



ASWAN FORUM

CONCEPT NOTE

Third Edition of the Aswan Forum for Sustainable Peace and Development (Aswan Forum III)

AFRICA IN AN ERA OF CASCADING RISKS AND CLIMATE VULNERABILITY: PATHWAYS FOR A PEACEFUL, RESILIENT, AND SUSTAINABLE CONTINENT

21-22 JUNE 2022

This year's edition of the Aswan Forum takes place in the context of an increasingly volatile international situation that has far-reaching consequences for the global economy, with the global economic growth rate projected to drop from 3.6% to 2.6%.¹ Disruptions in energy and commodities markets have resulted in price spikes which are negatively impacting many African countries reliant on food and fuel imports.² According to the African Development Bank (AfDB), USD\$1 billion needs to be mobilized to avert a potential food crisis across the continent.³ Disruptions to trade and supply chains, inflationary pressures, and reduced investment flows are having a ripple effect on African economies.

This rapidly evolving situation comes at a time when Africa is still grappling with the health and socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, with women and youth being hit the hardest.⁴ With only 15% of Africa's adult population being fully vaccinated⁵ (compared with more than 90% in many high-income countries⁶), a debt burden that reached 58% of GDP in 2020⁷, and a looming food crisis, Africa is experiencing increased waves of poverty which are threatening to reverse hard-won development gains. Progress made in the recovery from the pandemic is also likely to be hindered, as well as the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want.

Concurrently, protracted armed conflicts, violence and a surge in terrorism continue to plague the continent destabilizing entire societies, shattering local communities, and causing humanitarian crises.⁸ Terrorist groups in Africa have been continuously mobilizing new recruits, exploiting transnational organized crime networks and taking advantage of the vulnerabilities accentuated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

¹ UNCTAD (2022) - Ukraine war cuts global growth prospects - <https://unctad.org/news/ukraine-war-cuts-global-growth-prospects-1>

² UN (2022)- Global Impact of war in Ukraine on food, energy and finance systems, Brief no.1- <https://news.un.org/pages/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/UN-GCRG-Brief-1.pdf>; UNCTAD (2022) - Ukraine war's impact on trade and development - <https://unctad.org/news/ukraine-wars-impact-trade-and-development>

³ AfDB (2022) - It's high time Africa started feeding itself in the wake of the Russia-Ukraine war, Dr Akinwumi Adesina, 'The National' - <https://www.afdb.org/en/news-and-events/its-high-time-africa-started-feeding-itself-wake-russia-ukraine-war-dr-akinwumi-adesina-tells-national-50761>

⁴ UNCTAD (2021) - Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on trade and development - https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/osg2020d1_en.pdf UNCTAD (2021) - Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on trade and development - https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/osg2020d1_en.pdf

⁵ WHO (2022) - Africa's COVID-19 vaccine uptake increases by 15% - <https://www.afro.who.int/news/africas-covid-19-vaccine-uptake-increases-15?>

⁶ Stewart, C. (2022). Full COVID-19 vaccination uptake in the European Economic Area (EEA) in 2022. Statista - <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1218676/full-covid-19-vaccination-uptake-in-europe/>

⁷ Kristalina Georgieva (2021). The Road Ahead for Africa-Fighting the Pandemic and Dealing with Debt. IMF - <https://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2021/06/23/sp062321-the-road-ahead-for-africa-fighting-the-pandemic-and-dealing-with-debt>

⁸ UNDP (2022). The 2022 Special Report: New threats to Human Security in the Anthropocene: Demanding Greater Solidarity - <https://hs.hdr.undp.org/>

At the same time, these dynamics are further exacerbated by climate change as a threat-multiplier to the peace and security landscape across the continent.⁹ While Africa contributes the least to the climate crisis with only 4 per cent of global carbon emissions,¹⁰ it is the most vulnerable to its devastating consequences with livelihood loss, food and water insecurity, heightened competition over natural resources, and large scale forced displacement fueling tensions and aggravating existing vulnerabilities.¹¹

Furthermore, many countries in Africa that are highly exposed to climate change are also conflict-ridden, further accentuating the imperative to accelerate the implementation of global pledges and commitments in climate adaptation and resilience that would contribute to peacebuilding efforts.¹² In this regard, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) 6th assessment report, on Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability, emphasized that adaptation and development build peace in conflict-prone regions by addressing both the drivers of grievances that lead to conflict and vulnerability to climate change.¹³ This points to the importance of building synergies between the climate adaptation and peacebuilding communities.

