

African Policy Circle Annual Meeting 2023
Fiesta Royale Hotel, Accra, Ghana 5-6 December 2023

Where is Africa in a Changing World: Active contributor or inert observer?

Background:

Africa is a continent of immense diversity, opportunity and challenges. It is also a continent that is increasingly at the centre of global geopolitics, as the great powers compete for influence, resources and markets. How do we understand the dynamics of this new geopolitical landscape, and how do we navigate it in a way that promotes peace, security and development for all Africans? Despite the negative portrayals of Africa by its doomsayers, it continues to gain in geopolitical significance for both established and emerging global powers. This inexorable interest in a continent that has perennially played the poor relation in the global economy is underpinned by several important factors. Emerging powers like China and India are continuing their social and economic development at an aggressive pace. In turn, the developed world needs to sustain relatively high levels of economic growth to meet the welfare demands of ageing populations. What makes Africa unique compared to all other continents with regard to its global positioning?

The continent is surrounded by water bodies on all sides. The Mediterranean Sea to the north, the Suez Canal and the Red Sea to the northeast, the Indian Ocean to the east, and the Atlantic Ocean to the west. Uniquely, the African continent lies within all four hemispheres.

One of the main aspirations of Agenda 2063 is a strong, united, resilient continent capable of global agency and partnership. However, Africa's ability to meaningfully impact the global order has over the last few decades been hindered by poverty, disease, political patronage, ignorance, and divisions. In recent years, several shifts have taken place in the international community and alongside increased global connectivity, a multipolar world is also emerging. This, together with the ease with which challenges originating in distant places have travelled to and impacted Africa have heightened the importance of revisiting the continent's place in the world. The COVID-19 pandemic and the wars in Ukraine and the Middle East are clear illustrations of this and have had a significant impact on Africa's economic trajectory. But it has also illustrated that the continent has high stakes in and an active role to play in the global arena.

The economic strength of countries is often linked to their ability to influence and shape the global agenda. However, agency is also dependent on other factors including military strength and population size. While Africa covers some 20% of Earth's land mass and accounts for 18% of its population, the continent accounts for less than 3% of the global economy.¹ This affects Africa's agency, as well as perceptions and expectations about what the continent can, could or would do with respect to both global and its own affairs. Africa's population is projected to increase to 2.4 billion by 2050, and in the next century could grow to 4.2 billion.² This boom also means that youth will be a significant portion of the population, something the continent can take solace in when strategising for future agency.

But realising the full potential of its youth requires multiple investments, most essentially in building the capacities of people and ensuring their rights and freedoms. Young people need the chance to gain the

¹ IMF (2023) World Economic Outlook, April 2023, Washington DC: International Monetary Finance.

² African Development Bank Group, 'Human Development',

<https://www.afdb.org/en/knowledge/publications/tracking-africa%E2%80%99s-progress-in-figures/human-development>.

education and experience to succeed in a competitive global workplace, which demands more skills, education, and technical expertise than ever before.

The pace of skills development and capability in Africa does not match with the rest of the world, in part due to limited financial capacity demonstrated by relatively low per capita incomes. The future of Africa's agency depends just as much on decent job creation, good governance, infrastructure and functioning institutions to foster conducive investment and business climate for private sector to thrive. While recent trends suggest that Africa's economies were on the right track on growth, the region's growth performance is less stellar when accounting for population growth. Real GDP per capita grew at an annual average rate of 1.95 percent from 1996 through 2014.

Amid the "*Africa Rising*" euphoria after 2000—given the persistence of the region's rapid economic growth—the poverty rate in Sub-Saharan Africa decreased (from 54.3 percent in 1990 to 40.1 percent in 2018), albeit more slowly than in East Asia (from 61.6 percent in 1990 to 2.3 percent in 2018) and South Asia (from 47.3 percent in 1990 to 12.4 percent in 2018).³ However, the number of poor people in Sub-Saharan Africa steadily climbed to 523.2 million in 2022 from 416.4 million and 278 million in 2015 and 1990, respectively, as the region's population continued to expand rapidly. Half of the world's poor are now found in Sub-Saharan Africa, and without drastic policy actions, that number will only continue to grow.

