

**OUTCOME REPORT OF THE**

**AFRICAN REGIONAL DIALOGUE ON:**

**THE SUMMIT <sup>OF</sup> THE FUTURE,  
THE AFRICA <sup>WE WANT</sup>  
AND THE  
UNITED NATIONS  
<sup>WE NEED</sup>**



Organized by:



**SCDDD**  
SAVANNAH CENTRE  
FOR DIPLOMACY, DEMOCRACY & DEVELOPMENT

**STIMSON**



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**HELD AT  
THE TRANCORP HILTON HOTEL, ABUJA, NIGERIA**

**4-6 MARCH 2024**

**PREPARED BY**

**SAVANNAH CENTRE FOR DIPLOMACY,  
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**(FINAL WORKING DRAFT)**

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## FOREWORD

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It is a pleasure to write this foreword to the report of the deliberation and outcomes of the Africa Summit of the Future Dialogue on “The Africa We Want and the United Nations We Need,” which took place in Abuja, Nigeria, from 4 -6 March 2024. This report presents what prominent African and International leaders have collectively identified as essential in the build-up to the United Nations Civil Societies Conference, 9-10 May 2024, in Nairobi, and ultimately, to the Summit of the Future (SOFT), 22-23 September 2024 in New York.

This report encapsulates the collective wisdom, aspirations, and commitments forged during our time together, as we embarked on a journey to envisioning a brighter future for Africa within the framework of a reinvigorated United Nations and closer collaboration with the African Union and eight associated Regional Economic Communities. Africa stands at a pivotal juncture in its history, marked by unprecedented challenges and unparalleled opportunities. From socio-economic development to peace and security, the continent is grappling with multifaceted issues that demand innovative solutions and concerted action. In this context, the role of the United Nations, as the preeminent global institution for fostering cooperation and advancing common goals, becomes ever more crucial.

The Africa Summit of the Future Dialogue on “The Africa We Want and the United Nations (UN) We Need” brought together a diverse array of experts, including policymakers, civil society leaders, academics, women and youth advocates, united by a shared commitment to shaping a more inclusive, prosperous, and peaceful Africa. Through vibrant discussions, thought-provoking panels, and interactive workshops, participants delved into the complexities of the continent's challenges, while also exploring new pathways to sustainable development and regional integration.

Our deliberations underscored the imperative of amplifying African voices in global discourses and ensuring that the continent's priorities are firmly entrenched in the agenda of the United Nations. I underscored this point of inclusion and participation with the African adage that “you cannot shave a man's hair in his absence” in my welcome remarks. Our exchanges and ideas ranged from promoting good governance and human rights to fostering

economic empowerment and environmental sustainability. The Africa we envision is one that embraces its rich diversity, harnesses its untapped potential, and fulfills the aspirations of its people.

At the heart of our discussions was the recognition of the interdependence between Africa's development agenda and the broader global landscape. The United Nations must not only serve as a platform for African nations to articulate their needs and aspirations, but also as a catalyst for international cooperation, solidarity, and collective action in support of Africa's priorities. We agreed that Africa must be included in the collective definition, design and defense of the new world order.

As we reflect on the insights gleaned and the commitments made during our time together, let us recommit ourselves to the principles of solidarity, partnership, and mutual respect that underpin the vision of "The Africa We Want and The UN We Need." Together, we have the opportunity to chart a new course—one characterized by shared prosperity, enhanced resilience, and a more just and equitable world for all.

This conference report serves as a testament to our collective resolve and a roadmap for action in the pursuit of a brighter future for Africa and a stronger, more effective United Nations. May it inspire us to redouble our efforts and forge ahead with renewed determination towards realizing our shared vision.

Thank you to all who contributed to the success of this conference, and may our collective endeavors pave the way for a better tomorrow.

**Professor Ibrahim A. Gambari, CFR**  
**Chairman,**  
**Savannah Centre for Diplomacy, Democracy and Development**  
**Abuja - Nigeria.**  
**20 March 2024**

## PREFACE

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Multilateralism has encountered new challenges in the unfolding new world order. At the UN 75 Summit, the yearning for change and transformation towards the future was evident, such that input from all and sundry is required. At this period of inflection, Africa needs to put their thoughts together to provide a unified position on the way forward for the global future. The United Nations Secretary-General, António Guterres himself has identified the need for global re-appraisal of multilateralism and has put forward proposals in two key reports: *Our Common Agenda* and *A New Agenda for Peace*, alongside the report of his High-Level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism, *A Breakthrough for People and Planet*, to support this drive. This report is the outcome of a collaborative initiative by the Savannah Centre for Diplomacy, Democracy and Development in Nigeria and the Stimson Center in Washington DC, to amplify African perspectives on “The Africa We Want and the United Nations We Need.” The Savannah and Stimson Centres were joined by several other partners from Africa and around the world, presented below in this report's Acknowledgements.

The gathering sought to transform and deepen multilateralism in the new world order through the lens of prominent African experts and leadership. This gathering of Africans and friends of Africa stemmed from various backgrounds, including academia, civil society, think-tank institutions, diplomats, women, youth, traditional rulers and people with disabilities seeking to advance the following objectives:

- a. Raise the ambition of the agenda for the Summit of The Future (SOTF), giving special attention to African perspectives, priorities, and innovative ideas emanating from Africa;
- b. Establish a new platform for African policy researchers and advocates to critically discuss and advance policy research on “What Africa Wants” and the type of relationship the continent needs to have with the UN, World Bank, IMF, WTO and regional (including the African Union and African Development Bank) and the sub-regional institutions like ECOWAS; and
- c. Strengthen African Union, ECOWAS and UN collaboration, including through the New Agenda for Peace, Our Common Agenda, Global Digital Compact and Declaration on Future Generation.

As captured during Opening Session forward, this three-day gathering was fortunate to feature and for participants to learn from several eminent Africans in attendance. I thank them all for their invaluable contributions. The conference was broken into three segments: first, the breakthrough session panels which deliberated across the five thematic areas of Peace, Security and Defense; Sustainable Development and Democratic Governance; Human Rights and Humanitarian Action; Climate Governance; and a Rules-based World Order and the Place of Africa in Global Governance. The second segment consisted of spotlight sessions that dealt with the three key thematic areas of Mobilizing Sustainable Financing for the Africa We Want; an Intergenerational Dialogue on ECOWAS and Peacebuilding in West Africa; and finally, Engaging both the UN-Civil Society Conference on the Summit of the Future in May 2024 in Nairobi, as well as the Summit of the Future this coming September in New York. All sessions analyzed pressing global and regional problem-sets and offered actionable recommendations. At the end of the five thematic groups' deliberations, their observations and recommendations were submitted to the closing plenary, where all recommendations were discussed, challenged, and validated by a high-level panel of eminent persons. Their recommendations are presented in this report.

Lastly, believing that this important dialogue's outcome must gain traction and sustain high momentum, a new African research network focused on regional and global governance innovation was introduced as an idea for further the research, dialogue and networking for promoting the Africa We Want and the UN We Need. I commend this report to all Africans, friends of Africa and the global community in furtherance of more inclusive and effective multilateralism. There is no question that Africa wants effective global multilateralism where Africans play even more prominent roles in shaping a world order beneficial to both present and future generations. I thank all of our partners and participants for contributing to this report through their active participation in the 4-6 March 2024 Africa SOTF Dialogue.

**Ambassador Sani Saulawa Bala**

**Executive Director,**

**Savannah Centre for Diplomacy Democracy and Development**

**Abuja - Nigeria**

**18 March 2024**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The Savannah Centre for Diplomacy, Democracy and Development in Abuja and her committed partner, the Stimson Center, based in Washington DC, wish to thank immensely all the individuals and organizations that made this Africa SOTF Dialogue a huge success. Without intending to overlook the contributions of others not mentioned here, we appreciate, especially, the following organizations: *One Earth Future; Humanity United; United States Institute for Peace; Global Challenges Foundation; United Nations University Centre for Policy Research; State of Qatar; Olof Palme International Center; Max van der Stoep Foundation; and the Foundation for European Progressive Studies. Other partners include: the Global Governance Innovation Network; Kofi Annan Foundation; SDG Kenya Forum; Coalition for the UN We Need; Dag Hammarskjold Foundation; Centre for Democracy and Development West Africa; European Institute of Peace; OXFAM; SYNERGOS Nigeria; the Global Institute for Strategic Studies; and the Institute for Economics and Peace.*

The High-Level Eminent Persons who provided their intellect and personal encouragement over the three-days dialogue included: HE Professor Ibrahim Gambari, Founder and Chairman of Savannah Centre; HE Dr Donald Kaberuka, former President of the African Development Bank and Co-Chair of the UNSG's High-Level Board on Effective Multilateralism; HE Professor Tijjani Mohammad Bande, Nigeria's former Permanent Representative to the United Nations and former President of the UN General Assembly; HE Ann Linde, former Foreign Minister of Sweden, HE Ambassador Bankole Adeoye, Commissioner for Political Affairs and Peace of the African Union Commission; Mr. Leonardo Santos Simao, the UN Secretary-General's representative in West Africa; His Royal Majesty, Oba (Dr) Adedokun Omoniyi Abolarin, the Orangun of Oke Ila, Osun State of Nigeria; and HE Aissatou Hayatou, Head of NEPAD Coordination Office, African Union Commission (AUC). We appreciate your generous contributions to the ideas that informed this synthesis report.

The strong partnership from the Stimson Centre, personified by Dr. Richard Ponzio and Ms. Nudhara Yusuf, but also including their colleagues in Washington, D.C., is greatly cherished.

Lastly and most importantly, we thank profoundly the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, HE Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR, for his kind presence and support through the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Senator (Dr) George Akume, OFR. We shall continue to count on you as we develop and promote the recommendations and declaration published in this report.



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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African civil society leaders, think-tank policy researchers, academics and policy practitioners in various fields gathered in Abuja, Nigeria, from 4-6 March 2024, to discuss the theme, “The Africa We Want and the United Nations We Need.” They were joined by eminent personalities from Africa and friends outside the continent to generate insights and policy recommendations on the theme. The eminent personalities who made enriching statements at the opening ceremony included HE Prof. Ibrahim Gambari, who delivered the welcome address and Dr. Donald Kaberuka, who delivered the Keynote Address on “The Africa We Want and the United Nations We Need: An African Perspective on the Summit of the Future.” Important goodwill messages were received from the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, and the UN Representative. The representative of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, Senator George Akume, Secretary to the Government of the Federation, declared the conference opened. Others were HE Prof. Tijjani Mohammad Bande, HE Ann Linde, and HE Aissatou Hayatou, formed a High-Level Panel that validated the recommendations by participants.

