

Wilson Center Africa Program

Africa: Year in Review 2018

#AfricanWomenLeaders

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Africa: Year in Review 2018

A Letter from the Director

As an eventful 2018 concluded, The Wilson Center Africa Program continued its tradition of asking policymakers, practitioners, and experts to reflect on the year's most important and impactful Africa-related developments on the continent, in the global arena, and in U.S.-Africa relations. The fourth edition of the series, *Africa: Year in Review 2018*, is a collection of essays that offer brief and thoughtful analyses on many of the continent's significant developments in political, economic, and social affairs.

With the appointment of the new Assistant Secretary for African Affairs, Ambassador Tibor Nagy, in July 2018, and the iteration of the Administration's Africa strategy in mid-December, U.S.-Africa policy began to take more shape. The new U.S. policy frames relations with Africa in the context of great power competition while emphasizing the Administration's prioritization of economic ties to the continent.

On the continent, several issues and developments stood out. The African Union led efforts to boost member states' economies through the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA). A leadership transition in Ethiopia led to hopes for a democratic opening and contributed to the end of the 20-year war between Ethiopia and Eritrea. Women's leadership and representation in government increased as both Rwanda and Ethiopia appointed gender-balanced cabinets. Also, attention to Africa's role in the global arena increased.

Several contributors focused on U.S.-Africa relations and policy under the Trump Administration, noting the emphasis on economic development, trade, and investment. Others focused on private-sector engagement on the continent and the role of the President's Advisory Council for Doing Business in Africa in fostering bilateral trade. As the U.S. Army Africa (USARAF) marked its 10th year, Major General Roger L. Cloutier Jr., reflected on a decade of security partnership with Africa. Other developments of importance for the U.S. in Africa included growing concern about China's "debt diplomacy," the rise of Russian military engagement, and Turkey's continued presence and use of soft power.

2018 marked a historic year for Africa's economic development. The signing of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA)—the largest free trade



area since the advent of the World Trade Organization—marked the creation of a continental market aimed at reducing barriers and boosting intra-African trade. However, Africa still has work to do in keeping talent within the region—an issue highlighted anecdotally through a piece on African identity, immigration, and the 2018 FIFA World Cup.

Climate change continues to have a detrimental impact on dryland communities in Africa, contributing to insecurity. On a more positive note, the advent of the African Union’s Transitional Justice Policy bodes well for continental peacebuilding. In the midst of turbulent world events, one contributor drove home the necessity of thoughtful listening and reflection for sustainable community development.

On the democracy and governance front, 2018 stood out as a year of historic moments, especially in the Horn of Africa. Contributors focused on the implications of the election of Ethiopia’s Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, Ethiopia and Eritrea’s rapprochement, and the re-opening of the U.S. diplomatic mission in Mogadishu, Somalia. One contributor contrasted Sudan’s growing regional role, including in South Sudan’s peace agreement, with Khartoum’s turbulent domestic affairs. Ethiopia elected its first female president, established a gender-equal cabinet, and appointed women to lead the Supreme Court and Electoral Board. In West Africa, Sierra Leone and Mali held highly anticipated presidential elections. Meanwhile, Central Africa faced growing instability, and Cameroon’s President Paul Biya won a seventh term as the country’s Anglophone crisis persisted.

The final piece of the volume touches on a vital component of democratic life—electoral integrity and transparency. Between January 2018 and December 2019, 31 African countries will have held elections. The author highlights the growing importance of accountability and transparency in campaign financing for improving democratic quality.

We hope you enjoy this collection of essays about top developments in 2018 that resonated both within Africa and in its relations with the rest of the world, including the United States. We express our gratitude to the authors for helping us reflect on 2018, even as we look ahead to what is to come in 2019.

Dr. Monde Muyangwa
Director, Africa Program



**U.S.-AFRICA RELATIONS AND
AFRICA'S EVOLVING ROLE IN THE
GLOBAL ARENA**

U.S. Policy Toward Africa During President Trump's First Two Years in Office: 2017-2018

Ambassador Herman J. Cohen

In no other region of the world has President Trump's foreign policy shown as much continuity with previous administrations as his policy toward Africa. In keeping with tradition established in the late 1950s, U.S. policy in Africa continues to emphasize economic development, with the Trump Administration focusing on the enhancement of bilateral trade.

Of significance is the fact that important programs instituted by the Clinton, Bush (43), and Obama Administrations remain in place and continue to receive appropriations. These are:

- The African Growth and Opportunity Act (Clinton)
- President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (Bush-43)
- Millennium Challenge Corporation (Bush-43)
- Power Africa (Obama)
- Feed the Future (Obama)

Generally speaking, President Trump has not hesitated to abolish or modify programs instituted by his predecessors. In Africa, however, all previous projects are alive and well.

In the economic sector, the Trump Administration has emphasized that trade must be fair toward all parties. The Administration is particularly sensitive to situations in which trading partners of the United States appear to have an unfair advantage. For this reason, the Administration is looking closely at the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA).