Africa has much potential and many opportunities to contribute to the global agenda and benefit from the changing world. However, Africa also faces obstacles and risks that could hinder its progress and participation. Some of these include:

- **Climate change:** Africa is one of the most vulnerable regions to the impacts of climate change, such as droughts, floods, desertification, and food insecurity. Africa also has the least capacity and resources to adapt and mitigate these effects. Therefore, Africa needs to strengthen its resilience and voice in the global climate negotiations and actions.
- **Trade integration:** Africa has made some progress in regional integration and trade facilitation, such as the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM). However, Africa still faces many barriers and challenges to fully realise the benefits of trade, such as infrastructure gaps, non-tariff barriers, low value addition, and unequal trade relations. Therefore, Africa needs to enhance its productive capacities and competitiveness and diversify its export markets and products.
- **Governance and sustainability:** Africa has experienced some improvements in governance and democracy, such as peaceful transitions of power, constitutional reforms, and civil society participation. However, Africa also suffers from persistent problems of corruption, human rights violations, conflict, coups and instability. Therefore, Africa needs to promote good governance and accountability and foster peace and security.

It is against these concerns for a repositioning of Africa within the broader global power structure that the next meeting of the African Policy Circle seeks to discuss in detail Africa's approach to realising Agenda 2063's aspirations for a strong, united, resilient continent capable of global agency and partnership. Key questions for consideration are:

- How is the international system changing?
- What role is Africa currently playing in this system and what role could it play going forward?
- How can Africa strengthen its voice in the international community?

³ World Bank – World Development Report, April 2022—Finance for an Equitable Recovery.

- What factors are hindering meaningful participation for Africa in the international governance system?
- What can Africa do differently to enhance its engagement?
- What should change in the international system to better facilitate the participation of Africa and the Global South more broadly?

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Accra, Ghana 5-6 December 2023

Programme

Where is Africa in a Changing World: Active contributor or inert observer?

Monday 4 December 2023 Delegates arrive in Accra, Ghana

Tuesday 5 December 2023

08:30-09:00	Registration	
09:00-09:30	Welcome and participant introductions (5 minutes per input)	Dr Paul Kariuki, DDP Steven Gruzd, SAIIA Dr Holger Dix, KAS PoDiSSA Dr Arne Wulff, KAS Resident Rep. Ghana
09:30-10:00	Keynote address: "Where is Africa in a changing world: Active contributor or inert observer?"	Dr Vladimir Antwi-Danso, CDD
10:00-10:45	Refreshment break	
10:45-12:45	Moderated panel discussion How has Africa related to global crises, and how should it act?	Stephen Mwachofi Singo, SRIC Thelma Nyarhi, DDP Charles Nyuykonge, Indep. Moderator: Dr Paul Kariuki, DDP Discussant: Sylvain N'guessan, Institut Stratégique, Côte d'Ivoire
12:45-14:00	Lunch	
14:00-15:30	Moderated panel discussion Africa and the great powers – the return of geopolitics – how do we navigate?	Steven Gruzd, SAIIA Dr Ola Bello, GGA Milisuthando Mbete, Indep. Kwesi Jonah, CDD Moderator: Gray Kalindekafe, NICE Discussant: Hervé Akinocho, CROP, Togo
15:30-16:00	Refreshment break	
16:00-17:30	Moderated panel discussion The impact of technology on Africa's international relations	Frederico Links, IPPR Isabel Bosman, SAIIA Lwazi Somya, SALO Moderator: Raymond Muchemwa, Southern Africa Trust Discussant: Dr Lizzy Ofusori, UKZN
19:00-21:00	Dinner for delegates	

Wednesday 6 December 2023

09:00-09:15	Recap of Day 1	Isabel Bosman, SAIIA
09:30-11:00	Moderated panel discussion Africa's economic challenges, including the rising cost of living – what can be done? The African Continental Free Trade Agreement - what will it take to make it work?	Dr Chukwuka Onyekwena, CSEA Alida Tchinda, Braveheart Derick Msafiri, REPOA Moderator: Francis Maberu, Indep. Discussant: Victor-Emmanuel Ekwa Bebe III, KAS Abidjan
11:00-11:45	Refreshment break	
11:45-13:00	Moderated panel discussion What role for APC and African Think Tanks in the contemporary world?	Dr Paul Kariuki, DDP Dr Holger Dix, KAS Milis'uthando Mbete, Indep. Moderator: Steven Gruzd, SAIIA
13:00-14:00	Lunch	
14:00-15:30	Workshop What does APC want to focus on for 2024? How do we grow the circle? Developing a workplan – group work	Dr Paul Kariuki, DDP
15:30-16:00	Refreshment break	
16:00-16:45	Workshop continued What does APC want to focus on for 2024? Developing a workplan – groups present	Dr Paul Kariuki, DDP
16:45-17:00	Conference closing	Nathan Mukoma, KAS

Thursday 7 December 2023

Optional Accra city tour
Delegates depart Ghana

Speaker bios:

Dr Paul Kariuki

Paul Kariuki holds a Ph.D. in Administration from the University of KwaZulu Natal (UKZN) where he is also an honorary senior lecturer at the School of Management, IT and Governance. He is the Executive Director of the Democracy Development Program (DDP), a national non-profit organisation and think tank based in Durban, South Africa. His areas of expertise include governance, digital transformation, public participation, elections, electronic governance, local government, migration, cybersecurity, emerging technologies and monitoring and evaluation in the public sector.