### BREATHROUGH GROUPS

The Dialogue was conducted around five breakthrough group themes:

#### a. Peace, Security and Defense

This breakthrough group identified the challenges of Africa in global multilateral institutions. These included, for instance, the inability of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to be effective as a result of double-standard applied by Permanent Five (P-5) veto power holders on the Council. This has, in turn, caused paralysis of the UNSC, as well as, at times, inadequate funding and poor mandates and exit strategies for peacekeeping operations. The group further highlighted poor governance structures in member states as sources of high insecurity. Participants recommended, in particular:

- i. The United Nations Security Council should be democratized, including by establishing two new permanent seats for African countries;
- ii. The UN must make full funding for peacekeeping operations a priority, including in support of both African Union-led missions and hybrid peace operations led jointly by the UN and AU;
- iii. African Regional Economic Communities (RECs) should also be instilled with the

- capabilities for effective conflict management, including in the area of peacekeeping;
- iv. To better facilitate peace, security, and defense across the continent, the African Union itself must be organized around the principles of good governance, inclusion, and accountability. To this end, the African Union Parliament' representatives should be elected directly by African citizens; and
  - v. African traditional rulers, as an institution, should be involved in local security governance, as most insecurity issues take place in local environments, particularly in rural areas; hence, traditional rulers merit recognition in AU Commission governance structures.

#### **b. Sustainable Development and Democratic Governance**

Participants identified as among the most significant sustainable development and democratic governance challenges:

- i. Poverty, inequality, authoritarianism, political repression, and cronyism;
- ii. Violent conflicts, political instability, ethnicity, and tribalism;
- iii. Poor governance and corruption;
- iv. Climate change & environmental degradation;
- v. Limited Infrastructure, weak institutions and poor civic engagement;
- vi. Health challenges and weak institutions;
- vii. Limited access to education;
- viii. Electoral irregularities and fraud; and
- ix. Abuse of freedom of information and manipulation of information.

The breakthrough group members recommended that the solutions to the above challenges must be built around a strong political commitment by African leaders, with support from global multilateral institutions such as the United Nations, World Bank, and International Monetary Fund, to:

- i. Invest in education, research and development; sustainable economic growth; environmental sustainability and infrastructure development;
- ii. Promote gender equality; civic engagement, partnership and collaboration; and rule of law;
- iii. Protect human rights and social justice;
- iv. Combat corruption;
- v. Strengthen democratic institutions for the conduct of peaceful and credible

- leadership succession to entrench good governance; and
- vi. Support media independence and freedom of expression.

**c. Human Rights and Humanitarian Action**

- i. The breakthrough group recognized human rights as universal, and that these rights must be applied diligently, uniformly, and equitably by all governments and respected across all societies. At the same time, cultural relativism must also be observed, and hence, sensitivities to cultural differences must guide the universality of human rights.
- ii. Secondly, gender sensitivity in the promotion and safeguarding of human rights must be accorded special attention.
- iii. Thirdly, the media and civil society must play key, positive roles in the pursuit of human rights.
- iv. Fourthly, adequate data generation and information-sharing are central in advancing the course of human rights in societies across Africa.
- v. Finally, to improve humanitarian action, humanitarian aid, especially in times of global crises like pandemics, should be provided by the international community swiftly and without preconditions.

**d. Climate Governance**

The breakthrough group identified three key areas as chief climate-related challenges for Africa, namely: research, finance and security. Research findings and remediation do not cascade enough to the national and community levels. Inadequate funding at local levels for remediation also undermines efforts to manage conflicts arising from climate change. The group, therefore, recommended that:

- i. A new UN agency with three components be established, namely; an Environmental Assembly; a Research Community Network; and an Environmental Court - will all three serving to facilitate wider grassroots outreach and participation;
- ii. Global and African Environmental Funds should be streamlined to make the conditions and criteria for access these funds more simple, transparent and accountable; and
- iii. Climate change resilience should be mainstreamed within a conflict resolution framework.

**e. Rules-Based World Order and the Place of Africa in Global Governance.**

The group participants observed that Africa was poorly represented in the consequential negotiations that shaped the current rules-based world order. That one cannot benefit from a

world order one did not define or design. They stressed the imperative for African and Africans to fully participate in the redefining and redesigning of a new world order that works for all. The group therefore, recommended that:

- i. A new financial order must be formed;
- ii. Africa must have an African Common Currency for its companies and citizens to compete in global markets;
- iii. Trade and taxation rules must be reformed for the benefit of all; and
- iv. The United Nations must be democratized, with no nation wielding overriding (veto) powers over other nations; and
- v. Article 109 (3) should be invoked by African member states to convene a General Review Conference on the UN Charter, as a fundamental step toward reforming the UN to contribute, simultaneously, to “the Africa We Want, and the United Nations we need.”

## THE SPOTLIGHT SESSIONS

There were three spotlight panels that deliberated and made recommendations.

**Spotlight I “Mobilizing Sustainable Finance for the Africa We Want and the UN We Need, including through South Africa's G20 Presidency in 2025”.** This panel identified the lack of strong financial institutions, endemic corruption, foreign exploitation and undue foreign interference and high dependence on foreign aid in Africa as the main challenges to sustainable financing and recommended that Africa should:

- a. champion its cause through systematic and assertive breaking of the dependency syndrome;
- b. educate and feed its people;
- c. fight the endemic and systemic corruption;
- d. move from being consumers to producers of goods and services;
- e. negotiate the liberalization of the global financial system to include Africa;
- f. explore the opportunities in the EU-AU partnership to facilitate transfer of technology to Africa;
- g. take ownership of its natural resources and learn to contend with the dynamics of the international financial power game.

**Spotlight II “Intergenerational Dialogue on ECOWAS and Peacebuilding in West Africa”.** This panel identified the unconstitutional change of government as a major issue in West Africa today. This has arisen from weak governments and the inability to deliver hope to the people. The solution to this problem is good governance, with the support of ECOWAS, African Union,

and UN.. Politicians should learn to make their social contract with the people sacrosanct. Corruption should be addressed strongly, while democracy dividends would be the panacea for unconstitutional change of government. Member states should learn to participate in dialogues more like within a family, rather than succumbing to the threat of war.

**Spotlight III “From this Abuja Dialogue to the Nairobi UN Civil Society Conference in May to the Summit of the Future in September”.** The panel observed the slow recognition of CSOs as partners by African Governments as a major challenge. The panel therefore, made the following recommendations:

- i. African CSOs must work in unison to promote their ideals in governance;
- ii. CSOs must generate data and undertake relevant research that can provide informed perspectives for the public and government.
- iii. CSOs should create and sustain transnational partnership, capacity building and knowledge sharing.
- iv. All CSOs are welcomed and encouraged to participate in the 2024 UN Civil Society Conference on the Summit of the Future, planned for 9-10 May 2024 in Nairobi.

### THE AFRICAN RESEARCH NETWORK

All stakeholders met on the final day, 6th March 2024, and discussed issues of collaboration and mechanisms to promote the outcome of the conference on a sustainable basis. To this end, the group endorsed the need to continue discussions toward the establishment of a newly proposed African Research Network. The temporary (provisional) name given was *African Research Network on Regional and Global Governance Innovation (ARN-RGGI)*. To discuss the operationalization of the network, the group in Abuja organized around three themes, namely:

- a. A Policy Research Workstream
- b. A Policy Dialogue Workstream
- c. Community of Practice and Advocacy Workstream.

It was agreed that discussions should continue in the coming months, including at the forthcoming UN Civil Society Conference on the Summit of the Future, planned for 9-10 May 2024 in Nairobi. The provisional secretariat of the newly proposed network was tentatively domiciled at the Savannah Centre for Diplomacy, Democracy and Development in Abuja, Nigeria.

## THE OPENING SESSION



The Savannah Centre for Diplomacy, Democracy and Development (SCDDD), The Stimson Centre and diverse Global partners converged in Abuja - Nigeria, from the 4 - 6 March 2024, to deliberate through the Africa Summit of the Future Dialogue, with the overarching theme: “The Africa We Want and the United Nations We Need.” The main objectives of the African Regional Conference revolved around promoting African interests, advocating for the UN reform and fostering collaboration to address global challenges.

The Abuja Conference was to serve as a precursor to the Nairobi Civil Society Conference in May 2024. The Abuja - Kenya conferences will provide a consolidated input from African civil Societies that seek to contribute expertise and diverse perspectives to the Summit of the Future (SOTF) planned for this September in New York.

## The Welcome Address

In his welcome address to participants at the conference, the Chairman of Savannah Centre for Diplomacy, Democracy and Development (SCDDD) and Chief host of the conference, HE Professor Ibrahim Gambari, expressed gratitude to organizations and individuals for their invaluable support in hosting this very important conference on the *“Africa We Want and the UN We Need”*. He emphasized the importance of African unity, constitutionalism, human rights and dignity as non-negotiable principles for the growth and development of the continent. He stressed the significance of economic growth and development through collaboration with financial institutions like the African Development Bank, Afrexim Bank, and Africa Finance Corporation to improve livelihoods and provide economic security for Africans.

He called for reforms within the United Nations, including expanding the Security Council's membership to make it more inclusive by allocating, at least, two permanent seats to Africa. He equally underscored the point that in the envisioned new world order, Africa's voice must not only be heard but the global space should be opened for Africa to also play a critical role in the Collective Definition, Design and Defense of the new global order. Most importantly, he stated that Africa should not be expected to continue to defend what it did not participate in its definition and design.

He urged Africans to champion their own causes and advocate for a peaceful, secure, united, and prosperous continent, emphasizing the importance of African agencies in shaping the future of the continent and its relationship with the UN and the Breton Woods institutions. HE Professor Gambari equally recognized the importance of inclusivity by the active participation of the youth, women, and people living with disabilities as well as senior citizens in global governance.