AGOA has been giving African nations a unidirectional trading advantage since the year 2000. Under this legislation, all products produced or manufactured in Africa enter the United States duty-free, with some caveats such as content origin. While only a few African countries have been able to take advantage of this privilege, the Trump Administration is beginning to talk about reciprocity. The United States would like to negotiate duty-free entry for its merchandise entering Africa. This issue is likely to become important during the second half of President Trump's term of office.

Overall, the continuity of policy toward Africa, as expressed by the Trump Administration, has been welcomed by the Africans, who continue to have confidence in the U.S.-Africa partnership.

2018: Trump Policy toward Africa Takes Shape

Ms. Hannah Akuiyibo

The Trump Administration has had a bumpy start with Africa following disparaging remarks allegedly made by the President, the inclusion of several African countries in the travel ban, and some controversy over the First Lady's visit to four African countries—all occurring without a formally articulated policy in place.

However, the Administration's appointment of the new Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs and the reauthorization of the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) in 2018 marked a positive step for U.S.-Africa relations. In December 2018—the Trump Administration unveiled its new Africa strategy—which prioritizes trade and commercial ties, countering terrorism and insecurity, and efficient and effective use of aid. Notably, the policy centers on U.S. concerns about the expanding influence of China and Russia in Africa. In doing so, it revives the era of great power competition in Africa. While aspects of the policy remain consistent with previous administrations' emphases on development and security, in the eyes of many the "new Cold War" narrative overshadows the policy.

On the economic front, the Administration has proposed the "Prosper Africa" initiative. Prosper Africa aims to support U.S. investment on the continent, help grow Africa's middle class, and improve the overall business climate. In doing so, the United States will engage bilaterally with select countries. However, this approach may conflict with continental efforts to increase economic integration through the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs).

Additionally, private sector investment will play an increasingly important role aided by the passage of the BUILD Act in October 2018. This important legislation will merge the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) into a new development agency, the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (IDFC), that will seek to boost private sector investment in low and lower-middle income countries.

The policy also emphasizes Washington's increased scrutiny of United Nations peacekeeping missions. Since eight of the UN's 15 peacekeeping missions are in Africa, the implications could be significant given that the Administration wants to see increasing regional ownership of responses to insecurity, and implement changes to or abandon missions seen as underperforming.

In 2019, we can expect to see the Administration's Africa policy continue to take shape as the United States reviews its support for UN peacekeeping missions, USAID rolls out its new "Journey to Self-Reliance" development approach, and the IDFC becomes operational.



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Private-Public Engagement: The President's Advisory Council for Doing Business in Africa Delegation

Ms. Laura Lane

During the summer of 2018, the President's Advisory Council on Doing Business in Africa (PAC-DBIA) embarked on a two-week visit to Ethiopia, Kenya, Côte d'Ivoire, and Ghana. The PAC-DBIA is comprised of representatives from 22 companies who advise President Donald Trump, via Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross, on measures the government should take to support the expansion of U.S. businesses in Africa. In April 2018, the Council presented recommendations for various U.S. government agencies to bolster their support for American companies. The trip gave the Council an opportunity to investigate the feasibility of those recommendations first-hand, as well as to take initial steps toward their implementation. Joining the PAC-DBIA were high-level officials from 11 U.S. government agencies, led by Secretary Ross and Under Secretary of Commerce Gilbert Kaplan.

The PAC-DBIA targeted Ethiopia, Kenya, Côte d'Ivoire, and Ghana as high-growth investment markets, in recognition of the four governments' demonstrated effort in recent years to open their respective economies. Intimate discussions between the public-private delegation and government officials—including Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and Presidents Kenyatta, Ouattara, and Akufo-Addo—focused on finding solutions to obstacles that impede business growth. Recommendations touched on such topics as trade facilitation and customs modernization, government procurement processes, access to capital and foreign exchange, and transparency of market intelligence.

I am proud to have served as Vice Chair of the 2016-2018 PAC-DBIA as we strengthened the ties between the United States and some of the most promising economies on the African continent. Over the course of the trip, the delegation announced over USD\$1 billion in private sector deals and signed three government-to-government memorandums of understanding, thereby demonstrating America's commitment to serving the African market and promoting mutual prosperity. The global audience regarded this delegation as an important step in reorienting attention to these countries' economic potential, underscoring that the U.S. administration and private sector are willing partners in driving beneficial business environment reforms. The 2018 PAC-DBIA delegation was a critical inflection point in bolstering U.S.-Africa trade policy and commercial diplomacy, and I hope the work of this Council will continue.

U.S. Army Africa – A Decade Dedicated to Africa

Major General Roger L. Cloutier, Jr.

U.S. Army Africa (USARAF), the land forces component to U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM), celebrated its 10th anniversary in December 2018. For the past decade USARAF has matured as a command, steadily strengthening relationships, increasing its understanding of Africa, and finding more efficient ways to support U.S. national interests in Africa.

In 2008, our first year as a command, USARAF participated in one bilateral exercise and one security cooperation event in Africa. In 2018, USARAF coordinated nine exercises that included 35 African partner nations, European allies, and regional peacekeeping organizations; and conducted nearly 200 security cooperation events in Africa.

The preponderance of exercises in 2018 were multi-national in scope and supported regional security organizations. The exercises prepared African units to plan, deploy, and sustain forces operating in support of United Nations and African Union-mandated peacekeeping operations.

