and women in elections. Media can also be an accomplice to gender-based discrimination by portraying stereotypical sensational im- ages of women. According to Matekaire (2003) the media plays a significant role in determining how women in politics and decision- making are viewed and perceived by society in general. The media not only plays an important role in shaping the values of society but also reflects those values. The media is a chronicler of events, an informer, an educator, a transformative space and a tool to change society. Women in politics play a vital role in ensuring the democratic governance of the country and, therefore, their contribution to this processes needs to be analysed in the appropriate context by the media.

Here again, the challenge has been not only to harness the change of patriarchal mind-sets operating in this sector but also to constantly persuade them to create a better balance between their core commercial objective and their social responsibility to provide to disseminate what promotes the public good, including the matter of gender equality and democratic governance. In Kenya significant progress has been made in this direction in the last three decades, but more remains to be done.

The religious sector could become a very influential accountability instrument as well as an important vehicle for developing high level of ethical standards in governance. The challenge here, however, is the highly patriarchal nature of this institution that is deeply embedded in the doctrine that provides the code of conduct within and outside this institution.

On the whole, the Civil society sector has a responsibility not only to lobby and to put pressure on state and other non-state public institutions to enforce/implement existing norms and policy guidelines for democratising and engendering governance and its outcomes but also to take gender-specific actions that speak to the institutional cultures and norms that undermine wom- en's capacity to deliver; be accountable and also hold others to account. This sector thus needs to spearhead concerted and sustained civic education to combat the cultural values, norms and mind-sets that undermine women's effective participation in leadership and perpetuate gender inequality in division of labour, power and allocation of resources.

3.10 Kenya Women's Journey: Negotiating Rights and Space for Equitable Participation in Governance: 1963-2017

The post-2010 legal, policy and institutional gains discussed in the first part of this chapter are a central part of the Kenyan women's journey in the struggle for rights and participation in governance structures and processes.

This journey has a long history dating from the pre-colonial and colonial Kenya which has been well documented elsewhere by feminist historians and requires no repetition here. But the final year of transition to post-colonial era deserves mention, as it is here that we see the first Kenyan woman, Priscilla Ingasiani Abwao, participating alongside the team of five Kenyan men in the last stage of the independence constitution negotiation process at the 1962 Lancaster Conference in London. The Colonial governor had picked her for the delegation in her capacity as the first African woman to sit in the Legislative Council (LEGCO). Little is known of the role she played in the constitutional negotiations and in the undemocratic governance structures of the colonial government's LEGCO. But she is said to have been a principled woman and an advocate for women's rights (Lichuma 2017). Save for Abwao's presence at the constitutional negotiation process of 1962, women of Kenya were completely excluded from the entire first constitutional making and negotiation process. Despite Abwao's presence at this crucial independence nego- tiation conference, she seems to have been unable to secure the inclusion of gender and women's rights in the 1963 Constitution.

The 1963 independence constitution of Kenya provided for and legitimized patriarchy and dis- crimination against women in favour of personal laws. Thus, section 82 (4) of the first constitu- tion of Kenya allowed discrimination in respect to marriage, divorce, burial, property ownership and devolution of property on the death of a spouse. It is also significant that the first post- independence parliament was an all-male parliament. During the period 1963-2010, Kenya was governed by the independence constitution which had, in the intervening fifty-two years, been amended over thirty-nine times in a direction of entrenching authoritarian and patriarchal mode of governance. For every amendment made before 1991, human and gender rights became more eroded to the point where by 1991 no meaningful gender rights and freedoms were left in the old constitution. Despite this, the Kenyan women's resolve and steadfastness in the struggle for gender justice and right to participate in governance processes and to gain voice and visibility remained unshaken.

The twenty years struggle of constitutional reform (1990-2010) culminated in the promulgation of the 2010 Kenya Constitution. The role of women within and outside the State in the develop- ment of a progressive legal policy as well as institutional norms and frameworks that support gender equality, rights and social justice has been

enormous. Without doubt, this twenty years long struggle for constitutional reform was a key part of the women's journey towards gender equity, equality and justice. The gender-responsive content of the 2010 Constitution, owes a lot to the gender champions that blazed the trail and provided leadership and other support to the women's movement that lobbied for the rights and other democratic gains in the 2010 Constitution.