In this regard, the convergence of climate risks with fragility and security challenges, as well as concurrent crises including health and food security ones, calls for interconnected responses in the context of advancing a green and transformative recovery that is premised on building and investing in resilient and sustainable institutions, as well as robust governance structures and comprehensive long term inclusive policies, strategies and solutions. Such an approach--anchored in the sustaining peace and sustainable development agendas--is essential to increase the resilience of states and communities, especially those affected by violent conflict, to be able to withstand, adapt to, and recover from simultaneous crises and pre-existing threats, whether political, socio-economic, governance, health, or climate-related.

Responding to this cascade of multi-faceted risks is putting to the test African national capacities, as well as sub-regional and continental frameworks in an unprecedented manner. Nonetheless, Africa's pro-active stance is reflected in several recent developments and initiatives which seek to address some of these challenges and offer potential entry points to advance the integrated approach and responses outlined above. These include (i) the African Union Centre for Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD) - officially launched in December 2021 in Cairo; (ii) "Silencing the Guns"- a flagship initiative of Agenda 2063 which has been extended to 2030; (iii) the African Climate Mobility Initiative; (iv) the African Development Bank's 3rd Strategy for Addressing Fragility and Building Resilience in Africa (2022-2026); and

⁹ Communiqué of the 1051st meeting of the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) held on 26 November 2021 on the theme: Climate Change and Peace and Security: The need for an Informed Climate-Security-Development nexus for Africa - <https://www.peaceau.org/en/article/communique-of-the-1051th-meeting-of-the-au-peace-and-security-council-psc-held-on-26-november-2021-on-the-theme-climate-change-and-peace-and-security-the-need-for-an-informed-climate-security-development-nexus-for-africa>

¹⁰ Brookings Institution (2016). Africa: Financing Adaptation and Mitigation in the World's Most Vulnerable Region - https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/global_20160818_cop21_africa.pdf

¹¹ Communiqué of the 984th meeting of the PSC held at the level of Heads of State and Government held on 9 March 2021 on the theme: "Sustainable Peace in Africa: Climate Change and its Effects on Peace and Security in the Continent" - <http://www.peaceau.org/en/article/communique-of-the-984th-meeting-of-the-psc-held-at-the-level-of-heads-of-state-and-government-on-9-march-2021-on-the-theme-sustainable-peace-in-africa-climate-change-and-its-effects-on-peace-and-security-in-the-continent>

¹² International Committee of the Red Cross. (2021). Seven things you need to know about climate change and conflict - <https://www.icrc.org/en/document/climate-change-and-conflict>

¹³ IPCC, 2022: *Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability*. Contribution of Working Group II to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [H.-O. Pörtner, D.C. Roberts, M. Tignor, E.S. Poloczanska, K. Mintenbeck, A. Alegria, M. Craig, S. Langsdorf, S. Lösckke, V. Möller, A. Okem, B. Rama (eds.)]. Cambridge University Press.



(v) two upcoming African Union (AU) summits, slated for May 2022--the Continental Humanitarian Summit and the Summit on Terrorism and Unconstitutional Changes of Government.

All these efforts must be supported by regional and international partnerships that are recalibrated to new international realities within the framework of multilateralism and global solidarity.¹⁴ Such partnerships necessitate the active engagement of a wide array of stakeholders, including governments, multilateral and regional organizations, international financial institutions, the private sector and civil society organizations, as well as key local actors across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus to ensure the inclusivity and sustainability of these efforts.

The Third Edition of the Aswan Forum

Building on the first and second editions of the Aswan Forum and their conclusions, the *Third Edition of the Aswan Forum for Sustainable Peace and Development* aims to advance a green, transformative recovery agenda that strengthens Africa's ability to address a cascade of multi-faceted risks as it navigates the post-COVID-19 world to achieve sustainable peace and development, and a climate-safe future.

Building up to the 27th Session of the UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP 27) in Sharm El-Sheikh, this third edition will place special emphasis on the interface between climate change and sustaining peace in Africa. This will be addressed through a range of topics including climate adaptation and peacebuilding, the climate-displacement nexus, accelerating financing for sustaining peace, and gender-responsive climate programming for sustainable peace. Some of these have already been discussed in the preparatory meetings¹⁵ for this year's edition. Considering the importance of financing for peacebuilding and the climate resilience agenda in this year's edition, its deliberations will also focus on how to maximize resource mobilization and impactful utilization to yield peace positive results. This includes increasingly an emphasis on leverage and co-financing for example via existing financing vehicles, such as the UN Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) and AfDB's Transition Support Facility (TSF), among many others, as well as mobilizing resources and investments from the private sector and the diaspora.

