

# **AFRICA AND THE REFORM OF THE MULTILATERAL SYSTEM: THE SUMMIT OF THE FUTURE AND BEYOND**

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REPORT OF THE JOINT NAMIBIA-AMANI AFRICA  
HIGH-LEVEL PANEL OF EXPERTS ON AFRICA AND  
THE REFORM OF THE MULTILATERAL SYSTEM  
IN A CHANGING GLOBAL ORDER



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Prepared as an independent input and in support  
of the engagement of the Member States of the  
African Union in global policy processes  
on reform of the multilateral system

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## PREFACE



**H.E. Dr. Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah**  
**Vice President of the Republic of Namibia (Patron of Amani Africa and convener of the High-Level Panel on Africa and reform of the multilateral system).**

It gives me great pleasure to acknowledge the high-quality work done by Amani Africa and the joint Namibia-Amani Africa High-Level Panel on Africa and the reform of the multilateral system, in framing the issues that will guide the debate and presentation of the ideas on the reform of multilateral system from an African perspective. As Patron and Convenor of the Panel, I believe Amani Africa has seized an excellent opportunity to reflect on the new agenda for peace and the reform of the multilateral system, in order to assess whether multilateral system reflects present day reality as well as to determine whether the multilateral system is able to respond appropriately to geopolitical challenges in a fair and balanced manner.

There is no doubt, that reforming the UN, particularly the Security Council, to enable it to respond with effectiveness and legitimacy is an urgent mission of our time. In all multilateral fora, we continue our efforts to find the best way not only to make Africa's voice heard in the reform of the multilateral system, but also to influence the final process so as to guarantee the credibility of its actions, as well as to boost the confidence of African people in the multilateral system. The reform must also encourage the people of other continents, excluded from the current arrangement, to legitimize the process and restore global confidence in the multilateral system. Therefore, any reform process that does not reflect the hopes and aspirations of Africans, whether the current or future generations, will only perpetuate past injustices and will betray the generation that laboured in pain for the freedom and independence of the continent of Africa.

It should be noted that the responsibility for maintaining peace and security cannot be left solely to a single Member State or a particular region. The indispensability of the multilateral system lies in global unity and solidarity. Therefore, in our quest for reform of the multilateral system, we must consider the challenge posed by Frantz Fanon that 'Each generation must, out of relative obscurity, discover its mission, fulfill it, or betray it'. This challenge must guide and inspire our search for a more perfect reform of the multilateral system. Africa must pursue reform with enthusiasm and optimism, but must be guided

by realism in the face of the difficulties that lie ahead. Therefore, unity is the most powerful tool and without it our efforts will mostly be in vain.

Amani Africa has risen to take up the challenge in bringing together a group of African Scholars and experts in a High-Level Panel of Experts and I am proud that the experts have been working very hard and were able to produce this report at a time when the world leaders are expected to agree and endorse the Pact of the future which is meant to turbo charge the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. Hence, the Summit of the Future represents a unique opportunity to strengthen cooperation on critical challenges and address gaps in global governance. I am confident that the views of the joint Namibia-Amani Africa High Level Panel will make a significant contribution to the outcomes of the Summit of the Future and, wherever possible, impact the lives of people around the world, particularly in Africa.

There is no doubt that the United Nations Charter entrusts the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) with a primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, thereby placing it at the heart of the global collective security system. Then, to what extent are decisions taken in favour of maintaining collective international security? We must therefore, ask ourselves difficulty, but relevant and guiding questions: does Africa has a role to play in

the maintenance of international peace and security? What kind of a role, only providing troops to peace keeping and support missions? If indeed, Africa has a role to play, is the continent adequately represented in the decision-making process or are the current arrangements sufficient or does the continent only play a role in implementing decisions made by others? Is Africa demanding too an important role compared to what it should play? Although there appears to be some impatience with the Common African Position (CAP), with some alluding to the lack of flexibility in the Ezulwini Consensus, the question remains: which group of member states has a more attractive and united position than Africa? Is it right to limit the veto only to the current Five Permanent members (P5) and if so, why are we then calling for reform? Is it not preferable for the Security Council to be more representative, inclusive and transparent so that its actions can have credibility and legitimacy? Does the international financial system promote and enable sustainable economic development and growth in developing countries? Are we satisfied with the decisions made by international financial institutions on Africa's development and whether they lead to sustainable development and prosperity or hinder growth and development? There are critical and obvious factors that we must take into consideration, namely that the current international order is based on the promotion of national interests. However, multilateral diplomacy must be based on solid foundations of international cooperation and solidarity, as opposed to unilateralism.