The growth in USARAF activities over the past ten years can be attributed to forging and strengthening partnerships, understanding the operating environment, and having dedicated Army resources available to conduct our activities.

Whether we are enabling the fight against violent extremists, building the capacity of our African partners, or ensuring U.S. forces are postured to respond to crises, we are committed to instilling a respect for human rights and an adherence to the rule of law among our many African partners.

USARAF has not done this alone. Our efforts have and will continue to complement AFRICOM, U.S. Department of State, and international efforts to strengthen African partner defense capabilities and regional organizations. Annual exercises, engagements, and security force assistance missions will remain critical to strengthening partner networks and enhancing partner capability, ultimately reducing threats to African citizens, but also to the United States and our European allies.

We are proud of how far we have come as a command, but we are equally excited about the future. Through support to operations, execution of security cooperation events and exercises, and sustained engagements, USARAF will endeavor to be the security partner of choice for African armies, contributing to a more stable and secure African continent.

AFRICA'S EVOLVING ROLE IN THE GLOBAL ARENA

The Perils of China's Debt Diplomacy

Mr. Grant T. Harris

In 2018, Chinese loans to African states elicited increasing attention and even alarm. China is now the largest provider by far of bilateral loans to Sub-Saharan African countries, of which 40 percent are at high risk of debt distress.

The debate over China's debt diplomacy has been fierce, but not always nuanced. Some commentators downplayed the agency of African leaders who took on Chinese debt to make critical infrastructure investments. Others overlooked the role of domestic bond issuances and other non-Chinese sources of debt, as well as the West's own history of providing loans to the continent. Likewise, defenders of Chinese lending were often hung up on the technicalities of whether specific countries were at risk of debt distress and whether Chinese loans were the principal factor.

However, the real question is whether Chinese debt diplomacy offers positive or negative outcomes for African states. In many cases, Chinese loans constitute a problematic debt trap, regardless of other factors. Laden with opaque terms and conditions, Chinese debt is typically coupled with access for China to strategic assets like oil, minerals, and land, which may be sacrificed by countries struggling to pay back their loans.

Sri Lanka offers a cautionary tale: deeply indebted to China, the government handed over control of the port of Hambantota, giving Beijing a strategic perch along a vital waterway. The same could happen in Djibouti, where Chinese loans rocketed the country's debt-to-GDP ratio from 50 to 85 percent between 2014 and 2016. Other countries are also at risk. In Kenya, China holds a whopping 70 percent of the country's bilateral debt. Additionally, Moody's Investors Service has warned that Chinese largesse can amplify credit risk for African states and be less beneficial in the long run, because Chinese loans are divorced from governance requirements and policy reforms.

While, Chinese loans are helpful in funding infrastructure vital to spurring economic growth and job creation across Africa. No one—least of all the citizens of any given African country—has a clear picture of the concessions made by African leaders in exchange for these loans. And the fact that African leaders are clearly choosing to do business with China does not mean their backroom dealings come with equal leverage and negotiating power.

Russia Rises in Africa

Dr. Alex Vines

The first ever Russia-Africa summit in 2019 will highlight Moscow's efforts to deepen its African engagement and strategically compete with the West and others. For several years, Moscow has been quietly blowing off the dust from old Soviet-era partnerships and forging new alliances by offering security, arms training, and electioneering services in exchange for mining rights and other opportunities. It was only in early 2018, when Russians moved visibly into the Central African Republic with guns and men, that the world woke up to a new reality.

Russia's footprint in Africa has expanded quickly with engagements across the continent. The drivers are often mercantile (defense opportunities and gas and mineral concessions) but can also be strategic, such as seeking a naval support facility on the Gulf of Aden and seeking support for Russia at the UN Security Council and in other international fora.

Not all Russian outreach has been successful. Moscow's pursuit of nuclear deals in South Africa was tarnished so badly by association with the discredited Zuma administration that, during the BRICS summit in Johannesburg in July 2018, the Russians were kept at arms-length by new president Cyril Ramaphosa. Russia has been more successful with Egypt, which recently won a USD\$25 billion Russian loan to build its first nuclear power plant.

Moscow's interests go beyond defense and deals. Russian consultants have been increasingly offering their electoral expertise. In Guinea, Russia is supporting a bid by President Alpha Condé to scrap term limits so he can remain in power beyond 2020. Also, in Madagascar's 2018 elections, several candidates received Russian advice.

Russia is not the Soviet Union and it lacks the deep financial pockets and the long-term strategic economic vision of China, but it does aim to compete with and challenge the West's relationships. The Trump Administration's new Africa policy is partly aimed at containing Russia's rise, but this will not succeed without fully funded and staffed U.S. embassies, development projects, and soft power outreach. Russia's entry into the Central African Republic in 2018 is a reminder that this is possible across Africa. Russia, like other nations, is using Africa to experiment on how to project its international relations in the 21st century.

Turkey-Africa Relations in 2018: Two Decades after Turkey's Opening to Africa

Dr. Elem Eyric Tepeciklioglu

2018 was a busy and successful year for Turkey's Africa policy. Despite being a newcomer to African politics, Turkey attaches great importance to its relations with African countries, having established a strong presence on the continent through a pro-active and multi-dimensional approach that includes the use of different soft power instruments.

