ASWAN FORUM

Aswan Forum VI

Redefining the Global Commons: Africa's Agency in the Age of Disruption

21-22 November 2026
Aswan, Egypt

CONCEPT NOTE



PEACE. PROGRESS. PROSPERITY.

Redefining the Global Commons: Africa's Agency in the Age of Disruption

CONTEXT

The contemporary global landscape is undergoing a profound transformation, with evolving regional and international dynamics contributing to increased uncertainty. The recent developments in the Middle East have become the latest and most visible manifestation of this shift, with widening repercussions extending beyond the immediate context. In particular, heightened risks to freedom of navigation and to maritime security in strategic waterways, including the Strait of Hormuz, underscore the vulnerability of global supply chains, energy markets, and food systems, demonstrating that regional conflicts now carry immediate global economic and security consequences.

The conflict has emerged at a time when the international system is already under significant strain. It is further compounding the effects of ongoing conflicts and crises, notably the Russian-Ukraine war, and the crises in Sudan, Lebanon and Gaza. Together, these conflicts are exacerbating global challenges from which the world has yet to fully recover, including public health crises, climate change, energy and food insecurity, and mounting pressures on development finance. Meanwhile, geopolitical rivalry, economic fragmentation, and shifting alliances are reinforcing broader trends towards isolationism, weakening multilateral cooperation and placing growing pressure on the institutions and norms that have underpinned the international governance system for decades.

Despite growing geopolitical fragmentation and pressures to reverse globalization, interdependence remains an enduring reality. The shared challenges of peace, security, climate change, trade, technology, and development transcend borders and cannot be addressed through national action alone.

The question, therefore, is not whether the world should remain interconnected; it will. Rather, it is how the global commons can be governed more equitably through shared stewardship, collective responsibility, equitable partnerships, and renewed multilateral cooperation.

Africa should be at the center of these discussions. The implications of current global dynamics are particularly significant for the continent, where external shocks increasingly intersect with domestic and regional challenges. The ongoing conflict in the Middle East illustrates how external shocks can generate significant economic and development consequences for the continent through disruptions to trade, strategic shipping routes, and agricultural supply chains—exacerbating food insecurity, increasing market volatility and compounding existing fiscal pressures. While Africa has hardly contributed to today's global disruptions, it remains disproportionately exposed to their consequences. Africa has a vital role in shaping a more equitable and effective international order through a renewed approach to the governance of today's global commons.

From an African perspective, stewardship of the global commons must extend beyond the management of shared resources to encompass the pursuit of a more inclusive and equitable global order that works for the benefit of all members of the international community. It should entail a collective commitment to eradicating poverty, tackling inequalities, and addressing the structural vulnerabilities that perpetuate instability. Achieving this objective requires reforming the international financial architecture to expand the policy and fiscal space available to developing countries, delivering timely and adequate debt relief where needed, strengthening mechanisms that support long-term debt sustainability, and improving access to affordable, long-term development finance that enables countries to invest in their own priorities. Equally important are balanced partnerships that promote local value addition, technology transfer, and institutional capacity. Such reforms must be complemented by investments in resilient infrastructure, reliable and affordable energy systems, food security, climate resilience, digital connectivity, public health, and human capital, while strengthening the capacity of states and communities to prevent and respond to displacement driven by conflict, climate change and economic fragility.

An integrated approach to these priorities is fundamental to advancing peace and security, both across Africa and globally. Sustainable peace cannot be achieved in the absence of inclusive development, just as development cannot flourish without peace, security and effective institutions. Guided by the aspirations of Agenda 2063, Africa's vision recognizes the inseparable relationship between peace, security, and sustainable development, and affirms that long-term stability depends on resilient institutions, inclusive economic growth and equitable opportunities for all. Investing in Africa's resilience, productive capacity, and institutional strength is a strategic investment in international stability. A more prosperous, food-secure, energy-secure, and economically integrated Africa will strengthen global supply chains, expand markets, reduce the drivers of conflict and forced displacement, and

contribute to a more stable and secure international system. Rather than retreating from international cooperation, the international community should seize this moment as an opportunity to rethink development pathways, strengthen collective action and renew the global social contract towards an accountable global order in which Africa - alongside the broader Global South- serves as a co-architect of the future international system.