Arguably, the most outstanding gain to-date that both women and men of Kenya have reaped from their struggles was a legal framework that comprehensively provides for women's rights as human rights, democratic governance values and principles, including human dignity, equity and equality, social justice, inclusiveness, economic, social and cultural rights, which are en- trenched in the Bill of Rights in Chapter 4 of the Constitution. Women were specifically granted the right to confer citizenship to their foreign spouses and children born outside Kenya with non-Kenyan men. The Bill of Rights essentially provides that every person is equal before the law and has the right to equal protection and benefit of the law; equal treatment; and equal opportunities in political, economic, cultural and social sphere. The 2010 Constitution also created a bicameral parliament and a decentralized governance structure that created forty-seven County governments, each with a position for a woman only county representative. This brought a significant number of women into public leadership space.

The Constitution also provides for equality of rights in marriage, employment, matrimonial property; rights to inheritance, land ownership and access to education. The Constitution out- laws discriminatory customary practices and women are guaranteed equal parental responsibility. Both public and private institutions are required to comply with the gender and women's rights constitutional principles. The constitution thus provides massive space for both women and men to exercise rights and obligations; basic freedoms, as well as develop and embrace core democratic values of leadership and governance.

In addition, the State is expected to take legislative and other measures, including affirmative action programmes and policies designed to redress any disadvantage suffered by individuals or groups because of past discrimination. The State is further required to "take legislative and other measures to implement the principle that not more than two-thirds of members of elective bodies shall be of the same gender".

As noted earlier in this chapter, riding on the accountability of the 2010 constitutional provisions, the combined power of women parliamentarians and gender champions outside parliament successfully negotiated and secured enactment of the enabling legislation that have given implementation impetus to the 2010 Constitution. These legislations include: i) Marriage Act (No. 4 of 2014); ii) Employment and Labour

Relations Court Act (No. 20 of 2011, revised edition 2014); iii) Protection against Domestic Violence Act (No. 21 of 2015); iv) Basic Education Act; v) Matrimonial Property Act (No. 49 of 2013); vi) Micro and Small Enterprises Act (No 55 of 2012); vii) Treaty making Ratification Act (2012); viii) The Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Act (2011); ix) Law of Succession Act (2012); x) Citizenship and Immigration Act (2011); xi) National Gender and Equality Act (2011); xii) Counter-Trafficking in Persons Act (2010) and xiii) Government Policy on Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (2017) which provided implementation guidelines for the Sexual Offences Act of 2006. The Constitution has thus provided massive space, for both women and men, to exercise rights and obligations, basic freedoms, as well as develop and embrace core democratic values of leadership and governance. What the Constitution does not and could not provide is the necessary political will to uphold the rule of law and the desire and the moral fibre to act responsibly in the exercise of one's rights, with due recognition of the rights of others. It also did not and could not provide a formula of how to banish patriarchal mind-sets that constantly undermine efforts to implement the constitutional norms of gender equity and equality.

Notably, these critical legal standards of gender equity and equality have not been completely met. For example, Parliament has yet to pass legislation that would bring its two houses – the National Assembly and the Senate – in line with the Constitution's 'two-thirds gender rule'. Amendments to the Elections Act and the Political Parties Act (PPA) have improved the regula- tory environment but remain inadequate, lacking meaningful incentives and enforcement mechanisms. Compliance among political parties and the parliament continues to be problematic de- spite Supreme Court rulings, mandating implementation of the two-thirds rule. The manner in which patriarchal forces in Parliament have repeatedly blocked or undermined the implementa- tion of the two-thirds gender rule speaks of the patriarchal and hegemonic values that prevail in the Kenyan government institutions. This institutional culture has undermined not only the progress in increasing women's numbers in Parliament but also the possibility of transforming the governance culture.

In respect to the quest for Kenya women's political representation, the journey for the first five decades after Kenya attained her independence, the struggle for gender equality, quite under- standably, focussed on the need to increase the numbers of women in public decision-making, especially political institutions (Nzomo 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1996, 2002).

The quest for the attainment of the UN minimum standard threshold of one third female representation in political governance institution has yet to be met in Kenya. The patriarchal governance is largely blamed for this slow progress. In the latest (2017) elections, the second to be held since the promulgation of the 2010 Constitution, women

still comprised less than the minimum UN requirement of 30 per cent women in Parliament. As of 2018, the total female representation in the bicameral parliament in Kenya stands at 26%. The National Assembly comprises 19.7% and Senate 26.5 %. Even that number has been made possible because of the affirmative action using both the party quotas and seats reserved for women.

