Africa’s Emergence: Challenges and Opportunities for the U.S.

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The Aspen Institute’s Congressional Program convened a conference in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia to consider the topic of *Africa’s Emergence: Challenges and Opportunities for the United States*. Meeting from August 13-19, 2013, 23 members of Congress engaged with 14 American and African scholars on a number of issues affecting Sub-Saharan Africa and U.S. security, economic and humanitarian interests. Both the U.S. Ambassador to Ethiopia and the Ethiopian Foreign Minister addressed the conference. Participants also traveled to the town of Ambo to visit Peace Corps sites and to the USAID-supported Ethiopian Commodity Exchange.

The conference began with a general discussion on Africa’s strategic importance to the United States and its political and economic development. As the week progressed, members were able to discuss a variety of topics including human rights and religious freedom, food security, health, and China’s interest in the continent. Scholars noted that the United States could affect these issues through its policies relating to foreign assistance, trade, and private sector investments but that, ultimately, advances in these areas must be embraced by African leaders.

**U.S. Interests in Sub-Saharan Africa.** During the opening session, scholars noted that U.S. interests in Africa are diverse but related including: humanitarian concerns with poverty and hunger; commercial interests in many of the continent’s growing economies; threats relating to health and disease outbreaks; and security concerns relating to political instability, weak democratic institutions, and terrorist groups taking advantage of poorly governed and ungoverned areas. The case of Mali was used to demonstrate how even countries that seem firmly on track to develop both economically and politically can be prone to threats from militant groups.

From Boko Haram in Nigeria to Al-Shabaab in Somalia and Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), the threats are real and have consequences for African governments and U.S. interests. Isolated incidents, such as the bombings of U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998, were offered as examples of tangible threats but so too is the political instability that often accompanies radicalized group activity. Militant groups find amenable environments in weak states in which governments are unable to provide security or basic services. The creation of a U.S. African Command, AFRICOM, in 2008 was meant to be a platform for military-to-military partnerships. There were differing opinions on the merits of AFRICOM operations with some lauding its focus on building African military capacity and responding to humanitarian crises while others expressed concern with possible mission creep into areas in which the Department of Defense does not have expertise. Still others were troubled by U.S. military operations, particularly...
the use of drones, as potentially counter-productive to the goal of strengthening U.S.-Africa relations.

Despite these security concerns, there was some thought among members that U.S. policies toward the continent had been too security-driven rather than focusing on more humanitarian, development or commercial concerns. One African scholar proposed that the security lens can limit a deeper understanding of African challenges and opportunities. Most participants agreed that poverty and inequality were the root causes, or at least significantly contributed to political instability.

A Diverse and Emerging Continent. Throughout the conference scholars emphasized that Africa is politically, economically, and culturally diverse and that U.S. policies need to reflect and recognize this diversity. While popular views of the continent are of poverty, disease, and conflict, it should be noted that seven out of ten of the fastest growing economies in the world are African. Seventeen emerging countries have consistently been growing at about 5% each year. Most of these are also democratic, demonstrating a strong link between democracy and economic growth. Over the last ten years, there have been significant improvements in child mortality and HIV/AIDS prevalence rates. Democratic governments are the norm even while their consolidation is still ongoing. Technology, especially in the form of cell phone usage and internet access has exploded and presents new opportunities for economic growth and political processes.

Many participants noted that a goal of U.S. policies should be to build the capacity of African governments and provide an enabling environment for the private sector to fuel development. But there was considerable debate centered on whether efforts should be public or led by the private sector. Speakers pointed to the need for good governance in the form of transparency, accountability, and rule of law as well as government policies that support a thriving business environment. On the governance front, participants discussed the role of corruption as a significant hurdle to development. One scholar argued that more attention needs to be paid to improving governance especially around corruption so that businesses will be more willing to make the investments that are fundamental to economic growth. Another scholar countered that governments need to provide a regulatory environment that is conducive to business activity. As the economy and individuals’ wealth grows, a rising middle class will make demands on government for deeper democratization, transparency, and accountability. Some participants cited Ethiopia as an expanding economy in a country with relatively few democratic credentials and some consideration was given as to the implications of this type of development model.

Many members expressed support for investments in higher education as a way to help African countries build their capacity to develop. Innovations in scientific research, building faculties and university facilities, and more scientific collaboration among African and American scientists were offered as a few areas for possible partnerships. Several members expressed concern with U.S. immigration policy and the scarcity of F-1 student visas as a hurdle to expanded educational opportunities.

Aid, Trade and Business. In considering the number of African countries that have posted consistently positive growth rates, one scholar noted that about 17 have experienced a dramatic turnaround since the mid-1990s. All but 3 are democracies. He attributed the turnaround to: new leadership, an explosion in the use of technology, the end of the Cold War, and debt relief.

He argued that much of their progress is due primarily to African leadership but it has been helped by U.S. policies and programs, including debt relief, trade, and health and agriculture programs. Debt relief was provided to 30 countries. The President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) has reached nearly 7 million people. Malaria deaths are one third lower than just 9 years ago. Immunizations have quadrupled since 1980. Feed the Future, the U.S. food security initiative, has reached 9 million households with agriculture and nutrition assistance. The African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) has improved trade relations with a number of countries that qualify for its benefits.
These successes prompted a number of scholars to assert the benefits of foreign assistance when done well, and to suggest a number of ways to make aid more effective. A focus on the capacity needs of developing countries as determined by their own development strategies was a key point. This line of reasoning suggests that development tends to occur with the greatest sustainability when there is country ownership of development strategies and when governments are committed and working in partnership with donor nations. Public-private partnerships were also offered as a necessary component, particularly in periods of austerity in which international donors are under domestic pressure to scale back assistance budgets. Further, U.S. programs should be more focused and selective around effectiveness and efficiency with decisions driven by evidence produced in evaluation frameworks. Improving flexibility was urged in designing and funding U.S. programs given Congress’s role in directing foreign assistance funds.

A number of members turned to the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) as an agency that embodies many of these recommendations. While some members wondered if all U.S. aid should be administered via the MCC, several scholars reflected that the MCC is designed to help countries at a certain level of development but that it would not work in most countries. Instead, members suggested the need for better agency collaboration.

Members also discussed non-aid options such as increased educational exchanges and changes in immigration and trade policies. Many noted the value of U.S. business engagement for development and as trade partners. One participant pointed out that Ethiopian Airlines was created and managed by a U.S. airline and is now one of the largest on the continent and a significant Boeing customer. However, examples of success were counterbalanced by the particular challenges facing greater business investments. One scholar suggested that negative perceptions relating to risk are greater than reality particularly for large corporations. Medium-size businesses are more risk averse and have more difficulties entering African markets.

Conference members discussed barriers to further growth and private investment, identifying the lack of electrical power, infrastructure, access to finance for small and medium enterprises and the need for better governance in which laws are consistently enforced and property rights are respected. The transfer of American technology was discussed as a means to both develop business opportunities and to help build capacity on the continent.

**Ethiopia.** The theme of the conference was devoted to Sub-Saharan Africa but Ethiopia proved to be an interesting venue with its own development and political challenges. The U.S. Ambassador and the Ethiopian Foreign Minister spoke on the first day of the conference on U.S. relations with Ethiopia. The country is a major regional player with which the United States has a cooperative relationship despite disagreements on some issues. Since 1991, Ethiopia has been dominated by one political party. An opposition party won a considerable number of seats in 2005 and post-election protests resulted in passage of an anti-terrorist law that has since then limited political space for government critics and journalists. A number of activists and reporters have been arrested and convicted under this anti-terrorist law.

The U.S. relationship is built on three pillars relating to: regional peace and security; democracy, governance, and human rights; and economic development and growth. The United States supports these pillars through military and economic assistance that averages between $700 million to $1 billion each year. A large part of this assistance is food aid and PEPFAR. There are more than 100 American companies working in Ethiopia, many of which are owned by returning Ethiopian expatriates. The country is a hub for regional security, trade, and commercial activities with the African Union’s headquarters located in the capital.

Ethiopia’s dominant political party has a Marxist background that is often reflected in how it governs. At the same time, the government has taken appropriate steps to revitalize its agricultural productivity and entice private investments. As the country transitions to middle-income status some observers expect greater openness in the political space.

An afternoon visit at two Peace Corps sites in Ethiopia was highlighted by accompanying vol-
unteers. In Ethiopia, the Peace Corps works in the sectors of health, agriculture, and education with 205 volunteers, the third largest of Peace Corps programs globally. Members were able to visit with English-language students at the Ambo Addis Katama Primary School and learn about nutrition and rehabilitation services at the Vision Community-Based Rehabilitation Association health clinic. At the school, members were introduced to a number of elementary students who are studying English under the direction of a Peace Corps volunteer. While elementary school is taught in local languages, upper grades are all taught in English in the Ethiopian education system. This means that students who want to advance their education must have strong English skills to progress. The visit to a local health clinic was highlighted by a discussion on the lack of access to wheelchairs, prosthetics and other devices that can help people lead healthier and productive lives. A model garden that teaches growing techniques for healthier diets was also a component of the clinic. HIV/AIDS patients, who need a highly nutritious diet, can use low-technology strategies for growing food.

**Global Competition for Africa’s Resources.**

One scholar leading this session’s discussion noted the growing interest of China and some Gulf states in the mineral, oil, land and water resources of the continent. The theme of the discussion largely centered on whether one should see the Chinese as partners or competitors with American business. Since the late 1990s, China began a renewed surge in African investments. The press coverage of these investments often has alarmist overtones within a zero-sum framework. And while China has received the most press attention, scholars observed that many countries—Gulf states, Russia, Brazil and Korea—have also explored African opportunities. Chinese investments are often overstated. In the energy sector, it was pointed out that many companies, including Shell, Chevron and BP, have been on the continent much longer and are continuing to invest in new oil discoveries.

One scholar observed that while the Chinese are interested in energy and mineral resources, their investments still can have positive effects by strengthening related sectors and helped many African states avoid the negative consequences of the global economic downturn. On the other hand, the way in which China invests does not contribute to capacity building since many of its concessional loans are conditioned on the use of Chinese materials and labor. Scholars and members suggested that African governments need better regulatory tools and should more effectively monitor and enforce environmental and labor laws in order to ensure that these investments fit within a country’s own development strategies. A couple of African scholars provided examples of African governments implementing some limits on these investments, from moratoriums to better management tools.

China also does not condition its assistance on democracy, anti-corruption, or transparency issues as do most international donors. One scholar suggested that the effect is a privileging of business concerns over human rights, civil liberties and democracy. Chinese companies are either state-owned or state-supported. China often negotiates exemptions from local labor and other laws that U.S. companies must follow. It was suggested that the United States needs to help level the playing field by making it easier for American companies to compete. Several members suggested that the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) is well suited to assist U.S. companies, particularly medium-size enterprises that may not have the resources to operate overseas. One participant noted that OPIC is unable to operate in all countries and is barred from working in Ethiopia at Congress’s direction.

**Democracy, Human Rights and Religious Freedom.** While one scholar noted that trends in human rights and democracy have been generally positive over the last twenty years, there are also autocratic tendencies in a number of countries, such as Uganda, Cameroon and Zimbabwe. While it may take decades for democratic institutions to be consolidated, worrisome trends were noted with regard to freedom of the press, freedom of assembly, and the security sector. A Freedom House report was cited that notes democratic setbacks far outpacing gains since 2005. Some countries are
using counter-terrorism laws to jail and intimidate journalists. Cases were noted in Ethiopia, Burundi and South Sudan. These laws can have a chilling effect on how civil society functions. Part and parcel of limitations on press and assembly is the role of security forces to enforce laws. A number of scholars noted that repressive government tactics can and have produced societal tensions and increased anti-government sentiment.

Another scholar pointed out that there is a youth bulge that is contributing to popular dissatisfaction with government. The growing number of young people combined with recent and rapid economic development and their easier access to traditional and social media empowers them to counter government leaders and policies. According to this scholar, the United States can provide the most assistance in shoring up the public sector by strengthening the rule of law, making institutions transparent and accountable, and creating an environment that is conducive to private enterprise and job creation to absorb the growing number of unemployed youth.

The role of technology and social media was further explored with regard to its effects on governance. One scholar argued that cell phones and twitter make it virtually impossible for autocrats to rule freely and to abuse power. It limits their monopoly of media and provides openings for challengers to contest abusive policies.

The debate transitioned to those cases where the economy is thriving even while governments are non-democratic. Rwanda has turned around its economy since its genocide nearly 20 years ago. Life expectancy has increased by 20 years; its economy has enjoyed 8% growth rates; corruption rates are low; and it is one of the easiest countries in which to set up a business. On the other side, however, the Rwandan government is authoritarian with significant human rights abuses.

The appropriate role of the United States in promoting both economic growth and American values of democratic freedoms was discussed with a variety of views on how best to alleviate poverty and foster greater respect for human rights. At least one member cautioned not to ignore governance and human rights and noted that “the termites eventually eat the house.” Some members made a strong case for working with legislators and parliaments to strengthen policy making processes around these issues. Others suggested that strengthening civil society is a powerful check on repressive governments.

Scholars and members discussed the appropriate role of U.S. embassies in monitoring human rights, religious freedoms, and democracy. Working with host governments, it was suggested that embassies should develop strong country-driven strategies and ambassadors should be held accountable for their implementation.

**Food Security Challenges in Africa.** Two scholars of global agriculture and food security presented the conference with the looming challenges facing the world, Africa and Ethiopia. Global markets have been burdened with food price volatility in recent years with spikes rarely returning to their previous levels. There are approximately 1 billion people suffering from hunger in the world and this number could increase if production does not keep pace with projected population growth rates expected to reach 9 billion by 2050. Some experts estimate that food production will need to increase by 70% to 100% by then. Reaching those production levels will be challenging given the effects of climate change on crop productivity and growing demand for more protein-rich diets.

Agricultural production in Africa has stagnated but it also shows the most potential for increased productivity. The continent could very well be able to largely feed itself if certain hurdles are overcome. Currently Africa produces only one ton per hectare of grain on average while the rate in the United States and Europe is 4 to 5 times that amount. Eighty percent of Africa’s farmers are small landholders working on less than 2 hectares of land.

To be more productive, farmers will need to employ sustainable intensification in which existing land is made more productive through a range of traditional and modern farming techniques. Increasing the nutritional value of crops is an important component.

An expert on agriculture in Ethiopia pointed out how critical the sector is for the overall economy. It accounts for 45% of GDP, 90% of its exports, and
85% of employment. The country has 16 diverse ecological zones that make one-size-fits-all solutions difficult. He suggested that Ethiopia is putting resources into the availability of better inputs (seeds and fertilizers), better information especially for small landholders through extension services, better storage to reduce post-harvest loss, and better working markets including the country’s commodity exchange and financial services.

One participant reminded the conference of the close association between the U.S. Congress and Ethiopia. It was 24 years ago that Rep. Mickey Leland died in a plane crash while attempting to deliver food aid to Ethiopian communities.

Members discussed various tools for increasing African productivity including risk management and crop insurance, the value of genetically modified technologies, conservation farming and land tenure, and water resources. Some members raised concerns with large agricultural enterprises dislocating local populations even though Ethiopia has a current moratorium on large land leases.

Both scholars pointed to the value of the U.S. Feed the Future program of which Ethiopia is a focus country. The African Growth and Opportunity Act, which will expire in 2015 unless reauthorized by Congress, is an appropriate vehicle to help strengthen trade in agricultural products. It currently does not have a focus on agriculture but members discussed the merits of adding this component in its reauthorization.

Other hurdles include the lack of infrastructure that allows food to be easily moved from areas of surplus to those of deficits. Poor roads and port facilities make it difficult to support regional and international trading of commodities. Scholars and members discussed the value of improving scientific capacity in Africa in the form of National Agricultural Research centers and agricultural universities.

Some members expressed concerns with how U.S. food aid is managed with possibly negative consequences for local farmers. Others were concerned with delays and cost efficiencies in moving U.S. food assistance to areas of humanitarian disaster.

**Ethiopian Commodity Exchange Visit.** A visit to Ethiopia’s Commodity Exchange (ECX) underscored the discussion on agriculture and food security. ECX was established in 2008 as a platform for buyers and sellers to address the fundamentals of commodity transactions relating to quality, quantity, payment and delivery. Supported with USAID Feed the Future funding, the exchange handles transactions of coffee, sesame, maize, and some legumes. Cash crops, such as coffee and sesame, are important sources of income for Ethiopian farmers. Coffee exports account for a quarter of the country’s gross domestic product (GDP) or about $860 million in 2012, supplying U.S. businesses such as Starbucks, Whole Foods, and Green Mountain Coffee. Up to 20% of the country’s population directly or indirectly depends on coffee production and trading for their incomes.

The exchange helps to overcome problems facing farmers such as inadequate storage facilities, inaccessible markets, inconsistent quality grading, and lack of access to information on the effectiveness of inputs. The ECX model is now being used by other African nations in establishing their own commodity exchanges.

**Health Priorities in Africa.** Health gains have been exceptional in the last decade, largely due to programs such as PEPFAR, the President’s Malaria Initiative (PMI) and resources focused on maternal and child health. The bipartisan partnership of Congress and the White House on global health issues was credited for much of the success because it kept funding levels consistent and it mobilized public opinion around these issues.

The question was posed as to whether or not this bipartisan partnership will be maintained in order to develop an updated global health agenda around a coherent vision. Scholars and members discussed the need for a more workable inter-agency collaboration strategy that identifies which government agencies can contribute and which agency should lead U.S. efforts as represented in its Global Health Initiative (GHI). Some felt that there were too many “silos” among U.S. health programs and that greater flexibility is needed in how the U.S. designs
and manages programs. There was no consensus on which U.S. government agency was capable of leading the GHI with the merits of the Centers for Disease Control, the State Department, the U.S. Agency for International Development, and the White House discussed as possibilities.

Members raised the issue of U.S. family planning activities as one that has not enjoyed bipartisan or consistent support even as there has been growing concern with women’s health issues. One scholar noted the link among girls’ education, family planning and a reduction in child mortality rates. Another pointed out that Ethiopia has 35,000 health extension workers mostly working at the community level who are able to provide information and interventions.

The spread of disease across borders and reaching the United States was a theme that underscored the importance of surveillance systems and in strengthening African national health systems. The United States has pre-positioned some vaccines in areas of Africa to respond to disease outbreaks, such as the worrisome polio outbreak in Somalia. With disease outbreaks just a plane ride away from the United States, members were interested in how U.S. agencies work to prevent disasters.

One scholar with diplomatic experience argued that U.S. ambassadors have ways to impose flexibility and inter-agency collaboration if they are interested in doing so. Increased training programs on inter-agency management have helped to some degree. In the final analysis, ambassadors need to be in charge in the field.

The link between health and nutrition was also explored. One scholar noted that there is not enough work being done among government agencies on the value of nutrition for health. This is particularly important during the first 1,000 days of life when a lack of nutrients can produce lasting disabilities. Agriculture can also play a role with scientific advances in the bio-fortification of food items, such as cassava and golden rice. These foods have been genetically modified to provide higher levels of certain vitamins and minerals but are often opposed by organizations that discredit genetically modified organisms (GMO) technology.

At the conference’s end, members reflected on the complexity and challenges of Sub-Saharan Africa but also recognized the opportunities for better relations with the United States, for U.S. business engagement, and for advances in political stability and poverty alleviation. Many noted that the issues raised during the conference were all ones that Congress would have to consider, particularly on upcoming reauthorizations of AGOA, PEPFAR, and annual appropriations bills.
Sub-Saharan Africa and U.S. Security

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The role of Sub-Saharan Africa in U.S. security concerns worldwide has seldom bulked large. That may be about to change, with the recent upheaval in Mali a wake-up call for that change.