A significant indicator of Africa's growing importance in Turkish foreign policy—in addition to Turkey's establishment of new diplomatic missions throughout the continent—is the increasing number of high-level visits to African countries. Since making his first overseas trip to Africa in 2017, Recep Tayyip Erdogan has visited 24 African countries during his tenure as prime minister and president. In order to expand its military involvement in Africa, Turkey opened its largest overseas military base in Somalia's capital, Mogadishu. Ankara also plans to build another military base on Suakin Island, near Port Sudan.

However, Turkey's overloaded global foreign policy agenda and deteriorating economy raise the question of the sustainability of its Africa policy. Moreover, Turkey's recent domestic political turmoil may negatively affect perceptions of Turkey among Africans. Also problematic is Ankara's increasing emphasis on religious ties in regard to its Africa relations. Religion occupies a central place in Turkey's Africa policy, with a growing emphasis on Turkey's Ottoman heritage, Islamic humanitarianism, and Islamic solidarity. If not carefully managed such narratives could negatively influence Turkey's relations with particular African countries.

Ankara's interest in Africa is also driven by economic considerations, including the quest for new export markets and alternative investment sites. As Turkish companies seek to expand their presence in overseas markets, they place an important value on African countries.

The main drivers of Turkey's Africa policy feature a mixture of geopolitical, economic, cultural, and strategic factors. Africa provides a space where Turkey can leverage its regional and global influence, and enhance its status in the international system. Owing to Africa's increasing role in global politics and centrality to the new international order, the continent now occupies a more important place in Turkey's new foreign policy orientation.

Identity and Immigration: Africa and the World Cup

Dr. Terence McNamee

A soccer tournament in Russia would seem an unlikely choice for a review of key events impacting Africa in 2018. Unlikelier still when one considers that no African team advanced beyond the first round.

However, the FIFA World Cup is no ordinary event. Every four years it serves as a microcosm of our changing world. This year's tournament turned into a global conversation on immigration and identity. Africa, in multifarious ways, was at its heart.

The day after France's national team—three-quarters of whom were of African descent—lifted the winner's trophy, the host of *The Daily Show*, Trevor Noah, incensed France's ambassador in Washington when he joked that "Africa won the World Cup." His quip offered oblique support to those who criticized countries like France and Belgium, which are heavily reliant on people of African descent for sporting success, yet fail to integrate their communities and shield them from rising xenophobia.

Former President Barack Obama chimed in the next day from Johannesburg in his globally televised Nelson Mandela Lecture. He sought to portray the World Cup as a victory for open borders, a rebuke to European (and his own) governments intent on halting the flow of migrants from the continent. "Not all of those folks looked like Gauls to me," he said of the champions, "but they are French—they are French." For Obama, the "Africaness" of the winners was evidence that immigration and diversity are strengths.

The view from Africa was a mixture of pride and pain. On a continent where the World Cup is followed with near-religious devotion, there was an obvious delight in seeing so many of "their own" excelling in Russia. This was offset by the knowledge that in sport—as in so many facets of life—Africa is struggling to retain its best and brightest. Several players in the tournament, including France's teenage sensation Kylian Mbappe, could have represented African national teams but were deterred by the dysfunctionality typical of most African countries' football associations.

The 2018 World Cup was sadly emblematic of an age-old problem: Africa fails to harness the extraordinary talent it produces.

**TRADE, INVESTMENT,
AND DEVELOPMENT**

A Crucial Step Toward Prosperity: The AfCFTA

Dr. Leila Ndiaye

The African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA)—signed in Kigali, Rwanda in March 2018 by 49 African countries—was one of the most significant trade and investment events of the year. This unprecedented undertaking will break down trade barriers and create a more robust intra-Africa trade marketplace, while also accelerating growth and stimulating economic diversification.

Beyond the immediate benefits associated with increased trade opportunities, AfCFTA also sets off a domino effect that leads to long-term, widespread prosperity. The U.N. Economic Commission on Africa estimates that intra-African trade will increase by more than 50 percent as a result of the AfCFTA. By leveraging the continent's existing regional trade blocs and opening new continental trade routes, Africa will be connected in previously unimaginable ways, spurring growth in jobs, logistics needs, capacity building, entrepreneurship, and innovation.

The expected rise in jobs is needed to stem Africa's high unemployment, especially among youths, driven by a continuing population boom that is expected to add 10-12 million people to the workforce each year. Great opportunities for growth in agro-processing, information and communications technology, manufacturing, and infrastructure should help absorb this workforce and bolster both domestic and foreign investment.

The AfCFTA and emerging larger market will make the continent more attractive for business and investment. However, it is critical that Africa also has successful elections and smooth political transitions. Between January 2018 and December 2019, 31 of Africa's 54 countries will have held elections. Peaceful and credible elections are crucial to stability, especially in bellwether countries like Nigeria, South Africa, Senegal, and The Democratic Republic of the Congo. While there is much reason for optimism, caution will be required as we observe not only elections but also progress toward ratification of the AfCFTA.