Clearly, the P5 have repeatedly used their veto power to promote their own interests or protect their allies, thereby undermining the effectiveness and legitimacy of the Council. Since the veto has been used to promote narrow national interests, calls for reform of the Council are constantly being heard, even though reform of the Council has been almost impossible since the last amendment to the United Nations Charter in 1965, which increased the number of Council members from 11 to 15, but only added 4 non-permanent categories while the original five permanent members were left unaffected. The 1965 reform which came into force in 1966 increased the number of non-permanent members from 6 to 10. Again, the People's Republic of China replaced the Republic of China in 1971, and the Russian Federation succeeded the Soviet Union in 1991, as permanent members.

Thus, it can be said that those who shaped the current international system, although outdated, knew very well that it would serve their interests while presenting a challenge to reform it. Other factors are the legitimacy and effectiveness of the United Nations Security Council, including lack of equitable representation or skewed representation. Let us consider the example of Europe, which represents only around 6.6 percent of the planet's total land area, with population equivalent to 9.32% of the total world population. However, the European continent is over-represented by 60 percent in the Security Council while Africa that accounts

for 28 percent of the membership of the UN has no permanent representation. Therefore, the reform of the UN Security Council must seriously address the question of equitable representation and increase in the number of members of the Security Council and related issues.

I believe that the year 2024 presents an opportunity in the form of negotiations of the Pact of the Future in accordance with General Assembly resolution 76/307 of 8 September 2022, to be adopted during the Summit of the Future co-facilitated by the Republic of Namibia and Germany, at the margins of the 79th session of the UN General Assembly in September 2024. The Summit of the Future, the high-level summit of the UN scheduled for September 2024 expected to adopt the commitment of UN member states for reform of the multilateral system, offers a unique opportunity for taking the policy process for the reform of the United Nations (UN) Security Council (UNSC) forward. This report of the High-Level Panel assists Africa on how the Committee of Ten Heads of State or Government (C10) can position Africa to seize the current window of opportunity for UNSC reform and the kind of reform that both redresses the historical injustice suffered by Africa and makes the collective peace and security system fit for a multipolar world.

Africa joining the G20 is another opportunity for the continent to play its meaningful role in multilateral governance. The future of our world belongs to all of us to protect it and safeguard its wellbeing for the succeeding generations. Therefore, we must all determine together the prospect for the future in promoting social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom to quote from the UN Charter in order to ensure livable world for future generations.

In conclusion, I would therefore like to express my gratitude to the Amani Africa and the joint High-Level Panel for producing this report, which comes at a critical time when world leaders are considering the appropriate approach as we move into the future. There is no doubt that many readers and researchers as well as policy makers will find this report very informative, relevant and useful as it highlights the challenges of our time and for future generations.



## COLLABORATION THAT EMBODIES THE SPIRIT OF MULTILATERALISM



**Dr Solomon Ayele Dersso,  
Founding Executive Director, Amani Africa  
and Co-convenor of the High-level Panel**

Following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and in its wake, the multilateral system reached new heights of dysfunction and paralysis. As it failed to mobilize effective and equitable global action against the pandemic and the socio-economic, humanitarian and political fallouts it has triggered, the multilateral system has increasingly found wanting in delivering on the UN Charter's central pledge of 'saving succeeding generations from the scourge of war'.

In the face of various major challenges facing the world from large scale conflicts to economic crises and climate change, it has become widely acknowledged that the multilateral system as designed and operated on the basis of the post-World War II order has come to the end of its course or is on its 'death bed'. Accelerated

by the heightening geopolitical shifts and rivalries, this recognition has prompted important policy debates for reform of the multilateral system across various policy areas as captured in the High-Level Panel's Report here.