NDI and FIDA-K (2017) analysed the performance of women politicians in the 2017 elections as com- pared to the 2013 elections, taking into account Kenya's political, legal, and cultural environment. In this context the Report identified and documented the challenges encountered by women and the lessons learnt from this election. An analysis of the aspects that shaped the outcomes of both the 2013 and 2017 elections indicates that most of the factors that undermined women's success were non-legal and were mostly a reflection of patriarchy and hegemonic masculinity in access to and ownership and control of resources, capacity to inflict violence, gender stereotyping, etc. It was noted that the political space remains largely androcentric, making it difficult for women to fully partake in politics. Religion, which is predominantly patriarchal in its views on gender relations, is one of the instruments that have been used to legitimize women's exclusion and under=representation in political decision making. According to Tripp (1999: 6):

The prohibitive cultural attitudes against women's involvement persist among both men and women. These are reflected in voting patterns, media coverage of female politicians, and even in blatant attempts to suppress women's assertion of their political rights and views.

That said, the 2017 elections did represent a step forward for women's representation, albeit an in- cremental one. Compared to the elections in 2013, more women won seats at all levels, except for the presidential race, which remained exclusively male. For the first time, in 2017 three women became governors and three became senators compared to none in 2013. More women were also elected to the national and county assemblies (23 members of the National Assembly in 2017 vs. 16 in 2013 and 96 members of County Assemblies in 2017 vs. 82 in 2013). Women running as independent candidates were also elected for the first time. While these are positive changes, it is important to note that women comprised just 9.2 per cent of the 1,835 elected individuals in 2017, a marginal increase from 7.7 per cent in 2013.

Thus, the key challenge in moving forward to promote gender equity and justice in respect of political representation is not an absence of legal and policy norms, but a reflection of non-compliance with these norms. This lack of compliance has been the main challenge since the passage of the 2010 Constitution. Most notable has been the repeated failure of the Parliament to enact broad implementing legislation for the "no

more than two thirds" gender rule, while the Executive has done little to hasten the process or apply pressure. Court decisions mandating legislative compliance to this constitutional rule have, in some cases, encouraged delay and, in others, have gone unenforced. National laws related to political parties and elections also have significant implementation gaps that facilitate non-compli- ance and encourage non-enforcement. The constitutional provision for Recall of non-performing MPs has faced similar challenge of MPs acting with impunity.

This outcome speaks of the need for the development of a democratic governance culture that would facilitate elected bodies, and indeed, all political institutions in Kenya to undergo further reforms, in particular to provide not only for gender equality principle but also for precise enabling mechanism(s) for the implementation of a sustainable engendered agenda.

The above analysis indicates that the next stage of the gender equity journey in Kenya entails a para- digmatic shift away from the narrow narrative focused on the attainment of the magical 33%-50% threshold (critical mass) of women (as a homogenous category) in decision-making positions as an end goal, towards a perspective that views numerical presence as a means rather than an end in itself, bear- ing in mind that a critical mass without critical actors (both men and women) is inadequate. Thus, the paradigm shift should involve a move towards a greater focus on critical acts and actors rather than a focus on critical mass; less focus on formal/descriptive gender equity and greater focus on substantive equity and equality.

In this respect, the next stage of the journey should combine the quest for more numbers, along with a conscious effort to recruit and sustain a group of critical actors/gender champions comprising women (and men) committed to spearhead the transformative change from patriarchal and hegemonic gender relations to power relations based on meaningful/ substantive rather than simply formal equality. As Childs and Krook (2007) have noted, it is not really numbers that matter but rather, women's com- mitment and feminist consciousness of gender injustice. Numbers are important only to the extent that they are convertible to transformative action. In Parliament, for example, this implies that if politics is to be transformed in the legislative arena, gender champions should seek to change conditions of unequal power relations; patriarchal institutional culture and unequal access to economic resources.

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated not only the challenges women face in accessing public decision- making positions, but also the bigger challenge of attaining transformative power. The central argument of this chapter has been that attaining the magical 33%

minimum threshold of women's presence in public decision-making bodies should be treated as only a first step, as it does not automatically translate numbers into the influence needed to achieve and sustain the desired goals of equity, equality and social justice. I have made the case that the major challenge that undermines progress is patriarchal social-cultural values and hegemonic masculinities which pervade gender relations and governance structures and processes.