A Little History

In the early years of African independence in the 1960s and 1970s, the region was regarded as one where former colonial powers had primary responsibility for security issues there, including political stability as well as incursions of communist influence. The French remained actively involved in the politics and security concerns of their former colonies; the British somewhat less so. Other former colonial powers counted for little in local security issues. The Belgians proved incapable of engaging effectively with their three former colonies—Congo (now the Democratic Republic of the Congo), Rwanda and Burundi (transferred to Belgium from Germany after World War I). The Italians longed for a role in Ethiopia and Somalia but proved unwelcome and unable to seize that role. The Portuguese withdrew from their African colonies (Angola, Mozambique, Guinea Bissau, Sao Tome and Principe) in the mid-1970s in the face of challenges by independence movements they could not overcome.

With independence, Sub-Saharan Africa became a focus of Cold War competition for influence and strategic position—not just between the U.S. and the USSR and, to a lesser extent, China but also between the USSR and China, East and West Germany, North and South Korea, the Arabs and the Israelis—and some said, even between the U.S. and France!

In the early 1960s, the U.S., concerned with the potential for a Communist takeover in the Congo (potentially rich in minerals and strategically located in the center of Africa), became involved in ousting Patrice Lumumba and installing Mobutu Sese Seko; who, during his 30 years in power, proved to be the poster child of kleptocratic rule that just barely kept the country intact but at least—to the relief of Washington—away from communist temptations. The U.S. also sought to maintain a close relationship with Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia during the 1960s and early 1970s, given the strategic position of that country (and Moscow’s flirtation with the Emperor), especially as neighboring Somalia leaned towards Moscow. (Selassie was overthrown by a communist leaning Haile Mariam Menghistu in 1974 after which the U.S. established closer relations with Somalia as Ethiopia leaned more toward Moscow).

In the 1970s, another region of Africa became worrisome from a Cold War perspective—the former resource rich territories of Mozambique and Angola, both led by left wing governments facing domestic insurgencies contesting for power (and weakening those governments). These were in some ways proxy wars with the insurgents in...
Mozambique supported by the Republic of South Africa (still under apartheid rule) and with Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of the Congo) helping out insurgents in Angola.

With the end of the Cold War, the never-very-large U.S. strategic concerns in Africa greatly diminished. One additional security-related concern has also diminished: the ongoing U.S. interest in securing petroleum imports, especially from Nigeria—at one time Nigeria supplied just over a fifth of U.S. oil imports. But these imports are now decreasing with rising U.S. production of petroleum products.

Other mineral imports from SSA to the U.S. have also diminished. In general, the security importance of SSA to the U.S. based on imported raw materials—never large—has declined in recent years.²

**Security Concerns Today**

*It is the argument of this essay that we now face a potentially serious security challenge in Africa that could demand considerably more attention from the U.S. and its allies. This is the threat of Islamic radical insurgent groups seizing control of part or all of one or more of Africa’s weak states and turning them into bases for training and staging attacks on other states in Africa and beyond.*

A demonstration of the possibility that a well-armed radical group could take over an African country was the lesson of the incursion into Mali earlier this year when the Tuareg-led National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad⁴ in effect expelled the Malian army from the north of the country. Joining with the Tuaregs was Ansar Din, an armed group with ties to Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and the Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO). These two groups led a successful takeover of northern Mali and then moved south towards Bamako, the capital.

Had Ansar and MUJAO been successful, they could have spread their version of radical Islam throughout the region (where there are other radical Islamic groups and large, ‘ungoverned’ spaces) and beyond.⁴ Neither the Malian army nor regional organizations such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was able to act quickly or effectively enough to stop the advance of the Islamists. Fortunately, France stepped in and drove the insurgents back into the mountains of the north, where they remain, albeit diminished.

That Islamic radicals are operating in Sub-Saharan Africa is not new. They burst onto the African scene in their bombings of U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998. But these proved to be isolated acts. The Islamic Courts Union (ICU) gained control of much of Somalia but were driven out by the Ethiopian army. In their wake, the youth component of the ICU—called Al Shabaab—regained considerable control of Somalia and imposed strict (and often brutal) versions of Sharia law. Shabaab has reportedly declared its allegiance to Al Qaeda. They have now been pushed out of key areas of Somalia by UN-backed African troops. The ICU and Shabaab were early wake-up calls to the possibilities of a radical takeover of an African state. But that alarm was not as compelling as the incident in Mali. The infrastructure of the state—albeit weak in Mali—is not collapsed as it has been for two decades in Somalia.⁵ And Somalia is less centrally located in Africa (and so is more limited in its ability to export a radical ideology) than Mali.

Another potentially dangerous radical group is Boko Haram, operating in northeast Nigeria. Its goal is to impose Sharia law on all of (multi-religious) Nigeria—Africa’s most populous country. The Nigerian government seems unable to eliminate this movement—indeed, when it sends its army to confront it, the brutality of the soldiers to the local populations reportedly produce yet greater support for Boko Haram in the northeast of the country. While Boko Haram cannot seize control of the Nigerian government, it can (and has been) very disruptive in the north of the country and increased inter-ethnic and religious tension in what has always been Africa’s most dynamic and fractious country. (Boko Haram is but one of the troubling insurgencies in Nigeria; the other is in the Delta region of the south, one of the country’s poorest, where much of the petroleum is extracted and stolen by local groups but, in the view of the many residents of this area, with little economic benefit to
them and a lot of environmental damage—hence an almost disabling set of armed militias disrupting the production of oil in the region, a problem the Nigerian government has been unable to resolve.

The two cases of almost-radical Islamic takeovers of African states and other radical movements present another potential threat—linking up among them—(Boko Haram, AQIM and Shabaab)—for coordinated action. Former United States Africa Command (AFRICOM) Commander General Carter Ham recently remarked that his “biggest worry is a growing linkage and network of collaboration and synchronization among them. That, he added, “poses the greatest threat to regional stability more broadly across Africa, into Europe and the United States as well.”

The emergence of these radical Islamic organizations carry a message for the U.S.: it is possible that in coming decades, the key challenges to the U.S. of active and successful terrorist movements will not be in Afghanistan, Pakistan or the Middle East but in the far more fragile countries of Sub-Saharan Africa where radical movements can find not just training and staging areas but may prove able to take over entire states—and create networks of radical groups and regimes—and thereby create a major security challenge to Africa, Europe and the rest of the world.

It is important to note here that far from all civil conflicts or failing states are related to the activities of radical Islamic groups. The prolonged and bloody conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is a result of decades—even centuries—of brutal mismanagement and exploitation of the Congolese people, first by the Belgians and then by President Mobuto that left the Congo desperately poor, divided and without an effective state infrastructure. But it did have valuable minerals which, together with the weakness of the Congolese state, attracted the involvement of neighboring countries (e.g., Rwanda at present) that had an interest in extracting minerals while contributing to internal violence and incapacity of the state.

Other brewing conflicts can be found in the Sudan—and within Sudan (Darfur remains fragile and there are ongoing conflicts in Blue Nile State and South Kordofan) and between the Sudan and Southern Sudan (recently independent with both oil and water resources and still disputed borders); within the Central African Republic as a rebel group has upset the sitting government there; in Guinea and Guinea Bissau (and Mali which reportedly may have involved elements of the Malian army) where drug traffickers have created a hub of drug transfers from Latin America to European markets; ongoing tensions between Eritrea, Ethiopia and, on occasion, Sudan; and growing piracy in the Gulf of Guinea.

Not all the news is bad. A number of states have emerged from devastating internal conflicts: Liberia, Sierra Leone, the Ivory Coast as well as Mozambique and Angola. All of these conflicts have had terrible human costs and have demanded humanitarian responses from the U.S. and the West. These countries and others emerging from conflicts remain especially vulnerable to a resumption of conflicts as well. However, the threat of radical Islam, while a subset of problems of insecurity in Africa, is the one that poses the most serious potential threats to the security of the U.S. and its allies.

What has produced the conditions that make African states vulnerable to seizure by radical groups?

One part of the answer is that these states are ‘weak,’ ‘fragile,’ ‘failing’ or even ‘failed.’ A weak state is typically characterized by a limited ability to deliver the basic services throughout its territory expected from a state by its citizens: security (personal and national), education, health, property rights and economic progress. These characteristics can derive from the incapacity of governments (lack of human and material resources) and/or corruption and mismanagement on the part of political elites. Many of these states have what is known as the ‘resource curse’—attractive mineral, timber, land and fishery reserves that can relieve governments of the accountability of collecting taxes from their citizens to finance government activities. In Africa, there is another element in the ‘resource curse’: valuable resources can attract the intervention of neighboring countries to steal those resources or criminal networks to do so as well.
Governments are often too weak or too corrupt to stop this kind of exploitation.

Efforts have been made to identify the factors leading to weak states and to rank states according to their relative weaknesses. By most accounts, the bulk of the weakest states internationally are in Sub-Saharan Africa. Conditions leading to state weakness typically include ethnic, religious or regional fragmentation, poverty, poor governance, human rights violations, demographic pressures, group grievance and others.7

These ranking exercises are useful as possible preconditions but do not tell us much about which states are most vulnerable to threats or seizure by radical groups—and these are the ones that should be of most concern to U.S. security planners. Two additional factors can help in this regard. The first one involves regional conditions. Weak states can often continue to function if they are not threatened by external pressures such as interference by neighboring states directly or through proxy groups; armed, radical groups from abroad linking up with radical groups inside weak states; funding from abroad of radical movements; or civil conflict in nearby states that spills over and creates instabilities in vulnerable societies.

The second factor is ideology. Many policymakers and analysts have assumed that the age of ideology is over.8 But that fails to see radical Islam (or any radical religious movement) as an ideology that it is—a set of beliefs which explain important elements of reality to which individuals adhere and can motivate them to action—sometimes violent—that is intended to protect or further those beliefs.9 Radical Islam provides a lens through which to interpret realities, a set of values to guide behavior and for some, a justification for action—in many cases, against U.S. and Western interests. It is this ideology that unites and motivates individuals from many countries and across many borders and may explain its attraction in particular to restless and discontented youth. This element of ideology, potentially spread across many countries, differentiates the security threat to the U.S. of radical Islam from such movements as the Lord’s Resistance Army10 which can never have the reach of a more universalist ideology or create a threat to U.S. security.

It is this combination of weak states—often poorly governed (whether democracies or not) with limited capacities to manage or implement their own programs and policies—in a region of considerable poverty and instability, many with a common religious identity; and large numbers of youth with limited prospects for prosperous lives and numerous and possibly growing radical Islamic groups that present the principal security challenge to the U.S. in Sub-Saharan Africa going forward.

What is to be done?

What are the implications for U.S. policies regarding Sub-Saharan Africa of the foregoing analysis? The obvious answer is for the U.S. to work towards strengthening weak African states vulnerable to internal conflict, collapse or seizure by radical movements. Easily said; not so easily done.

The ‘Iraq’ or ‘Afghan’ option of military occupation and attempts through the expenditure quickly of large amounts of military and economic assistance appear to be (a) ineffective and (b) politically and economically unrealistic in today’s world. Not only have the experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan proven that the U.S. is limited in its abilities to do effective nation and state building in other countries (notwithstanding the post-World War II experiences in Japan and Germany),11 but also the much earlier experiences of U.S. military occupations and state building efforts in the Western Hemisphere (e.g., Nicaragua 1912-1933; Haiti 1915-1934; and Cuba 1906-1922)12 all suggest that it is very difficult for one government, even with the best of intentions and with considerable military and economic resources at its disposal, to effectively bring about significant and sustained changes in political institutions, social formations, public capacities and habits and the political culture—at least not in any time frame that is politically feasible from the point of view of American politics and the patience of the American public.

If state or nation building are not options, what remains for the U.S. to do? There are short-run and long-run answers to this question, based on one’s interpretations of the root causes of weak states and radical Islamic movements in Africa. The essence of the short-run answer is to (1) help
African governments strengthen the capacities and effectiveness of their security forces; (b) help African regional organizations to respond more quickly and effectively to security threats in individual countries; and (c) ensure that the UK and France in particular are ready to assist or take the lead in responding to such security threats. France did so in Mali and the UK did so in Sierra Leone to ensure the sustainability of the peace agreement there in the early 1990s. Should there be more regularized collaboration and planning among these countries and the U.S. on African security issues?

Isn’t AFRICOM one vehicle to achieve some of these goals? To some extent it is—but it has yet to fulfill the goals of its creators. This newest U.S. military combatant command was announced in 2007. The roll out of AFRICOM was a disaster—it was done with little prior consultation with Africans or with others—e.g., the U.S. and other development communities—whose support was important for the success of the Command. As a result, it provoked widespread resistance and suspicion that (a) the U.S. was militarizing its engagement in Africa; and (b) that DOD was seizing leadership of U.S. Africa policy—a prospect that made the Department of State and other U.S. government agencies decidedly uncomfortable. To address some of these concerns, AFRICOM has a Department of State officer as one of its deputy commanders. But the damage was done. Initially, African countries were reluctant to accept the location of AFRICOM and its headquarters remain in Stuttgart, Germany.

AFRICOM, along with the Department of State and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), is associated with several U.S. government programs aimed at potential terrorist activities in vulnerable parts of Africa: Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP), Combined Joint Task Force Horn of Africa, the Partnership for Regional East African Counter Terrorism (PREACT), and the West Africa Regional Initiative (WARSI). These programs combine military training and elements of development aid in the countries where they operate. The USAID congressional presentation for 2014 states that “both TSCTP and PREACT focus on enhancing the capabilities of partner nations to prevent and respond to terrorism in their respective regions. WARSI focuses on enhancing rule of law, promoting security sector reform, and building partner nations’ capacity to counter transnational threats, including narcotics trafficking.”

And under the Africa command, drones are now located and operating in parts of Africa to keep an eye on radical groups’ activities. These programs, like TSCTP, remain relatively small in annual dollar terms; their impact was unclear from available documents.

The longer-term options confronting the U.S. involve addressing the more basic factors feeding the attractions of radical ideologies in Africa. Among those factors is surely access to a sense shared by many ethnic minorities (e.g., the Tuaregs in Mali) of exclusion from national political and economic life. Perhaps also is the factor of education (beyond the primary level) for more than a handful of lucky or well-positioned individuals and employment for youngsters who have benefitted from quality education (and who, presumably, will be the future leaders of their countries). This approach to furthering education in Africa and elsewhere (e.g., with the use of foreign assistance) deviates from the traditional one among development experts who have tended over the past several decades to concentrate on getting all children in primary school. That is an understandable policy (where children actually learn in school—and that is a contested outcome in much of Africa) but probably does not do much to diminish the attraction of radical ideologies for youth with minimal education and few employment prospects.

It seems quite likely that radicalization in the future in Africa will occur mainly in the large and growing cities of the region. Is there a combination of policies involving education and training as well as jobs that would address the burgeoning number of young people in Africa’s urban areas? And should not the U.S. government bring all of its policy instruments to bear not only on helping countries susceptible to radical ideologies be able to resist the temptations of such ideologies among their own populations but incursions from external sources of groups fomenting those ideologies—but also help those countries facing internal conflicts (with or without such ideologies involved) or recov-
ering from such conflicts because evidence shows clearly that countries that have endured such conflicts are very susceptible to their recurrence—and these countries can also be the sources of instabilities for entire regions (as well as producing their own humanitarian disasters).

And if radical Islam is in fact at the core of future security threats to the U.S. from Africa, that would argue for a greater focus on long-term engagement and assistance to countries and communities most vulnerable to those ideologies and the development of a comprehensive U.S. strategy to address these threats—a ‘whole of government’ approach. This engagement would likely involve a rather different distribution of U.S. expertise, personnel and resources than presently exists in SSA. In the best of times, a greater security focus in U.S. engagement in the region would not call for trade-offs among programs and resource commitments. That this is not the best of times in budgetary terms, some difficult decisions and delicate negotiations could well lie ahead.

A Final Word—about China in Africa

After four decades of on and off attention to Sub-Saharan Africa, the People’s Republic of China began in the 1990s to engage more broadly and actively with governments in Africa. The principle goals of this engagement are three: to gain access to needed raw materials (e.g., minerals and food and fiber) necessary for China’s continued growth; increased trade with Africa; and increased political influence in the region (with political goals of persuading African countries to vote against Japanese membership in the Security Council and non-recognition of Taiwan as an independent country).

It is difficult to estimate the extent of Chinese financial engagement in Africa since the Chinese do not keep their books the same way most other countries do and do not publish comprehensive data on their annual expenditures in Africa.¹¹ Nor do the Chinese condition their support to African governments on human rights and good governance policies—they take a more ‘hands off’ approach to the provision of their aid. Finally, the Chinese support large infrastructure projects—the types of projects Western aid-giving governments or international institutions have avoided over recent decades.

These approaches are different from those of Western governments but not necessarily threatening to Western interests. Financial pressures on governments, like that of the Sudan or Zimbabwe, not popular with the West because of their policies, have undoubtedly been eased by the Chinese. There have also been concerns (including by Chinese officials themselves, about corrupt Chinese businessmen in Africa). But these practices do not constitute threats to important U.S. interests. Efforts by the USG and other Western governments to engage the Chinese in mutually supportive activities in Africa are worthwhile and worth continuing.

It is quite possible that the Chinese will in time confront serious resistance to their assistance by African officials. There have also been criticisms and occasionally violent incidents aimed at the Chinese based on their practice of bringing their entire workforce on projects from China and so, adding little to the local economy or employment levels. Other criticisms involve rough treatment by Chinese managers of African employees. It is quite possible that eventually the Chinese will learn that ignoring problems of governance and national aspirations of their African partners will create higher costs politically and in human terms than the Chinese are willing to bear.

It may also prove to be the case that China could become a partner in U.S. efforts to contain or eliminate security threats from radical Islamic groups. These groups can threaten Chinese interests in Africa as well as those of the U.S. (though they are unlikely to use African spaces as staging grounds for terrorist attacks in China itself). It is in short important to engage with the Chinese in Africa and not regard them as either enemies or security threats on the continent.

Endnotes

¹ This paper focuses primarily on security issues currently and potentially confronting the United States in Sub-Saharan Africa—by definition, issues that can affect the well-being of Americans and American allies and interests. It recognizes that the U.S. has multiple interests in the region—some based on American
democratic values, human rights and humanitarian aspirations for all peoples; others involving economic and commercial opportunities. U.S. policies towards Sub-Saharan Africa typically reflect a mix of these various interests.

2 http://www.agoa.gov/build/groups/public/@agoa_main/documents/webcontent/agoa_main_003964.pdf

3 The Tuareg peoples inhabit the north of Mali and have long been a discontented minority in that country, largely living in refugee camps for decades. The independent, Tuareg country they support is called by them “Azawad.”

4 There are reports of insurgent attacks near the capital of Niger, a neighbor of Mali by The Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (Mujao). See http://www.charismanews.com/world/39901-climate-of-terror-rising-as-islamists-continue-attacking-in-niger

5 It is worth noting that “Somaliland,” the former British part in the north of Somalia, has organized itself into a functioning state and is seeking recognition as an independent country separate from the rest of Somalia.