He outlined the objectives of the conference including convening policymakers and researchers to discuss regional and global institutional policy innovations, advancing policy research on Africa's needs, strengthening collaboration between African institutions and the UN, and the establishment of an African Research Network to drive and sustain the advocacy for the implementation of the outcome of the conference through AU and UN for durable peace and sustainable development.

## Goodwill Messages

The conference received a number of goodwill messages from the following dignitaries:

The African Union Commission (AUC) Chairperson, Ambassador Moussa Faki Mahamat - Represented by the Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, Ambassador Bankole Adeoye. In his compelling goodwill message, the AUC Chairperson emphasized the AU's overarching vision for Africa: an integrated, prosperous, and peaceful continent driven by its citizens, aligning closely with AU Aspirations 1 and 7. He articulated that this vision should extend beyond regional borders, projecting into the global arena, where Africa would assert itself as a dynamic force, especially in view of the interconnection of the aspirations of Africa and the UN. He posited that as Africa strived for its desired future, it must simultaneously contribute to shaping the UN into the organization that reflects these shared goals.

Acknowledging the pressing challenges facing both Africa and the world, the Chairperson underscored the timeliness of the dialogue, recognizing the critical juncture at which global development agendas stand. He pointed to multifaceted issues such as conflicts, geopolitical rivalries, and systemic risks, while also acknowledging the opportunities for collective action in overcoming these obstacles. Proposing a comprehensive 6-point action agenda, he outlined key areas for AU engagement: peace and security, counter-terrorism, conflict prevention, cyber security, and inclusive governance. Moreover, he emphasized the AU's historical contributions to global peace, highlighting milestones such as the establishment of the Peace and Security Council.

In expanding on the interconnectedness of peace, security, and development, the Chairperson introduced the concept of the triple nexus approach. He stressed the pivotal role of good governance, democracy, human rights, and the rule of law in achieving sustainable peace, positioning these elements as essential components of conflict prevention and resolution efforts. Additionally, he reiterated the principle of African solutions to African problems, emphasizing the AU's agency in addressing regional challenges and promoting human security and resilience in the face of emerging threats.

In his concluding remarks, the Chairperson invoked a poignant quote from former UN Secretary General, Dag Hammarskjöld, underscoring the imperative for the UN to confront contemporary global challenges. He asserted that a fit-for-purpose AU not only aligns with



the aspirations of the UN but also plays a crucial role in realizing a collective vision of global salvation. Thus, he urged for concerted efforts towards building a mutually reinforcing relationship between Africa and the UN, wherein the Africa we want shapes the UN we need, and vice versa.

### **Representative of the UNSG**

Mr. Leonardo Santos Simao, the UN Secretary-General's representative in West Africa, appreciated the timeliness of this program and called for concerted efforts through multilateralism to address Africa's very serious governance challenges. He expressed optimism that despite Africa's daunting challenges of governance, its dynamism for change within the UN System was unstoppable. He supported the advocacy for the reform of the UN, including UN funding of regional peacekeeping, to make Africa act on its security and development challenges. Furthermore, he expressed the hope that the discussion was going to be as promising as the continent was keen on stamping her feet and getting her voice heard as sovereign equals on global governance issues.

### **African Traditional Rulers**

His Royal Majesty, Oba Adedokun Omoniyi Abolarin, the Arokinyeye I, the Orangun of Oke-Ila, spoke on behalf of the African Traditional Rulers, reaffirmed the vital roles traditional rulers play in the continent and urged that their views must also be included in determining the Africa we want. He observed that the wisdom, leadership and deep-rooted connection within communities offer invaluable insights into sustainable development, peace building and inclusive governance. For Africa to leverage on the invaluable guidance of traditional rulers/institutions, the Oba urged the participants to recognize and recommend the engagement and empowerment of traditional rulers in governance in the struggle to forge a future Africa that would embrace diversity, equity and unity in building a stronger and more prosperous Africa.

### **The Representatives of the African Women, Youth and People with Disabilities**

Ms. Sabina Nforba, representing the AU Youth Special Envoy, Ms. Chido Cleopatra Mpemba, drew attention to the fact that Africa was a youthful continent. She noted that Africa population was estimated to rise to about 2.5 billion people by 2050 and that between 35 - 45% of this population would be under the age of 35. It was thus imperative that the Africa we want must include the views of the African youth.

She scrutinized the exclusion of a significant number of young people at the conference and called for their inclusion in planning and decision-making that would shape the Africa We Want and the UN We Need. She equally called for the institution of an enabling environment in Africa to address the challenges currently forcing the African youth to migrate. She urged the UN system and the African Union to place the engagement of youth youthful population at the center of their development strategies.

On her part, the Women representative from the Nigerian National Council for Women Society urged African leaders to ensure that they increased the momentum to meet up the 35% women inclusion in governance and called for more advocacy and awareness campaign for inclusive governance by the media and international civil society organizations.

The representatives of the People Living with Disabilities called for urgent improvement in the laws protecting the rights of the people with disabilities, inclusion in decision making processes and all government and private sectors of the economy to consider and make adequate and or review the provisions for the special needs of people with disabilities in infrastructure developments.

#### **Dr. Richard Ponzio of the Stimson Center**

He commended the Savannah Centre and the dialogue's twenty-one partners for their immeasurable support for the successful organization of the conference. Dr. Ponzio underscored the importance of feeding African perspectives into the Summit of the Future (SOFT), as well as energizing the Nairobi UN Civil Society Conference in May 2024 and helping to restore trust within the UN and international community through a new Pact for the Future. In short, all countries and peoples have much to benefit from strengthening and innovating the UN, AU, and Africa's eight Regional Economic Communities for more harmonious global governance and the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and Paris Climate Agreement.

#### **The Keynote Address**

In his keynote address, Dr. Donald Kaberuka, former Finance Minister of Rwanda and former President of the African Development Bank, articulated the crisis facing the current multilateral system established in 1945. He noted that while certain aspects remained functional, overall, the system fails to deliver effectively, leading to widespread dissatisfaction. Dr. Kaberuka emphasized that the existing global order does not adequately

address existential challenges such as climate change, pandemics, and geopolitical tensions, exacerbating global fragmentation. He underscored the urgent need to establish a new equilibrium in global governance to tackle issues like great power rivalry, division between the global north and south, and the failure to meet Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Proposing transformative shifts outlined by the Secretary-General's High-Level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism on which he served, Dr. Kaberuka advocated for inclusive and effective multilateralism. These shifts include prioritizing legitimacy and effectiveness, ensuring sustainable global finance, enhancing digital and data governance, and fostering peace and collective security. He stressed Africa's crucial role in shaping the future of global governance, advocating for the continent's voice and commitment to a more equitable and inclusive international system within the UN framework.

Dr. Kaberuka called for a balanced approach between legitimacy and effectiveness, rejecting hegemonic and exclusive structures in favor of inclusivity. He urged for urgent reforms in global finance to ensure equitable representation and fairer taxation rules, while emphasizing the importance of proactive measures to address emerging transnational threats like pandemics.

Acknowledging Africa's aspirations for a more equitable international system alongside internal challenges, Dr. Kaberuka highlighted the importance of aligning with Africa's priorities and institutions, such as the African Union, to forge meaningful partnerships. He emphasized the demographic trends of Africa, particularly its youthful population, which presents both opportunities and challenges for global governance. Dr. Kaberuka stressed the need for supportive global structures to effectively harness Africa's demographic dividend and address its development and investment needs.

Despite the daunting challenges, Dr. Kaberuka expressed optimism that the Summit of the Future could serve as a turning point, restoring hope and paving the way for a more just and effective global governance architecture. He underscored the importance of peace, prevention, and collective security as crucial aspects of effective global governance, emphasizing the need for mechanisms to maintain stability in a rapidly changing world. Dr. Kaberuka encouraged pragmatic leadership and collaboration, expressing confidence in the possibility of meaningful change towards achieving a more just and historic African cause.

## The Presidential Message

The conference was declared open by the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, HE Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR, who was represented by the Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF), Senator (Dr). George Akume. In his address, the President commended the organizers of the dialogue and expressed serious concerns about the rising threats of terrorism, insurgency and military intervention in African governance, particularly in West Africa. He called for the reform and democratization of the UN system and collaboration between African Governments, the African Union (AU), the United Nations and the international community to combat these challenges through multilateralism.

On developmental challenges, he acknowledged the multifaceted impacts of socio-economic, environmental, and political shocks, making it difficult for many African countries to meet their development goals. He also stressed the importance of including African perspectives and innovation priorities in policy debates on sustainable development, peace and security, climate governance, human rights, and humanitarian actions.

In declaring the conference open, Mr. President called on fellow African leaders to support the initiative to get the African voice heard in global governance discussions. He pledged to make peaceful efforts, under his Chairmanship of the Authority of Heads of State and Government of ECOWAS, to negotiate the return of democratic governance in the affected ECOWAS member states.