OBJECTIVE

To drive this agenda forward, the Sixth Edition of the Aswan Forum for Sustainable Peace and Development will convene under the guiding theme of advancing the interconnected pillars of Peace, Progress, and Prosperity across Africa and beyond. Anchored in the conviction that sustainable development, inclusive growth, and lasting stability are mutually reinforcing, the Forum will serve as a platform to foster coherent and collective action, strengthen strategic partnerships towards durable peace, inclusive prosperity, and adaptive resilience.

The Sixth Edition of the Aswan Forum will bring together leaders from governments; regional and international organizations; Regional Economic Communities and Regional Mechanisms (RECs/RMs); financial institutions; the private sector; and civil society, alongside opinion leaders, scholars, practitioners, technical experts, and other stakeholders to:

- Foster strategic dialogue and renewed multilateral cooperation to address the implications of geopolitical fragmentation, global instability, and economic uncertainty on Africa and the broader Global South.
- Advance a renewed global compact grounded in solidarity, shared responsibility, equitable cooperation, and respect for international law—while rethinking the governance of the global commons and redefining what states, institutions and societies owe one another in the pursuit of peace, progress, and shared prosperity.
- Strengthen African agency and leadership in shaping global governance and development priorities by advancing initiatives aligned with African Union frameworks, regional strategies, and continental aspirations for peace, progress, and prosperity, while centering the voices, aspirations, and leadership of youth as key drivers of the continent's future.
- Re-center poverty eradication and inclusive socio-economic development – including universal access to quality health services – within global peace and security agendas, including by addressing poverty as a key driver of instability with national, regional and global implications. Advance integrated and locally grounded approaches to the Humanitarian-Development Peace (HDP) and Peace-Security-Development (PSD) nexus, with a focus on prevention, resilience-building and sustainable recovery across Africa.
- Promote innovative and sustainable financing models that support inclusive growth, economic resilience, and long-term prosperity across Africa, including by improving access to finance, addressing debt challenges, and strengthening resource mobilization.
- Explore policy, legal and governance frameworks that harness artificial intelligence (AI), technological innovation, and digital transformation for sustainable development and institutional effectiveness, promote social inclusion, and ensure the equitable, ethical and rights-based use of emerging technologies.

GOVERNANCE AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The International Advisory Board for Cairo International Center for Conflict Resolution, Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding (CCCPA) and the Aswan Forum comprises eminent global figures, including the Forum's strategic partners and key contributors. This Board provides strategic direction and guidance, in collaboration with African and international think tanks and knowledge partners. CCCPA serves as the Forum's Secretariat.

PREPARATORY PROCESS

The preparatory process will build on the Aswan Report and the outcomes of the past five editions. It will include a series of expert workshops and related initiatives to develop action-oriented recommendations for consideration by African and international leaders from government, regional and international organizations, financial institutions, the private sector and civil society during the Forum. It will also integrate technical insights and lessons learned from the implementation of the Aswan Conclusions across various contexts in Africa, and beyond.

This will further feed into "Aswan in Practice," which aims at bridging the gap between policy and practice and to advance the Aswan Cycle of implementation through policy engagement, capacity building, and research, in collaboration with a broad range of partners to ensure holistic and integrated responses. Such preparatory activities include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. "Beyond Crisis Response: Strategic Partnerships and Adaptive Financing in FCV Settings" – June 2026, Washington, D.C.
2. "Regional Dialogue on Building resilience in Africa through Aligning Food Systems and Climate Action" – July 2026, Cairo.
3. "From Peace Agreement to Sustainable Peace: Building with the Nexus"- October 2026, Geneva.
4. "Trilateral Cooperation and the Role of Policy Platforms to Advance Sustainable Peace and Development" - October 2026, Cairo.
5. "Networked Peace Operations: Building a More Flexible Peace and Security Toolbox" - October 2026, New York.
6. "Women, Peace and Security in Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development" - October 2026, Rethinking Rebuilding Symposium, Alexandria.