Steven Gruzd

Steven Gruzd is Head of the African Governance and Diplomacy Programme at the South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA). He also previously worked as Senior Researcher and Diplomatic Liaison at the SA Jewish Board of Deputies, and researcher and research coordinator at the Centre for Development and Enterprise. Steven holds an MSc from the London School of Economics and Political Science in International Relations and a BA (Hons) in International Relations from the University of the Witwatersrand. He has published widely on governance and the African Peer Review Mechanism, and keenly follows African political developments and South African foreign policy.

Dr Holger Dix

Holger Dix, PhD., is the Director of the Political Dialogue for Sub-Saharan Africa Programme at Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS), an organisation he joined in 1993. Since then, he has held positions including the Resident Representative in South Africa, Romania, Tunisia and Algeria; and Director of the Political Education Programme in West Africa. From 2003 to 2006, he served as the Director of the Africa/ Middle East Department at KAS' Department for International Cooperation in Berlin. Dr. Dix has published widely on a range of topical issues on sustainability, development and democracy. In line with the various appointments, he is skilled in stakeholder engagement, organizational leadership, policy analysis and advisory, and management at the regional and international levels.

Dr V. Antwi-Danso

~ full bio needed ~

Stephen Mwachofi Singo

Singo Mwachofi is Deputy Director at the Security Research and Information Centre (SRIC) and Lecturer at the Department of Political Science and Public Administration, University of Nairobi, Kenya. Mwachofi has over 20 years national and international experience working on peace and security issues primarily in the areas of disarmament and arms control, governance, peacebuilding and conflict management. He is adjunct trainer at the International Peace Support Training Centre (IPSTC), a research fellow at the Horn Institute for Strategic Studies and a member of the Editorial Board of the Arms Trade Treaty Monitor. He is currently working on a joint UN-Kenya government project that is reviewing Kenya's national Peacebuilding architecture.

Thelma Nyarhi

Thelma Nyarhi, a Sociology and Anthropology graduate from the University of Cape Town (UCT), is a Research Intern at the Democracy Development Program (DDP). She recently completed an MSocSci in Anthropology at UCT) and is pursuing a Ph.D. in Anthropology with a focus on migration, citizenship, identity and belonging.

Charles Nyuykonge

Dr Charles Nyuykonge is a lawyer, M&E specialist; and a peace and conflict expert currently working with the African Development Bank as a Senior Peace and Conflict Analyst covering Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa with close to twenty (20) years of working experience with organisations such as The World Bank (WB), the African Union (AU), Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and the United Nations (UN) agencies including the Ethiopia-based Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the United Nations Development Programme Resident Service Centre in Africa (UNDP-RSCA). Over the last decade, his work has been at the managerial level and included Senior-Management Monitoring and Evaluation advisory for the WB Pacific Risk Insurance Company (PCRIC); High-Level Dialogue Facilitation with the UN-Office of the Special Adviser for Africa (UN-OSAA) for whom he conceptualised, convened and participated in Expert Group Meetings (EGM) on topics which sharpen the continent's response to emerging global challenges; and Multiple country programme management and Coordination with the UNDP-RSCA.

Dr Ola Bello

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Milis'uthando Mbete

~ full bio needed ~

Kwesi Jonah

~ full bio needed ~

Gray Kalindekafe

Gray holds a Master of Science in Strategic Management from the University of Derby, UK and a bachelor's degree in education (*Humanities) from Chancellor College University of Malawi. He has extensive experience in organisational development and project management in the democracy, civic education, human rights and governance sectors in Malawi. Gray currently works as National Programmes Manager and Acting Executive Director for NICE Public Trust. He is also the current chairperson for the Malawi Union of the Blind (MUB).

Frederico Links

Frederico Links is a Namibian journalist, researcher, trainer and freedom of expression advocate. As a researcher he is mostly affiliated with Namibia's leading independent think-tank, the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR), where he coordinates a number of projects. In both his journalism and research, Links has a strong focus on good governance, human rights (including digital rights), state surveillance, corruption, rule of law, and transparency and accountability. Links has coordinated and contributed to projects at both national, regional and international levels. Links is also the founding and current chairperson of the Access to Information in Namibia (ACTION) Coalition of civil society and media organisations and social activists. The ACTION Coalition has been instrumental in successfully advocating for an access to information law in Namibia since 2012.