The chapter has shown that women's access to governance institutions does not necessarily lead to capacity to implementing a feminist agenda. Instead, as several scholars have noted, there is need for the emergence of critical actors, both women and men that have the commitment and the conviction of taking on the role of gender champions within and outside the State; and can sustainably push for gender-responsive governance, in a consistent and sustainable manner. In this context, one of the ways of assessing performance is the extent to which critical actors are able to set an agenda for change and follow through the implementation of actionable gender equality policies, followed by tangible outcomes. And as noted earlier, the development of legal and policy institutional frameworks, however progressive, is on its own inadequate in the absence of the willingness to transform normative frameworks into actionable programmes for engendering gover- nance. Thus, the journey towards gender equality and social justice remains unfinished until critical actors and gender champions emerge to effectively contribute and sustain the process of eliminating patriarchal and hegemonic governance structures, values and processes that undermine the achieve- ment of sustainable equity, equality and social justice for all.

Moving forward therefore, I would propose that there is need for scholars to continue to provide intel- lectual leadership by providing evidence-based knowledge and strategic thinking that goes beyond numbers and focuses more on the structural impediments that stand in the way of both attaining numbers as well as implementing positive transformative change. Scholarly analysis also needs to create greater understanding of the role of individual women's multiple and diverse identities and experiences (just like men) that may contribute to sustaining patriarchy and hegemonic masculinity. The overall strategy will, however, need to be multifaceted and strategically phased out, with short, medium and long-term goals. Making gender equality a reality in Kenya, therefore, requires not only a conducive normative framework but also the collaborative efforts of relevant state and non-state actors. These include all state organs such as the Parliament, the executive and the judiciary, as well as statutory commissions responsible for gender issues, such as the IEBC, the ORPP, the office of the Attorney General (AG), the NGEC and related institutions.

Furthermore, whereas the entire society should take responsibility for transforming and democratiz- ing governance, elected, nominated and appointed leaders and other public

officials employed by the taxpayers, both women and men, bear special responsibility to represent and deliver on mandates delegated to them. That responsibility entails, inter alia, democratizing and de-masculinising political institutions to make them responsive to gender equality and justice, including creating an enabling institutional and policy environment for equally effective participation of women and men and de- feminizing the responsibility for representing and achieving gender equality in parliament, so that it becomes a shared responsibility between male and female MPs who should all be held accountable for their contribution to this mandate.

In the short term, Parliament needs to enact progressive legislation that include specific mechanisms for meeting the two-thirds threshold in the National Assembly and Senate, as has been done at the County level. It should amend the Elections Act to facilitate full implementation of the inclusion principles in compliance with Article 100 of the Constitution. The IEBC and ORRP should play a greater role in providing guidelines to political parties to ensure compliance with the two-thirds gender rule. Civil society and the NGEC should continue to provide comprehensive civic education to citizens. Con- certed and sustained civic education is necessary to combat the patriarchal cultural values, norms and mind-sets that undermine women's effective participation in leadership and that perpetuate gen- der inequality in division of labour, power and roles within households. Special training needs to be provided to key implementers, including political parties on how to implement the affirmative action regulations. Similarly, the Media personnel should continue to be sensitized on gender responsive reporting, especially in respect to cases of gender-based violence in the electoral context and outside it.

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SITE VISIT FACT SHEETS

DREAMS/PEPFAR

Background [39]

DREAMS (Determined, Resilient, Empowered, AIDS-free, Mentored and Safe) is a public-private partnership providing a comprehensive, multi-sectoral package of core interventions to address key factors that make girls and young women particularly vulnerable to HIV.

The DREAMS partnership was announced on World AIDS Day in 2014 and in 2015. USAID began activities in ten countries in sub-Saharan Africa: Eswatini, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. These countries accounted for nearly half of all the new HIV infections among adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) globally. In 2017, DREAMS expanded to five new countries: Botswana, Côte d'Ivoire, Haiti, Rwanda, and Namibia. In 2020, South Sudan also began to implement a targeted package of DREAMS services including Violence Prevention and Economic Strengthening.