7 The best known effort at ranking weak and failing states is the Fund for Peace’s Failed States Index. For the 2013 index and indicators, see http://ffp.statesindex.org/rankings-2013-sortable. The Index finds that of the 35 highest ranked countries in terms of state failure, 20 of them are in Sub-Saharan Africa.

8 This was in effect the argument of Frank Fukuyama in his popular book, The End of History.

9 To be absolutely clear, radical religious ideologies are not confined to Islam—they are evident today in all major world religions—Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism and even Buddhism (e.g., in Myanmar recently where Buddhist fundamentalists attacked Muslims). Furthermore, radical Islamists are by no means representative of a significant percentage of Muslims or of the traditional and widely embraced interpretations of Islam which at its core involve beliefs based on peace, community and compassion. Indeed, many devout Muslims today begin their public presentations by invoking “…In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate…”

10 The Lord’s Resistance Army, led by Joseph Kony, is a small, dispersed armed group in central Africa that originated 24 years ago in Uganda.

11 Japan and Germany are arguably sui generis. They were defeated countries and the U.S. and its allies were fully in control of rebuilding not only the infrastructure but the political and social institutions of the country, with the military and financial resources to back up that state-building. These cases were rare occurrences and provide poor guides to policy-making today involving state building.

12 These interventions were intended mainly to protect U.S. properties in these countries but they were often accompanied by efforts to reform the health sector and to implement democratic governance. Unfortunately, the sustainability of these efforts proved limited.

13 http://m.state.gov/md185679.htm

Emerging Africa: The Economic and Political Transformation in Half of Sub-Saharan Africa

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For more than 30 years beginning in the mid-1970s, it seemed that just about all the news out of Africa was bad. Newspapers reported endless civil wars, repeated coups, gross misrule, famine, disease, and poverty across the continent. In May 2000, The Economist newsmagazine published a famous cover story dubbing Africa “The Hopeless Continent.” Even today, many people agree with that sentiment, and discount any good news as short-term blips on the screen. The Afro-pessimists are hard to move.

More recently, a new view has emerged that Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) is in the midst of a renaissance. Africa has turned around, they say, and is enjoying an economic resurgence based on higher commodity prices. The Afro-optimists are gaining ground.

Both are wrong.

For too long, researchers, the media, politicians, and casual commentators have blended together all of the countries of SSA and treated them as a single entity, sometimes treating them like a single country. This continent-wide approach might have made some sense when most of the countries in the region were heading in the same direction. But it doesn’t make any sense any more. It is not accurate to say “Sub-Saharan Africa is turning around” or “Sub-Saharan Africa is still stuck” because Sub-Saharan Africa is too complex to be captured by such singular phrases.

Indeed, the biggest single pattern across the region since the mid-1990s is sharp divergence in economic performance and political systems. Some countries are doing better—much better. But others are still stuck with economic stagnation and misrule. The failure to appreciate these differences—and their implications—is a major stumbling block for understanding and working with the countries across the continent.

In Emerging Africa, I divide the sub-continent into four sets of countries:

1. The Emerging Countries, comprising 17 countries—none of them oil exporters—that have turned the corner economically since the mid-1990s, many of which have also become democracies;
2. The Threshold Countries, including six countries that are on the verge of a turnaround, but haven’t quite achieved it yet;
3. The Oil Exporters, including nine countries whose economies (and politics) are heavily determined by oil markets and therefore follow very different dynamics than other countries; and,
4. The “Other” Countries, comprising 16 countries that have made little change and remain economically stagnate with non-democratic leadership.

In this short brief I will focus my attention primarily on the first group.
The Emerging Countries of Africa

Seventeen emerging African countries—home to more than 300 million people—have undergone dramatic changes in economic growth, poverty reduction, and political accountability since the mid-1990s. Another six “threshold” countries have seen promising but less dramatic changes. The transformation in these countries has been little noticed by the outside world and is too often overshadowed by negative news from other African countries. But the break from the past is clear.

Consider the economic turnaround in the 17 emerging countries: between 1975 and 1995, their economic growth per capita was essentially zero. But between 1996 and 2010, they achieved growth averaging 3.2 percent a year per capita, equivalent to overall GDP growth exceeding 5 percent a year. That growth has powered a full 50 percent increase in average incomes in just 15 years. By comparison, the other non-oil exporting countries of the region have achieved essentially no growth in incomes over that period.

And it is not just growth: trade and investment have doubled, school enrollments are rising, and health indicators are improving. The share of people living in poverty has declined from 58 percent to 48 percent. Democracy, while still flawed, has become the norm rather than the exception. Governance has slowly but steadily improved. To be sure, these countries are far from perfect. They face many challenges, and their continued success is far from certain. But deep changes are taking place in the emerging countries, and their future prospects look bright.

Five Fundamental Changes

The turnaround in emerging Africa is neither temporary nor simply the result of favorable commodity prices. While commodity prices have helped sustain growth in some countries in recent years, commodity prices were working against them when they started their growth turnaround in the late 1990s. The growth revival persisted through the global recession of the late 1990s, and these countries weathered the 2009 global economic crisis better than most developing countries.

Something deeper is at work. Emerging Africa points to five fundamental changes underway in these countries. The first two ignited the turnaround in the 1990s and helped sustain it over time; the next three took hold later and are helping sustain progress.

1. More democratic and accountable governments.

Africa’s troubles have been, in large part, a failure of leadership. Too many leaders have ruled by intimidation, violence, and brute force. But in the 1980s, many authoritarian governments lost their legitimacy and the economic and financial resources to maintain control. Protestors began to call for change, and governments lost the backing of key supporters. With the end of the Cold War and apartheid in the early 1990s, authoritarian leaders were forced to give way to democratic governments. The number of democracies in Sub-Saharan Africa jumped from just 3 in 1989 to 23 in 2010, including most of the 17 emerging countries.

Democracy means not only elections but greater adherence to basic political and civil rights, more freedom of the press, and stronger political institutions. Not all of the emerging countries are democracies, but there has been a clear shift toward greater political accountability and improved governance more broadly. Democratic progress has been uneven and remains incomplete, but it has been—and will continue to be—at the core of emerging Africa’s renaissance.

2. More sensible economic policies.

Twenty years ago, nearly all African economies were effectively bankrupt, with large budget deficits, double-digit inflation, growing debt burdens, thriving black markets, shortages of basic commodities, and rising poverty. Economic mismanagement and the heavy hand of the state scared off investors, provoked capital flight, and led to stagnation and rising poverty. In the late 1980s, the emerging countries began to implement much stronger economic policies. Today, black markets are but a distant memory. Budget and trade deficits are more sustainable. The role of the state is smaller, the business environment is friendlier, and trade and investment barriers are lower.
3. The end of the debt crisis and major changes in relationships with the international community.

The 1980s debt crisis hit Africa particularly hard. Stagnant economies and heavy borrowing created huge debt burdens. As the crisis deepened, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) took on a much more prominent role, and IMF–World Bank “stabilization and structural adjustment” programs became central to economic policymaking and the relationship between African countries and the donor community. Some middle-income countries began to resolve their debt problems in the early 1990s, but it took another decade or more for low-income countries to get out from under their debt burdens through the Heavily Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) Initiative and the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative (MDRI). Of the 40 countries eligible for the HIPC program, 36 have received at least the first stage of HIPC debt relief.

Today, the debt crisis is finally winding down. Debt burdens are significantly lower, freeing up financial resources and relieving the time burden on senior policymakers. But perhaps even more important, relationships with donors have become much healthier. Country-led Poverty Reduction Strategies have replaced structural adjustment programs at the center of policymaking, providing a stronger basis for donor support to bolster future development going forward.

4. New technologies that are creating new opportunities for business and political accountability.

Cell phones are becoming ubiquitous across Africa, and Internet access is growing quickly. In the most remote corners of the countryside, cell phones are relaying information on prices and shipments of goods in real time and facilitating the transfer of funds with simple text messages. The Internet is opening new economic opportunities and creating jobs that did not exist before, such as data entry and other services. And both are widening political involvement by enabling the debate and flow of information that are the backbone of political accountability and transparency.

5. A new generation of policymakers, activists, and business leaders.

A new generation of savvy, sharp, and entrepreneurial leaders is emerging across Africa. They are rising through the ranks of government, starting up businesses, working as local representatives of multinational corporations, leading local nongovernmental organizations and activist groups, and taking an increasing role in political leadership. They are fed up with the unaccountable governments and economic stagnation of the past and are bringing new ideas and new vision, often fortified by travel abroad and a globalized outlook. With the new generation at the helm, Africa’s future looks increasingly bright.

The Road Ahead

The five changes described above provide the foundation for continued success in the emerging countries, but the turnaround is young and remains fragile. The emerging countries face several challenges, including the need to deepen democracy and strengthen governance, diversify their economies to create new economic opportunities for a growing workforce, manage the role of China and other emerging actors to ensure that the benefits outweigh the risks, adapt to the effects of climate change, and build strong education and health systems. Unleashing the power of girls and women will be central to maximizing the speed, equity, and sustainability of development.

Meeting these challenges will not be easy. It will require difficult choices, effective leadership, and hard work by the citizens of the emerging countries. Their future is primarily in their own hands: the decisions they make, the priorities they set, and the institutions they establish. Their record since the mid-1990s has been strong, and there is great promise for the future, but it is hardly certain.

Implications for the United States

There are three main reasons why developments in SSA matter for the United States:

1. Strengthening National Security. Weak, failed, and failing states create opportuni-
ties for transnational criminals and terrorist organizations. As countries in SSA become economically and politically stronger, these threats are reduced within their countries, in the region, and to the United States and the rest of the world.

2. **Promoting American Values of Openness, Prosperity, Freedom, and Democracy.** The United States must lead in promoting its vision for a more prosperous and democratic world—a vision shared by most people around the world. Unfortunately, many people in low-income countries see economic opportunity, escape from poverty and political freedom only as distant dreams. The United States needs poor countries as well as rich countries to support the values we champion, and to believe that they, too, can climb out of poverty and achieve economic and political freedom. It is directly in the U.S. national interest to help low-income countries achieve rapid economic growth and strengthen democracy. And for most Americans, helping the people of some of the poorest countries of the world succeed in building their economies, strengthening their political systems, and meeting the basic needs of their people is simply the right thing to do.

3. **Enhancing Business Opportunities.** American companies are increasingly looking for new global business opportunities, and the countries of SSA provide new and expanding frontiers. Opportunities are growing in power, agriculture, construction, manufacturing, hotels, tourism, and a wide variety of other activities. Investors from China, India, Brazil, Turkey, Malaysia, Indonesia, and a variety of other countries are moving fast, and so far U.S. investors have been less active.

So what can the United States do?

1. **Develop innovative ways to work with the private sector and encourage private investment.** Instead of seeing foreign investment solely as a substitute for missing private capital, increasingly it can be used to stimu-

late, facilitate, and leverage private investment. One way is through creative risk-sharing or co-investing, such as through partial guarantees to local banks for new loans, or through expanding the operations of the U.S. Agency for International Development credit authority, the Overseas Private Investment Corporation and the Export-Import Bank in SSA. Another is to work with investors to encourage stronger supply change linkages, such as helping improve the quality of local supplies to make foreign investment more profitable. And a third is to work with governments and investors to identify roadblocks and obstacles to investment.

2. **Make Bigger Distinctions Among Partner Countries.** In an increasingly divergent developing world, one-size-fits-all approaches no longer make sense. Partnerships should be much better tailored to the conditions on the ground and the progress and commitments that countries are making. The new emerging democracies of SSA have shown they are willing to make the tough decisions to put their countries on a new path forward, and they deserve strong support. These countries should receive larger and longer-term commitments and have greater say in where funds are directed. By contrast, the countries that have not made these changes should receive smaller commitments and less flexibility in how funds are used.

3. **Continue to Invest in Health and Education.** In the long run, a country’s capabilities, capacities, and progress depend significantly on its investments in people. The United States leads the way in investing in health, especially fighting HIV/AIDS and malaria, and also makes important investments in education.

4. **Invest in Technology.** It is impossible to see how the emerging countries of SSA can meet the challenges of widespread disease, climate change, and pressure on food supplies except through the development and dissemination of new technologies. Aid agencies have a long history of such investments, includ-
ing the seeds and fertilizers of the Green Revolution, Oral Rehydration Therapy, and more recently for vaccines for meningitis A and other diseases. Meeting new challenges will require forging creative relationships with universities, foundations, businesses, and local entrepreneurs, with new kinds of supporting mechanisms. It will require a willingness to take risks and provide support, even when some investments fail.

5. **Create Trading Opportunities at Home.** The U.S. is an important trading destination for the countries of SSA, although they are increasingly looking to other countries to forge new relationships. Expanding programs like the African Growth and Opportunity Act and reducing barriers created by agricultural subsidies and tariffs on finished products can help encourage new investment and expanded economic opportunities for the countries of SSA.

6. **Work More Closely with Other New Development Partners.** New investors from China and India provide new competition, but also new opportunities to work together with local governments to solve problems of mutual interest. These new partners bring skills, new perspectives, experiences, ideas, and funding, and sometimes working together can bring huge benefits. In Liberia, for example, the U.S. and China worked closely together with the Liberian government on rehabilitating a hospital—the Chinese rebuilt the road leading to the facility, and the U.S. helped build and restock equipment and supplies. As a result of this cooperation the facility is now able to effectively serve the local population.

Africa’s emerging countries will undoubtedly face challenges, but they have shown that nations once considered failures can turn around and climb out of poverty. The renaissance in emerging Africa provides hope for some of the most challenged countries in the world that it is possible to combat poverty, secure peace, increase prosperity, and widen the global circle of development.

**Endnotes**


2 The 17 emerging countries are: Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Ethiopia, Ghana, Lesotho, Mali, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, São Tomé and Príncipe, Seychelles, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia.

3 The six threshold countries are: Benin, Liberia, Kenya, Malawi, Senegal, and Sierra Leone.

4 The nine oil exporting countries are: Angola, Cameroon, Chad, Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Mauritania, Nigeria, and Sudan.

5 These non-oil exporting countries are: Burundi, Central African Republic, Comoros, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Côte d’Ivoire, Djibouti, Eritrea, The Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Madagascar, Niger, Somalia, Swaziland, Togo, and Zimbabwe.
Introduction

Global food security has become a serious agenda for humanity in the 21st century. We have entered a new era with concerns of feeding future generations sustainably. The concern is driven by a steadily growing world population, currently projected to stabilize at about 9 billion in 2050, the need for a concomitant increase in global food production to support the rapid growth in human population, as well as the increasing recognition of the fragility of our ecosystems and the enhanced need for greater stewardship of our natural resource systems.

It is shocking to some that a world of plenty of resources is challenged with supplying nutritious food to a rapidly-growing global population. The recognition that there is an uneven distribution of natural resources and other key materials for economic growth, such as land, labor, knowledge, and capital, and the implications of these shortages on our ability to feed the world and sustain global economic growth, is not widely felt.

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We are aware that science, technology, and the commercial infrastructure that were laid out in the 20th century have changed the way we produce and use food, the way we take care of our health, the way we travel and communicate with each other; and that the spread of this knowledge has literally shrunk the world into a small global village with changed lifestyles and diets—adding greater economic opportunities, but also resulting in increasing pressure on our global land use and resource utilization.

We also recognize the additional dimensions of some of these changes. The recognition that hunger taking place in the far fringes of the world can cause an increasing demand in agriculture for food, feed, and energy at home, resulting in an eerie emergence of a rare sense of food insecurity even in the western world.

It has now been made abundantly clear that population growth, lack of employment, and poverty are aligned with hunger and political instability, as evidenced with the many riots in several countries in recent years that were linked to price spikes in food commodities.

Coupled with the imminent threat from climate change, a looming global water crisis, and serious concerns about the growing demand for and depletion of non-renewable energy sources (in spite of the excitement that new technologies have recently generated), we are left with only one choice. We have to opt for sharpening our focus, restoring our commitment to science and technology and the power of trade and business, and strengthening our public and private institutions with a 21st century vision and infrastructure to enhance our mitigation and adaptation capabilities.
These are serious challenges indeed. But as imminent as these dangers are, I believe we can rise to the challenges and meet them head-on, provided that there is the political will to galvanize the great opportunity that our vision, our creativity, and our sciences can offer to grow our economies and address the issues of food, agriculture, and natural resource conservation and management in a responsible and holistic way.

There is little doubt that science, business, international trade, and effective policies will play key roles in addressing global food security effectively and catalyze Africa’s emergence and Africa’s flourish as the new and dynamic frontier in the global economy.

Both the developed and developing nations are in this together, sharing the responsibility of tapping into the resources of our shared planet for sustaining a prosperous global economy and sustaining these opportunities for future generations.

**America’s Leadership and Example**

The United States is widely recognized as the global leader in agricultural sciences and in advancing global economic development through agriculture. In the 20th century, U.S. leadership was responsible for the three most important agricultural revolutions that brought about transformative changes in global economic development, improved human livelihoods, as well as global nutrition and health.

a) In the 1930s, scientific discoveries made at U.S. universities in the new science of genetics, created the hybrid-corn technology that was followed by the ingenuity and innovation of American rural communities, which spurred the development of an agro-industry complex, creating jobs and opportunities for millions of people and changing the face of rural America once and for all.

b) In the 1960s, Norman Borlaug, a young American scientist who grew up in the rural Midwest during the depression era witnessing the exciting opportunities and impact brought about by science, technology, innovation and business to his own people, figured out a way to take his own scientific discoveries to the fight against hunger in Asia and Latin America in the now famous Green Revolution that is known to have fed and saved billions of people since.

c) In the 1980s, building on the discoveries of the double-helix structure of the DNA, American scientists made a new discovery, made possible through ground-breaking molecular research, the advent of the science of biotechnology and the creation of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) through the transfer of single genes from other sources including simple (single cell) organisms to complex (higher level) organisms, such as crop plant cultivars, endowing them with favorable traits of disease or insect resistance, and/or traits that add nutritional value.

With these three remarkable agricultural revolutions, the United States thrust itself as a global leader in advancing science, technology, and innovation to spur economic development for its people and, as it turned out, for other nations as well.

Fundamental to these successes is America’s early vision and commitment to building functional institutions, and its unshaking position to providing the right policy environments for innovating agricultural industries.

The United States, today, is the undisputed global leader of successful agricultural enterprises through the legacy of science and technology work that stream out of its many universities and research institutions, and the innovations that continue to emanate out of its agricultural and food business communities.

The American experience is a compelling story on the power of science, trade, and business to achieve food security and to advance economic development. America has the comparative advantage and the capacity to continue to offer global leadership in global development for decades ahead.

This American formula of science, technology, and innovation—suffused in the right policy environment as the basis of creating agricultural business enterprises that create employment, grow
local economies, and offer a steady supply of food for consumers—has succeeded everywhere it has been given a chance; certainly in Europe and the Pacific, as well as, more recently, in the emerging economies.

America’s contribution to spreading its proven approach of science-based economic development in agriculture was not limited to just setting an example; it also included providing technical assistance and rallying necessary resources in support of, and in sustaining, the agricultural and food systems of the world.

As a product of the American educational system, I can attest that this great success story and the legacy of American leadership in agricultural revolutions is embedded in the magical formula of public-private partnerships that was first discovered in the United States of America.

It started with a series of brilliant early laws that established the U.S. Land Grant University system, with its tripartite functions of educating young men and woman from rural America at public colleges, establishment of the Agricultural Experiment Stations and the Cooperative Extension Services, and perhaps as importantly, the recognition for the ingenuity of businesses to exploit scientific discoveries from public institutions toward building employment and wealth, as well as economic opportunities for local communities.