Africa is at a critical historical juncture. Local businesses, especially small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), are becoming more connected and aggressively pursuing new opportunities. Any assistance from the donor community and other foreign partners should focus on strengthening these emerging businesses, especially those that are led by youth and women. They stand to have the greatest economic and social impact on the continent. There is, indeed, hope for building on Africa's impressive momentum.

Developing Resilient Livelihoods in the Drylands of Africa

Mr. Matt Kandel

Despite the August 2018 announcement of a military drawdown, it appears U.S. Africa policy will still be dominated by security commitments rather than efforts to mitigate climate change effects on food and water security. The critical importance of climate change was underscored in the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's October 2018 report, which warned of potential catastrophe if governments do not act urgently to slow global warming. In dryland environments, where climatic variability is heightened, the need for resilient livelihood development (that is, building people's capacity to adapt to and overcome shocks and disturbances such that structural vulnerability is reduced) is particularly critical.

Drylands are characterized by low and variable precipitation, and, in Africa, include the Sudano-Sahelian belt in West Africa and vast areas of East Africa. Pastoralism and agro-pastoralism—premised on mobile livestock systems and designed to exploit the variability of drylands—have historically defined livelihoods in these environments.

However, social and environmental factors such as increased climatic variability, large-scale commercial agriculture, urbanization, oil and gas extraction, and land privatization are straining traditional coping mechanisms of dryland communities. Conflict and insecurity pose additional challenges, especially since drylands are often peripheral and historically marginalized areas where states struggle to exert authority.

Military and counterterrorism are important aspects of U.S. Africa policy; yet, absent concomitant strategies to address food and water insecurity, the root causes of the vulnerabilities of people living in dryland areas will go unaddressed. Interventions that seek to enhance household and community resilience are therefore crucial and should be central to U.S. engagement in Africa. However, interventions should be tailored to the social context and demonstrate an understanding of the potential trade-offs.

Dryland communities in Africa have long relied on indigenous methods to manage climate-related events such as droughts and floods. However, contemporary social and environmental changes are reducing the effectiveness of traditional approaches—in particular, if they are premised on mobility. Rather than scaling down development interventions, the United States would do well to commit more resources to resilient livelihood development in Africa in order to address the effects of climate change on food and water security.

Community Development in Africa in an Age of Divisive Rhetoric

Dr. Jamie Van Leeuwen and Mr. Nathan Davis

2018 was fewer than two weeks old when the U.S. President made headlines for allegedly using a pejorative term in referring to a broad swath of Latin American, Caribbean, and African nations during a closed-door discussion on immigration policy.

Those of us who work in those regions were dismayed by this unfortunate characterization. We worried that such rhetoric could hamper efforts to change international development dialogue.

Students and community leaders traveling with our organization, The Global Livingston Institute, to East Africa report being asked, “What are you going to *do* there?” One implication of that question is that Africans must just be waiting for Americans to descend upon their communities and build schools, clinics, and orphanages.

This implication is reinforced by rhetoric like the President’s—countries with rich cultural traditions, abundant natural resources, and promising investment opportunities are reduced in the public imagination to backward places defined by poverty, disease, and corruption.

Such mischaracterizations have real consequences. In 2018, the IMF highlighted the importance of governments in Sub-Saharan Africa increasing their ability to collect tax revenue. These countries must bolster private-sector investment and growth. People and companies are not eager to travel to or invest in places disparaged by our leaders.

Cultural exchange can drive investment and development. This year the Global Livingston Institute and its cross-cultural, cross-sector partners and sponsors produced a free concert series attended by 72,000 people in Uganda and Rwanda. Local health providers tested thousands of attendees for HIV and other health conditions.

These concerts had an economic impact estimated at USD\$1.3 million. Travelers to the concerts told their friends about the Uganda and Rwanda they saw—places that have little in common with the stories often told about Africa.

When we build authentic partnerships, we can ensure that economic development is driven from within communities. When we listen and think before we act, we can create change that is intentional and sustainable. It is not about building schools, it is about building communities, it is about building movements. And in doing so, what we do is no more important than how we do it—and how we talk about it.

Infrastructures for Peace: The African Union's Transitional Justice Policy

Dr. Franklin Oduro

The advent of the African Union's Transitional Justice Policy (AUTJP) signals the AU's growing commitment to sustainable peacebuilding in Africa. In October 2018, the Department of Political Affairs (DPA) of the African Union (AU) and its partners—including the South African-based Center for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR)—organized in Sudan the second in a series of continental forums on the state of transitional justice in Africa. The maiden forum took place in South Africa in 2017. The AU-backed continental forums seek to create a platform for stakeholders to discuss transitional justice processes and their relevance to human rights accountability and peacebuilding. The implementation of these forums at the continental level, and under the auspices of the DPA, marked an important milestone in the AU's discourse on human security and sustainable peacebuilding.

These forums advance the development of an AU Transitional Justice Policy (AUTJP). This, in turn, strengthens Africa's justice and peacebuilding architectures by deepening the linkages between transitional justice, peace, and security.

Once adopted by member states, the AUTJP would add to the AU's framework for fostering sustainable peacebuilding in Africa. Thus, it deserves support from peacebuilders everywhere who desire to see Africa prosper in peace, stability, and growth. The continuation of continental forums on the state of transitional justice in Africa will help sustain discourse and throw light on the AUTJP across the continent.