The idea of the High-level Panel as a unique platform for advancing Africa's agency in shaping reform of the multilateral system was conceived from the recognition of Africa's huge stake in multilateralism and the need for seizing the opportunities for both addressing existing flaws in the design and operation of the multilateral system detrimental to Africa and making it fit for the realities of the changing world order. However, what propelled this idea into reality was the incredible collaboration forged with the Republic of Namibia with H.E. Dr Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah availing the weight of her leadership as the Champion and co-Convener of the Joint Namibia-Amani Africa High-level Process on Africa and the Reform of the Multilateral System. H.E Dr Nandi-Ndaitwah deserves our most appreciation for her progressive and exemplary leadership.

This unprecedented joint initiative leveraging the role of an African Union member state with good standing and robust commitment for multilateralism, Namibia, and an African think tank that established itself to be the leading source of information and analysis on matters

AU and its peace and security work, Amani Africa, would not have been possible without the generous support Amani Africa received from Open Society Foundation. Amani Africa expresses its gratitude to the generosity of the members of the High-Level Panel with their rich insights, intellectual inputs and time. We would also like to acknowledge with appreciation the collaboration and support accorded to us by Ambassador Fatima Mohammed, Permanent Representative of the AU to the UN, during the consultation the high-level Panel held with the Africa Group in New York held in September 2023 and by Korir Sin’Oei, Principal Secretary, Kenya Ministry of Foreign Affairs, during the Panel’s retreat held in Nairobi in December 2023.

Illustrating collaboration between various role players as the energy that fuels effective multilateralism, this report is a culmination of the unique contribution of each of these actors. I wish to take the opportunity to express the utmost gratitude of Amani Africa and that of my own self to each and every participant of this collaborative process. I also wish to extend special thanks to H.E. Ambassador Emilia Mkusa together with the team at the Namibia Embassy in Addis Ababa and H.E. Ambassador Jeroboam Shaanika. Last but not least, I wish to extend warm thanks to the Amani Africa team that diligently made their mark in the planning and implementation of the high-level process.



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The multilateral system, in the way it has been organized and operated for a long-time, is evidently failing to deliver for meeting the world's needs, with disproportionately adverse consequences for Africa. The world is faced with a stark choice: 'reform or rupture'.

In response to these serious crises afflicting the multilateral system, during the past few years, there has been growing policy interest and debates on the reform of the multilateral system, precipitating various initiatives for reform. The most notable of such initiatives for reform is the UN Secretary-General's proposed convening of the [Summit of the Future](#), scheduled for September 2024. **Building on Agenda 2063's vision of Africa as a dynamic force in the international arena** and the lessons from the historical processes that led to Africa's marginalization, it is imperative for the continent to actively engage in the ongoing policy dialogues and push for the reforming the multilateral system.

During the inaugural meeting on 17-18 July 2023 in Windhoek, Namibia of the joint Namibia-Amani Africa High-Level Panel of Experts, an initiative that assembled leading African experts of diverse background for articulating proposals for reform of the multilateral system for use by the African Union (AU) and its member states, the Patron of the High-level

Panel, Her Excellency Honourable Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, Vice President of Namibia, stated:

While many challenges [that we face today] are not new, it is clear that they are bigger in scale, unfolding in the same timeline and tend to reinforce each other. They are also taking place at a time of major global power shifts and worrying geopolitical rivalries...for the continent of Africa, this would mean that our collective effort should go beyond presenting a good case for securing the interest of Africa. It should also include articulating proposals on how to reform the multilateral system in a way that it also meets the just expectations and needs of the whole of humanity.

This report aims to respond to this ambition of articulating an African vision of a multilateralism that serves Africa and the world.

There are several compelling factors rendering reform, if not transformation, of the multilateral system a collective global imperative. In light of this, Africa, as a bastion of multilateralism and a region with a major stake, should embrace and actively engage in the diverse reform endeavours currently underway, including those beyond the Summit of the Future.

Titled, ***Africa and the Reform of the Multilateral System: The summit of the Future and Beyond***, the High-level Panel's report is organized around seven chapters.

## ***I Principles***

In the first Chapter articulates the principles that should guide the reform of the multilateral system. These principles are:

- i. Effective representation,
- ii. equality of the dignity of all nations and peoples,
- iii. equity, fairness and justice for achieving 'social progress and better standards of living',
- iv. transparency, and
- v. reaffirmation of commitment for the principles of the UN Charter and international law.