## BREAKTHROUGH SESSIONS

### THEME I: PEACE, SECURITY AND DEFENCE



With guiding opening remarks from Savannah Centre’s founder, Professor Ibrahim Gambari and Ann Linde, former Foreign Minister of Sweden, the panel identified the following challenges as the major causes of insecurity and poor defense in Africa:

- a. Terrorism, insurgency, illegal arms in-flow, cross-border and cyber criminality as well as sea piracy;
- b. Bad governance: lack of political will, poor coordination and focus by the 54 AU member States, giving rise to mass discontent, mistrust and violent agitations and military coups;
- c. Failure to implement the President Paul Kagame Report
- d. Devastating effects of climate change and environmental degradation;
- e. Weak institutions, including the UNSC; AU PAPS and RECs;

- f. Failure to implement AU Assembly Resolutions such as the silencing the Gun by 2030 and the January 2017 President Paul Kagame “Report on the Proposed Recommendations for the Institutional Reform of the African Union”;
- g. Failure to meet the UNSDG Goals by AU member states;
- h. International interferences on the sovereignty of Africa by foreign powers either by proxy or direct involvement;
- i. Unhealthy geopolitical competition and the tendency for unilateralism by powerful states, thus causing paralysis in the UNSC peace processes and global security;
- j. Poor funding for peacekeeping operations and weak interrelationship between the UNSC; the AU PAPS and the RECs, resulting in half hazard mandate and exit strategies;

### Recommendations

Three institutions were identified as relevant in making effective responses to these challenges, namely, the United Nations, the Political Affairs, Peace and Security Council of the African Union Commission, along with its Regional Economic Communities (RECs), and Africa’s fifty-four national governments. In line with the problems identified above, the group proposed the following reforms:

- a. The UN must be fully democratized, to include all with at least, two permanent seats for Africa on the UNSC;
- b. The use of veto powers be either abrogated or reviewed to ensure it does not override popular will;
- c. Funding for peacekeeping should have a full draw down without conditions. The UNSC must collaborate with the AU in the implementation of peacekeeping missions, such that the mandate and exit strategies are fully coordinated with the regional body;
- d. The AU must endeavor to make its Political, Peace and Security Council, more effective. The African Standby Force in each of the regional commissions should be operationalized and made fully functional and well-funded;
- e. UN Peacekeeping Operations and security architecture must be by African initiatives and not by impositions;
- f. Governance: For good governance, regional parliaments should be fully democratic. Members of these parliaments must be chosen by direct elections;
- g. In addition to ECOSOC, special committees should be created for traditional rulers and faith-based organizations;

- h. In view of the emerging digital world, artificial intelligence and internet technology should be monitored with strong regulatory oversights, particularly in cybersecurity; and
- i. Women, youth and People with Disabilities be mainstreamed in the decision-making processes, ensuring that issues that affect women and youth must be in full compliance with the UN standard through appropriate legislation. A gender and special needs desk should be created in the AU Commission.





## **THEME II: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE**



Participants recognized the nexus between the SDGs and Democratic Governance, for analytical purposes, they elected to present a two-tier report on **Sustainable Development Goals and Democratic Governance**.

**Sustainable Development Goals:** After a very robust interrogation by participants, they identified the following factors as major hindrances to achieving the SDGs in Africa:

### **Poverty & Inequality**

Persistent poverty and significant income disparities hinder progress towards achieving many of the SDGs. Inadequate access to basic services such as education, healthcare, clean water, and sanitation exacerbates inequality and impedes development efforts.

### **Conflict & Instability**

Many African countries grapple with armed conflicts, political instability, and insecurity, which disrupt socioeconomic development and impede efforts to achieve the SDGs. Conflict-

affected regions often experience the destruction of infrastructure, displacement of populations, and setbacks in poverty reduction.

### **Weak Governance & Corruption**

Corruption, lack of transparency, and weak governance structures undermine development initiatives and divert resources away from essential services. Inefficient public institutions hinder the effective implementation of policies aimed at achieving the SDGs.

### **Climate Change & Environmental Degradation**

Africa is particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, including droughts, floods, diseases, and desertification. Environmental degradation, deforestation, and biodiversity loss further exacerbate the challenges faced in achieving environmental sustainability goals.

### **Limited Infrastructure**

Inadequate and poor infrastructure, including transportation networks, energy systems, and digital connectivity constrain economic growth and impede progress towards achieving various SDGs, such as those related to industry, innovation, and infrastructure.

### **Health Challenges**

Africa continues to face significant health challenges including high rates of infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis. Weak healthcare systems, limited access to essential medicines, and insufficient investment in healthcare infrastructure hinder progress towards health-related SDGs.

### **Limited Access to Education**

Despite progress in increasing school enrollment rates, many children in Africa still lack access to quality education. Inadequate educational infrastructure, teacher shortages, and socioeconomic barriers hinder efforts to achieve SDGs related to education and lifelong learning.

### **Recommendations**

Having identified the problems in order to achieve the desired SDG results in Africa, participants proffered the following solutions:

- a. **Strong Political Commitment:** African governments need to prioritize the

implementation of policies and strategies aligned with the SDGs. This includes integrating the SDGs into national development plans, allocating adequate resources, and establishing effective governance structures for monitoring and evaluation;

- b. **Investment in Education:** African governments should invest in education infrastructure, teacher training, and curriculum development can help build human capital and promote lifelong learning;
- c. **Promoting Gender Equality:** African governments should ensure they provide equal access to education, healthcare, economic opportunities, and decision-making processes to all, irrespective of gender;
- d. **Environmental Sustainability:** African countries need to implement policies that mitigate climate change, promote sustainable land use, biodiversity conservation, and climate resilience as well as adaptation;
- e. **Sustaining Economic Growth:** This requires diversifying economies, supporting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and investing in infrastructure and innovation;
- f. **Infrastructure Development:** African governments should invest in infrastructure including transportation networks, energy systems, and digital connectivity to ensure economic growth and achieve SDGs related to industry, innovation, and infrastructure;
- g. **Partnership and Collaboration:** African governments should foster partnerships for resource mobilization, knowledge sharing, and capacity building. This will also include, improving data collection, analysis, and monitoring mechanisms is crucial for tracking progress towards the SDGs and identifying areas that require attention. Investing in data infrastructure and capacity building can strengthen evidence-based decision-making and accountability.

### **Democratic Governance**

Participants recognized that democratic governance in Africa faced several challenges that hindered its development and consolidation. They identified the underlisted as the key issues militating against democratic governance in the region:

- a. **Weak Institutions:** Many African countries struggle with weak and ineffective institutions, including electoral commissions, judiciaries, and legislative bodies. Weak institutional capacity undermines the rule of law, limits checks and balances, and contributes to governance deficits;

- b. **Authoritarianism and Political Repression:** Despite significant progress towards democratization in some countries, authoritarian regimes persist in others. Political leaders in authoritarian regimes often use repression, censorship, and intimidation tactics to suppress dissent, restrict political freedoms, and maintain power;
- c. **Ethnic and Tribal Politics:** Ethnic and tribal divisions are prevalent in many African societies and are often exploited by political elites for their own gain. Ethnic-based patronage networks, identity politics, and conflicts undermine national unity, social cohesion, and democratic governance;
- d. **Corruption and Cronyism:** Corruption is pervasive in many African countries and undermines democratic principles such as accountability, transparency, and integrity. Political leaders and elites often engage in corrupt practices, including embezzlement, bribery, and nepotism, which erode public trust in democratic institutions;
- e. **Economic Challenges:** Economic instability, poverty, and inequality pose significant challenges to democratic governance in Africa. High levels of unemployment, inflation, and debt can exacerbate social tensions and political instability, leading to governance crises and democratic backsliding;
- f. **Lack of Civic Engagement:** Limited civic education, low levels of political participation, and apathy towards democratic processes contribute to governance challenges in Africa. Strengthening civic engagement, promoting civic education, and enhancing civil society participation are essential for building vibrant democracies;
- g. **Media Gagging & Abuse of Freedom of Information:** Restrictions on media freedom, censorship, and state control of the media undermine democratic governance by limiting access to information, stifling public debate, and preventing accountability. Political leaders often manipulate the media to disseminate propaganda and suppress dissenting voices. Media outfits often abuse the freedom of information for material gains;
- h. **Electoral Irregularities & Fraud:** Electoral fraud, irregularities, and manipulation undermine the credibility and legitimacy of democratic elections in Africa. Weak electoral systems, lack of transparency, and voter intimidation tactics often result in contested elections and political crises.

## Recommendations

Participants agreed that to reverse these trends, committed and concerted efforts from all parties: governments, civil society organizations, the private sector and the international community were necessary to strengthen democratic institutions, promote accountability, political stability, durable peace and transparency as well as fostering inclusive political leadership selection processes for the building of resilient democratic governance systems in Africa. They strongly advocated the following:

- a. **Strengthening Institutions:** African governments should reform their electoral commissions, judiciaries, legislative bodies, and anti-corruption agencies to enhance their capacity, independence, and effectiveness;
- b. **Promoting the Rule of law:** Governments should, as a matter of priority, strengthen legal frameworks, promote judicial independence, and combat corruption and impunity;
- c. **Protecting Human Rights:** Governments must respect, protect, and promote human rights, including the rights of marginalized and all vulnerable groups;
- d. **Promoting Civic Education & Engagement:** Empower citizens to participate in democratic processes, hold leaders accountable, and advocate for peaceful change;
- e. **Supporting Independent Media:** Governments must respect and protect media freedom, refrain from censorship and intimidation, and promote a diverse and vibrant media landscape;
- f. **Combating Corruption:** Governments must enact and enforce anti-corruption laws, establish independent oversight mechanisms, and promote a culture of integrity and transparency in public institutions;
- g. **Promoting Economic Development and Social Justice:** Governments must implement policies that promote social justice, reduce poverty, and create opportunities for all citizens;
- h. **Engaging With International Partners:** This would provide the required technical assistance, capacity building, and financial resources to strengthen democratic institutions and processes.

## THEME III: HUMAN RIGHTS AND HUMANITARIAN ACTION



Participants agreed that discussions surrounding human rights and humanitarian issues which form the third pillar of the UN Charter, are not ordinary concepts or tasks; they are ingrained in the very fabric of all human endeavors. The debate focused on critiquing and acknowledging the harsh realities of human rights issues across Africa. Participants agreed that the major challenges to human rights and humanitarian actions include:

- a. Inadequate data collection and analysis;
- b. Poor information management: poor information gathering and dissemination are inimical to shaping positive mindsets and attitudes of individuals and groups to human rights issues. Disinformation, misinformation and hoarding of information are major challenges in addressing the issues of human rights and humanitarian actions; and
- c. Marginalization, discrimination, stereotyping, divide and rule, classification; etc.

### Recommendations

At the end of the debate, the group made the following recommendations:

- a. At the core of every human endeavor lies the principle of inclusivity, recognition and respect for cultural relativity underpinned by collaborative efforts, respect for

- humanity, unity in diversity, and building strength in disability to achieve the collective vision for Africa we want and the United Nations we need;
- b. It is imperative to scrutinize media content and verify information for the sake of fostering communal unity, cohesion and positive development;
  - c. Prioritize the special needs and inclusion of people with disabilities, women, children, the youth and senior citizens. Genuine inclusivity entails catering to a diverse array of needs, encompassing physical, mental, psychological and emotional aspects;
  - d. Harness the power of data to advocate for substantial investment in infrastructure, particularly in artificial intelligence and data accessibility, with a focus on combatting gender-based discrimination and disinformation;
  - e. Enhance the efficacy of the UNHCR through robust peer review mechanisms, bolstering capacity-building efforts and integrating monitoring, evaluation, and learning clauses into guidance charters to facilitate periodic assessments and bolster emergency crisis response capabilities;
  - f. Strengthen human rights advocacy by fostering alignment among national, regional and global entities, coupled with robust data collection and sharing mechanisms to ensure inclusive growth from the grassroots;
  - g. Safeguard and preempt humanitarian crises through collaborative efforts among regional, continental, and global bodies, leveraging on civil societies' outreach to hold accountable and prioritize solutions at the grassroots level;
  - h. Ensure protection and prevention of humanitarian affairs through joint responsibility in regional, continental and global bodies and utilizing civil societies to hold groups and account and emphasizing the grassroots level solution-oriented; and
  - i. Ensure proper data and reliable information gathering and dissemination to check against disinformation, misinformation and hoarding of information.