As long as there is injustice and impunity for human rights violations, efforts toward sustainable peacebuilding in Africa will remain. A transitional justice policy at the continental level may not be the panacea to ending conflicts, but it is certainly an added value to peacebuilding efforts. The continental forums on transitional justice—launched in 2017 and continued in 2018—provide the needed platform for strengthening Africa's transitional justice policy and interventions.

**DEMOCRACY, GOOD
GOVERNANCE, AND LEADERSHIP**

Ethiopia: A New Model of Leadership

Ms. Vivian Lowery Derryck

One of the most important events of 2018 occurred when Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed took office in April. While there was a quiet celebration, fireworks might have been more appropriate. Abiy is transforming his country and realigning the region's political dynamic. He is working to calm ethnic tensions, restoring human rights, and engaging restive youth by drawing on his Christian-Muslim Oromo heritage, as well as his government and party experience with the EPRDF (Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front) and OPDO (Oromo People's Democratic Organization).

Abiy reformed the executive branch by reducing ministerial positions from 28 to 20. He created a Ministry of Peace with unprecedented powers ranging from intelligence and security to police and immigration, and appointed Muferiat Kamil, a powerful female and former parliamentary speaker, to lead it. Many Ethiopians call it the most important cabinet ministry in the country's history. Its very creation suggests a national commitment to regional peace. Furthermore, Abiy harnessed the energy and expertise of Ethiopian women as partners in governance by declaring that 50 percent of the cabinet would be female, in addition to appointing nine other women to senior cabinet positions. The appointment of veteran diplomat Sahle-Work Zewde as the country's first female president further deepens the women's bench. It is hard to overestimate the impact of this formidable group of seasoned professionals on Ethiopian domestic and foreign policy.

Abiy is transforming regional international relations. When he reached out to Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki, he touched the third rail. Ethiopia and Eritrea had been battling over their boundary since 1998, but Abiy staunchly ended the conflict and thereby changed the region's political and economic dynamics. The United States, which had been working to strengthen relations with Eritrea, welcomed the rapprochement. This opens new channels for addressing the broader regional challenges of Somalia, Sudan, and refugees. Moreover, over time, Ethiopia, with new port access and strengthened economic ties, will be a stronger U.S. partner.

Abiy has opened the political space in Ethiopia and introduced a new model of governance. It is premature to claim success, but so far, he has the respect of Ethiopian citizenry and the attention of other African leaders. Not bad for nine months.

Hope in the Horn: Prospects for Peace Under New Leadership

Dr. Ann L. Phillips

In a region better known for inter and intra-state conflicts and humanitarian crises, two leaders have emerged to inspire hope. Promising reform, Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed, aka “Farmajo,” became Somalia’s new president in February 2017 with broad-based clan and military support. His prime minister, Hassan Ali Khaire, reinforced the promise. The U.S. government opened a permanent diplomatic office in Mogadishu in November 2018—ending a 27-year absence. Although enormous challenges to structural reform and a durable peace remain, the Somali leadership appears committed to the task.

Mohamed was joined in the spring of 2018 by a kindred spirit in Ethiopia. Chosen by the ruling Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) to be its chairman and Prime Minister, Abiy Ahmed moved quickly to undo central features of autocracy: lifting the state of emergency, releasing political prisoners, calling for an opening of the economy, and a transition to a multi-party democracy. His new cabinet reflects a dramatic change in a traditionally patriarchal society. Women lead half of the ministries, including defense and security and a new Ministry of Peace. The country also has its first woman president.

Equally dramatic, Abiy made peace with Eritrea and opened the border to free movement of people and goods. The Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) declared a truce in its secession struggle from Ethiopia, contributing to domestic peace and improved relations with Somalia.

Success is by no means certain. Eritrea remains under the thumb of Isaias Afwerki. Age-old ethnic and religious conflicts have re-emerged in Ethiopia’s more open political space. Al Shabaab has stepped up attacks and the Somali National Army is far from ready to provide security as AMISOM draws down. Corruption is endemic; more effective governance remains an aspiration.

Nonetheless, in an otherwise bleak 2018 marked by conflict, humanitarian crises, and global retreat of democracy and the rule of law, the Horn offered a glimmer of hope. While Gulf states and great powers compete for influence in this important geo-strategic region, U.S. government and European Union interests would be best served by supporting the reform agendas of the new Somali and Ethiopian leaders.

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African Women in Politics: Playing the Long Game

Dr. Toni Weis and Ms. Naomi Sand

In a year that repeatedly elevated the issue of gender equality to front page news, Africa's female political leaders had their share of breakthrough moments. Yet a look beyond the global headlines reveals a more sober image.

Without doubt, 2018 ended on a high note: in October, Ethiopia's parliament elected a new President in Sahle-Work Zewde—the country's first female head of state since Empress Zewditu a century earlier. Her election came hot on the heels of the appointment of a gender-balanced cabinet and was followed by the appointment of two women to head the Supreme Court and Electoral Board. The same month, Rwanda's new cabinet also featured an equal representation of female and male ministers, further boosting the country's global number one ranking on the UN's Women in Politics index.