These principles are meant to help address not only the current shortfalls in the operation of the multilateral system but also its structural flaws from which much of its legitimacy crises arises.

## ***II Reform of the collective peace and security system of the UN: Redressing historical injustice and making it fit for a multipolar world***

Chapter II is dedicated to reform of the global collective peace and security system organized on the basis of the UN Charter. Drawing inspiration from the principles in Chapter I, this Chapter outlines reform proposals that aim at both **redressing the system's historical injustice and making it fit for an increasingly**

**multipolar world.** The first and major aspect of the reform in this respect concerns the reform of the UN Security Council (UNSC). For Africa the reform of the UNSC is of strategic concern not only for addressing the historical injustice that Africa suffered with respect to UN Security Council membership due to its non-representation in the permanent category and under-representation in the non-permanent category but also for rectifying the failings of the UNSC in its current form to deliver on its mandate as it became evident from developments in recent years.

Among others, first, the Panel makes a case **for African states to seize the current window of opportunity for ensuring the clear affirmation of the legitimacy of Africa's position on the reform of the UNSC in the ongoing negotiations on the Pact of the Future.** Second, the Panel supports the African Common Position, in line with the Ezulwini consensus and Sirte Declaration, **for the enlargement of the size of the Council both in the permanent and non-permanent categories.** The Ezulwini consensus calls for the allocation of at least two (2) permanent seats to Africa with all the privileges, including the right of veto, and five (5) non-permanent seats on the Security Council. Such enlargement addressing the historical injustice that Africa suffered will also bring to the Council members who are disposed to, and can, operate as moderating force for limiting the gridlock that the increasing multipolarity tends to induce in the Council.

The Panel observes that it would be consistent with the Ezulwini consensus should African member states **support limitations to and accountability for the use of veto**, including through UNGA resolution that allows 2/3 majority of members of the UNSC to refer a resolution vetoed by a permanent member to the UNGA for review by a super majority the members of UNGA.

Beyond the reform of the UNSC itself, the Report articulates proposed reforms covering:

- i. the democratization of the penholder system,
- ii. inclusive consultation and meaningful opportunity for inputting into draft UNSC products, and
- iii. Systematically consulting with the AU Peace and Security Council particularly on African files.

Underscoring the importance of transparency as a foundation for trust in the multilateral system, the Panel also proposes options for making the international peace and security architecture fit for a multipolar world including through the possibility of an *Intergovernmental Panel on Threats to International Peace and Security as a standing mechanism* for establishing the facts that inform UNSC deliberations, hence availing it a minimum common ground for its effective functioning in the face of multipolarity. Advocating for a multidimensional approach to addressing peace and security challenges, it also makes a case for enhancing the role of the Peacebuilding Commission and ECOSOC.

### ***III Reform of the Global Financial and Economic Architecture: Delivering on the SDGs and the UN Charter's promise for 'social progress and better standard of life in larger freedom'***

The global financial and economic architecture has become not only unfair to Africa and others in the developing world (illustrated by exclusion from decision-making structures and what Antonio Guterres called extortionist terms for access to development finance) but also unfit for meeting contemporary development needs of the world.

Beyond the immediate requirement to tackle liquidity issues, including through the re-channelling of Special Drawing Rights and debt restructuring, the Report argues that a series of reform measures are imperative. The reforms that the Panel proposes in this regard include:

- i. Strengthening the role of the UN in global economic, financial and social policy making. To this end, the Panel invites African states to ensure that there is a commitment in the Summit of the Future both to affirm the role of the UN as the centre and hub of global multilateralism including on global economic, financial and social policy making.
- ii. Reforming the governance structures and decision-making processes of the financial and economic architecture through, among others,

- the reform of the quota system of the IMF for ensuring effective representation of Africa in the Fund's decision-making architecture and changing the business model of the international financial institutions.
- iii. Addressing the debt challenge systematically through an independent global sovereign debt authority, rechannelling of SDRs, reducing the cost of financing and debt servicing and reforming credit rating standards and institutions. The Panel thus recommended that 'the Africa group, particularly within the context of the Summit of the Future, could propose establishing an international expert group tasked with delivering a comprehensive report and a set of recommendations on credit rating agencies, debt, and the cost of borrowing for sustainable development and reform of debt sustainability analysis.'
  - iv. Addressing debt distress and the current liquidity crunch in African countries should be coupled with efforts to scale up accessible and affordable public finance. To this end the Panel proposes increase in concessional finance, ease of access to such finance and a review of the division of labour between the regional development banks and the multilateral banks.
  - v. Creating conditions for expanding sources of domestic finance through international tax co-operation that tackles existing lacuna that deprive countries of much needed development finance.