**The Challenge for America**

The challenge for America today is whether it can continue to play this role again, and again. America has done this in the past, so it is only reasonable to believe that it can do it again in the last frontiers of Africa and Southeast Asia. Science-based economic development can work its miracle one more time, lifting millions of smallholder farmers in poor nations out of the misery and drudgery that have shackled them for centuries.

I hope that Americans will realize that their nation can do it again. America can be the center of the next major scientific discovery, and be a game-changer with its next technology and innovation. America can also assist other nations, not through handouts but hand-ups, through helping build the human capacity of poor nations, strengthening their public institutions, influencing local governance and encouraging them to place the right policy environments in their own nations.

I recognize that this is a tall order. It may take time and serious effort, and require greater commitment to change stubborn traditions and corrupt political systems of many of these nations. But with a growing recognition, and the sense of urgency created by the changing realities of the new global economic order and the ensuing competition for resources, there may be a new window of opportunity for a concerted effort.

America does not have to do it alone, but in partnerships with governments and other organizations in both the rich and poor nations, such as what is underway in the New Partnership for Food Security and Nutrition recently advanced by the G8 (forum of eight of the world’s largest economies: Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States).

Development assistance has proven to be the most effective way to reduce food security challenges. When implemented well, development assistance increases food production, improves nutrition, sparks economic development, reduces poverty, creates social stability, and it can also be good for the global natural environment.

The U.S. farm sector produces five times as many crop and livestock products today, in the dawn of the 21st century, as it did at the turn of the last century, just before the miracles of science, technology, and innovation were beginning to impact the economies and livelihoods of Americans.

American assistance in building public institutions in developing countries, such as universities, research organizations, regulatory agencies, as well as the greater governance and policy arena, has been universally successful in Africa, Asia, and in Latin America.

As past American investments have generated so much opportunity for all, paying great dividends for America as well as for recipient nations, it is reasonable to project that today’s investments will also have far-reaching benefits for all in the near future.
The Power of Markets and Trade

Foreign direct investments, in resource as well as in intellectual capital, and overall private-sector engagement in building hopes and opportunities, are key to establishing real change and growth that is likely to be more enduring and permanent.

It should perhaps be made clear that the call for America’s renewed leadership in advancing the power of science, trade and business for global development is an avenue of enlightened self-interest for the United States as well.

In assisting poor nations to spur their agricultural growth and develop their economies, America helps itself as well. It has been demonstrated that some of the fastest growing economies of the world are in Southeast Asia and in Africa. Agriculture is the largest sector of the economies of many of these nations, and the most important vocation and livelihood for 70-80% of the population of many of these nations.

As incomes grow, some of these economies raise their capacity as consumers of foreign products, providing new trade and investment opportunities for the United States; a vision and goal not lost to many U.S. companies that have turned their attention to Africa in the last few years.

In providing poor nations with the tools and skill set needed to get them on the path of prosperity through science, trade and business, the United States would also create more American jobs, expand trade and investment, grow markets, and increase U.S. influence globally, particularly in the new frontiers of Africa and Southeast Asia, which are going to become increasingly important strategically in the not-too-distant future.

Thanks to American leadership, it has been demonstrated in many nations that modern agricultural science, when combined with the power of trade and business, can generate dramatic increases in agricultural productivity, meet the growing future demand for global food supply, increase profitability, and catalyze growth in regional and global economies.

The challenge of growth in agricultural business should include learning from the past, avoiding complacency, and sustaining focus on meeting both current needs and future demands for food, feed, and fiber.

Public-Private Partnership

We need to recognize that the challenges of meeting current and future food demands have grown to be infinitely more complex. The challenge of global food security demands that, as people, we learn to produce more food with less land and water, and adopt prudent use of modern agricultural inputs, mitigating the growing weather variability and the threatening agenda of the global climate challenge.

Public investments in agricultural sciences should be increased to supplement the steady growth in the private sector. The science and business of agriculture and food should receive the incentives and resources needed for deployment of existing tools of modern agricultural sciences, as well as new investments and more funding for research to generate more powerful tools such as advanced biotechnology to address the more intractable problems of agriculture and food systems.

These investments are essential to increase production, enhance nutrition and utilization, reduce food loss, improve storage and transportation, as well as devise new processing and distribution systems to encourage trade, business, and overall growth of entrepreneurial capacity in the new frontiers for commercial agriculture.

To enhance the value and benefit from these investments, the complexities around global trade that work against poor developing nations should be relieved so as not to prevent these nations from advancing their economic growth and reducing their food insecurity.

Poor developing nations of the world are generally not exporters of food, as they lack basic human capital, physical infrastructure such as storage and transportation, and harmonized regulatory systems—or they have government regulations or protectionist policies that discourage regional and global trade opportunities for many poor African nations.

The challenges of feeding a growing world population are huge. To feed the world, we will need to earnestly encourage the effective engagement of smallholder farmers as well as large commercial enterprises.

We will need smart investments and partnerships
from poor and rich nations that advance the science and technology necessary to address the growing complexity around the biophysical challenges and shocks brought about by climate change.

Strategic public-private partnerships that take local realities of the developing countries into account will be badly needed. Meeting the future global demand of food and preserving the natural resources for the future generation would require smallholder farmers in poor nations not only to feed themselves, but also as major contributors in the charge of feeding the world.

Trade and businesses are critical for growth of agriculture, as they generate a demand for increased production derived from the investments in science, technology, and innovation.

Trade and business create the markets for agricultural inputs, as they do for the produce generated from farm commodities, as well as the end products that emerge from the extended value chains of the production and processing systems that have been put in place.

Since the recent (2007-2008) food price spike that awakened the whole world from its complacency in believing that it can feed the world on food produced in a few pockets of remarkable success, major commodities have continued to show trends of sharp increases in prices, pinching the pockets of the poor all over the world.

The greater concerns have been in developing countries, particularly in Africa and South Asia, because these nations badly need science and technology, but they do not possess the capacity to access and adapt them.

**Africa: The New Frontier**

Focusing on Africa, this continent needs to recognize that, like the nations of the developed world, it too cannot meet the grand challenges of food security and economic development without the powers of science and technology, trade and business, in the right policy environment.

Because of the lack of human and institutional capacity, and political will and leadership that has not always been exercised with alacrity, Africa has not been able to scale up existing scientific technologies to meet the challenges in national and regional food security.

I am an agricultural scientist, and believe that I know what is needed to develop Africa’s agricultural economy. There are so many issues to address, however. Key, basic interventions in science, technology, and innovations, coupled with markets and businesses that encourage the so-called value chains of improved seeds, fertilizers, irrigation, finance, agronomic and animal husbandry practices, and access to services, property rights, and ownership of land by all, particularly by women and the youth, are badly needed. The urgency to address these issues needs to be felt.

An Africa that is not ready to address these issues to meet today’s food production and natural resource challenges with conventional sciences would be in real danger with climate change and the ensuing heat, moisture, pest and disease stresses that would likely require advanced biotechnology, and other physical sciences to meet these challenges.

It should be recognized that the emerging challenges make these problems very complex. These are not simple nuts to crack, and it will take time to effectively address them. There is urgency for increased commitment to the sciences of agriculture, health, and natural resource conservation and management, building the necessary human and institutional infrastructure today and now, and not after the problems have worsened and gotten out of hand.

Most fundamental to nations seeking food security is building local human and institutional capacity in all spheres of their economy. Africa needs to rapidly build its human capacity, its scientific infrastructure, and its public and private institutions, including the institutions of governance and policy. It needs to invest its own meager resources, as well as aggressively pursue technical assistance from friendly nations.

I am a product of the Technical Assistance program, with most of my educational programs supported by the United States government, I and know fully well what education and knowledge can do for a person, a family, and a nation. Africa needs
to turn to the power of education, science, trade and business to address the triad of the continent’s most persistent enemies of illiteracy, hunger, and disease, and commit its due attention to growing economic opportunities for its people. There is no substitute.

Africa will need assistance from other nations and development organizations. Africa may not be able to make the essential science-based development to transform its agriculture and build its economy without significant external assistance. I am even more certain, however, that no amount of external funding will bring about transformative change in Africa’s economy, unless it is locally-led by an inspired citizenry and driven by an unequivocal support and commitment from African leaders and policy makers.
Global competition for Africa’s rich natural resource base, long dominated by Western commercial interests, has expanded dramatically in the last 15 years, with a host of new players seeking oil, minerals, and other commodities to fuel their growing economies. An array of emerging economic powers has entered the fray—Malaysia, India, Brazil, Korea, and Turkey among them. China, through the sheer scale and rapidity of its expansion, has generated the most profile and reaction, both within Africa and the West.

In the United States, China’s assertive mix of economic engagement and commercial diplomacy spurred fears that Western “values” and interests in Africa would be undermined by China, that China would “gobble up” Africa’s resource base, and that the U.S. and China were locked on a course to strategic confrontation. Some of the hyperbole around the threat of Chinese engagement and the scramble for African resources has abated. But there is still a common narrative in Washington policy circles—as evidenced in media coverage of President Obama’s July 2013 Africa trip—that the United States and the West are losing ground to Chinese firms, that the U.S. has walked away from Africa as other players are stepping in, and that China is monopolizing African resource opportunities.

In discussing U.S. interests vis-à-vis China, other investors, and the “scramble” for African resources, a few points are worth bearing in mind.

Africa’s landscape is changing and African governments can afford to be more assertive and selective in their partnerships. There is no question that Africa has become a more competitive environment in commercial and diplomatic terms, and relative U.S. influence with African governments is less than it was 15 or 20 years ago. This should not be surprising in a region where opportunities for investment and trade are growing, where governments are becoming more strategic in pursuit of economic interests, and where domestic African constituencies are generally more powerful vectors of change and reform than any external actor can be. Africa’s changing landscape calls for new forms of U.S. engagement, but U.S. policymakers should not exaggerate the threat that China poses to U.S. interests, nor frame U.S. engagement in Africa as counter to China or other investors. Ultimately competition for African resources and commercial opportunities, if well managed by African leaders, will be a boon to Africa and will challenge external partners—the United States, China, and others—to update their assumptions and their approaches to Africa to remain relevant and attractive to the up-and-coming generation.

Demand for African resources has had a transformative effect on Africa’s economic outlook and has opened new opportunities for investment. External demand for the continent’s resources has been the major driver of Africa’s sustained growth surge over the last decade. Persistent high demand from China and other Asian players allowed most African states to
emerge from the global economic crisis of 2009 relatively unscathed. Sub-Saharan Africa’s economy has more than tripled since 2000 to some $1.33 trillion, and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) predicts continued growth of 5.4 and 5.8 in 2013 and 2014 respectively. The current commodity surge has been accompanied in many cases by more savvy economic management and technological advances that speed transactions and lower costs. It has helped drive an expansion in banking, telecommunications, and construction and has accelerated the rise of an African consumer base that is opening opportunities in retail and small-scale local manufacturing. As these trends gain traction and momentum, it is not insatiable appetite for resources, but a slowdown in Chinese demand that will test how qualitatively different the current growth trajectory will be from commodity booms of the past. The onus will fall on African governments to ensure that the current boom is managed to support sustained, inclusive growth.

U.S. and Western firms are not out of the picture and in fact remain the major players in Africa’s most lucrative extractive industries. Western companies remain the dominant players in African mineral and energy production, even as China’s investments and imports grow. China came late to the energy game in Africa; and international oil companies, with massive asset bases, reserves that dwarf China’s holdings in Africa, and major technological advantages, retain an almost insurmountable lead over China’s state-owned oil companies, particularly in deep water finds where the greatest development potential lies. China scholar Peter Nolan points out that in Angola, where China has made a concerted effort to increase its oil assets, of 10 mega-projects slated to be completed by 2015, Chevron is the leader on four; BP on three; Total on two; and ExxonMobil on one. China is not on the list. In Nigeria, of similar mega-projects, Shell is the lead on four; ExxonMobil on two, and Chevron, Total, and Repsol on one each. New oil finds in Ghana, Uganda, and Sierra Leone and natural gas finds off the East Coast of Africa have been led by smaller western independents like Anadarko, Tullow, Cobalt, and Ophir; western engineering companies like Baker Hughes and KBR remain predominant in energy infrastructure and services; and the large commodity traders, which move oil to China, are largely European. In the mining sector, where China has invested heavily, not Chinese companies, but multinational giants such as Rio Tinto, BHP Billiton, Glencore Xtrata, and ENRC remain the heavy hitters.

African governments will determine whether the continent’s natural resources are a blessing or a curse. Whatever the intentions or practices of external investors, African governments are ultimately responsible for maximizing the benefits accruing from their countries’ natural resource endowments.

First, African governments need to set and enforce the terms of engagement with external investors. A number of African countries are taking a more strategic look at the costs and benefits of relations with big commercial partners. African workers and civil-society groups have pushed back on poor labor relations, lax worker safety standards, and inadequate environmental protection measures by external investors. Increasingly, African governments have pressed for more equitable trade patterns with China and other partners, for greater local beneficiation of raw materials, increasingly stringent local content regulations, and adherence to tax and environmental codes. Long-term land acquisitions in Africa (“land grabbing”) are drawing scrutiny—and controversy, and the costs and benefits of such deals are not always transparent or fully understood. The African Union has adopted a set of continental guidelines on best practices, but this is an area that warrants greater analysis and focus by African governments, African opinion leaders (like the African Progress Panel – see below) and the international community.

Second, African governments must take steps to eliminate incentives and opportunities for corruption and mismanagement and strengthen mechanisms of oversight and accountability. The government of Ghana, for example, publishes quarterly disclosures of petroleum production and payment. Liberia has made adherence to the voluntary Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative principles a legal requirement. Guinea and Liberia have committed to posting all mining contracts online for public scrutiny. In instances where political will is lacking, collective pressure and standard setting
by other African government or regional organizations may strengthen constituencies for reform. The Africa Progress Panel, chaired by former Secretary-General of the United Nations Kofi Annan, has brought much needed high-profile attention to the massive losses to African economies and citizens from government undervaluation of assets, secret deals, and mismanagement in the oil, gas, and mineral industries. The report singled out five mineral deals contracted in the Democratic Republic of Congo between 2010 and 2012, and concluded that total losses from the five deals reviewed were “equivalent to more than double the combined annual budget for health and education in 2012.”

Finally, to be ultimately successful, African governments will need to ensure that gains from natural resource flows are reinvested in sectors and services—infrastructure, power generation, agriculture, education, institutional capacity—that will ultimately drive long-term growth, employment, and inclusive development.

Africa’s partners can support better management of natural resources.

The United States has fairly stringent rules guiding U.S. companies’ engagement, including the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, Dodd-Frank, and the Foreign Account Transparency Act. The UK and other Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries have similar models. International efforts on the lines of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative and the Kimberly Process, as well as efforts to improve global transparency and exchange of information to prevent tax evasion and aggressive avoidance—an initiative that the UK has promoted in its leadership of the G-8—all warrant exploration. Emerging economies and Africa’s newer investment partners should also be engaged, if possible in these debates, and active African buy-in and support will be critical.

What does Africa’s commodity boom and increased competition mean for the United States?

First, the U.S. can get more skin in the game by bolstering U.S.-Africa economic and commercial engagement. Harnessing the capacities and resources of the U.S. private sector can serve U.S. commercial interests and also spur economic growth and development in Africa. The U.S. has generally shied away from overt commercial diplomacy in Africa, downplaying hard economic interests in its rhetoric and assistance outreach. This squeamishness is subsiding, as the development benefits of investment are increasingly acknowledged in traditional development circles and among African publics. The U.S. government can help facilitate entry by a broader swath of the U.S. private sector, beyond the corporate giants and extractives, education on the opportunities and offering greater support to mitigate risk and uncertainty. The president’s July trip was a much needed boost to this aspect of U.S. engagement, and the Power Africa initiative a promising opportunity for further expansion.

But as the U.S. steps up its commercial game in Africa, it should also help African governments step up their capacity to manage. If the U.S. bolsters its economic engagement in Africa, it will also want to ensure that the current commodity super-cycle generates longer-term opportunities, sustained growth, and an expanding market base. The Millennium Challenge Corporation, Power Africa and similar programs can help African governments overcome long-standing barriers to investment. Technical assistance and training can focus on strengthening mechanisms of oversight and accountability in natural resource management, including legislatures, regulatory and tax agencies, and civil society watchdogs. The U.S. should encourage African regional bodies and efforts to set norms and standards for global investors, environmental stewardship, natural resource management, and transparency. And it should work with global partners, both traditional G-8 partners and the emerging economic powers, to strengthen global norms in transparency and responsible investment.

Democracy and Human Rights in Africa

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The Arab Spring has been a forceful reminder to the international community that good governance and human rights are more than just aspirational goals—they are the fundamental basis of societies to which even those living under the most authoritarian rulers seek access. As the last few years have shown, no region—and no country—is immune from reform. Even countries that long appeared resistant to change can see entrenched leaders removed while political reform, however tricky, takes root. While the Arab Spring has its roots in North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa has felt corresponding tremors. Many leaders are cognizant of the links between governance and human rights and the uprisings in North Africa have stimulated both hope and anxiety throughout the continent. Indeed, many of the underlying issues are the same: large youth population, high unemployment, rising food and fuel costs, persistent corruption, and limited political participation.

But even prior to the Arab Spring, many Sub-Saharan African countries have been submerged in a prolonged period of transition. Some countries have seen forward movement while others have gone backwards. Indeed, the struggle to develop viable democratic institutions and legal frameworks that enable the protection of human rights, accountability, and the rule of law can be seen across the continent—from Sierra Leone to South Africa. At the same time, many repressive, authoritarian rulers as well as ongoing conflicts across the continent have stymied reform, crippled development, and institutionalized a culture of impunity and human rights violations.

The Arab Spring—with all its successes and failures—offers some important guidance for African nations undergoing political transitions as well as for Africans seeking meaningful change. Ultimately, creating effective governance institutions, independent judiciaries, and disciplined security forces won’t happen overnight. But the steps senior government leaders take to bring them into existence are important indications of the intent to uphold the rule of law and support human rights. They also provide opportunities for citizens to hold their government to account—and enable donors, such as the United States, to engage directly in order to support and improve the process.

Overarching Challenges

Throughout much of Africa, one of the most overt threats to democracy and human rights is widespread political oppression. Whether outright dictatorships or authoritarian rulers, these governments categorically deny citizens access to the political process. Few regimes of this nature remain as there is increasing international—and regional—pressure not to maintain such centralized power. In some African countries, however, stark repression continues and remains violent and direct. In other countries there has been a steady decline in civic
participation through the passage of legislation that eviscerates fundamental freedoms through broadly-defined provisions. For example, while Burundi saw the assassination of members of the National Liberation Forces (FNL)—an armed group turned opposition party—and other opposition groups in 2010 and 2011 and ongoing violent threats in 2012 and 2013, Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni has maintained power for 27 years, with threats to freedom of expression, assembly and association escalating over the last decade.

In Equatorial Guinea, the Democratic Party maintains a monopoly over political power by outright prohibiting independent coverage of voting and offering employment opportunities to those who joined or allied with them. In Ethiopia, the death of long-time Prime Minister Meles Zenawi has thus far led to little change in a severely restrictive environment that includes cases of government assistance being offered only to farmers who support the ruling party, essentially tying economic security, long-term livelihoods, and even basic survival of families to support for the party. Such forms of oppression are far more insidious because they can be more difficult to detect than overt political violence and are sometimes overlooked as a violation of rights.