EXPECTED OUTCOME

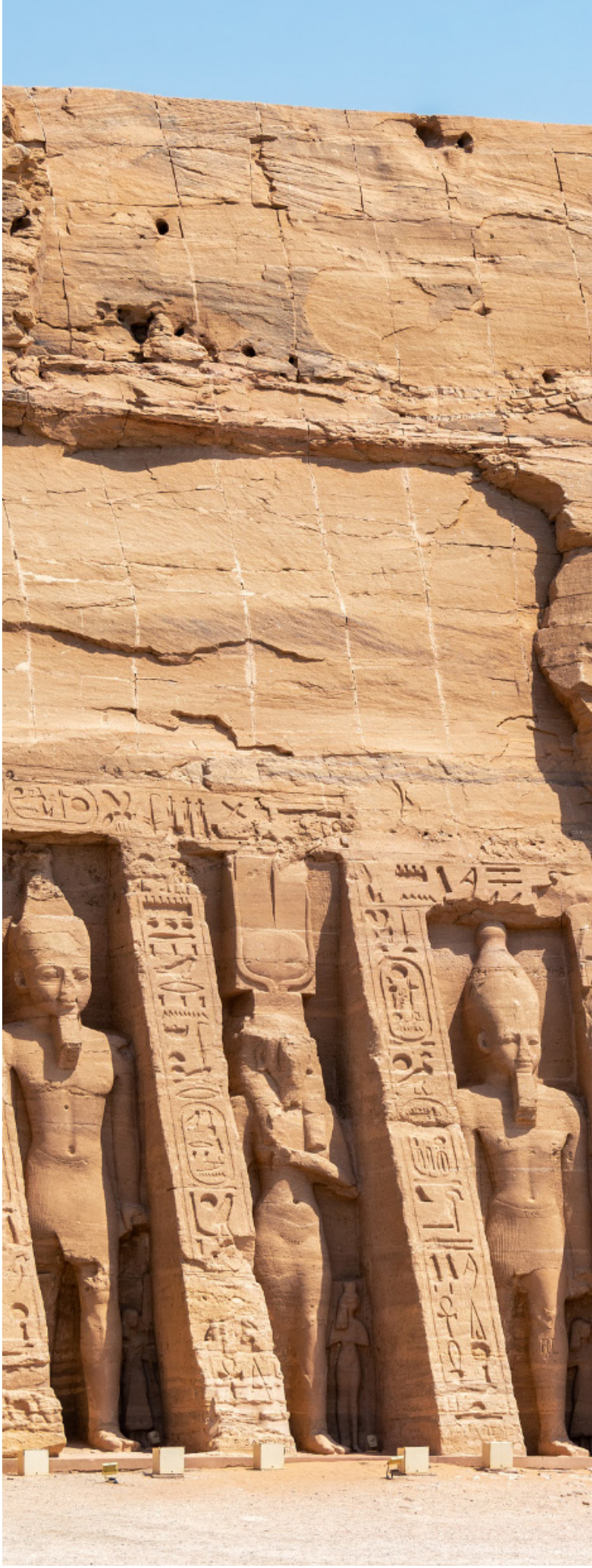
The Forum will culminate in the adoption of the "Aswan Conclusions on Sustainable Peace and Development," synthesizing key insights, recommendations, and outcomes emerging from the Forum's deliberations. The Aswan Conclusions will guide the Aswan Cycle and inform a structured implementation agenda, translated into specific, measurable deliverables, advanced in partnership with stakeholders and collaborators. Through the Aswan Cycle, these outcomes will be carried forward into sustained action, strengthening continuity between dialogue, policy development, and impact on the ground.

VENUE

Pyramisa Hotels and Resorts
Aswan, Egypt

DATES

21-22 November 2026



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