## THEME IV: CLIMATE GOVERNANCE



The debate around climate governance has been on collective agreement on the best multilateral strategies for the mitigation and adaptation strategies to the devastating effects of global warming across the globe. The climate change-induced challenges occur in different degrees in different parts of the world. These include human and food insecurity, human and livestock displacements and migration due to hunger, floods, droughts and diseases.

During the two-day dialogue, the group on Climate Governance brainstormed on issues such as finance, laws, research and development, innovations and carbon credit. They made the following pertinent observations as part of the main challenges of Climate Governance:

- a. The greatest part of the global warming is caused by the industrialized world and Africa which contributes only about 3%, is suffering the worst impacts of global warming;
- b. the mitigation and adaptation strategies have mainly been skewed to favor the developed world with the Global South, merely falling in line, with little or no voice despite being the least polluters;



- c. climate finance continues to pose the most critical challenge to research, adaptation and mitigation efforts across Africa due to discriminatory and stringent conditions, thus making it nearly very difficult for African countries to access finance, especially within the UN system and the global financial institutions to fund their climate research, mitigation and adaptation strategies;
- d. national governments and international organizations have always downplayed the importance of academic, research institutions and civil society organizations in climate governance issues, which often impede the effective flow and harnessing of climate-focused research outcomes conducted in Africa;
- e. expressed concerns that African countries have yet to demonstrate appreciable worries and a high sense of responsibility as they largely depend on the global north for solutions while their peoples continue to suffer the catastrophic impacts of climate change; and
- f. Africa's voice is hardly reckoned with at the UN climate focal bodies- the United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP) and United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

### Recommendations

For justice, equity, improved funding, and the development of innovative and effective strategies for the implementation of climate governance policies:

- a. The parts of the UN Charter relating to climate governance should be reformed to reflect current realities, especially in the light of the myriad of challenges of global warming threatening the world, especially Africa's existence;
- b. To give voice to Africa, the UNEP and UNFCCC should be reformed to have three components: Environmental Assemblies; Research Community/Network cascading from the UN to regional and sub-regional levels and Environmental Court for justice;
- c. UNEP and UNFCCC should establish more African regional offices for effective grassroots reach and collaboration with Africa's research institutions and CSOs;
- d. The UN should review the policy of taking a new theme at every COP to make enough room for the monitoring and the evaluation of the implementation of its decisions;
- e. Climate Justice: the highly polluting nations should not only pity Africa but take the lion's share of the responsibilities towards emission reduction and adaptation as well as mitigation of the catastrophic impacts of global warming on the continent by

- improving on their current support to Africa's climate adaptation and mitigation strategies with appropriate technology, manpower, sustained friendly funding and accessible market for private companies investing in green innovations. Africa should go through the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and the Pan-African Parliament to seek justification for this position;
- f. African leaders must wake up to their constitutional responsibilities and summon the political will to commit to building capacity and ability through research and advocacy for the organized private sector buy-in, including looking outside the UN System, to drive innovation and collaboration towards self-sufficiency in addressing the existential threats of global warming on Africa;
  - g. Climate Change is scientific. African nations need to develop a climate strategy that is rooted in its peculiarities and realities and transit to green energy and develop indigenous models informed by indigenous research, backed by clearly defined laws, to tackle its climate crises;
  - h. For sustainable funding:
    - i. climate finance should be restructured. The various environmental funds, more specifically, climate change, should be streamlined to make the conditions, criteria and medium of access simpler to enable African countries to access these resources while also ensuring accountability and transparency in their usage;
    - ii. Africa should negotiate for debt swap within the UN and the Bretton Woods institutions and lower interests on capital loans to encourage private sector participation in climate financing and shift focus to opportunities offered by climate change, especially green infrastructure, to support the continent's sustainable development;
    - iii. Special drawing rights should be changed to climate funding and all financial arrangements attached to adaptation and mitigation of climate change should be subjected to legal oversights through proper scrutiny for their potential benefits amongst the vulnerable people while accessing their overall implications for sustainable development;
  - i. Based on the clear nexus between climate change and security, evidence-based research, early warning and early response mechanisms to global warming's existential threats and climate resilience should be integrated into conflict

- resolution strategies by the UN and the AU; and
- j. The inputs of Africa's academic institutions, think tanks and civil society organizations should be given serious consideration in the collective efforts towards addressing climate governance issues. The UN, African Union and the RECs as well as African governments should support, and contribute funds, intelligence and technology for the sustenance of the Network of African Think-Tanks just established and launched in Abuja at the end of this Regional Dialogue.



## THEME V: RULES-BASED WORLD ORDER AND PLACE OF AFRICA IN GLOBAL GOVERNANCE



The panel deliberated on “building consensus around a shared understanding of particular global/regional problem-sets and analyzing and critiquing the strength and weaknesses of the current global/regional governance responses to such a particular global/regional problem-set. During the debate on the issues as highlighted above, the following problems, weaknesses and strengths of the global/regional bodies were identified:

- a. Rules are made to guide the conduct of actors in the international system. A governance system without rules would amount to anarchy. This underscores the relevance of a rules-based order in global governance. However, based on hypocrisy and double standards in the international system, a rules-based global governance does not seem to exist. As such the group observed that the current rules are:
  - i. reflecting a time that has long passed, the current rules both in the UN and those governing financial institutions' architecture were decided a long time ago when most African countries were not independent and were not signatories to those decisions;

- ii. being applied unequally, unfairly and unjustly to different states and situations. The five superpowers of the UN Security Council made laws and broke them at their whims and caprices;
  - iii. not adequately solving the global problems as decided upon (SDGs);
- b. Africa presents weakness and lack of compliance: the regional bodies of Africa don't obey the rules created by them;
  - c. Private actors, with the capacity to influence global decisions, through finance and technology, often do so in favour of their countries of origin, irrespective of their huge gains from Africa; and
  - d. National interests are highly active and often influence discussions on global governance and the framing of rules.

### Recommendations

After exhaustive deliberations on the above issues, the panel agreed that global governance is all about dealing with issues that no one country can handle on its own, hence the framing of policies through supra-national institutions. Therefore, to have a global world order that is fair, just, consistent and impartially applied at the core:

- a. Africa must call urgently for a conference to review the UN Charter, otherwise known as invoking Article 109 (3). This conference will open the opportunity to make the rules that will place the world order on a more effective, equitable, inclusive and democratic framework. In the negotiations leading up to such a conference, Africa must bring to the table topics that represent the interest of Africans:
  - i. Democratize the UN system and expand the Security Council to include Africa's permanent representation;
  - ii. Increase the power of the General Assembly, making it more of a world parliament;
  - iii. Make ECOSOC work better for development and govern global supply chains to be more democratic and equitable;
  - iv. Govern effectively in the world of digital technologies (including AI)
  - v. Reform financial and trade institutions: Bretton Woods institutions, WTO and ILO to make them more inclusive;

- b. Flanking priority: African countries and leaders should be more accountable, adhere to the AU rules and develop strategies to make the AU more effective, increasing unity and thereby improving the role it (Africa) can play in the UN; and
- c. In addition to investing in continental unity, Africa needs to strategically and proactively look for partnerships, based on mutual interest with partners from South-East Asia, Latin America and progressive European countries to build and strengthen capacity as well as the accountability mechanisms for the African Union and its RECs.



## SPOTLIGHT PANELS

### PANEL I: MOBILIZING SUSTAINABLE FINANCE FOR THE AFRICA WE WANT AND THE UN WE NEED, INCLUDING THROUGH SOUTH AFRICA'S G20 PRESIDENCY IN 2025



Participants deliberated on how African governments, the AU, with its Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and the organized private sector would mobilize sustainable finance for the “Africa we want and the UN we need” through sustained collaboration with the international community, particularly the G20 during and after its South Africa's presidency in 2025. The participants observed that:

- a. Africa was depending too much on foreign funding for development and the well-being of its peoples;
- b. The continued pillaging of Africa's resources by the developed countries leaves too little for African countries to be self-sufficient;
- c. Pervasive and endemic corruption as well as insecurity were the greatest clogs in

- the wheel of development in Africa;
- d. Some former colonial masters were still holding their independent former colonies to the jugular;
  - e. The global financial system established 75 years ago had yet to carry Africa along, hence its (Africa's) limited access to international financing;
  - f. There was yet to be appreciable mutual respect between Africa and the industrialized world; and
  - g. Instead of collaborating with the world on the principles of multilateralism, Europe, was leading others in moving to the extreme right.

### Recommendations

Building on the conviction that the time had come for Africa to be a part of the solution to global governance challenges, the group recommended that in order to mobilize sustainable finance for "the Africa we want and the UN we need." Africa should:

- a. start by championing its cause through systematic and assertive breaking of the dependency syndrome and committing and recommitting resources at its disposal to educating and feeding its population and developing practicable solutions to Africa's peculiar governance challenges;
- b. fight the endemic and systemic corruption through strong institutions, transparent leadership selection processes, inclusive democratic and accountable governance, to free its resources for self-sufficiency in food security, educational and technological development;
- c. strengthen the African Standby Force to give force to the AU's resolve to silence the gun by 2030;
- d. move from being consumers to producers of modern technological services in order to have a fair share of the global market;
- e. leverage on South Africa's presidency of the G20 in 2025 to negotiate the liberalization of the global financial system to guarantee Africa's access to global finance on the principles of equity, justice and fair play;
- f. Take advantage of South Africa's membership and presidency of the G20 in 2025 to negotiate for access to funds created by the G20 for development;
- g. Take advantage of the global governance innovation platform to strengthen EU-AU collaboration and humane migration and fairtrade policies for Africa;
- h. borrow from the Asian strategies and explore the opportunities in the EU-AU partnership for the facilitation of the transfer of technology to Africa;



- i. Take ownership of its natural resources through proper legislation, diplomatic renegotiation of natural resources signed off to former colonial powers; and
- j. Above all, think ahead of the September 2024 Summit of the Future to examine Article 109 of the UN Charter, support the established African Research Network and learn to contend with the dynamics of the international financial power game.