Political violence and oppression are often tied to the suppression of civil society, a growing problem in many African countries. Indeed, the worrisome limiting of freedom of speech, press and assembly is often a tactic to stave off opposition. In some cases, governments take steps to ensure that certain topics are off-limits: Angola, for instance, has press laws regulating “abuse of press freedom,” which has been broadly interpreted and used to restrict commentary on government policy. Even South Africa, recognized as a regional leader on human rights and which generally protects constitutional freedoms, is in the midst of debating a bill that could regulate discussion and dissemination of information about “state security.” Vague wording and broad definitions allow authorities to prosecute journalists and activists whose statements are critical of the government, oppose the ruling party’s policies, or simply upset local authorities.

In some countries, when citizens seek to protest peacefully, authorities respond with excessive force: in Angola, security agents in civilian clothing have assaulted protesters with impunity; and police have arbitrarily arrested protesters, intimidated journalists, and alleged that protests could restart civil war in order to prevent future participation. In Ethiopia, the prosecution of 29 Muslim community protest leaders—charged under the deeply flawed anti-terrorism law—raises serious fair trial concerns as the government has provided defendants with limited access to legal counsel and closed the hearings to the defendants’ relatives and the public. These are only two examples of measures taken across the continent that present challenges for effective governance and have implications, over the long term, for development and stability.

While political violence is the most direct threat and the suppression of civil society a major obstacle to political participation and the protection of rights, these are both symptoms of a more serious and systemic underlying challenge: weak or nonexistent rule of law and unaccountable security forces. The interlocking nature of these two obstacles means that in many cases cycles of violence and impunity continue. An example of such a challenge is in Kenya where authorities have made no effort to investigate or prosecute serious crimes committed by security forces.

Despite the positive turn towards growing judicial independence, most Kenyan authorities have taken similarly reluctant stances in the past when presented with such findings. Recent reports of undisciplined security force behavior in Nigeria—in response to Boko Haram attacks—have also been met with rejection and dismissal. Insecurity cannot be addressed solely by security forces, particularly if they are undisciplined—as such initiatives may serve to worsen the problem as opposed to mitigating it.

To be sure, some notable steps have been taken to hold the worst offenders to account, including through the conviction for war crimes and crimes against humanity of Liberia’s former president Charles Taylor in 2012 and Senegal’s recent arrest of former Chadian leader Hissene Habre to be tried in a special court in Dakar, but the rule of law remains restricted and accountability undermined in many countries. Unfortunately such examples still remain the exception—not the rule.
Positive Cases: Improvements in Human Rights

There are some positive developments worth highlighting, including recent successes in Liberia and Ghana. Liberia, which ended its civil war almost a decade ago, has made significant improvements in the area of freedom of speech. Since the 2010 passage of the Freedom of Information Act, the government has been a regional leader for the promotion of access to information. In 2012, libel was decriminalized, and the government has supported a movement to decriminalize libel and insult throughout Africa. While legal defense is still difficult to obtain for the poor, access did improve in 2010 with the deployment of public defenders, who were operating in each county by the end of 2012. Corruption remains endemic throughout Liberia, but there have been some positive developments, particularly with the government admitting to fraud and agreeing to an external audit. Finally, Liberia’s military—once a violently abusive and predatory force—has seen large-scale improvements in recent years following a major initiative, led by the United States and the United Nations, to strengthen and professionalize the Liberian Armed Forces. The U.S. took the lead in vetting, reforming, and training the national army, which has resulted in a force of 2,000 apparently more professional troops. Major challenges remain, but Liberia’s ongoing progress is noteworthy.

Ghana similarly stands out for its successful transition from a history of military rule and coups to a functioning democracy. The four elections since Jerry Rawlings was forced to step down have been widely recognized as free and fair by the international community. Despite fierce competition between the two major political parties, the National Democratic Congress and New Patriotic Party, the 2012 elections were largely peaceful. These elections followed a 2011 commitment by all major political parties to denounce intimidation tactics and cut down on harsh rhetoric, signifying further embrace of genuine democratic participation by all sides. Equally important was the peaceful transfer of power in 2011, when President Atta Mills died unexpectedly and was immediately succeeded by Vice President John Dramani Mahama without conflict.

The government has recognized that it still has numerous challenges to address and is taking impressive steps to do so. While the death penalty is still on the books, the government has accepted recommendations to abolish it. And, despite continuing to sentence people to death, no executions were carried out in 2012. In August 2012, the Ghanaian government ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and passed the Mental Health Act of 2012 in order to work towards improving protection of the rights and freedoms of those with mental disabilities. The passage of laws is only a first step towards rectifying the inhumane treatment of Ghanaians with disabilities, but it is certainly a positive one. While Ghana continues to face challenges with corruption and violence against women and the LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) community, it remains a strong example of democratic governance in the region.

Negative Cases: Backsliding on Human Rights

While Liberia and Ghana are strong examples of an improved human rights situation, there are many cases of governments backsliding, including Ethiopia and Zimbabwe. Ethiopia has seen economic gains and improvements in socioeconomic indicators, but it may be little more than a red herring given the inextricable link between human rights and long-term development. In Ethiopia, political avenues for peaceful protest have been shut down. Opposition leaders, civil society activists, and independent journalists have been jailed or forced to flee persecution for exercising their right to freedom of expression. Worse still are the abuses committed by Ethiopia’s security forces throughout the country.

The passage of the 2009 Charities and Societies Proclamation provides unfettered powers to the Charities and Societies Agency and restricts freedom of association and peaceful assembly—including by restricting the amount of foreign funds non-governmental organizations (NGOs) could acquire. Similarly, the overly broad language in the 2009 Anti-Terrorist Proclamation has been used to target journalists, members of the opposition, and dissenters, with at least 30 individuals convicted in 2012 alone. Forty-nine journalists have fled Ethiopia
over the last five years while others are forced to choose between self-censorship and being charged with terrorist activity if they publish articles critical of the government or prominent political figures. These laws have deeply affected the ability of individuals and nongovernmental NGOs to address human rights violations and participate in social issues.

In addition to severely restricting civil space, there are numerous cases of state-sponsored violence. Witness accusations of abuse such as torture during interrogation and forced confessions from prisoners have gone largely uninvestigated. In response to protests by members of the Muslim community after the government sought to interfere in the religious sphere, the police used excessive force—including beatings and the use of tear gas—to break up the peaceful movement. This has generated greater religious tensions, a problem that cannot be addressed militarily. Finally, the government has stepped up “villagization” programs: originally intended as voluntary relocation, numerous reports indicate that the government is forcibly evicting citizens. In many cases, these forced evictions involved intimidation by security forces, arbitrary arrest of dissenters, and beating those who questioned relocation. In the majority of these incidents, the government forces have faced no investigation or liability for their actions.

Zimbabwe, once the continent’s bright spot, has been on the road to ruin over the last decade. More than four years after Zimbabwe’s violent and disputed 2008 presidential election, the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) and the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) party have yet to implement key reforms envisioned under their power-sharing agreement. Neither the ZANU-PF-controlled security forces nor others responsible for torture and killings during the 2008 election have been held to account. This, combined with the lack of progress on institutional and legal reforms, means that many Zimbabweans fear a renewed cycle of violence, particularly with elections to be held in advance of any genuine reform.

Political leaders have also failed to address restrictive laws on civil society: the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act and Public Order and Security Act have been used regularly to restrict freedom of assembly and arrest and prosecute those who speak out on human rights issues or criticize the government. Civil society groups and NGOs have faced increased harassment under these laws. One rights group, Women of Zimbabwe Arise, saw more than 200 members arrested in 2013 alone. Independent and opposition media coverage is also severely restricted and further limits accountability of the government: the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Authority has consistently refused to grant licenses to private broadcasters in an attempt to stifle any independent lines of discussion and channel coverage through groups that support ZANU-PF. In September 2012, the Minister of Media, Information, and Publicity threatened to begin revoking operating licenses of organizations that denounced the ZANU-PF leadership.

The police have followed through on this threat through raids of production studios of independent news groups, seizure of material, and attacks on reporters, all of which have increased in advance of the 2013 elections. More generally, Zimbabwe’s security forces are tightly controlled by ZANU-PF and exhibit a long history of partisanship on their behalf. Zimbabwe’s security forces operate within a system that allows elements within their ranks to arbitrarily arrest, torture and kill perceived opponents with impunity. Worse still is their interfering role in the nation’s political and electoral affairs in ways that have adversely affected the ability of citizens to vote freely. The security forces are partisan and abusive, particularly against opposition members, their supporters and members of civil society.

Conclusion

On a continent that continues to be in transition, human rights and democracy remain core components that must be upheld if African governments are to see sustainable progress in a range of areas. With some successes and some setbacks on governance, the question for U.S. policymakers is how can the United States best make a lasting contribution to good governance and human rights in Africa? Is providing significant development assistance to a
government despite its troubled record on fundamental rights and governance a sensible decision given the long-term implications? Should security interests in the Horn of Africa and increasingly in the Sahel trump the importance of providing assistance geared towards enhancing accountability and transparency? Ultimately, the goal should be to provide support not only to African governments but to African people as well. And to pass this test, the U.S. needs to craft a policy that goes beyond rhetoric—and towards one that legitimately incorporates security concerns, economic interests, and effective governance. Until all three issues genuinely have an equal place at the table, the potential for U.S. policy towards Africa to be weak and antiquated is high.

Endnotes

1 Courtney Weatherby, a graduate student at Georgetown University’s Walsh School of Foreign Service, contributed to this paper.


A Forklift in the Road:
A Snapshot of Economic Choices and African Governance

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President, Initiative for Global Development
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An acquaintance of mine recently talked his way onto an old cargo ship on East Africa’s Lake Victoria. Even though the vessel wasn’t much to look at, he was impressed with how smoothly she sailed between ports. When they were safely tied up at one stop, he found the captain up on deck, leaning against a railing, looking at the pier below. Then he saw what the captain was watching—a long line of young African men, each stripped to the waist, loading heavy sacks of grain, one at a time, on to the ship. Ten thousand sacks of grain, it turned out, which took more than a dozen hours to haul on board.

After a while, my acquaintance turned to his host and said in a sarcastic tone, “Did you ever think of using, say, a forklift?” The captain paused briefly, pointed to the line of working men, and said, “I’m all they’ve got. So, no, I won’t be using a forklift.”

Everyone’s Talking About Africa

Africa is finally getting its economic “moment in the sun.” As President Barack Obama said during his July 2013 visit to Tanzania, “The world is investing in Africa like never before...So I see Africa as the world’s next major economic success story.” International investors are showing their support by ramping up their dollars, euros and renminbi. In the last ten years, Africa’s trade with the rest of the world has quadrupled, and its trade with the “BRICS” (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) has gone up tenfold, reaching $340 billion in 2012 (Ernst and Young, 2013 Africa Attractiveness Report). Just as importantly, Africans themselves are expressing their optimism by “talking with their feet.” As Jean-Louis Ekra, President of the African Export Import Bank, and an Initiative for Global Development (IGD) “Frontier Leader,” said in a recent interview with IGD, “Many Africans that have been trained abroad are looking at returning to Africa—that was not the case 7-10 years ago.”

Indeed, Africa’s growth is impressive and increasingly broad-based. According to the International Monetary Fund, six of the ten fastest growing economies from 2001 to 2010 were in Africa and, looking forward through 2017, 11 of the 20 fastest growing economies will be on the continent. African economies have tripled in size since 2000 (IMF), and according to the firm Renaissance Capital, an investment bank focused on emerging markets (and cited in the Ernst & Young report), 11 African countries grew at an annual rate of at least 7 percent in the last decade. Contrary to conventional wisdom, this growth isn’t merely due to new discoveries in the extractive sector. According to the IMF, “non-oil” economic growth on the continent has averaged 5.4 percent over the last five years. World Bank figures show that 27 African countries have already attained “middle income” status and a number of others are well on their way to doing so in the next decade. In summary, in May 2000, The Economist famously referred to Africa as the
“hopeless continent.” Just over ten years later, in 2011, that same publication ran a cover story called “Africa Rising.”

American Business: Late to the Dance?

In many ways, U.S. business has been a step slow in recognizing Africa’s rise and the economic opportunity it represents. As the editors of Bloomberg.com put it recently,

“Which continent is home to six of the world’s ten fastest growing economies and is projected to grow by 5 percent in 2013, more than twice the U.S. rate? And which one gets only 1 percent of U.S. foreign direct investment? The answer, of course, is Africa…” (July 7, 2013)

The European Union (EU) nations, if taken together, are well ahead of the U.S. in terms of trade with Africa. In 2009, China became Africa’s single largest trading partner, and in the last few years, other nations have dramatically boosted their stake in Africa as well nations like Brazil, Malaysia, Indonesia, Turkey, South Korea, the United Arab Emirates and Iran (Center for Strategic and International Studies Global Forecast 2012).

What has been holding American business investment back? According to many observers, it’s a poorly balanced sense of risk and reward. As Andrew Alli, President of the African Finance Corporation, and another IGD Frontier Leader, puts it,

“Many investors’ perceptions of Africa are somewhat distorted…People are focused on things they hear in the press, violence, corruption, not that these are not problems, but they are often exaggerated because investors coming to Africa look at it as a high risk environment and expect high returns.” (Interview posted at IGDleaders.org)

Alli and Jean-Louis Ekra are quick to point out the obvious to American audiences: there are 54 countries on the African continent, with different policies, cultures and conditions. Characterizing the continent as risky or dangerous because of violent protests in Egypt would be akin to avoiding Canada because of drug-related crime in Mexico.

So What Can Go Wrong?

Of course, Africa’s continued rise isn’t inevitable—not by a long shot. The negative perceptions that many have of the continent exist for a reason. As any honest observer of the continent will admit, African leaders are facing a number of challenges and choices that will determine whether their countries are positioned to capture their economic destiny. In short, governance—from building the capacity of democracies to respond to their citizens’ needs to fostering sustainable economic growth based upon market principles—may be the single most important factor in shaping the continent’s future.

Demographic Challenges

Arguably, the most immediate challenge for African elected leaders is finding effective ways to meet the needs and demands of a rapidly-growing younger generation. A “youth bulge” is emerging in much of the continent and quickly changing the face of every region. According to African Union figures, half the continent’s population is under the age of 20, and the 15 to 24 age group is growing faster in Africa than any other place in the world. In places like Tanzania, some 70 percent of the population is under the age of 30. In Liberia, 65 percent of the population is under 25 (African Business, June 2013).

On one hand, the youth bulge represents a great opportunity for African economies to mobilize production and productivity. By 2020, according to IMF estimates, Africa will have 122 million more young people ready to enter the workforce than any other region of the world. By 2035, the continent will have the world’s largest workforce—at a time when many regions of the world are facing an aging population and rising labor costs. As journalist Howard French puts it, “Africa has entered what experts call a demographic ‘sweet spot.’ For the next few decades, the distribution of people by age will be sharply skewed toward the young, who are energetic, eager to work and maximally productive.” (The China-Africa Convergence: Can America Catch Up? All Africa, June 15, 2013).
On the other hand, taking advantage of the youth demographic requires jobs and economic opportunity sufficient to satisfy the aspirations of these young adults—opportunity that is currently lacking in many areas. Young people make up 60 percent of Africa’s unemployed population (Agbor, Taiwo and Smith, in Foresight Africa: Top Priorities for the Continent 2012, *Sub-Saharan Africa's Youth Bulge: A Demographic Dividend or Disaster*). A 2012 analysis of Africa’s changing workforce reports that of the continent’s 40 million currently unemployed youths, 22 million have given up on finding a job (African Economic Outlook 2012, produced by the African Development Bank, OECD, UNECA and UNDP). Of those working, World Bank figures suggest that much of their activity is in the “informal economy,” usually small-scale agriculture, which often brings lower pay. In places like Mali and Ethiopia, for example, 94 percent and 74 percent, respectively, of youths are “self-employed in the informal and agricultural sectors.” (Agbor, Taiwo and Smith).

As young people become more connected to their counterparts in other regions and nations, and more aware of their comparative economic circumstances, unskilled manual labor seems less likely to satisfy them. Technology is dramatically changing generational perceptions and expectations. As Zimbabwean-born Strive Masiyiwa, Founder and Executive Chairman of Econet Wireless Group, points out, “In 1994, 70 percent of Africans had never heard a phone ring. Today, 70 percent own a telephone.” (*Opportunity is Africa's Middle Name*, IGD blog, November 8, 2012). The advent of affordable mobile phones and social media, access to the internet, long distance radio, and satellite television in gathering places like Internet cafes, means that young people are much more likely to realize what they don’t have. iPods, smart phones and tablet computers are no less exciting to young people in Nairobi than those in New York. Real economic opportunity provides a hope—even far off—of acquiring such products. A perceived lack of opportunity can lead to the opposite feeling: despair.

**Stresses on Democracy**

While Africa’s economies are growing faster than elsewhere, the combination of a youth bulge and rising expectations will inevitably put greater pressure on elected leaders. On a continent long dominated by colonial governments or one-party regimes, there are increasingly credible opposition parties and strong political debate. From 1960-1989, only five African countries had regular democratic elections. Since 1990, over 30 leaders or ruling parties have changed through democratic process (Ernst & Young). As the Economist Intelligence Unit puts it, “Elections have become a normal occurrence in Sub-Saharan Africa…” (Democracy Index Report 2012). The United Nations Development Programme characterizes this trend as a “virtual sea change in governance.” (UNDP.org/Africa). While this relative flowering of democracy is positive in so many ways, it also creates new political realities. Large numbers of unemployed or underemployed youth in Africa could prove a powerful voting bloc—and in some places, protest bloc—that will need attention.

The lure of “quick revenue” in the form of lucrative natural resource discoveries will only increase the pressure on some political leaders. In the case of oil and gas development, as Brookings Visiting Scholar and former World Bank official, Tamar Atinc, recently put it, “So far, the track record for effectively managing natural resource wealth has been pretty dismal with very few countries successfully using their natural resource wealth to promote sustained economic growth and poverty reduction. In fact, many countries have not only squandered their resources but their economic performance has actually worsened in many cases, leading to what is often referred to as “the resource curse.” (*Avoiding the Resource Curse: How to Manage Natural Resource Wealth for Human Development*, Brookings Institution Up Front, July 11, 2013).

Atinc suggests that such revenue sources can tempt policymakers to spend money without making either long-term investments in such needs as education and workforce training, or undertaking optimal policy reforms.

Natural resource discoveries are not the only form of “revenue temptation.” Chinese loans and
investments in Africa, accurately or not, are often criticized for being “tied” or otherwise bearing conditions that can distort policymaking. Tied loans, as described in a recent article in *The Economist*, provide that “the recipient must spend the money with Chinese companies....With no competition, favoured (sic) firms get away with delivering bad roads and overpriced hospitals. Creditors and donors often set the wrong priorities” (“Trying to pull together: Africans are asking whether China is making their lunch or eating it.” *The Economist*, April 20 2011). Another frequent charge is that Chinese investments are made in exchange for long-term contracts that lock up rights to African natural reserves, limiting both competition and long-term economic flexibility (Raymond Hu, *Chinese Investment in Africa: A Dangerous Game*, American Foreign Policy, Princeton Student Editorials on Global Politics, March 2011). While efforts are underway to address these conditions through, for example, newly announced “diplomatic frameworks” between China and Africa, it is unlikely that there will be major changes in the near term (*China’s New Leadership and Sino-Africa Relations*, 2013 Foresight Africa, The Brookings Institution).