## ***IV Crafting Global Governance on Digital Technology and Artificial Intelligence***

The Panel is of the view that the issues arising from digital technology, including artificial intelligence, require a global architecture that promotes cooperation to address fragmented approaches, promote digital inclusion and safeguard the digital economy as well as ensure human control over and application of international law rules including human rights and IHL in the use of lethal autonomous weapons.

The Report proposes:

First that the Summit of the Future should reflect on the principles that would allow the technological revolution to act as a positive force for all. Notably:

- i. Trust, safety and accountability: Member States shall promote trustworthy data environments that are safe and secure, accountable to data subjects, and ethical and secure by design.
- ii. Transparency: agreement on minimum standards of transparency on the development and use of digital technologies, including AI applications
- iii. Comprehensive and forward-looking: the framework shall enable the creation of an environment that encourages investment and innovation through the development of infrastructure, human capacity and the harmonisation of regulations and legislation as well as the sharing of know-how.

Second global governance that facilitates

- i. digital access to all
- ii. inclusive and coherent digital architecture
- iii. accelerated dialogue and response to address technology-related threats
- iv. A global cybersecurity treaty that safeguards Africa's interests
- v. Human control over and application of international law rules in the use of lethal autonomous weapons
- vi. A new technologies Alliance for Global Public Goods

## ***V Collective Action to Avert and Support Regions most affected by but Least Responsible for the Climate Emergency***

Africa is the region of the world that has contributed the least to but is vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. The Panel's report notes that by 2050 Africa would still account for a mere 4% of global emissions, regardless of the scenario. In the circumstances, the Panel supports the view in Africa that centres on adaptation as a priority climate change policy position. Among others, this necessitates the need for mobilization of funding to significantly increase climate financing for meeting the expanding financing needs for climate action in Africa. Beyond financing for adaptation, Africa faces additional challenges in responding to climate change, including the impact of global reforms that extend across various policy

domains. The Panel also notes that despite the challenges, climate change also presents certain opportunities.

For addressing the challenges that climate poses specifically in Africa and harnessing the opportunities, the Panel proposes the following actions

1. Climate action that is in harmony with developmental goals.
2. Scaling up financing and ease of access.
3. Policy alignment to prevent the adverse impact of region-specific or individual climate action policy measures for other regions. In this respect, the Pact of the Future should therefore reaffirm the principle of Article 3.5 of the UN Convention on Climate Change as well as the outcome of COP28 which noted that ‘measures taken to combat climate change, including unilateral ones, should not constitute a means of arbitrary or unjustifiable discrimination or a disguised restriction on international trade’.
4. Higher ambition on the part of high-emitters in the pace and scale of reduction of greenhouse gas emission.

## ***VI Regional organizations as pillar of a reformed multilateral system: ‘networked, inclusive and effective multilateralism’***

The Panel holds that ‘the nature of today’s challenges and shifts in international relations necessitates networked multilateralism, which can effectively leverage the roles of multiple multilateral actors and foster more productive partnerships among them.’

Cognizant of the UN Secretary General’s call for a ‘more networked, inclusive and effective’ multilateralism, the Report of the Panel argues that a new reformed multilateralism should recognize and institutionalize regional organizations, particularly the AU as pillar of the collective security and development system anchored on the UN Charter.

It thus proposes that the Pact of the Future

- i. Articulates ways to integrate regional multilateral organizations, notably the African Union (AU), into the global governance processes in a systematic manner, rather than on an ad hoc or *ala carte* basis or merely tokenistically.
- ii. Calls for enhancing the partnership between the UN and the AU across all the pillars of the UN.

## ***VII Promoting Gender Equality and youth participation and safeguarding the interest of future generations***

In pursuit of the UN Charter's reaffirmation of 'faith in...the equal rights of men and women' and the AU Constitutive Act's recognition of the role of 'all segments of civil society, particularly women, youth', the Panel proposes a more inclusive multilateral system committed to the realization of gender equality and participation of youth.