## PANEL II: INTERGENERATIONAL DIALOGUE ON ECOWAS AND PEACEBUILDING IN WEST AFRICA



The spotlight on Intergenerational Dialogue on ECOWAS and Peacebuilding in West Africa sought to:

- a. Assess the ECOWAS frameworks that succeeded and those that failed or are failing;
- b. Explore and build consensus on sustainable ways and means the international community and regional actors can help ECOWAS to develop policy implementation plans and strategies to achieve its founding objectives; and
- c. Advance USIP's Africa Center's strategic agenda for capacity-building in ECOWAS and other regional peacebuilding institutions.

Participants examined the strength and potential of the Commission that made it record such rare successes in the past and the weaknesses that are making it difficult to handle the current regional socio-political and economic crises manifesting in violent conflicts and military interventions, such as in the Republics of Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger:

- a. ECOWAS Structure and Framework - On the strength and potentials of the regional

organization, participants agreed that in its 50 years of existence:

- i. ECOWAS remained the only regional body in the world that had put in place self-funded peacekeeping and peacebuilding measures that restored durable peace and stability in some war-torn member states;
  - ii. The kind of assessed contribution framework adopted by ECOWAS made it the best self-funded regional organization in Africa;
  - iii. The regional organization had evolved progressively by putting in place frameworks such as the ECOWAS Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance for the promotion of inclusive and accountable governance and the ECOWAS Standby Force for conflict prevention, peacekeeping and peace enforcement;
  - iv. It had progressively transformed from the union of the state to the ECOWAS of the people;
  - v. It successfully used its Conflict Prevention Framework, including the ECOWAS Standby Force, to enforce peaceful compliance with the ECOWAS Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance in the Gambia, Guinea, and Guinea Bissau, among others;
  - vi. It had progressively built strong socio-economic integration and trade facilitation through common customs tariffs, integrative finance and banking (ECO Bank), free movements of people, goods and services, and common currency in the making.
- b. On Structural Limitations: participants observed that:
- i. The above progressive moves have been tested in recent years by the legitimacy of leadership. They expressed deep concerns about the organization's apparent poor diplomatic handling of a constitutional amendment for tenure elongation or electoral frauds and other corrupt tendencies; that these had created wide cracks for aberrational military intervention in the governance of some member states, with existential threats, as in the case of Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso, which have unconditionally renounced their membership of the organization;
  - ii. Despite the exemplary achievements of ECOWAS enumerated above, in its 50 years of existence, it had never found itself in such an existential crisis or distressed situation as today, as such it was too weak to resolve the crises of governance in the subregion;
  - iii. ECOWAS had been extremely weak and lacked the political will and audacity to break the precedence that constituted the Authority of Heads of State and

- Government;
- iv. iv. Nigeria which had been in the sick bay for too long was too sick to provide the leadership it was noted for since the establishment of the organization in 1975;
  - v. The regional organization was not immune to the effects of multidimensional challenges of globalization and resurgent nationalism confronting multilateral institutions like the UN, AU. As such, they urged that critiquing the successes and failures of the organization should be considered against the backdrop of globalization and the effects of epidemics and pandemics, growing youth demography, social media influences, and the aggressive hijacking of the civic space by non-state actors, as well as conflicts without borders;
  - vi. Although it had transformed into a union of the people, the organization and the national governments were still acting protective of the State to the exclusion of the people and their interests; To do so, the parliament has to be elected by the people and not by governments as is the case now;
  - vii. For too long, the ECOWAS Vision, which should be a vision for all, had been in the hands of the political leaders and technocrats in the Commissions, leaving out the youth, women, people with disabilities, labour organizations and civil society organizations;
  - viii. While the West condemned the change of power in Mali, Burkina Faso, Guinea and Niger as undemocratic, it had been regarded by Pan-Africanists as a popular uprising or overdue peaceful revolution against colonial domination and crust exploitation, hence the call for a redefinition of democracy reflecting the perspectives of the subregion and Africa in general;
  - ix. On gender mainstreaming, participants observed that ECOWAS had made appreciable advancement in actualizing the UN Security Council **Resolution R1325** and others by capturing them in a number of its (ECOWAS') frameworks and initiatives towards actualizing the UN's women in peace processes and security;
  - x. In addition to bad governance and corruption, the French colonial policies account for the infrequent military coups and unconstitutional governments in most of its former colonies in West Africa;
  - xi. xi. The ECOWAS's shift from the main objective of economic integration to conflict management was most logical given the primacy of peace, security and political stability in the economic development of any society like West Africa which had been riddled in prolonged violent conflicts and political instability. The region

should take advantage of its superb early warning mechanisms on the ground in collaboration with the UN and AU to develop appropriate police/military/diplomatic or political responses to existential security threats in the region;

## Recommendations

51. For ECOWAS to meet up the intergenerational aspirations of its people under the current global realities as stated above, participants made the following recommendations, not in any order of priority:

- a. through expanded conversations, the opportunities to achieve the ECOWAS Vision and Mission, need to be harnessed with inputs from all stakeholders, e.g., civil society organizations, labor unions, parliaments and the organized business communities in the region. The members of the ECOWAS Parliament should be elected through direct franchise;
- b. to peacefully and effectively address foreign domination and interference in the internal affairs of member states of the ECOWAS Commission, historical perspectives and current dynamics in the subregion must be taken into consideration;
- c. for ECOWAS to stop being a multilateral abstraction, it needs to be on the ground as a development center rather than an abstraction issuing resolutions or sanctions. Member states should develop their economies to make it fit, and pay their assessed contributions when due;
- d. ECOWAS should look to organizing future dialogues aimed at harmonizing all member states' institutions and infrastructures for peace and have them speak with one voice to address, mitigate and resolve cross-border conflicts;
- e. Transiting from ECOWAS of the State to that of the people would entail the diplomatic and practical engagement of the age-old traditional institutions, women, youth and all other groups in subregional activities to change the narrative from the state-centric approaches to dealing with all governance challenges in real-time;
- f. To mitigate the effects of Climate Change-induced socio-economic and security challenges in West Africa, governments and ECOWAS must ensure that military actions do not further deplete the environment;
- g. For ECOWAS to gain traction and legitimacy in condemning military coups in West

Africa as an aberration and undemocratic, followed by stringent spur-of-the-moment sanctions, member states MUST adequately respond to the despicable deficit of good governance in their jurisdictions;

- h. To give effect to intergenerational considerations, ECOWAS should reflect and embark on redesigning preemptive measures against inevitable youth revolts of the Arab Spring type by investing in multidimensional and cross-cutting engagements and building trust in the youth parliament while tapping from the rich experiences and knowledge of the older generations;
- i. ECOWAS should review her Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, Goods and Services to resolve the recurrent cross-border and communal violent clashes between farmers and herders traceable to resource control, including grazing/farmlands and water holes;
- j. On free movement - issues of transhumance were issues nations needed to deal with boldly through modernization and development to fit current dynamics, such as investing and reinvesting in livestock development, modernization, and education etc;
- k. For Nigeria to return to the leadership table and drive the search for durable peace and sustainable development in the subregion, the government needed to harness the country's rich diplomatic, traditional religious as well as private sector talents for preventive diplomacy: negotiations and mediations.
- l. Most importantly, for the ECOWAS that we want, the citizens must take responsibility for deepening the understanding of what ECOWAS sought to achieve, what has been going on in the Commission and advocate for inclusive and accountable leadership for managing the difficult but necessary intergenerational dialogue for transiting from the ECOWAS of state to that of the people in the face of the reality that the states no longer had the monopoly of the instruments of coercion.

## **PANEL III: FROM THE ABUJA DIALOGUE TO THE NAIROBI UN-CIVIL SOCIETY CONFERENCE LEADING TO THE SUMMIT OF THE FUTURE 2024**



The Panel and participants discussed the relevance of Civil Society Organizations. The question was asked: How can CSOs hold governments accountable in their various state, national and regional political environments? This was a result of the observation that the CSO space in many countries are shrinking and there is the need to reinvigorate and sustain CSOs as progressive stakeholders in the society.

Responses:

- a. CSOs need to invest and generate reliable data and evidence about the subject matter concerned in society.
- b. All indicators must speak with each other. They must be in consonance in the information gathered i.e. this includes coming together and creating the reality of a better life. CSOs need data and must undertake research and be equipped to speak from an informed perspective.

- c. CSOs and Government should have a symbiotic relationship and be partners in progress. It must avoid double-faced tendencies that generate negative impressions in the eyes of society.
- d. CSOs are to ensure self-accountability and trust with the people and government, galvanize and mobilize people through information and enlightenment.
- e. CSOs should create and sustain transnational partnerships, capacity building and knowledge sharing with other CSOs. They should be agent of change which uses the tool of persuasion and layer of influence, legal systems and laws to enforce government compliance on issues of governmental responsibility.
- f. CSO should use the platform of social media to inform and mobilize the populace.

#### **Roles of Civil Society Organizations**

- g. CSOs should embrace policy engagement with government, regional and international multilateral institutions.
- h. CSOs are entrusted with the mandate of reminding the government about its obligation to citizens.
- i. CSOs ensure Informative and advocacy on local, regional and global issues that affect the people or society.
- j. There is a need for a smart coalition of CSOs to project very deliberate, very intentional influence on government at national, regional and multi-national levels. CSOs are stakeholders in governance as such legislative action is needed to protect CSOs and to entrench them as key stakeholders in governance and societal projects, while CSOs are also encouraged to carry out independent self-evaluation to ensure accountability and credibility.