Adolescent girls and young women account for 74 percent of new HIV infections among all adolescents in sub-Saharan Africa, and nearly 1,000 adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) are infected with HIV daily. Social isolation, poverty, discriminatory cultural norms, orphanhood, gender-based violence, and inadequate schooling all contribute to their vulnerability to HIV and a life not lived to its full potential. The DREAMS partnership goes beyond individual health initiatives to address these factors, working toward meeting the Sustainable Development Goal of ending AIDS by 2030.

The DREAMS core package aims to:
- Empower adolescent girls and young women and reduce risk through youth-friendly reproductive health care and social asset building;
- Mobilize communities for change with school- and community-based HIV and violence prevention;

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[39] Photo from https://www.usaid.gov/global-health/health-areas/hiv-and-aids/technical-areas/dreams

- Reduce risk of sex partners through PEPFAR programming, including HIV testing, treatment, and voluntary medical male circumcision; and
- Strengthen families with social protection (education subsidies, combination socio-economic approaches) and parent/caregiver programs.

USAID is the lead implementer of DREAMS in both funding and geographic reach. U.S. funding for PEPFAR grew from $1.9 billion in FY 2004 to $6.9 billion in FY 2023. DREAMS builds upon USAID's decades of experience empowering adolescent girls and young women and advancing gender equality across many sectors, including global health, education, and economic growth. USAID partners with community, faith-based, and non-governmental organizations to mobilize significant numbers of community leaders and members, helping to address the structural inequalities that impact vulnerability to HIV.[40]

Impact

Preventing and treating HIV in AGYW not only leads to improved physical and mental health and outcomes, but also provides economic benefits by connecting them with social protection programs that help them attend school and participate in the workforce. While helping AGYW is viewed as a major moral imperative, PEPFAR can also help support economic and national security.

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[40]All information from USAID.
https://www.usaid.gov/global-health/health-areas/hiv-and-aids/technical-areas/dreams
U.S. Foreign Policy in Africa

MAASAI MARA NATIONAL RESERVE

Background

Maasai (Masai) Mara National Reserve is located in south west Kenya and is a vast scenic expanse of gently rolling African savannah plains measuring 1,510 square kilometers in area and bordering the Serengeti National Park in Tanzania to the south. Maasai Mara is a unique wildlife conservation famous for its spectacular natural diversity of wildlife and is the premier Kenya Safari location in East Africa. The Mara is home to a breathtaking array of life. The Mara Game Reserve is known all over the world for a wide range of wild animals such as the "big five" (lion, leopard, African elephant, cape buffalo, and black rhinoceros) and other popular species like zebra, giraffe, hyena, cheetah, wildebeest, eland, and Thomson's gazelle.[41]

Regarding the origin of the name, the word 'Masai' comes from the Maasai tribe, nomadic inhabitants of the area and the word 'Mara' is their word for 'spotted', referring to the ubiquitous flat topped acacia trees, shrubs, and bushes that dot the landscape across most of the reserve.

A study funded by WWF and conducted by ILRI between 1989 and 2003 monitored hoofed species in the Mara on a monthly basis, and found that losses were as high as 75 percent for giraffes, 80 percent for common warthogs, 76 percent for hartebeest, and 67 percent for impala. The study argues that the loss of animals is caused by increased human settlement in and around the reserve. The higher human population density leads to an increased number of livestock grazing in the park and an increase in poaching.[42]

The rise of local populations in areas neighboring the reserve has led to the formation of conservation organizations such as the Mara Elephant Project who aim to ensure the

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[41] Information from https://www.maasaimara.com/
[42] Ogutu, J. O.; Piepho, H. P.; Dublin, H. T; Bhola, N.; Reid, R. S. (May 2009). "Dynamics of Mara-Serengeti ungulates in relation to land use changes". Journal of Zoology. 278 (1): 1–14.

peaceful and prosperous co-existence of humans alongside wildlife. Human wildlife conflict is seen as a leading threat to the reserve as the population continues to grow.[43]

Impact

The Maasai Mara is a major research center for the spotted hyena. With two field offices in the Mara, the Michigan State University based Kay E. Holekamp Lab studies the behavior and physiology of this predator, as well as doing comparison studies between large predators in the Mara Triangle and their counterparts in the eastern part of the Mara.