Isabel Bosman

Isabel Bosman is a researcher in the African Governance and Diplomacy Programme at the South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA). She holds an MA in Political Studies from the University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa. She worked on SAIIA's 'Atoms for Development' project that focused on the

peaceful use of nuclear energy in Africa and nuclear governance issues more broadly. Her work also focuses on the nexus between technology and politics, democracy, security, and non-proliferation.

Lwazi Somya

Lwazi Somya is a senior research development and programmes coordinator at the Southern African Liaison Office (SALO), where he leads dialogues and practical interventions between relevant policymakers, government officials, civil society, and marginalised groups in finding consensus-based solutions on human, peace and security, and regional integration in the SADC region. Lwazi is a Chevening Scholarship Alumnus (2020/2021) and holds a Bachelor of Social Sciences in International Relations and Public Policy Administration as well as a Bachelor of Social Sciences in International Relations (Honours) from the University of Cape Town. He also holds a Master of Sciences in International Relations with Merit from the University of Bristol, UK.

Dr Lizzy Ofusori

Lizzy Ofusori holds a Ph.D. in Information Systems and Technology from the University of KwaZulu Natal (KZN), South Africa. She is Director of Research at Pan African Research Consultant. She is also a postdoctoral research fellow at UKZN and the Editorial Manager of the African Journal of Computing & ICT and African Journal of Management Information Systems. Her research interests include Information Security, BYOD, Mobile Security, Social Engineering, Big Data and e-Governance.

Dr Chukwuka Onyekwena

Chukwuka Onyekwena is the Executive Director of the Centre for the Study of the Economies of Africa (CSEA). He is also a member of the Steering Committee of the Southern Voice. His research interests include foreign direct investment, trade, global economic governance, digital governance and financial inclusion. He holds a Ph.D. in Economics from the University of Portsmouth, UK and Executive Education certificates in Rethinking Financial Inclusion and Evaluating Social Programs from Harvard Kennedy School of Government and JPAL-MIT respectively.

Alida Tchinda

Alida Tchinda is a gender specialist and social entrepreneur committed to the skills empowerment of youth, women, and girls – especially those seeking peer mentorship, victims of GBV or persons fleeing from conflict and climate induced migration. As founder and Executive Director of the Brave Heart Organisation (based in Cameroon), she seeks networks and the expansion of her work across Africa, particularly in refugee and internally displaced communities where women and young people are victims and at risk of double vulnerability which can propel them into crime or risk them joining violent extremists and organised or trans-border crime groups.

Derick Msafiri

Derick Msafiri is a research economist working with REPOA, a renowned Tanzanian think tank actively involved in data-driven and policy-oriented research. He is also a non-resident fellow at the Africa Polling Institute. His research interests include development economics, public finance and the political economy of Africa. Derick has successfully published several research reports, journal articles and policy briefs. He holds a bachelor's degree in Economics and a Masters degree in Applied Economics, both from the University of Dar es Salaam.

Francis Maber

Francis Maberu is a young leader in sustainable development, recognised for his strategic leadership and commitment to addressing global challenges. He co-chaired a grassroots campaign that mobilised public support for the UN Sustainable Development Goals and played a key role in securing commitments from world leaders. As founder of the Ubuntu SDGs Knowledge Hub, Francis demonstrated resilience and adaptability in tracking development commitments during the COVID-19 pandemic. He has been honoured as the Africa SDGs Youth Ambassador of the Year and has led initiatives to amplify youth voices in post-2015 discussions. Currently, he spearheads the African Women in Business Summit and Expo, empowering African women in the business sector for sustainable development.

Nathan Mukoma

Nathan Mukoma is the program coordinator for the Sub-Saharan Africa regional program at the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung. He is also an expert in strategic communications and human rights. With extensive experience in managing large-scale political and humanitarian projects. Currently a PhD candidate in politics at the University of Pretoria, specializing in comparative politics and transition studies, with an emphasis on the study of politics in the DRC. As a writer, he has contributed to various journals such as Good Governance Africa (GGA), BUWA and others.

Hervé Akinocho

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Mamadou Hafziou Barry

~ full bio needed ~

Victor Emmanuel Ekwa Bebe III

~ full bio needed ~

Sylvain N'guessan

~ full bio needed ~

Raymond Muchemwa

~ full bio needed ~