# AFRICAN RESEARCH NETWORK



## ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PROPOSED “AFRICAN RESEARCH NETWORK ON REGIONAL AND GLOBAL GOVERNANCE INNOVATION”



### INTRODUCTION

On the 6th of March, 2024, participants and representatives of the sponsors of the Arica Summit of the Future Dialogue for “the Africa We Want and the UN We Need” converged at the same venue to discuss the viability and possibility for establishing and launching a new African research network focused on issues of regional and global governance innovation, as proposed by the organizers of the Conference (see [ARN-RGGI Concept Note](#)). The Executive Director of the Savannah Centre introduced the proposal to the group. He informed participants that the “*African Research Network on Regional and Global Governance Innovation*” was just a conceptual name, subject to change to a more suitable one by the group at the end of their deliberations in the coming weeks and months.

Many suggestions were made in **plenary**, including the use of some native African words for the name of the network. It was thereafter referred to the various groups to discuss and put forward a suggested name for the proposed African research network. The plenary was then broken into three groups, namely;

- a. Policy Research Workstream;
- b. Policy Dialogue Workstream; and
- c. Community of Practice and Advocacy Workstream.

## **THE POLICY RESEARCH WORKSTREAM**

The discussion revolved around how the Network can invest in research, especially on issues that affect the African continent. It was reiterated that African -centered reports be clearly defined by its values system and be broken down to ensure proper understanding by all classes of persons. Solution-centered research was deemed pivotal to the development of Africa and hence a research network was imperative as a platform for researchers, civil societies, and its retinue of experts to provide problem-solving research reports that would be driven by state actors into policies that promote good governance, sustainable development and regional cohesion, all aimed at creating an Africa that works for all.

Some basic questions were raised and the following answers were provided:

### **a. Who are the Target Group for Policy Research Reports?**

Academic Institutions, Academics and Researchers stressed the need to break it down for the ordinary people at the grassroots level to understand and access; State actors responsible for policy formulation and implementation; Civil society organizations who act as the instrument of check and balance towards ensuring accountability in all facets of leadership; and the Policy Dialogue Group;

### **b. How can these reports be simplified for the general public?**

- i. Design the research in a way that it can be easily understood and adapted by the target group, e.g., the farmers, the uneducated, the elite etc;
- ii. Simplify and prioritize the ideas and themes to speak to the problems and the solutions in the language of the people;
- iii. Attend to challenges that affect continental groups in terms of development; and
- iv. purposeful cooperation and collaboration with state actors at the national, regional and global levels for this to take root.

**c. What are the main themes to work on?**

- i. The main and secondary targets, especially, groups or organizations that consume research products, such as security outfits, health and welfare organizations, governments, Human Rights groups, civil society organizations, academic institutions, media outlets, etc;
- ii. Focus on existing challenges: Digital preparations; space; energy; climate change; governance; physical and food security; and
- iii. Agenda Setting- Artificial Intelligence and Innovation

**d. Challenges to the success of the Network**

These include:

- i. Finance; Language barriers; and gatekeepers;
- ii. Ambiguous definition of concepts and ideologies such as human rights issues, inclusion etc;
- iii. Interference by government;
- iv. Limited platforms for knowledge dissemination;
- v. Nationalism and stringent migration laws within Africa;
- vi. Interference by funding partners or donor organizations; and
- vii. Absence of Regional cohesion and harmony amongst African countries.

**e. How can we deal with friction in the network?**

- i. Adopt strategic global best practices from other International non-governmental organizations;
- ii. Prioritize African problems and adopt appropriate solution strategies;
- iii. African countries to build trust amongst themselves;
- iv. Clear definition of themes as they affect Africa;
- v. Bridge language barriers through an effective communications network;
- vi. Key Issues should be pronounced
- vii. Determine the type of research to be carried out, making sure that it provides solutions to the existing problems and brings to the fore the tangible and hidden potentials of Africa;
- viii. Set the Agenda, encouraging policy-level engagement with key institutions;
- ix. Build trust and confidence between the national, regional and global divides towards ensuring regional cohesion;

- x. Speak with one voice and inaugurate a council, all geared towards building a united front;
- xi. Leverage on African talents in the Diaspora;
- xii. Accept and choose to deal with our problems, such as insecurity, irregular migration, poor communication networks and food shortages by ourselves, where we can, through research;
- xiii. Design ways of getting citadels of learning, research institutions to benefit from this platform and our own gatekeepers, thus promoting African home-grown research;
- xiv. Leverage diplomacy, diplomatic and consular missions to build relationships and heritages across African boundaries as support bases for putting this platform on the right path; and
- xv. Amplify the African voice, values and talents.

At the end of their deliberations, this breakout group proposed the name for the network as, *“The Academic Council on African Research and Development” (ACARD)*.

## **THE POLICY DIALOGUE WORKSTREAM**

Participants deliberated on how to institute effective policy dialogue between civil societies, governments, and citizens. They outlined that such dialogue was imperative for promoting transparency, accountability, and participatory governance. Participants agreed that to facilitate the establishment and operationalization of the *“African Research Network on Regional and Global Governance Innovation,”* the following must be in place:

- a. **Mechanism for Dialogue:** This should be created to provide a formal platform for policy dialogue or discussions among working groups or joint committees of representatives from civil societies, government agencies, and citizen groups can come together to discuss and recommend key policy issues;
- b. **Inclusive Participation:** Ensure that policy dialogue research processes are inclusive and participatory across the board,
- c. **Transparent & Accessible Information:** Provide access to relevant information, data, and research findings to all participants in the policy dialogue process. Transparency in decision-making and access to information enables stakeholders to make informed contributions and hold policymakers accountable;

- d. Trust: Build trust and mutual respect among stakeholders by promoting open communication, and constructive engagement; and
- e. Workspace and materials: There must be cordial relationships, a conducive workspace and adequate as well as suitable working materials for competent hands;
- f. Facilitation and Mediation: Employ skilled facilitators or mediators to guide the policy dialogue process, ensure balanced participation, and manage conflicts or disagreements that may arise. Facilitators can help create a safe and respectful space for dialogue and ensure that all voices are heard;
- g. Clear Objectives and Agenda: Defined clear objectives and agendas for policy dialogue sessions, focusing on specific policy issues or challenges that require collective action or decision-making. Having clear goals helps to focus discussions and achieve desired outcomes;
- h. Regular Dialogue: Foster a culture of regular dialogue between and among relevant stakeholders. Continuous engagement allows for reiterative discussions, feedback loops, and adaptation of policies based on changing circumstances;
- i. Feedback Mechanism: Establish feedback mechanisms to ensure that outcomes and decisions from policy dialogue sessions are communicated transparently to all stakeholders. Solicit feedback from participants on the effectiveness of the dialogue process and use it to improve future engagements;
- j. Capacity-Building: Provide capacity-building support to enhance the skills, knowledge, and capacity of civil society organizations, government officials, and citizen groups to effectively participate in policy dialogue processes. Training workshops, technical assistance, and resources can empower stakeholders to engage meaningfully in policy discussions;
- k. Integration into Policy Making Processes: Integrate the outcomes and recommendations from policy dialogue sessions into the policy-making process, ensuring that they inform decision-making, policy formulation, and implementation. Promote a culture of evidence-based policymaking that values input from diverse stakeholders.

Participants concluded that by adopting these strategies, the African research network would be on a firm footing to conduct its activities, including advocacy for the implementation of research works and decisions of UN and AU conferences by governments for sustainable development. The Network can also serve as a veritable vehicle for

promoting collaboration, consensus-building, consistency, and inclusive governance processes that address the needs and priorities of all stakeholders.

## **THE COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE AND ADVOCACY WORKSTREAM**

Questions asked:

- a. What organization or group should be part of the community?
- b. How can collaboration strengthen regional dialogue?
- c. How can membership for the network be sought out?
- d. What is the mandate?
- e. What value are we looking for in an ideal network?

### **Recommendations**

- a. Identification of both long-term and short-term targets for the network.
- b. Identification of key people.
- c. Identification of advocacy role during and after SOTF.
- d. Identification of roles of people in various areas of expertise to avoid duplication of policies.
- e. Practicalize grassroots inclusion.
- f. Inclusion of community-based organizations not limiting it to tier organizations.
- g. A group practicalizing inclusion that goes beyond publications or reports that does lobbying and advocacy through the building of political will.
- h. Data on informed policymaking.
- i. Almost reversing the migration syndrome.
- j. Inclusion of practically identified youths globally.
- k. The community of practice should be structured to reach a wide range of people, there should be a department within it to deal with this aspect.
- l. Yearly round table discussions on issues revolving around the global south.
- m. There should be a clarification on what we are trying to achieve with an analysis of how it should be established.
- n. Monitoring and following up on the outcome of the policies.
- o. A group that will specialize in drafting resolutions with experience in negotiations and establishing agendas that can penetrate the grassroots.

## CONCLUSION AND LAUNCH OF THE AFRICAN RESEARCH NETWORK

The various groups finally converged at the plenary session and submitted their reports as summarized above. It was concluded that from the observations and recommendations of the three groups, participants and representatives of sponsors present agreed that the proposed African Research Network was a workable idea, worthy of continued discussion and conceptual development. They, therefore, pledged to work together in further exploring the development of this idea into a continental link between researchers and policy makers in the search for durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. They deferred picking any of the suggested names till after further consultations and agreed to proceed with the African research network idea development under the provisional conceptual (and merely descriptive) name: *“African Research Network on Regional and Global Governance Innovation,”* It was suggested that the upcoming UN-Civil Society Conference in Nairobi (9-10 May 2024) would offer another opportunity to continue the consultations. All participants from the Africa SOTF Dialogue were urged to register and attend the Nairobi conference.







## THE ABUJA DECLARATION

### CHAPEAU

The Abuja Declaration reflects major discussion elements from a recent gathering of African experts and friends of Africa to consider African perspectives on “The Africa We Want and the United Nations We Need” in the run-up to the September 2024 Summit of the Future in New York. The Africa SOTF Dialogue took place in Abuja from 4-6 March 2024. It was convened by Abuja-based Savannah Centre for Diplomacy, Democracy and Development, in partnership with the Stimson Centre, One Earth Future, Oxfam, Humanity United, United Nations University Centre for Policy Research, Kofi Annan Foundation, Olof Palme International Center, Foundation for European Progressive Studies, United States Institute for Peace, Global Challenges Foundation, Foundation Max van der Stoel, Global Governance Innovation Network, SDGs Kenya Forum, Global Institute for Strategic Research, Dag Hammarskjold Foundation, Centre for Democracy and Development, European Institute for Peace, Synergos and Institute for Economics and Peace.