However, African women in politics still face an uphill struggle. Rwanda and Ethiopia are dominant-party states whose rapid strides towards gender parity reflect the extraordinary powers vested in their (male) heads of government. New leaders at the helm of Zimbabwe's ZANU-PF, Angola's MPLA, and the South African ANC—all parties with a rhetorical commitment to gender parity—failed to raise the profile of women in their administrations. Most tellingly, not one of the African Union's 55 member states had a female head of government at the end of 2018, following the departure of Liberia's Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and the resignation of Mauritius' President Gurib-Fakim. And the African Union itself came under fire this year after an internal investigation revealed widespread sexual harassment.

Will 2019 bring better news? With presidential and parliamentary elections in 15 countries, there is no shortage of races to watch. Joyce Banda, Malawi's first female President, is running for the top job again while Obiageli Ezekwesili—one of the originators of the #BringBackOurGirls campaign—faces a tricky task as a third-party candidate in Nigeria's presidential election. But Africa's female political leaders are playing the long game, and continued support from U.S.-funded initiatives such as the International Republican Institute's Women's Democracy Network or the State Department's Equal Futures Partnership can help them win out in the end.

Breaking the Legacy of Patriarchy: A Win for Women in Government

Dr. Getachew Zeru

With the coming of new leadership in Ethiopia in 2018, the lifting of women into high political positions is a groundbreaking move that challenges the country's persistent, patriarchal political culture. Moreover, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's drive to bolster female leadership in his sweeping political and economic reforms aims to improve life in Africa's second most populous country.

Prime Minister Ahmed received widespread praise after appointing a gender-balanced cabinet for the first time in Ethiopia's history. The cabinet now has 10 female ministers out of a total of 20. Although women have held roles in the cabinet before, many were not in high-level positions. In the new cabinet, in addition to defense and security, women head the ministries of trade and industry; science and higher education; women, children and youth; labor and social affairs; culture and tourism; transport; revenue; as well as the planning and development commission.

Aisha Mohammed is Ethiopia's first female defense minister, while Muferiat Kamil heads the newly formed Ministry of Peace. The latter oversees the powerful National Intelligence and Security Service and the Federal Police Commission. This new ministry will take the lead in tackling the ethnic unrest that has swept the country since Abiy's reforms.

Parliament took another step toward gender parity by appointing the country's first female head of state. Though the role of president is considered largely ceremonial—with executive power vested in the office of the prime minister—the decision has a valuable symbolic weight in Ethiopia and beyond. Former Ambassador Sahle-Work Zewde is Ethiopia's fourth president since the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front gained power in 1991, and the first woman to hold the post.

Parliament also approved Meaza Ashenafi's appointment as Supreme Court President. It is the first time in history that Ethiopia has a woman chief justice, and her appointment is expected to strengthen the country's strained legal system.

While Abiy's new government has many problems to tackle, the women in top government positions should play an important role in governance overall, as well as increasing the focus on societal issues such as unemployment, health services, education, and gender inequality.

Central Africa: Autocratic Entrenchment and Increased Instability

Dr. Sophia Moestrup

Central Africa is home to the world's three longest-serving presidents: Teodoro Obiang Nguema of Equatorial Guinea (39 years in power), Cameroon's Paul Biya (36 years), and Congo's Denis Sassou Nguesso (34 years). Moreover, Idriss Déby (27 years) of Chad is not far behind, and the Bongo family has ruled Gabon for over 50 years. Faustin-Archange Touadéra of the Central African Republic (CAR) is the region's only president elected in legitimately competitive polls (2016), although his government now has limited control outside of the capital. All six of these countries are ranked "not free" by Freedom House, and score below continental averages on the Ibrahim Index of African Governance.

Central Africa experienced further autocratic entrenchment and growing instability in 2018. Cameroon's Biya won a seventh term in elections that lacked credibility, while his country continued its descent toward civil war. In Equatorial Guinea, Vice-President Teodorín Obiang (son of the current president) was promoted to major-general as the ruling family closed ranks. Teodorín recently presided over a cabinet meeting, confirming fears he is positioned to replace his father soon. In Congo, Sassou Nguesso's son Denis Christel, one of 10 family members elected to the National Assembly in 2017, was rumored to be preparing to run against his father in 2021. In Gabon, Ali Bongo has been ill for months, and the courts amended the constitution to delineate executive responsibilities in the absence of the president. Déby pushed through a new constitution for Chad that enhanced presidential powers and eliminated the post of prime minister. The CAR became increasingly ungovernable as armed groups spread violence to new regions.

Prospects for replacing one-man or dynastic rule in Central Africa through orderly, democratic elections are bleak. They stand in sharp contrast to democratic progress in West Africa, where successful transfers of power have taken place in 14 of the region's 15 countries in the last decade. Central Africa is a sobering example of the strong-man rule in fragile states that could implode into violence. These long-serving autocrats would serve their people well by holding inclusive, credible elections that foster peaceful transfers of executive power and more accountable governance.