**Signs of Progress, Reasons for Optimism**

While the foregoing challenges are real, there are many signs that African leaders are embracing the continent’s economic potential. For example, the Doing Business 2013 Report, a project of the International Finance Corporation and World Bank which tracks the business environment across the globe, concludes that African governments are improving how they regulate and interact with private businesses. As measured by the Doing Business Index, while in 2005 only a third of Sub-Saharan nations were reforming their business regulations to make them simpler and more investment-friendly, now two-thirds are (“Doing Business 2013: Getting Better,” *The Economist*, Oct. 27, 2012). More and more African nations are making progress on the Millennium Challenge Corporation’s (MCC) “economic freedom” standards—a cluster or “bucket” of eight objective indicators (For an in-depth discussion of these indicators and their application, see MCC.gov).

**A Few of the Ways the U.S. Can Help**

U.S. policymakers should carefully examine existing assistance programs to ensure that they emphasize (if not actually be built upon) the role of private enterprise and market-based principles in development. As a recent report of the bipartisan CSIS Executive Council on Development concludes, the U.S. should “place broad-based economic growth and job creation in developing countries at the center of U.S. development and diplomatic policy.” (*Our Shared Opportunity: A Vision for Global Prosperity*, CSIS, March 2013).

The clearest example of an assistance program that tries to meet this charge is the MCC. Countries are only eligible for MCC grant compacts if they are able to demonstrate a commitment to good governance, as reflected in three broad areas—ruling justly, investing in its people and economic freedom—as measured by 20 objective indicators. Compacts are drawn up after conducting a thorough “binding constraints to growth analysis” that identifies policies and conditions that are restricting private sector growth. Most importantly, compact implementation relies on a “country ownership” model that explicitly aims to build country capacity for leading sustainable economic development projects and partnering with the business community even after the five-year compact itself has ended. While the most visible compact outcomes—usually the completion of infrastructure projects like roads, energy production, etc.—are what garner the most public attention, in many ways the experience itself of administering complex projects, on time, under budget, through transparent means, partnering with business and according to international standards, is the most important benefit in any compact.

In addition to ensuring that international assistance programs emphasize the role of private enterprise, U.S. assistance policies should prioritize investments and sectors that are most likely to catalyze business activity and private sector growth. President Obama’s recently announced “Power Africa” initiative and the “Electrify Africa Act,” co-authored by Representatives Royce, Engel, C. Smith and Bass, have the potential to increase access to reliable electricity in the next decade. There are obvious humanitarian reasons for want-
ing to increase access to power for the nearly 600 million Africans without electricity, but there are also important economic development reasons as well. As President Obama said in unveiling Power Africa, “Our primary interest when it comes to working with Africa on energy issues has to do with how we power Africa so that it can be an effective market creating jobs and opportunity. We also then have somebody to trade with and sell iPods to, and airplanes, and all kinds of good stuff.” Increasing access to reliable, more affordable power can lower manufacturing costs and increase manufacturing potential. This, in turn, should help leaders respond to the younger generation’s growing demand for economic opportunity.

That “Forklift in the Road”

The picture my acquaintance painted in his story of the old boat on Lake Victoria reminds me of the tough choices African leaders are facing in crafting economic policy and governance. Commerce in Africa is clearly on the upswing. There are real reasons to be optimistic about rising standards of living and long-term economic activity. But seizing those opportunities will require making investments that may not satisfy some immediate needs, nor be politically popular. Do we keep our focus on the shirtless men toiling away in the hot sun—men who are working for very little, but working nonetheless? Or do we focus on policies and investments that provide hope for the younger men behind them? Do we only encourage men to carry those heavy sacks, or do we bring in the forklifts and teach a few men to drive—knowing, hoping, that we give younger men (and women) the tools and inspiration to one day buy their own forklifts? Tough choices to go along with Africa’s “moment in the sun.”
The challenges

Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) is faced with three daunting challenges: repeated food price spikes, over 200 million people who are chronically hungry, and the need to feed a world of growing demands by 2050.

There have been three global food price spikes since 2007, the latest peaking toward the end of 2012. Each has been devastating for the poor of Africa who spend most of their income on food. Since 2007, hunger has been rising by 2 percent per year. Today, over 200 million people, nearly 23 percent, of the African population, are now classed as hungry. Most shocking of all, 40 percent of children under age five in SSA are under-height for their age due to malnutrition and are destined to suffer from stunted growth, blindness and death.

This is not a transient crisis. In SSA the population is growing at about 2.5 percent per annum and will double by 2050, to close to two billion. This population has to be fed, while at the same time per capita incomes are beginning to rise and some African countries are seeing growing demands for dairy, poultry and other meat products requiring increases in livestock feed production. Present and future supply is constrained by increasing energy and fertilizer prices, deteriorating soil and water resources, poor yield growth, and the varied impacts of climate change.

Progress to date

While some African countries are ‘stalled in a cycle of conflict and poverty,’ according to a report by One, a nonpartisan advocacy group that addresses extreme poverty, other African countries have particularly stood out as having the elements of success stories. Fourteen countries—Benin, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritania, Mozambique, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania, Togo and Uganda—have shown remarkable progress since 2005. Across these countries, gross domestic product (GDP) growth averaged 6 percent between 2005 and 2011 and nine of these countries are on track to halve extreme poverty by 2015.

Nevertheless the proportion of Sub-Saharan Africa’s population suffering from hunger has barely decreased over the past eight years (since G8 leaders announced a new aid package of $50 billion at the Gleneagles summit), and due to population growth, the absolute number of hungry people has actually risen during this time. While only one country in SSA—Ghana—has met and exceeded the United Nations Millennium Development Goal (MDG) No. 1 to halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from poverty and hunger, 13 other countries in SSA are on track to halve poverty, and 10 countries are on track to halve hunger.
According to the World Bank, food insecurity may prove to be the biggest obstacle to the developing world’s long-term economic growth. Agricultural growth directly stimulates overall national economic growth and poverty reduction: 1 percent growth in per capita agricultural GDP has been shown to lead to 1.6 percent growth in the incomes of the poorest 20 percent of the population. Moreover in SSA smallholders are key to this growth: the approximately 33 million small farms, i.e., those less than two hectares (hectare = 2.47 acres), make up 80 percent of all farms and supply up to 90 percent of agricultural production in some SSA countries. In some countries, large-scale estates have been developed especially for export crops such as cotton, oil palm and tea. We should expect this trend to continue and where appropriate to expand to food crops such as maize, wheat and sorghum. But for the foreseeable future food security is going to have to rely on greater yields from the overwhelmingly smallholder population and on ensuring they are better connected to input and output markets.

While Sub-Saharan Africa is a highly diverse region, its agriculture is characterized by a relatively common range of interacting, socioeconomic and biophysical strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

Today the strengths and opportunities outweigh the weaknesses and threats. Appropriate solutions to the challenges exist and there are strong signs of a new, distinctively African, agricultural renaissance. Much of the acceleration in GDP growth in SSA has been driven by faster agricultural growth and the potential for greater agricultural productivity is very high. In many respects Africa is the last agricultural frontier and smallholder farming will remain a leading sector for several decades to come.

In recent years there has been a step change in the way African leaders, African regions and African governments approach agriculture. Since 2003, the African Union’s Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP), has provided an official channel for developing regional and national agricultural sector policies, strategies, and investment programs. Key commitments include: raising agricultural productivity by at least 6 percent per year, and increasing public investment in agriculture to 10 percent of national budgets per year.

After a slow start, CAADP progress has been good. Most important, there is strong support for the CAADP process among European donors, working together with other donors through channels such as the Global Donor Platform for Rural Development. As of 2012, 30 countries have completed the CAADP Roundtable process and signed strategy documents, known as ‘compacts.’

**The Solutions**

A practical pathway toward the goal of universal food security is needed, one that has less impact on the environment, intensifying food production while ensuring the natural resource base on which agriculture depends is sustained, and indeed improved, for future generations.

At the same time, because of the widespread lack of good land and water in SSA and the high cost of inputs, we must learn to do more with less. **Sustainable Intensification** is a new paradigm that aims to produce more food on the same amount of land, with responsible use of water, fertilizers and pesticides, as well as achieving lower emissions of greenhouse gases. Moreover it tries to do this in a way that is both efficient, resilient and contributes to the stock of natural environmental capital, for example cleaner water, carbon sequestration, flood protection, groundwater recharge and landscape amenity value.

Many of the farming systems in Africa are far from their productive potential. Average cereal yields sit currently at a meager 1.3 tons per hectare, whereas, for example, maize (corn) modern hybrids can produce 3-7 tons per hectare. Achieving higher yields will require intensification. This can take many forms. The current model has served us well for a hundred years or more, including its underpinning of the Green Revolution of the 1960s and 1970s that kept food production in pace with population growth. But the context has radically changed. Conventional intensification is not a viable solution if it comes at the expense of the environmental and social resources on which it depends.
Today many farmers in the industrialized world are striving to ensure their inputs are much more precisely targeted. Their goal is to reduce costs and optimize returns on inputs while preserving resources. To this end they are increasingly relying on new technologies like satellite imagery, information technology and geospatial tools. Such precision farming is not appropriate for the smallholder farmers who predominate in SSA, but the same principles may apply.

For example, fertilizers are increasingly costly in SSA and often inefficiently used. One highly efficient and intrinsically sustainable approach is the technique of microdosing, developed to both minimize the application of inorganic fertilizer and to improve protection against drought. Each microdose consists of a 6-gram mix of phosphorus and nitrogen fertilizer, which just fills the cap of a soda bottle—an item that is easy to obtain. The cap of fertilizer is then poured into each hole before the seed is planted. It is somewhat more labor intensive than broadcasting the fertilizer but very effective. This technique equates to using only four kilograms per hectare (kg/ha) of phosphorus, the key limiting nutrient, but is still very effective. Millet yields increase by over 50 percent and crops are better able to absorb water.

**Precision farming**

Precision farming focuses on one aspect of Sustainable Intensification, namely the precise use of inputs. More generally, SI is a product of the application of technological and socioeconomic approaches to the task. There are two main technological approaches—one is the application of agricultural ecological processes (ecological intensification), the other is to utilize modern plant and livestock breeding (genetic intensification). Concurrent to these approaches is socioeconomic intensification, which provides an enabling environment to support technology adoption and to ensure it is sustainably used. These, in turn, rely on innovation in science and technology and in socioeconomic institutions and processes.

**The Components of Sustainable Intensification**

For example ecological intensification is illustrat-
tives attained. The challenge lies in meeting all the objectives and in scaling up success to a regional or national production system.

There are no magic bullets and no ‘one-size-fits-all’ solutions. We also have to eschew dogmatic assertions that one form of intervention, especially one type of technology, is intrinsically best, whatever the circumstances.

For the developed and emerging countries, such as China and Brazil, there are considerable opportunities for transfer of technologies and processes to SSA. The United States, in particular, has much to offer from the experience and skills of both the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the private sector. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) is already playing a lead role in this respect under Administrator Rajiv Shah.

Food insecurity affects us all. We must act together on all fronts to tackle food insecurity: acting holistically to tackle the multiple causes and utilize multiple solutions, acting wisely to determine which solutions will be appropriate in different situations and, most importantly, acting now.

**Further Reading**

1. www.ag4impact.wordpress.com
2. www.Canwefeedtheworld.org
Food Security: Implications for Africa and the World

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The issue of food insecurity in Sub-Saharan Africa

Food security exists when “all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preference for an active and healthy life.” There are three pillars of food security: ‘food availability,’ referring to a country’s ability to supply sufficient quantities of food via domestic production and imports; ‘food access,’ referring to households’ ability to get food in the marketplace or from other sources; and ‘food utilization’ referring to individuals’ knowledge of basic nutrition and care as well as adequate water and sanitation. Each of these pillars is required to ensure a healthy population. This paper focuses on the two issues of food availability and food access.

Insufficient food availability: focus on agricultural production

An estimated 234 million people in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) suffer from chronic undernourishment, and as evidenced by its food imports and amount of food aid it receives, particularly in contrast to its vast available agricultural resources, the region is not producing enough food to feed its people. In the late 20th century, many African governments emphasized manufacturing over agriculture. In parallel, support from development partners to the African agricultural sector during this period shrank considerably, from $6.2 billion in the 1980s to $2.3 billion in 2002. Although these policy stances began to shift in the late 1990s, investments in the agricultural sector in SSA are still too low, resulting in low uptake of improved inputs and agronomic practices, low yields, and high post-harvest crop losses. For example, the application of fertilizer in SSA is currently 10.5 kilograms per hectare (hectare = 2.47 acres) compared to 230 kilograms per hectare in Asia. Similarly, only 6 percent of SSA’s arable land is irrigated, compared to 47 percent in Asia. Consequently, per-hectare cereal yields for maize stood at 1.4 metric tons in Eastern and Western Africa, compared to 5.2 and 3.2 metric tons in Eastern Asia and South Eastern Asia respectively. These yields are further reduced by post-harvest losses, due to farmers’ limited knowledge of and/or access to storage facilities and relevant harvesting, drying, threshing, and winnowing technologies.

Finally, it needs noting that for centuries, African farmers have focused primarily on food production to directly meet their subsistence needs, with any surplus food sold in the local market. Similar to other farmers across the world, African farmers must increasingly focus on their comparative advantage to produce crops that will secure the highest financial return from the market and use the revenues from this production to purchase other foods they require.
**Insufficient access: markets and infrastructure**

One of the most glaring bottlenecks in smallholder farmers’ access to input and output markets is poor infrastructure, due to the region’s poorly developed road networks and lack of capacity in information and communication technologies. As a result, 76 percent of the crop production in the region is sourced from areas with more than 2.5 hours travel time to urban markets. Hence the shift from subsistence agriculture to market-led production must be coupled with investments in infrastructure development.

**Insufficient focus on building resilience to handle shocks**

Given the vulnerability of smallholder farmers in SSA to shocks, and the significant amount of land in the region that has been degraded due to erosion and nutrient mining, any discussion on food security in SSA must include solutions related to resilience. For instance, until recently Ethiopia was estimated to be losing 1.9 billion metric tons of soil, equivalent to 30,000 hectares of arable land every year due to soil erosion. Moreover, in many SSA countries, the lack of well-designed early warning systems, risk mitigation tools and proactive safety net programs result in national governments and the international community constantly dealing with expensive and difficult relief operations rather than more sustainable and efficient preventative measures.

**Progress in tackling food insecurity: the case of Ethiopia**

For decades, Ethiopia has faced chronic food insecurity. In particular, the country bears the scars of the famine in the mid-1980s that took hundreds of thousands of lives. However, through a comprehensive and integrated set of strategic interventions, the country is increasingly able to respond to food security threats. These measures have enabled Ethiopia to make remarkable gains in improving the livelihoods of the population. For instance, the number of Ethiopians living on less than $1.25 a day has fallen from 55 percent of the population in 2000 to 29 percent in 2012. Although more still needs to be done, the following section highlights some of the interventions that Ethiopia has adopted to achieve these gains. These interventions could serve as examples for other countries in SSA as well as ideas for consideration by the U.S. and other development partners supporting them.

**Snapshot of the Ethiopian economy and its agriculture sector**

Ethiopia is an agrarian country with the agriculture sector contributing nearly 45 percent to gross domestic product (GDP) and employing 83 percent of the population. With a population of 85 million and arable land mass of 74 million hectares, Ethiopia has emerged to be the fifth fastest growing country in the SSA over 2000 to 2010. Over the same period, the agriculture sector grew at an average of 8 percent and the country is projected to sustain this pace until at least 2015. In 2012-13, Ethiopia produced nearly 20 million metric tons of the five major cereals: tef, barley, wheat, maize, and sorghum. This represents a 150 percent increase from 1999 figures. During this same period, average yield in cereals have also increased by 77 percent, ranging from 3.1 tons/hectare for maize to 1.4 tons/hectare for tef.

However, nearly seven million people in Ethiopia are still chronically food insecure and rely on food and cash transfers for their survival. There is also a persistent gap between agricultural production and local demand in some parts of the country. Consequently, Ethiopia has embarked on a set of integrated interventions to ensure availability of and access to food for all, focusing on three broad areas: policy actions and investments to address structural issues, interventions intended to increase the productivity of smallholder farmers to close the yield gap, and actions intended to improve the ability of farmers to access markets and become more resilient in the case of unforeseen circumstances.

**Policy actions and investments to address structural issues**

Ethiopia’s agriculture related policy actions have ranged from efforts to overcome broad structural obstacles to narrower strategies to tackle issues in specific parts of the sector. Ethiopia put agriculture
at the heart of economic development two decades ago by launching its Agriculture Development Led Industrialization (ADLI) strategy. This was further strengthened in the national Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP) which covers 2010 to 2015, with ambitious targets for the agriculture sector.

Ethiopia has also developed a Policy and Investment Framework (PIF) under the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Program (CAADP)\(^\text{11}\) to enhance policy linkages and highlight investment opportunities.\(^\text{12}\) The government has also addressed narrower policy areas, such as re-writing the Seed Proclamation in 2013, which provides guidelines for varietal release, and quality production and distribution of seeds. Supporting these policy initiatives, Ethiopia has made significant investments in agriculture related human, institutional and infrastructure capacity development. Allocating an average of 14.7 percent of its budget to the agriculture sector since 2004, Ethiopia is among eight African countries that have exceeded the 2003 Maputo declaration that challenges African countries to invest at least 10 percent of their budget to the sector. More specifically, the establishment of 25 new agricultural Technical and Vocational Education and Training Centers (TVETs) has led to the training of 60,000 Development Agents (DAs) or agricultural extension workers. Employing these DAs at over 10,000 Farmer Training Centers (FTCs), Ethiopia currently has the highest density of agricultural extension workers in the world.

Furthermore, Ethiopia has invested heavily in improving its physical infrastructure. Since 2005, road density has increased from 33.6 to 44.5 km per 1,000 people with plans to connect all kebele (smallest administration districts) with all-weather roads by the end of the 2015. Ethiopia also aims to increase irrigation coverage from 3 percent to 16 percent and electricity coverage to 75 percent of the population during the Growth and Transformation Plan.\(^\text{13}\)

**Interventions to increase production**

Leveraging the broader investments made in human, institutional and infrastructure capacity, Ethiopia aims to improve its food security situation by implementing a series of coordinated interventions to increase the productivity of smallholder farmers. The four interventions that act as pillars to this approach are described below:

**Improved research and development:** Investments in the discovery, development, and adaptation of improved seed varieties and other technologies have been shown to yield average rates of return of 80-100 percent.\(^\text{14}\) Over the past four decades, Ethiopia’s agricultural research system has developed over 700 crop varieties. Unfortunately many of these varieties have yet to be widely adopted by local farmers. As such, a strong effort is currently underway to more closely link the research and extension system. Other efforts are also underway to strengthen knowledge capacity. For example, the Ethiopian Soil Information System project (EthioSIS) is a new project that uses remote sensing and satellite technology to create a national soil map of the country. The digital soil map will provide farmers and other stakeholders with up-to-date information on soil types for locations across the country and allows the development of efficient and localized fertilizer application rates and appropriate land management practices.

**Timely access and use of high quality inputs** is among the most important factors for yield improvements. A number of interventions are being undertaken aimed at solving challenges in the production, distribution and delivery of inputs.