A flow assessment and trans-boundary river basin management plan between Kenya and Tanzania was completed for the river to sustain the ecosystem and the basic needs of 1 million people who depend on its water. The Mara Predator Project also operates in the Maasai Mara, cataloging and monitoring lion populations throughout the region. Concentrating on the northern conservancies where communities coexist with wildlife, the project aims to identify population trends and responses to changes in land management, human settlements, livestock movements, and tourism.[44]

Since October 2012, the Mara-Meru Cheetah Project has worked in the Mara monitoring cheetah population, estimating population status and dynamics, and evaluating the predator impact and human activity on cheetah behavior and survival. At that time, she developed an original method of cheetah identification based on visual analysis of the unique spot patterns on front limbs (from toes to shoulder) and hind limbs (from toes to the hip), and spots and rings on the tail. Collected over the years, photographic data allows the project team to trace kinship between generations and build Mara cheetah pedigree. The data collected helps to reveal parental relationship between individuals, survival rate of cubs, cheetah lifespan, and personal reproductive history.[45]

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[43] "Our Mission." *Mara Elephant Project*. Archived from the original on 12 August 2019.
[44] Information from: http://www.livingwithlions.org/mara/
[45] Information from: http://marameru.org/

U.S. Foreign Policy in Africa

MEMBERS OF CONGRESS VISIT TO

KAKUMA REFUGEE CAMP

Background [46]

Kakuma refugee camp is located in the Northwestern region of Kenya. The camp was established in 1992 when the "Lost Boys of Sudan" arrived, fleeing conflict in Darfur. Also during that year, large groups of Ethiopian refugees fled their country following the fall of the Ethiopian government. Somalia had also experienced high insecurity and civil strife causing people to flee.

Kakuma is the Swahili word for "nowhere," but it is the only place to call home for more than 250,000 refugees and asylum seekers living at the Kakuma Refugee Camp. It is one of the world's largest refugee camps, supporting children and families from various countries, including South Sudan, Somalia, Ethiopia, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Uganda, and Rwanda.[47]

The camp is located on the outskirts of Kakuma town, which is the headquarters for Turkana West District of Turkana County. With such an unprecedented number of refugees in one place, the conditions in Kakuma are harsh. The Camp's resources and infrastructure are overtaxed, causing rampant malnutrition and the spread of infectious disease. Currently, new arrivals number 12,000, overwhelming the Reception Center's capacity of only 5,000.

The United States and Kenya have worked together for over 60 years to foster development and address humanitarian concerns. Between 2015 and 2021, the United States provided nearly $790 million in assistance for refugees in Kenya, including Kakuma. Food assistance is provided in partnership with the UN's World Food Program (WFP), offering nutritional assistance through cash and food transfers that invest in

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[46] Photo from https://www.unhcr.org/ke/kakuma-refugee-camp
[47]https://www.unicefusa.org/what-unicef-does/childrens-protection/child-migrants-refugees/kakuma-refugee-camp

solutions to increase refugee self-reliance. PEPFAR, aimed at HIV/AIDS awareness and treatment, is also present in the Camp.

Impact

Supporting refugee camps is viewed as a humanitarian imperative, promoting stability, combating extremism, and promoting diplomatic relations. The U.S. has traditionally had a generous concern for vulnerable refugees who have been forced to leave their homes – like the millions who have fled Ukraine. By providing support to refugees, the U.S. can help reduce the likelihood of violence and conflict, which can have regional and global consequences. The support provided can help foster trust with other nations which is important for addressing global challenges.

MAS INTIMATES TEXTILE FACTORY

Background[48]

The MAS Intimates textile factory in Athi River, Kenya produces clothing for PVH Corp, an American clothing company that owns brands Calvin Klein and Tommy Hilfiger. In line with Prosper Africa's goal of increasing trade and investment between African nations and the United States and USAID, six Kenyan and American apparel companies announced $55 million in investments,[49] which is the basis to increase exports, create jobs for women and youth, and increase the capacity of MAS's training schools.

Apparel is the largest export from Kenya to the United States at approximately $353 million in 2021 (approximately two-thirds of total Kenyan exports to the U.S.). Kenyan apparel exports to the U.S. have grown steadily since 2010.

The Kenyan apparel sector employs tens of thousands of women and is directly supported by the significant trade preferences (duty-free access) provided by the United States under (AGOA). Approximately 90% of Kenya's apparel production is exported to the U.S. market, supplying a wide range of American brands.