Sudan at a Crossroads: Between a Controversial Regional Role and Trouble at Home

Ambassador Nureldin Satti

In recent years, Sudan has witnessed a change in its relations with regional and global partners. The need for Sudan to play a role in stemming migratory flows to Europe has obliged the European Union and some influential European countries to change their policy toward Khartoum and cooperate with it. Sudan's former ties with Islamist jihadist groups also make it a valuable source of information and advice on dealing with such threats.

Due to its geostrategic position, Sudan is an unavoidable partner in solving some of the intractable crises in the region. Long considered as a spoiler and a driver of instability, Sudan had started being courted by the EU, the U.S., Russia, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Qatar as a peacemaker, or an ally that is malleable to their needs and interests. Khartoum has shown a great deal of opportunism in dealing with each regional and international situation, seeking to reap immediate financial and material benefits in order to salvage its catastrophic economic and financial situation; but, thus far, to no avail.

In 2018, Sudan, benefiting from the regional détente created by the change of leadership and direction in Ethiopia, played a major role in the peace process aimed at revitalizing South Sudan's failed 2015 peace agreement. In so doing, Sudan made peace with Uganda, its traditional regional rival, and ensured the resumption of oil flows from South Sudan in order to rescue its ailing economy. Khartoum also joined the Saudi-led alliance in the war against the Houthis in Yemen, and exerted efforts to find a peaceful settlement to the crises in the Central African Republic and Libya. More recently, Sudanese President al-Bashir, in yet another bewildering turnaround, went so far as to become the first Arab League head of state to visit embattled Syrian President Bashar al-Assad.

Ultimately, the success of President al-Bashir's regional and global dealings will be measured by his ability to take his country out of its current political and economic quagmire. Opportunistic foreign policy positions should not be a viable alternative for sound domestic policy decisions on the home front. The popular protests that started on December 19, 2018 have shown the limits of this policy. Nothing seems to deter the rising masses from reclaiming their freedom and dignity against a regime which will stop at nothing to maintain its grip on power, including the use of excessive force and live ammunition against peaceful demonstrators.

Political Campaign Finance: Safeguarding Electoral Integrity in Africa

Mr. Rushdi Nackerdien

In 2018, the late Kofi Annan affirmed that not only electoral management bodies but also political leaders, civil society, and ordinary citizens must play their part in ensuring electoral integrity, which is the foundation of democracy. Also last year, South Africa's Constitutional Court stated in a judgment on campaign finances that a nation's future largely stands on how elections are conducted, with transparency and accountability being paramount. As elections move forward in Africa, electoral management bodies should broaden their existing technical roles to include fostering greater accountability and transparency, particularly in campaign financing. Without greater integrity in campaign financing, the resilience of African institutions and democracies will be severely tested.

Running for political office costs money. Just ask some of the female candidates in the last Kenyan elections who sold their cars to finance their campaigns for political office. Ask those who have to borrow money to hold a political rally or pay administrative fees. Ask the small parties that cannot obtain state funding because they do not meet the minimum thresholds required to access it.

Beyond such legitimate fees, there is also pressure to raise money for illicit purposes such as vote-buying, bribing officials, or even fomenting election-related violence. In this context, accountability and transparency are paramount, highlighting the need for more enforcement. Voters need to know where parties are receiving funds from and on what they are spending.

Modern African election campaigns are increasingly investing in running sophisticated operations that use foreign public relations companies and analysts.

Meanwhile, electoral management bodies are playing catch-up in a process that is rapidly outstripping current legal provisions and understandings of political campaign finance. While some bodies focus on regulations and laws—politicians are already at the next frontier in the era of the permanent political campaign—which seems to run on a 24/7/365 basis. Campaigns often weave a narrative of fraud and attack electoral institutions, undermining democratic ideals. At times, this culminates in electoral violence and manipulation of the courts in order to disrupt electoral preparations. This is the new reality of adversarial African politics—a reality that should be more effectively managed by African societies.

The Africa Program

The Africa Program works to address the most critical issues facing Africa and U.S.-Africa relations, build mutually beneficial U.S.-Africa relations, and enhance understanding about Africa in the United States.

The Program achieves its mission through in-depth research and analyses, including our blog *Africa Up Close*, public discussion, working groups, and briefings that bring together policymakers, practitioners, and subject matter experts to analyze and offer practical options for tackling key challenges in Africa and in U.S.-Africa relations.

The Africa Program focuses on four core issues:

- i. Good governance and leadership
- ii. Conflict prevention, peacebuilding, and security
- iii. Trade, investment, and sustainable development
- iv. Africa's evolving role in the global arena

The Program maintains a cross-cutting focus on the roles of women, youth, and technology, which are critical to Africa's future: to supporting good governance, to securing peace, to mitigating poverty, and to assuring sustainable development.

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The Southern Voices Network for Peacebuilding

The Southern Voices Network for Peacebuilding is a continent-wide network of African policy and research organizations that works with the Wilson Center's Africa Program to bring African knowledge and perspectives to U.S. and international policy on peacebuilding in Africa in order to create a more sustainable peace. Established in 2011 and supported by the generous financial support of the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the project provides avenues for African researchers and practitioners to engage with, and exchange analyses and perspectives with U.S., African, and international policymakers in order to develop the most appropriate, cohesive, and inclusive policy frameworks and approaches to achieving sustainable peace and state-building in Africa.

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