- **Demand-driven supply of fertilizer:** Leveraging the information generated by the EthioSIS soil mapping project, Ethiopia is constructing four fertilizer blending facilities in strategic locations around the country. These facilities will produce blended fertilizers for farmers that are tailored to the specific soil nutrient qualities and crop needs for each agro-ecology in the country.

- **Seed production and marketing:** Uncertified seeds from the informal sector with sub-optimal yield potential account for close to 94 percent of the seed use in Ethiopia. As such, Ethiopia has been aggressively supporting the expan-
The expansion of certified seed production capacity of both private and public sector seed producers. To improve marketing and distribution issues, Ethiopia is also exploring its own model of the Agro-Dealer programs that have been successful in other parts of SSA.

- **Input credit—leveraging micro-finance institutions:** Even when farmers are aware of the benefits of improved inputs, they may not be able to access seeds and fertilizer due to low access to credit. To address this, Ethiopia has been strengthening the capacity of its commercially oriented micro-finance institutions and working to increase their efficiency by leveraging innovations such as vouchers and electronic transfer platforms.

- **Small-scale mechanization technologies:** Traditional planting techniques contribute to low cereal yields. For instance, the technique of broadcasting tef seeds by hand requires 30 to 50 kg of seeds per hectare, 10 times larger than the recommended usage of 3 to 5 kilograms per hectare. Small-scale mechanization technologies introduced to facilitate easier planting have led to yield increases of at least 30 percent.

**More effective on-farm agronomic practices:** Ethiopia’s diverse agro-ecologies require customized proportions of inputs, farming practices, and natural resource management techniques. As such, the country’s extension system is providing recommendations that are customized at the crop and agro-ecological level. The effectiveness of the extension system is also being enhanced through technologies such as participatory radio campaigns that promote awareness as well as a collective decision-making process.

**Improved warehousing:** Storage facilities are being improved and increased to reduce post-harvest losses and increase the ability of farmers’ cooperatives/unions to decide on the timing and volume of sales. Warehouses also serve as a platform to link smallholder farmers with the financial system, as the warehouse receipt framework gives farmers documentation of collateral they can use to secure immediate post-harvest financing.

**Interventions expected to improve access**

Given Ethiopia’s ambition to commercialize its smallholder farmers, food security will rely increasingly on the ability of farmers to access markets for their production as well as their demand for food need. In addition, given the margins at which most smallholder farmers operate, food security solutions must also consider resiliency strategies to account for unforeseen shocks and circumstances such as droughts.

In terms of markets, Ethiopia has focused on three important areas:

- **Strengthening farmer associations and cooperatives:** Though large in number, small-scale farmers have limited bargaining power in agricultural markets owing to their widely dispersed location and the very small per-head contribution to market supply. Farmer cooperatives can help to overcome this problem and reap the benefit of economies of scale which is of paramount importance, especially given high transaction costs. To this end, Ethiopia has established 10,910 agricultural primary cooperatives and 179 multi-purpose cooperative unions.

- **Bridging information gaps:** Information asymmetry is among the primary reasons behind smallholder farmer’s low profit margin in the lengthy supply chain of Ethiopian cereal markets. Since its establishment in 2007, the Ethiopian Commodity Exchange Market (ECX) has been working to enhance the performance of agricultural markets and build an efficient and transparent price discovery system.\(^{15}\)

- **Creating opportunities for structured demand:** Over the past few years, considerable work has been done in Ethiopia to link smallholder farmers to large commercial buyers—both domestic (e.g., Mama Fresh Injera, the largest domestic producer of a traditional Ethiopian flatbread) and international (e.g.,
Diageo, a major brewer). Ethiopia is also partnering with development organizations such as the World Food Programme (WFP) to catalyze such market opportunities. Through its purchase for progress (P4P) project, in 2013 WFP expects to purchase ~25,000 metric tons of maize from Ethiopian cooperatives for its food aid operations. Although much care in design is needed, shifting in-kind food aid from other sources towards cash-based systems (as being done by WFP) could be a win-win solution for all. It would create a demand pull for local producers, and reduce the cost of delivering food aid to beneficiaries. Most importantly, it would create market mechanisms that would strengthen rural economies and move communities away from a reliance on food aid.

Given the fragile nature of most rural communities emerging from traditional livelihoods and the recurrence of droughts and more unpredictable weather patterns, food access solutions must include other tools besides merely access to markets. In Ethiopia, these tools have included strategies to make farmland more resilient to the elements, market-based instruments designed to mitigate losses and well-designed safety net programs.

- **Developing strategies for a climate-resilient economy:** The World Bank estimated that unless the negative impacts of climate change are abated in a timely fashion, they will reduce Ethiopia’s GDP growth between 0.5 and 2.5 percent each year, possibly halving the potential GDP projections by 2025. Due to efforts on land restoration, organic farming, compost and manure, afforestation and agroforestry, conditions in many parts of Ethiopia have already begun to improve. For example, some of the most vulnerable woredas (districts) have registered up to a 40 percent decline in soil erosion over the past two decades.16

- **Market-based financial instruments to mitigate risk:** Ethiopia is also exploring market-based risk reduction tools to support farmers transitioning from subsistence to commercial agriculture. One such tool is the *Rural Resilience Initiative (R4)* launched in 2010 by Oxfam America.17 R4 works to reduce farmers’ vulnerability to weather shocks through a four-legged comprehensive risk management program; risk reduction (through improved resource management), risk transfer (through micro insurance), prudent risk taking (though microcredit) and risk reserves (savings).

  - **The Productivity Safety Net Program (PSNP):** The most important part of Ethiopia’s food security package is the PSNP, Africa’s largest food security safety net program. The PSNP’s objective is to assist chronically food insecure people by smoothing their food gap, protecting them from asset depletion and developing resilience to minor shocks at the household level. PSNP follows a three-legged implementation approach of transferring cash and/or food for work to chronically food insecure households, addressing transitory cash and food needs and establishing community assets through the Household Asset Building Program. Also part of the PSNP is a Risk Financing Mechanism that is believed to have minimized the impact of the 2011 Horn of Africa food crisis in Ethiopia, as scenes of devastation were seen in neighboring countries.18

**Conclusion**

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) estimates that, by 2022, the world will have 840 million food insecure people, nearly half of which are expected to live in SSA.19 A combined effort of all concerned is essential to achieve food security in this region. This paper suggests two comprehensive approaches to food insecurity:

- First is to support smallholder agricultural development through an integrated set of systemic interventions intended to increase productivity, reduce post-harvest losses and increase market access.
- Second is to support rural communities, which are likely to be the most vulnerable to food
security issues, with the knowledge, tools and products to become more resilient to unexpected shocks.

Endnotes

3 OECD, 2004
4 Fertilizer Market Information, IFPRI 2011
5 Hengsdijk H and Langeveld, 2009
6 AFDB, 2011
7 Mekonnen A. GTZ-Integrated Food Security Program
8 World Bank, 2012
9 The Economist, 2012
10 Strategic Grain Reserve in Ethiopia, IFPRI 2012
11 CAADP was introduced in 2003, as part of a larger initiative, NEPAD (New Partnership for Africa’s Development) with the objective of promoting agriculture
12 The Ethiopian Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, 2010
14 IFPRI - A meta-analysis of rates of return to agricultural R&D, 2000
15 This is to be achieved through a combination of efforts ranging from development of modern warehouse systems to providing better access to market information, from promoting and implementing product grades and standards to enforcing contracts and regulations.
16 VLIR – Mekelle University IUC program, Zala-Daget project
17 The Relief Society of Tigray (REST), Nyala Insurance Share Company, Dedeit Credit and Savings Institution (DECSI), Mekelle University, the International Research Institute for Climate and Society (IRI), Swiss Re, and eight other organizations.
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U.S. Health Engagement in Africa: A Decade of Remarkable Achievement. Now What?

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In the past decade, there has been a steep and historic expansion of U.S. health engagement in Africa, principally through the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and the President’s Malaria Initiative (PMI). U.S. commitments to global health, of which over 70 percent is directed to Africa, rose from $1.7 billion in FY2001 to $8.9 billion in FY2012.¹

This dramatic shift in U.S. foreign assistance—spurred by the “exceptionalism” of HIV/AIDS—has rested on a consensus that substantial U.S. investments in health in Africa do indeed advance U.S. interests. They fulfill American humanitarian values by saving and enhancing lives; they strengthen health security against common and emerging threats; and they promote the stability and long-term development of vulnerable communities in low-income countries.²

Over the past decade, several key factors account for the robust, sustained U.S. health engagement in Africa and the widely-held view that these U.S. investments are a foreign assistance success story.

High-level U.S. leadership—by the president, most importantly—has been an essential ingredient. Witness the July 2013 appearances by both Presidents Obama and Bush in Tanzania, at which Obama lauded Bush’s landmark contributions to health in Africa; so too, the First Ladies’ Summit at which both Michelle Obama and Laura Bush affirmed their commitments to advancing women’s health in Africa, reinforcing former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton’s determined efforts to champion women’s health and gender equality.

Critical also has been an enduring and exceptional bipartisan foundation in Congress, reinforced by a relatively small, but vocal and resilient base of popular support in American society that encompasses religious communities, universities, foundations, nongovernmental organizations, advocacy groups, the private sector, and media. Congressional travel to Africa to see firsthand the results of U.S. health partnerships has had powerful impacts on members personally and back home in discussions of U.S. policies and programs.

A third vital factor has been the ability to measure and demonstrate significant concrete progress in improving the health status of millions of individuals in Africa, and the surprising success in recent years in improving operational efficiencies, which made possible significant expansion of U.S. programs even as budgets flattened. To support 5.1 million persons by early 2013 on life-sustaining antiretroviral treatment, the vast majority in Africa, up from 50,000 a decade earlier; and to be on course to reach 6 million by the end of 2013: these are remarkable public health achievements. Similarly impressive claims can be made for the swift reductions in malaria seen in Ethiopia, Zanzibar, Zambia, Tanzania and Rwanda.

There have of course been sharp critiques of the U.S. approach: that it exaggerated, especially in the early days of 2002-2003, the true threat HIV/AIDS
posed to the stability of nations; that U.S. programs are too vertical versus focused on essential health infrastructure; that the HIV/AIDS investments are grossly outsized vis-à-vis other health priorities and the financial capacities of partner countries; and that they crowd out other worthy foreign assistance concerns and create a long-term dependency—a “mortgage” or “entitlement”—with no clear end game. Debate has persisted over whether the United States is doing enough to reach with essential prevention services those highly marginalized groups that are at high risk of HIV infection, e.g., sex workers, men who have sex with men, and injection drug users.

Congress made valuable contributions to U.S. leadership on health in Africa through two successive five-year authorizations. The United States Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria Act of 2003 outlined a five-year, $15 billion emergency initiative focused on 14 (later 15) high-burden countries, 12 in Africa, and established powerful authorities in a new Office of the Global AIDS Coordinator (OGAC). Appropriations from Congress from 2003 to 2008 eventually reached $18.8 billion.3

Congress subsequently passed the Tom Lantos and Henry J. Hyde United States Global Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Reauthorization Act of 2008. This five-year $48 billion reauthorization called for a transition from an emergency response to sustainable country programs. That shift, it was argued in the legislation, requires expanded efforts to strengthen partner government capacity—especially the training of skilled personnel—and a higher priority to winning greater country ownership, e.g., higher political, financial and staff commitments. It requires expansion of prevention, care and treatment programs; better integration and coordination of HIV/AIDS programs with other health and development programs; higher investments in innovation and operations research to better evaluate impacts; and improvements in service delivery to maximize outcomes.4

Given the present acute polarization in Congress, which constrains action across countless fronts, there is a very low probability that there will be a third five-year reauthorization in 2013. Hence it will be through alternative, more discrete actions—appropriations language, congressional travel, targeted resolutions—that Congress will address pressing policy challenges on health in Africa and help update the U.S. strategy for the future.

There are risks and uncertainties as we look forward, but also opportunities for U.S. policy to continue to advance global health.

It remains to be seen whether, in the midst of budgetary austerity, a durable bipartisan congressional consensus can be successfully preserved in support of continued strong U.S. leadership on health and Africa.

Congress will also certainly be called upon to help define how—and with what level of long-term resource commitments and what U.S. political leverage—the United States can effectively build partner country capacities and facilitate real and timely transitions to greater country ownership. It remains to be seen whether in its interactions with the more competent and able partner countries the United States can systematically scale back its high-cost delivery of services, without convulsive disruptions to the health of beneficiaries, and become mainly a source of technical expertise; at the same time, it remains to be seen what transition strategy the U.S. pursues with those partner countries which are poorer and have weaker capacities, and in which the U.S. will be called upon for a longer period to deliver programs and services. Progress in these critical areas depends of course on whether partner countries themselves can and will increasingly take the lead in service delivery, financing, and managerial responsibility. At present, the process of transition, and how the United States is to facilitate change, better manage its partnerships, and measure progress, are neither clearly understood nor defined. There is a continued need for better data collection and evaluation; new, reliable scorecards of country performance; and an updated vision of U.S. goals, expectations and commitments for each of these transitions.

In recent years, the United States has come to rely more and more on multilateral partners,
most importantly the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, but that change has happened with little discussion of what the desired specific balance should be between U.S. bilateral programs like PEPFAR and PMI versus the Fund. Similarly, in recent years the U.S. global health agenda in Africa has steadily broadened: there is today a far bigger emphasis on gender, maternal health (including the often divisive issue of family planning), child survival, and polio (especially as regards Nigeria). But at present there is no coherent delineation of U.S. priorities. Related to that, an important but quickly evolving debate has begun over noncommunicable diseases (diabetes, cancer, hypertension/heart disease, lung disorders), the behavioral, policy, and medical interventions to lower their rising incidence in Africa, and what the appropriate U.S. contribution in this area should be.

One can argue, of course, that any revised, updated global health strategy can and should rely heavily on executive branch leadership. But experience to date has been disappointing and problematic. The Obama administration unveiled its Global Health Initiative (GHI) in the spring of 2009 with a focus on seven valuable guiding principles: a women- and girls-centered approach; strategic coordination and integration of programs; strengthening and leveraging key multilateral institutions and other partners; country-ownership; sustainability through health systems strengthening; improving metrics, monitoring and evaluation; and promoting research and innovation. Operationally, GHI was charged with tackling fragmentation and tensions across competing U.S. agencies—most significantly, the U.S. Office of Global Aids Coordinator (OGAC) and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) versus the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). In reality, the GHI directorate never acquired the political sway, budgetary authority and staff capacity to fulfill its mandate; interagency clashes often escalated in the first Obama term. The State Department’s Office of Global Health Diplomacy, established in late 2012, is the designated heir to GHI. It remains to be seen what its exact mission will be and if it is more successful than its predecessor.

Additional detail by sector

PEPFAR, HIV/AIDS, and the Global Fund

The PEPFAR program, launched in 2003 by President George W. Bush, became the largest and most successful U.S. global health initiative. To date, the estimated cumulative U.S. spending overseas on HIV/AIDS is $44.3 billion, including contributions to the Global Fund. Outlays in 2012 totaled $6.6 billion.

The United States directly supports antiretroviral treatment for more than 5.1 million HIV positive individuals as of September 30, 2012. This puts the United States on track to reach a goal set by the Obama administration to reach 6 million HIV positive individuals by the end of 2013. In FY2012, the United States also supported HIV counseling and testing for more than 11 million pregnant women, 15 million people with care and support, and HIV counseling and testing for 46.5 million people.

The International AIDS Conference—AIDS2012—returned to the United States, after a 22 year hiatus, in July 2012 in Washington D.C. A special session featuring Congressional leaders—Senator Mike Enzi (R-WY), Senator Chris Coons (D-DE), Senator Marco Rubio (R-FL), and Congresswoman Barbara Lee (D-CA)—focused on the historical legacy and future trajectory of Congressional involvement in addressing the global AIDS epidemic.

At AIDS2012, there was considerable optimism surrounding recent scientific discoveries in the field of HIV prevention: specifically, proof that early antiretroviral treatment can significantly lower the risks of new HIV infections, along with evidence that male circumcision and prevention of transmission from mothers to infants can also be highly effective in reducing HIV incidence. In late November 2012, the Obama administration released its Blueprint for an AIDS-Free Generation which laid out a detailed, impressive strategy for building systematically upon these gains, but without budgeting costs or offering a game plan for financing the strategy.
The United States has entered a new phase of its global HIV/AIDS response where it has begun to transition PEPFAR support from direct service delivery to the provision of technical assistance. Transitions will occur on a country-by-country basis guided by framework agreements with partner countries. This process has advanced in Botswana, South Africa, and Namibia. However, there is no clear method to track progress and measure country ownership. Part of this new phase also includes a transition to increased U.S. support to the Global Fund. At present, how this shift will evolve into the future has also not yet been clearly defined.

As part of the 2008 PEPFAR reauthorization, the U.S. Congress tasked the Institute of Medicine (IOM) to evaluate PEPFAR programs. Completed in February 2013, the IOM report was overwhelmingly affirmative: “Since it was first authorized by Congress in 2003, PEPFAR has saved and improved lives of millions; supported HIV prevention, care and treatment; strengthened systems; and engaged with partner countries to facilitate HIV policy and planning. PEPFAR has expanded global expectations for what can be accomplished in partner countries with resource constraints and limited infrastructure.” The report also highlighted critical needs: to address unmet demand for HIV/AIDS services; diversify financing; improve data collection and evaluation; improve access to prevention services by sex workers, injection drug users and men who have sex with men; tackle HIV co-infection with TB; and put in place a measurable gender strategy.

The Global Fund began operations in January 2002 as an independent, multilateral financing instrument to address HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria in low- and middle-income countries. To date, the Global Fund has approved more than $26 billion in grants to over 150 countries. The United States has played an integral role in the Global Fund since its creation, providing the Fund with its founding contribution and continuing to be its single largest donor. U.S. contributions to the Global Fund between FY2001 and FY2012 totaled $8 billion. From the Fund’s inception, Congress has mandated that U.S. contributions be matched by other donors by at least a 2:1 ratio.

Over the last several years the United States has increased collaboration and coordination with the Global Fund. The United States remained a strong proponent of the Global Fund even as the Fund experienced considerable financial, managerial and governance adversity in 2011 and entered a period of promising restructuring in 2012.

The Fund operates on three-year funding cycles. In 2010, the Obama administration announced a three-year (FY2011-FY2013), $4 billion pledge to the Global Fund which met with a mixed response from Congress. Current annual U.S. funding stands at an all-time high of $1.65 billion. It remains to be seen if the Obama administration commits to another formal three-year pledge, during the Fund’s 2013 replenishment cycle, or chooses instead to commit year-by-year. Given their budgetary woes, other major donors to the Fund (e.g., France, the UK, Japan, Germany, the Scandinavians, Canada, Australia) may not be able to reach twice the level of the U.S. contribution of $1.65 billion, which might perforce trigger a reduction of the U.S. contribution.

The President’s Malaria Initiative (PMI)

PMI was launched in 2005 by President George W. Bush as a 5-year $1.2 billion effort originally targeting 15 African countries. Housed at USAID and co-implemented with CDC, in partnership with the Department of Defense (DOD), the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and other agencies, PMI aims to reduce malaria-related deaths by 50 percent. U.S. bilateral funding for malaria totaled $3.6 billion between FY2004-FY2011 and was approximately $806 million in FY2012. The Obama administration requested $775 million in FY2013, a 4 percent decrease over the FY2012 level.