MAS Holdings, the largest apparel tech company in South Asia, is a leading concept-to-delivery solution provider in apparel and textile manufacturing, sought after by the world's leading brands. Established in 2020, MAS Intimates Kenya EPZ, takes advantage of the vast supply chain in the region and the existing trade agreements with key customer markets. One of the largest employers in apparel manufacturing in Kenya, MAS Intimates is focused on developing a sustainable one-stop solution for apparel while being the most responsible employer in the region, driving a vision of economic progress, social growth, and a secure future. Currently, MAS employs over 1,800 employees from all over Kenya and is poised for further growth.

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[48] Photo from:
https://www.the-star.co.ke/business/kenya/2021-09-17-mas-intimates-kenya-has-sold-apparel-worth-sh165mn-since-setup/
[49]
https://www.prosperafrica.gov/news/prosper-africa-and-u-s-embassy-kenya-announce-55-million-in-co-investment-partnerships-at-the-launch-of-the-u-s-kenya-business-roadshow-in-new-york-city/

PVH Corp., a publicly listed U.S. company, is the largest buyer (by value) of apparel in Kenya and is one of the world's largest and most admired fashion companies, connecting with consumers in over 40 countries. PVH is committed to bringing additional business to Africa, increasing vertical integration in Kenya and the East Africa region, and championing sustainability and women's economic empowerment.

Impact

This is a great example of how American businesses are finding reliable supply chains and helping drive economic stability in African countries. MAS contributes to building national capacity in terms of transferable skilled workers, creating social change for families and communities, and creating peripheral job opportunities. With prosperous communities can come more democratic stability.

KENTEGRA BIOTECHNOLOGY PYRETHRUM PROCESSING FACILITY

Background

Kentegra is an American, Nairobi-based biotechnology company specializing in the production of organic insecticide pyrethrum for home biocide, agricultural, and pharmaceutical pesticide markets.[50]

Once Kenya's third largest export, pyrethrum is a naturally occurring mixture of chemicals found in chrysanthemums that are extracted and refined into pale refined extract (PRE), an active ingredient used to formulate organic insecticides and pesticides. Kenya contributed more than 80% of the global supply with over 300,000 farmers growing the flowers, and it was a major supplier to the U.S. until the late 1990's.

Kentegra Pyrethrum Company Limited (Kentegra), a U.S. firm based in Kenya, is at the forefront of the pyrethrum revival. The company has already contracted with more than 9,000 farmers growing over 2,000 acres across seven counties and has invested over $4.5 million to build a factory in Athi River that they recently expanded to double production. The organization operates two nurseries in Nakuru county and is a KEPHIS certified seed merchant, having invested over $1 million since 2017 in seeds and seedlings to address the severe shortage of pyrethrum planting material.

Kentegra has been supported by several U.S. development agencies in their effort to bring Kenyan pyrethrum production back to become competitive on the world market, including as a supplier to the U.S. The USAID Pyrethrum Revitalization Partnership (PRP) builds off of the foundation that Kentegra has laid by providing $500,000 in grant funding to accelerate and expand farmer recruitment, acres contracted for pyrethrum and technical training for smallholder farmers.[51] In addition, the program will specifically focus on increasing women and youth participation. Currently, 44% of Kentegra's farmers are women with the program

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[50] Photo from:
https://nakuru.go.ke/2022/12/13/pyrethrum-farming-provides-a-more-sustainable-income-source-for-farmers-in-the-county/
[51] https://govtribe.com/award/federal-grant-award/project-grant-72061522fa00011

targeting over 50%. Kentegra staff is over 60% youth and nursery staff is over 70% women.

OPIC (the predecessor to the Development Finance Corporation (DFC)) invested $4 million in 2018 to help Kentegra revitalize pyrethrum production and more recently, the DFC has committed to a $10 million loan to the company to construct a new facility and help scale production.[52] Moreover, the U.S. Trade and Development Agency has issued a grantee invitation to qualified American companies to draft a $661,000 feasibility study of this new manufacturing facility.[53]

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[52] https://www.dfc.gov/sites/default/files/media/documents/9000115973.pdf
[53]
https://ustda.gov/business_opp_oversea/kenya-kentegra-pyrethrum-refined-extract-capacity-expansion-project/

U.S. Foreign Policy in Africa