In addition, the Forum's deliberations will continue to promote the shift to prevention, including through early warning, resilience and sustainability paradigm whereby institutions are strengthened to sustainably and inclusively respond to crises, conflicts, and risks, as well as meet the needs of African populations through an inclusive and gender-sensitive governance approach. This will not only contribute to addressing structural vulnerabilities, grievances, and inequalities, but will also shape pathways towards the operationalization of the humanitarian-development-peace nexus.

¹⁴ UN Secretary-general's report, "Our Common Agenda." United Nations. (2021).

¹⁵ The Cairo International Centre for Conflict Resolution, Peacekeeping & Peacebuilding (2021). CCCPA Workshop Series on Forced Displacement Tackles Interlinkages with Climate and Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development - <https://www.cccpa-eg.org/news-details/1000>

The Forum's third edition will benefit from the deliberations of relevant preceding events such as the two May AU summits (previously mentioned); the AfDB's Annual Meetings (23-27 May) under the theme Achieving Climate Resilience and a Just Energy Transition for Africa; the Stockholm Forum on Peace and Development (23-25 May) under the theme From a Human Security Crisis Towards an Environment of Peace; COP15 of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) themed 'Land. Life. Legacy: From scarcity to prosperity' (9-20 May in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire); the International Migration Review Forum (IMRF, 17-20 May in New York) and Stockholm+50 (2-3 June) to mention a few. It will also seek to ensure synergies with subsequent relevant forums such as the 8th Tokyo International Conference for African Development (TICAD8) (27-28 August), and COP-27 in Sharm El-Sheikh (7-18 November).

To take forward its ambitious agenda, the Aswan Forum will continue to champion African-led and owned responses to ensure that international, regional, national, and local stakeholders are better equipped to invest in African pillars of resilience, and advance national ownership.

Egypt, the Champion of Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development in Africa as well as the current Vice-Chair of the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission, will organize the **Third Edition of the Aswan Forum for Sustainable Peace and Development**, titled:

**Africa in an Era of Cascading Risks and Climate Vulnerability:
Pathways for a Peaceful, Resilient, and Sustainable Continent**

The Forum will be held in a hybrid format with sessions online and in-person presence in Cairo, Egypt, from 21-22 June 2022. It will bring together leaders from governments, regional and international organizations, financial institutions, the private sector, and civil society, as well as visionaries, scholars, key experts, and practitioners for context-specific, action-oriented, and forward-looking discussions of the new threats and challenges, as well as opportunities, ahead. The Forum will feature a Youth Dialogue with a focus on empowering youth-led climate responses for sustaining peace and development in Africa.

Grounded in Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want and the United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, the Forum will:

- develop context-specific and action-oriented recommendations to advance a green, transformative recovery agenda in Africa post-COVID-19;
- propose a set of suggested actions and measures to promote peaceful, resilient, and sustainable pathways grounded in institutions and solutions that ensure Africa achieves its peace, development, and climate goals.

Governance and Organizational Structure

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

Preparatory Process

The following series of webinars and workshops have been held to develop forward-looking and action-oriented recommendations for consideration during the Forum by African and international leaders in government, regional and international organizations, financial institutions, the private sector, and civil society. These webinars and workshops include:

- From the Agenda for Peace to the New Agenda for Peace - 18 May 2022
- Leveraging Women's Role in Building Resilience Towards Sustainable Peace and Development in Africa - 11 May 2022
- The Climate-Displacement Nexus in Africa: Implications for Sustainable Peace and Development - 14 December 2021
- Defeating Terrorism in an Era of Cascading Risks: Perspectives from Africa - 8-9 December 2021
- Accelerating Climate Finance for Sustaining Peace in Africa: Towards Integrated, Sustainable, and Innovative Finance - 4 November 2021
- Financing for Peacebuilding in Peacekeeping and Transition Contexts - 28 October 2021

Expected Outcome

The Aswan Conclusions on Sustainable Peace and Development in Africa

Venue and Date

Virtual and in-person presence, Cairo, 21-22 June 2022.

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