The costs to Africa of malaria are steep. In 2010 there were an estimated 660,000 malaria fatalities of which 91 percent occurred in Sub-Saharan Africa. Malaria is the third biggest killer of children under five globally, with over 90 percent of malaria deaths occurring in Africa. Malaria imposes an estimated $12 billion in lost economic output per year. Indirectly, Malaria is a leading cause of school absence. A 2005 survey found that nearly 75 percent of companies in Africa reported that malaria negatively affects their business.
Increased funding and political support have resulted in big gains in malaria control. An external evaluation conducted in 2011 detailed strong leadership, an effective integration of malaria control interventions, solid procurement and host country partnerships, and significant declines in malaria disease burden and child mortality. Delivered in combination and on a dramatically expanded basis, the principal tools for malaria control have brought about swift gains: investments in long-lasting insecticide-treated nets, indoor residual spraying, intermittent prevention treatment for pregnant women, and Artemisinin (antimalarial drug) combination therapies delivered results in a relatively rapid fashion.

Nonetheless, progress remains fragile; it can be reversed swiftly if there is a loss of focus. In the meantime, several challenges are outstanding. For malaria control and elimination to succeed, bed nets must be replaced every three years once insecticide loses potency and nets become worn, ripped, or torn. An inexpensive, rapid diagnostic to confirm cases and prevent overuse of antimalarial drugs is needed. Drug and insecticide resistance need to be addressed. And there is need to better clarify the division of responsibility between PMI and the Global Fund.

**Women’s Health**

Despite the often polarized atmosphere in Washington, bipartisan successes have been achieved in support of women’s health. The Bush administration’s PEPFAR program developed gender strategies to reach women and girls, and the Obama administration elevated women’s health and gender equality as a key foreign policy goal.

New public-private partnerships are illustrating innovative ways to maximize U.S. investments in women’s health and promote sustainability. The Obama administration has participated in several such partnerships, including Together for Girls; the Alliance for Reproductive, Maternal and Newborn Health; Pink Ribbon Red Ribbon (PRRR); and Saving Mothers Giving Life (SMGL).

With policies and strategies largely in place, the next step is to ensure that these policies are supported by political commitment and financial resources to accelerate program implementation. In April 2013, the IOM PEPFAR evaluation dedicated a section to PEPFAR’s gender-focused programs, recommending the development of precise objectives with desired outcomes within gender-focused efforts. To ensure continued success of these programs the United States will need to maintain high-level leadership and embed new policies into USG agencies, better leverage the PEPFAR platform and existing funding to support research and programmatic investment in women and girls, shift to program implementation, and expand access to voluntary family planning and maternal health.

**Child Survival**

During the first Obama administration, USAID put child survival—in Africa and South Asia—at the top of its health agenda. The importance of childhood vaccinations, the need to address neonatal deaths, and the link between maternal health and child survival came to the forefront.

In 2010, 7.6 million children died before the age of 5. This was a 35 percent reduction from the 12 million children who died before the age of 5 in 1990. Much of this reduction can be attributed to progress in preventing pneumonia, diarrhea, and measles through vaccinations. Pneumonia, preterm birth complications, diarrhea, intrapartum-related events, and malaria represent more than 50 percent of the global burden of under-5 mortality. Experts stress the importance of addressing neo-natal complications which account for approximately 40 percent of child deaths globally. Progress has been unevenly distributed across regions, countries and population groups; and specific causes of mortality, and national averages can mask important sub-national differences.

Ethiopia is an example of considerable recent progress in Africa. It launched its Health Extension Program in 2004. Salaried health extension workers promote health education at household and village levels, including preventive services in water and sanitation, child health, and family planning. The program has reached significant scale since 2004, having trained 35,000 health workers and built 15,000 health posts. In this period, Ethiopia
has seen a decline in under-5 mortality from 123 deaths/1,000 live births in 2005 to 88/1,000 in 2011, which constitutes an average annual rate of decline of 5.4 percent. The percentage of under-5 stunting also was reduced by 14 percent during the same period, while the percentage of married women who use a modern contraception increased by 93 percent.\textsuperscript{18}

The Child Survival Call to Action was convened in Washington, D.C., by Ethiopia, India, and the United States in collaboration with UNICEF in June 2012. At this conference, the United States launched its Commitment to Child Survival: A Promise Renewed. Eighty countries were represented at the conference by governments and partners. The conference set out a goal to reduce child mortality to 20 or fewer child deaths per 1,000 live births by 2035. Fifty-six governments and over 100 civil society partners signed the pledge and the first iteration of a global roadmap was unveiled. Congressional participation at the Call to Action included Senator Johnny Isakson (R-GA) and Senator Mary Landrieu (D-LA). Ethiopia and India hosted their own Calls to Action in January and February 2013, respectively.

Recognizing the importance of childhood vaccination and the high return on investments in vaccines, the United States has increased collaboration and engagement with the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation (GAVI). GAVI began operations in January 2000 and by the end of 2010 had received over $5 billion in donor financing and disbursed $2.8 billion to support immunization programs in 76 low- and middle-income countries. The United States is one of GAVI’s largest donors providing 12.5 percent of all contributions through 2010. Obama has cited GAVI as an important multilateral partner for the United States, and in 2011, the Obama administration made the first ever multiyear funding commitment to GAVI, pledging $450 million over 3 years. The United States sits on the GAVI Board and multiple advisory committees and provides technical support and expertise.\textsuperscript{19}

Polio and Africa

Nigeria is the last African country to harbor endemic polio. While polio cases globally were at a historic low in 2012, eliminating the virus from the country’s northern states, as well as in remaining strongholds in Afghanistan and Pakistan, will be a challenge.\textsuperscript{20} As long as the virus continues to circulate anywhere, outbreaks are possible where immunization rates are low. This year, for example, both Somalia and Kenya, previously polio-free, are grappling with new cases. In addition, poliovirus has been detected in sewer systems in Egypt and Israel.

The presidents of Nigeria, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, along with the international community, are rallying behind a major push to finally eradicate the disease. The World Health Organization-led Global Polio Eradication Initiative, also spearheaded by UNICEF, CDC, and Rotary International, with support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, recently launched a six-year strategy to end poliovirus transmission and plan the program’s legacy. The $5.5 billion “Eradication and Endgame Strategic Plan” outlines responses to the initiative’s enduring challenges: intensified engagement with religious and community leaders to overcome resistance to vaccination, facilitating provision of needed health services beyond polio immunization, and using polio program resources to better support immunization for other childhood diseases. It also begins laying the groundwork for a global switch to a more appropriate vaccine for the later stages of the eradication effort. Shorter, low-profile campaigns and better risk analysis are being employed to ward against further lethal extremist attacks on polio vaccinators in Nigeria and Pakistan.

The U.S. government, along with Rotary International and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, have been major supporters of polio eradication, together providing nearly half of the $10.8 billion pledged to the program through 2013. They also have contributed critical technical assistance, advocacy, and personnel. Without continued focus, a hard-fought opportunity to permanently eliminate polio could be lost.
U.S. Funding for Global Health (FY 2001-FY 2014)

In Billions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Funding (Billions)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FY01</td>
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Notes: Global health funding represents accounts in the Global Health Initiative (GHI) only. FY 2013 funding levels are not yet available.

The President’s Global Health Budget Request by Sector, FY 2014

In Millions

- Global Fund: $1,650
- Malaria: $843
- MNCH: $680
- FP/RH: $534
- TB: $199
- Nutrition: $95
- NTDs: $85
- Other: $60
- HIV: $4,881

Total = $9.0 billion

Note: Global health funding represents accounts in the Global Health Initiative (GHI) only.
U.S. Global Health Funding, Percent Change by Sector (FY2012-FY2014)

In Millions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<tr>
<td>HIV Bilateral</td>
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<tr>
<td>TB</td>
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<td>Malaria</td>
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<td>FP/RH</td>
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<tr>
<td>NTDs</td>
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</table>

Note: Global health funding represents accounts in the Global Health Initiative (GHI) only.

U.S. Global Health Funding for the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) (FY2004-FY2013*)

In Millions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>HIV</th>
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<tr>
<td>FY 2009</td>
<td>$5,028</td>
<td>$5,028</td>
<td>$5,440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY 2010</td>
<td>$5,574</td>
<td>$5,574</td>
<td>$5,503</td>
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<tr>
<td>FY 2011</td>
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<td>$5,440</td>
<td>$5,082</td>
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<tr>
<td>FY 2012</td>
<td>$1,300</td>
<td>$1,300</td>
<td>$4,536</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY 2013</td>
<td>$1,650</td>
<td>$1,650</td>
<td>$4,536</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*FY 2012 are final estimates; FY 2013 is President’s Budget Request to Congress.

NOTES: Global Health Initiative (GHI) funding only. The GHI was created as an initiative in FY 2009. All prior years represent the same programs and accounts which were not yet referred to as the GHI. PEPFAR was created in 2003 and funding began in FY 2004. PEPFAR includes funding for HIV, TB, and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

Total U.S. Bilateral Funding for Malaria (FY2001-FY2013*)

U.S. Funding for Global Maternal, Newborn & Child Health (MNCH) and Nutrition (FY2004-FY2013*)

*FY 2012 are final estimates; FY 2013 is President’s Budget Request to Congress.
Endnotes

1 In this same period, aggregate investments in global health—from all sources—rose from $10 billion in 2001 to $28 billion in 2010.


15 CSIS led a delegation of congressional staff to Zambia in March 2013 to examine the successes and challenges of two of these partnerships—SMGL and PRRR. A trip report outlines recommendations to engage high-level leadership from congressional leaders from both political parties and from the Obama administration to prioritize women’s health, protect and expand U.S. investments in this area, measure the impact of new partnerships, invest where progress is being made, and plan for scale and sustainability of programs. See: Fleischman, Janet and Alisha Kramer. *Strengthening Investments in Women’s Global Health: A Trip Report of the CSIS Delegation to Zambia, March 2013*. Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies. May 2013. Print and online: https://csis.org/files/publication/130521_Fleischman_ZambiaDelegation_Web.pdf

16 On a global scale, women’s health issues have received growing attention. The July 2012 London Summit on Family Planning convened more than 150 leaders from developing and donor countries, international agencies, civil society, foundations and the private sector. Donors made new financial commitments totaling $2.6 billion with a goal to provide an additional 120 million women and girls in the world’s poorest countries access to voluntary family planning services, information, and supplies by 2020. http://www.londonfamily-planningsummit.co.uk/fp2020more.php.


Africa’s Emergence: Challenges and Opportunities for the U.S.

PARTICIPANTS

August 13-19, 2013
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Members of Congress

Representative Karen Bass
and Yvette Lechuga
Representative Earl Blumenauer
and Margaret Kirkpatrick
Representative Jim Cooper
and Martha Cooper
Representative Susan Davis
and Steven Davis
Representative Diana DeGette
and Francesca Lipinsky
Representative Charles Dent
and Pamela Dent
Representative Lloyd Doggett
and Elizabeth Doggett
Representative Anna Eshoo
and Celine Purcell
Representative Sam Farr
and Sharon Farr
Representative John Garamendi
and Patricia Garamendi
Representative Scott Garrett
and MaryEllen Garrett
Senator Thomas Harkin
and Ruth Harkin
Representative Barbara Lee
and Memuna Lee
Representative Zoe Lofgren
and John Collins
Representative Carolyn Maloney
and Christina Boshier
Representative George Miller
and Cynthia Miller
Representative Erik Paulsen
and Cassandra Paulsen
Representative Thomas Petri
Representative David Price
and Lisa Price
Representative Bobby Rush
Representative Loretta Sanchez
and Martha Cannady
Representative Janice Schakowsky
and Robert Creamer
Representative John Tierney
and Patrice Tierney

Guest Speakers

Donald Booth
U.S. Ambassador to Ethiopia

Tedros Ghebreyesus
Ethiopian Minister of Foreign Affairs

Scholars/Experts

Khalid Bombe
Chief Executive Officer
Ethiopian Agricultural Transformation Agency
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Gordon Conway
Chair, International Development
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Center for Strategic and International Studies
Mark Green
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John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation

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Country Representative for Ethiopia
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Africa’s Emergence: Challenges and Opportunities for the U.S.

AGENDA

August 13-19, 2013
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

U.S. Strategic Interests in Africa and Political Developments

Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) comprises 49 diverse countries with their own histories, levels of economic and political development, cultures and languages. The region is viewed as one of growing strategic interest by the United States, Europe, China, Russia, and numerous other countries for its oil, mineral resources, and land. On security issues, SSA poses a number of challenges in the form of civil wars, border conflicts, terrorist activities, and piracy, that has prompted the United States to form a new military command—AFRICOM.

- What are the United States’ strategic interests in Africa?
- What is the role of AFRICOM and what has been its reception?
- What are the current conflicts and possible outcomes/consequences for the United States?
- How severe is the threat of extremist Islamic movements and what is the international or U.S. role?
- What are the interests of China, Russia, and others in SSA and how are they manifested either in conflict or in cooperation with U.S. goals?
- How significant are conflicts in the Congo and movements such as the Lord’s Resistance Army; and what responsibility, if any, does the international community have?
- What level of involvement does the U.S. have in multilateral peacekeeping operations based in Africa?
- How does AFRICOM work with civilian, diplomatic, and development agencies to support U.S. foreign policy objectives?

Carol Lancaster, Dean, School of Foreign Service
Georgetown University

U.S. Relations with Ethiopia

Ethiopia is the second most populous country in Africa with a population of 86 million people in 2013. It is a federal parliamentary republic although it is criticized for having democracy deficits in the form of limitations on press freedoms, human rights, and the level of government control of the private sector. Nonetheless, its economy is one of the fastest growing on the continent and it has been a key U.S. ally in the Horn of Africa. The country faces a number of challenges in the form of low agricultural productivity and frequent droughts that affect food security, health issues including HIV/AIDS, and poverty. Addis is a major African hub with a number of headquarters for international companies and regional political organizations.

Remarks by Donald Booth, U.S. Ambassador to Ethiopia
Africa’s Economic Development: The Role of Aid, Trade and Business

Despite a faltering global economy over the last several years, SSA has experienced record annual growth rates exceeding 5%. Many major U.S. companies see the continent as a growth market and are making significant developments there. Yet, hurdles to building a robust business climate remain—largely in the form of corruption, infrastructure deficits, regulatory burdens and a poorly-educated workforce. The United States allocates approximately $8 billion each year throughout Africa for programs focused on health, food security, and governance. (The largest recipients of aid are Kenya, Ethiopia, and Nigeria.) The United States is currently discussing a trade partnership agreement with the East Africa Community that some see as a model for future U.S.-Africa trade relations. Several countries are on track to meet the Millennium Development Goals of halving rates of poverty and hunger by 2015.

- With impressive growth rates, how necessary is U.S. foreign assistance?
- To what extent, or when, can other forms of cooperation—in the form of trade and investment—supplant assistance?
- What has been the role of the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) in supporting development in Africa? What are its current limitations?
- How does the United States support political and economic environments that are conducive to U.S. business investments?
- Despite the noted progress and promising signs for the future, what are the current bottlenecks in Africa’s development?

Global Competition from China and Others for Africa’s Resources

Press reports and other analyses point to the growing interest of China, Gulf States, and other countries in Africa’s varied resources. In some instances this manifests itself in so-called “land grabs” in which foreign entities seek to purchase or rent on a long-term basis vast tracks of land (and its water resources) for agricultural production to be exported back to the investing country. Such arrangements are believed to include minimal benefits to citizens of the hosting country and are vulnerable to corrupt practices. Other nations see the continent as an important source of oil and minerals and are making investments accordingly. China has been particularly active in recent years—at least one report estimates development assistance at approximately $75 billion from 2000 to 2011—with investments focused in Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, and Sudan.
The State of Democracy, Human Rights and Religious Freedom in Africa

Democracy has become the norm in SSA, with the majority of African governments being fully or nominally democratic. Just two decades ago, perhaps only three African countries could be considered democracies. Despite this progress, a number of governments score poorly on Freedom House’s index of political freedoms. These democracy deficits include limitations on the press, political organizations, and electoral transparency. Ethnic and religious tensions form part of the African landscape with its diversity of tribes, religions and Islamic movements. The 2013 report by the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) identified three countries—Nigeria, Eritrea and Sudan—in SSA on its Tier 1, representing “systemic, ongoing and egregious violations.” It identified Ethiopia as a country being closely monitored but not on its Tier 1 or 2 lists.

- To what extent should U.S. assistance be tied to the forms of governance, standards of human rights and religious freedom?
- What types of programs does the United States conduct that promote democracy and good governance in SSA?
- How does the African Union and Africa’s regional economic communities support the movement toward stronger democracies and respect for human rights and religious freedoms?
- To what extent are elections in most African countries considered free and fair?
- What types of sanctions have the United States imposed as a result of USCIRF designations?
- What should U.S. policy be in countries that lack democratic principles, or rank low in regard to human rights and tolerance of religious freedom?

Food Security: Implications for Africa and the World

It is estimated that the global population will grow to more than nine billion people by 2050, putting increasingly difficult demands on farmers to meet growing and changing demands of wealthier consumers. Africa’s agricultural development has been stagnant for several decades. Severe weather events, soil erosion, deforestation, pressures on water resources, and bad governance have produced some of the world’s worst
humanitarian crises and high levels of chronic hunger. The United States has committed significant resources to promote food security and agricultural development in Africa, and African countries have made similar commitments to raising productivity. The United States also provides the World Food Program with significant assistance to respond to humanitarian crises.

- What is the extent of food insecurity in Sub-Saharan Africa and what are the trends for the future?
- Is the era of African famines a plague of the past?
- With the current rate of investments by donors and African governments, when will significant progress begin to be seen with regard to food security?
- What is sustainable intensification? What is the relationship between agricultural and economic growth?
- Does Africa export commodities to the United States? What are barriers to agricultural exports to the United States, Europe, and within the continent?
- What are African attitudes toward genetically modified technology and why is this relevant to U.S. interests or to global food security?
- How does U.S. food aid help to alleviate acute and chronic hunger in Africa?

Gordon Conway, Chair in International Development, Imperial College, London
Khalid Bomba, Chief Executive Officer, Ethiopian Agricultural Transformation Agency

Health Priorities in Africa and the U.S. Role

At the height of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, SSA was considered the poster child of bad practices with regard to disease management and treatment. Since the President’s Emergency Plan for HIV/AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), prevalence rates have stabilized and declined in some areas, and effective treatment has extended lives. African countries are increasingly taking on a greater role in prevention and treatment with some observers urging wealthier countries, such as South Africa, to be transitioned off PEPFAR funds. Other diseases, such as malaria, continue to pose considerable problems. Malnutrition plagues many parts of the country that suffer from food insecurity, and the prevention of stunting through better nutrition in the first 1,000 days of life has become a major focus of efforts. At the same time, obesity is becoming more prevalent as wealthier populations adopt a more western-style diet and sedentary lifestyle.

- Given the investments the United States has made with PEPFAR funds, what are the prospects for transitioning recipient countries to other forms of health cooperation?
- Have U.S. programs helped to build the capacity of recipient countries to provide for the health needs of their citizens?
- How do food security and nutrition programs connect with broader health issues in most African countries?
- From the Ebola virus experience, Africa is perceived to be an incubator for global pandemics. Is this perception warranted and, if so, what is the responsibility of the international community?
- What role do U.S. institutions such as the Centers for Disease Control have in Africa?
- What are the remaining challenges that Africa faces in the years ahead?

Stephen Morrison, Senior Vice President and Director, Global Health Policy Center
Center for Strategic and International Studies