The dialogue was honored to feature eminent African and international leaders, including: HE Professor Ibrahim Gambari (former United Nations Under-Secretary General for Political Affairs and Foreign Minister of Nigeria); HE Dr Donald Kaberuka (former President of the African Development Bank, former Minister of Finance of The Republic of Rwanda, and member of the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism); HE Leonardo Santos Simao (the UN Secretary-General's representative UN Coordinating Office in Dakar); HE Ambassador Bankole Adeoye (AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security); Professor Tijani Mohammed Bande (Nigeria's former Permanent Representative to the UN and President of the 74th General Assembly); HE Aissatou Hayatou (Head of the NEPAD Coordination Office, African Union Commission); HE Ann Linde (former Swedish Foreign Minister and FEPS Special Advisor for International Affairs); Dr. Richard Ponzio (Director, Global Governance, Justice & Security Program, Stimson); and His Royal Majesty, Oba Dr Adedokun Omoniyi Abolarin, the Orangun of Oke Ila, Osun State of Nigeria. Together, they were joined by over 80 participants from across Africa (alongside a few partners from beyond Africa), who are experts from all walks of life, including academia, policymakers, civil society leaders, government officials, ambassadors, the military and paramilitary services, activists, women, youth, and people with

disabilities. The President, Federal Republic of Nigeria, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, who was represented by the Secretary to the Federal Government, Senator, Dr George Akume, declared the conference open. These eminent Africans and partners vigorously exchanged ideas and perspectives over three days to produce the Abuja Declaration.

## **METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES**

### **Opening Session**

The event began with an opening session, on 4 March, with lead-off remarks from the Chairman of the Savannah Centre, HE Professor Ibrahim Gambari, the delivery of several goodwill messages, and a keynote address entitled “The Africa We Want and the UN We Need,” by HE Dr Donald Kaberuka.

### **Breakthrough Group Sessions**

Five breakthrough group sessions met, on 4 and 5 March, on the following themes:

- a. Peace, Security, and Defense
- b. Sustainable Development and Democratic Governance
- c. Human Rights and Humanitarian Action
- d. Climate Governance
- e. Rules-based World Order and the Place of Africa in the Global Governance

Gender, youth and technology served as cross-cutting issues for all five breakthrough groups.

Co-Facilitation and Rapporteurs: Three co-facilitators and one rapporteur (spokesperson) were assigned to each breakthrough group, in addition to note-takers.

### **Spotlight Sessions**

Within the dialogue's plenary hall, three “spotlight” panel discussions were conducted on:

Spotlight 1: Mobilizing Sustainable Finance for the Africa We Want and the UN We Need, including through South Africa's G20 Presidency in 2025

Spotlight 2: Inter-generational Dialogue on ECOWAS and Peacebuilding in West Africa

Spotlight 3: From this Abuja Dialogue to the Nairobi UN Civil Society Conference in May 2024 to the Summit of the Future in September 2024.

### **Closing Session**

The closing plenary session, held on the late afternoon of 5 March, was anchored by a high-level panel of five eminent persons: HE Professor Ibrahim Gambari, HE Aissatou Hayatou, HE

Ann Linde, HE Professor Ambassador Tijani Mohammed Bande, and HE Dr Donald Kaberuka. Each breakthrough group's rapporteur presented to the high-level panel and broader plenary the chief outcomes and recommendations from their deliberations. This was followed by specific feedback and questions from the eminent panelists. The outcomes of the five breakthrough groups were validated by the dialogue's participants and, subsequently, embodied in this Declaration.

### **African Research Network on Regional and Global Governance Innovation**

On 6 March, the participants held a special session on the proposed creation of an African Research Network for the purpose of follow-on policy dialogues and joint research, in connection with the themes taken up in the Africa SOTF Dialogue.

## **THE DECLARATION**

Following three days of deliberations at the conference of African Regional Dialogue on the “Africa We Want and the United Nations We Need”, we, the African participants, hereby declare as follows:

- a. Africa commits to Effective, Just & Inclusive Multilateralism under the umbrella of the United Nations.
- b. Chief UN functions are paralyzed today due, in particular, to double-standards and the mis-application of veto powers by some members of the Security Council.
- c. To make the UN more effective and serve all nations and peoples fairly and justly, it must fully democratize in both structural design and operation.
- d. UN Security Council Permanent Membership must be increased to include representation from neglected continents, including Africa (for example, through consideration of two new African permanent seats).
- e. We appeal that article 109, paragraph 3 of the United Nations Charter be invoked to convene a General Review Conference as an outcome of The Summit of the Future.
- f. Similar to the makeup and procedures of the UN's Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), the UN should establish a Commission of Traditional Rulers and Faith-based Organizations.
- g. The Rules-based World Order must be re-defined, and re-designed to address the concerns of Africa. In particular, the World Bank, IMF, WTO, and UN should be restructured to cater better to the needs, interests, and aspirations of all Africans.
- h. Peacekeeping operations must be fully funded by the UN without pre-conditions. African interests are of paramount importance and should be reflected in the

- mandates and exit strategies of peace operations on the African continent.
- i. Africa is committed to sustainable development and democratic governance. To this end, we call on all African States to abide by their constitutional governance arrangements, consistent with the principles of inclusion, transparency and accountability, equity, the rule of law, and justice.
  - j. Africa rejects external interference in the sovereignty of its nations and peoples. To this end, all foreign powers with a military presence must evacuate.
  - k. We call on all governments, multilateral agencies, and the international business community to support efforts to stop the illicit inflow of weapons into Africa.
  - l. Africa is committed to Human Rights and Humanitarian Action. Human Rights' application must take into consideration diverse cultural norms across Africa. Similarly, humanitarian action must always be conducted with a sense of immediacy to save human lives, without preconditions. Similarly, the transfer of technology and medical support during health pandemics must be done on an unconditional basis.
  - m. Africa fully realizes the severe effects of climate change across the continent and, indeed, the world. All attempts must be made to contain and reverse the adverse effects of climate change. There must be technology transfers and adequate climate financing from the international community to cushion climate change's effects across Africa.
  - n. We will continue to explore the establishment of a new African Research Network for the development, promotion and innovation of new ideas to achieve more effective, just, and inclusive multilateral institutions, globally, regionally, and sub-regionally, to better advance the values and actions associated with “the Africa We Want.”

## CONCLUSION

We, as proud Africans, are committed to this Declaration for Action and Greater Unity, and we call on our partners and friends from across the globe to support “the Africa We Want and the UN We need.” We thank our sponsors for making the Africa SOTF Dialogue a success. As we move towards this September's Summit of the Future, we look forward to our collective actions to promote more effective, just, and inclusive multilateralism for our common good.

Prepared as a reflection and synthesis of the discussions by African SOTF Dialogue Participants, held from 4-6 March 2024 in Abuja, Nigeria.

## ANNEXES

### Annexes to the Report:

1. Concept Note I: The Africa We Want and The United Nations We Need.  
[https://docs.google.com/document/d/e/2PACX-1vRGHYipXafg\\_mdScgYWG3Dy6yQ7FmX2lalzq4jA-\\_0-fW0svhllglPrDr3oultVXL7dUNpWiKtfqWi2/pub](https://docs.google.com/document/d/e/2PACX-1vRGHYipXafg_mdScgYWG3Dy6yQ7FmX2lalzq4jA-_0-fW0svhllglPrDr3oultVXL7dUNpWiKtfqWi2/pub)
2. Concept Note II: the African Research Network on Regional and Global Governance Innovations.  
[https://docs.google.com/document/d/e/2PACX-1vTsZZl3tv-5GOFV4Pq2ToeeZa774EfDlCWl04NWS-pOHd1LzQjicGGi2H95fxO8O2STsMggvgfFB\\_eCN/pub](https://docs.google.com/document/d/e/2PACX-1vTsZZl3tv-5GOFV4Pq2ToeeZa774EfDlCWl04NWS-pOHd1LzQjicGGi2H95fxO8O2STsMggvgfFB_eCN/pub)
3. Welcome Address by Prof Ibrahim Gambari.  
[https://docs.google.com/document/d/e/2PACX-1vSxAAIQ2VN\\_iPw3jE9ZfuFx9j9vDSgb66-Ql1ZCee6upippKQLKvHRUNNFic4KWRBFYOeEd6vNF0gV9/pub](https://docs.google.com/document/d/e/2PACX-1vSxAAIQ2VN_iPw3jE9ZfuFx9j9vDSgb66-Ql1ZCee6upippKQLKvHRUNNFic4KWRBFYOeEd6vNF0gV9/pub)
4. Address by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu at the Africa Regional Dialogue on the Summit of the Future (SOTF).  
[https://docs.google.com/document/d/e/2PACX-1vQBULnFPpR\\_pAvhX1gw1S9Nn59y8Apl1nm3RZmxSpvcyacDKnsJsq-DtcUTTyysKr2sy2BARrrmHxNG/pub](https://docs.google.com/document/d/e/2PACX-1vQBULnFPpR_pAvhX1gw1S9Nn59y8Apl1nm3RZmxSpvcyacDKnsJsq-DtcUTTyysKr2sy2BARrrmHxNG/pub)
5. Keynote Address by Dr Donald Kaberuka.  
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/e/2PACX-1vSIIGZTJKUi1bPFIF-QrsQEARR-EoOYOLIhrqfK6X7nEVFqkhBTec-NhpztTYwHpRz-p1RxOxdHX1af/pub>
6. Goodwill Message by the Chairperson of the Africa Union Commission.  
[https://docs.google.com/document/d/e/2PACX-1vRnp36F71T8ptu8\\_sFiT07HbOqXKDBwiwfr1rPu9Gm2z4Svdo9WN7mgZp-44Z902kbi8SREQdP4voqr/pub](https://docs.google.com/document/d/e/2PACX-1vRnp36F71T8ptu8_sFiT07HbOqXKDBwiwfr1rPu9Gm2z4Svdo9WN7mgZp-44Z902kbi8SREQdP4voqr/pub)



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