

National Security Strategy - Invest in Africa's Future

Africa is rising. Many countries in Africa are making steady progress in growing their economies, improving democratic governance and rule of law, and supporting human rights and basic freedoms. Urbanization and a burgeoning youth population are changing the region's demographics, and young people are increasingly making their voices heard. But there are still many countries where the transition to democracy is uneven and slow with some leaders clinging to power. Corruption is endemic and public health systems are broken in too many places. And too many governments are responding to the expansion of civil society and free press by passing laws and adopting policies that erode that progress. Ongoing conflicts in Sudan, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the Central African Republic, as well as violent extremists fighting governments in Somalia, Nigeria, and across the Sahel all pose threats to innocent civilians, regional stability, and our national security.

For decades, American engagement with Africa was defined by aid to help Africans reduce insecurity, famine, and disease. In contrast, the partnerships we are forging today, and will expand in the coming years, aim to build upon the aspirations of Africans. Through our Power Africa Initiative, we aim to double access to power in sub-Saharan Africa. We will increase trade and business ties, generating export-driven growth through initiatives like Trade Africa and AGOA. We will continue to support U.S. companies to deepen investment in what can be the world's next major center of global growth, including through the Doing Business in Africa campaign. Moreover, we are investing in tomorrow's leaders—the young entrepreneurs, innovators, civic leaders, and public servants who will shape the continent's future. We are strengthening civilian and military institutions through our Security Governance Initiative, and working to advance human rights and eliminate corruption. We are deepening our security partnerships with African countries and institutions, exemplified by our partnerships with the U.N. and AU in Mali and Somalia. Such efforts will help to resolve conflicts, strengthen African peacekeeping capacity, and counter transnational security threats while respecting human rights and the rule of law.

Our investment in nutrition and agricultural capacity will continue, reducing hunger through initiatives such as Feed the Future. We will keep working with partners to reduce deaths from Ebola, HIV/AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis across Africa through such initiatives as the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief and the Global Health Security Agenda. The Ebola epidemic in 2014 serves as a stark reminder of the threat posed by infectious disease and the imperative of global collective action to meet it. American leadership has proven essential to bringing to bear the international community to contain recent crises while building public health capacity to prevent future ones.

Other Mentions of Africa in the National Security Strategy

We will strengthen the operational capacity of regional organizations like the African Union (AU) and broaden the ranks of capable troop-contributing countries, including through the African Peacekeeping Rapid Response Partnership, which will help African countries rapidly deploy to emerging crises.

We are partnering with African entrepreneurs to launch clean energy projects and helping farmers practice climate-smart agriculture and plant more durable crops.

All countries will benefit when we open markets further, extend and enhance tools such as the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), and reduce inefficiencies in the global trading system through trade facilitation improvements. And through our development initiatives—such as Power Africa, Trade

Africa, Feed the Future, and the Open Government Partnership—we will continue to work closely with governments, the private sector, and civil society to foster inclusive economic growth, reduce corruption, and build capacity at the local level. Investment in critical infrastructure and security will facilitate trade among countries, especially for developing and emerging economies.

Trends in economic growth also signal what is possible; sub-Saharan Africa has averaged an aggregate annual growth rate of over 5 percent for the last decade despite the disruptions of the world financial crisis.

Our focus is on supporting countries that are moving in the right direction—whether it is the peaceful transitions of power we see in sub-Saharan Africa; the movement toward constitutional democracy in Tunisia; or the opening taking place in Burma.

We have established new programs of exchange among young Americans and young people from Africa to Southeast Asia, building off the successes of the International Visitor and Young African Leaders initiatives.