On gender equality, the Report of the Panel advocates for

- i. Ensuring representation in decision-making structures and processes
- ii. Gender-responsive policies and agreements
- iii. Pursuing Resolution 1325 Beyond protection: participation and decision-making of Women in Peace and Security

On youth, the Panel notes that in an era when the demographic structure of the world is changing, the participation of the youth has become a strategic imperative for the legitimacy of not only national but also multilateral decision-making. The Report of the Panel accordingly proposes

1. Enhance and institutionalize participation of youth
2. Representativeness and inclusivity of the diver-

sity of youth

On Future generations, affirming that the present generation only has use rights, the Panel's report advocates for articulation in the Pact of the Future

- i. the obligation of the current generation for the preservation of the conditions of life for a more secure and liveable international order and planet.



## I. CHAPEAU

We are at a historic juncture in global affairs, characterised by major challenges and changes as well as opportunities and possibilities for progress. These challenges and possibilities of this period reverberate across all parts of the world, although their manifestations and impacts are uneven and vary across different regions of the world. This is also a time that has revealed that the multilateral system, in the way it has been organized and operated for a long-time, is evidently failing to deliver for meeting the world's needs induced by the major developments currently unfolding. Effectively responding to the challenges, managing the major changes, and harnessing the opportunities of this period depends on and necessitates a substantively revamped, inclusive, effective and networked multilateralism.

From the perspective of both the challenges, changes, and opportunities of this remarkable era, Africa emerges as a significant stakeholder on the global stage. Given Africa's position within global power structures and its institutional and socio-economic vulnerabilities, the deficiencies and failures of the current multilateral system disproportionately affect the continent. Additionally, as a critical vehicle for protecting the interests of the peoples of the continent in global affairs, the *practice* of multilateralism has come to constitute a cornerstone of Africa's international relations. As such, both the issues affecting multilateralism and its

reform or transformation are of strategic interest and concern for Africa.

During the past few years, there has been growing policy interest and debates on the reform of the multilateral system, precipitating various initiatives for reform. The most notable of such initiatives for reform is the UN Secretary-General's proposed convening of the [Summit of the Future](#), scheduled for September 2024. It will not only build on ongoing discussions, including the reforms of the UN Security Council and the Global Financial Architecture (GFA) but will also provide new platforms to stimulate discussions and identify pathways to achieve the multilateralism we want and the world can and should have.

**Building on Agenda 2063's vision of Africa as a dynamic force in the international arena** and the lessons from the historical processes that led to Africa's marginalization, it is imperative for the continent to actively engage in the ongoing policy dialogues aimed at reforming the multilateral system. Critical to this is for Africa to organise itself and forge a consensus on the changes it wishes to see and push for in the existing multilateral system which has the UN family of organisations at its heart. Equally crucial is for Africa to articulate a position that conveys the irreducible principles, values, and processes based on which a new or reformed global order will be governed regardless of which powers or models or visions become dominant in shaping future multilateralism.

## ***The Multilateralism Africa envisions and all of humanity needs to have: About the Panel and its Report***

It is against the foregoing backdrop and with the objective of contributing to the articulation of African common position by African States that Amani Africa and the Government of Namibia, under the patronage of Her Excellency Honourable Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, Former Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of International Relations and Cooperation and current Vice President of the Republic of Namibia, convened a High-Level Panel of African Experts on the Reform of the Multilateral System (panel of African experts) representing different fields of expertise, African regions and generations, to prepare the present report.

The initiative on Africa and the reform of the multilateral system was inaugurated during a joint Namibia-Amani Africa convening on the margins of the 36th AU summit in February 2023. Following this, the inaugural meeting of the joint Namibia-Amani Africa High-Level Panel of Experts took place on 17-18 July 2023 in Windhoek, Namibia. Subsequently, the Panel convened for its second meeting at the AU Permanent Observer Mission to the UN in New York in September 2023, coinciding with the 78th UNGA, for consultations with the Africa Group. Additionally, preparatory work for the initial draft report of the Panel was conducted in Nairobi, Kenya.

Speaking at the inaugural meeting of the Panel in Windhoek, Namibia on 17<sup>th</sup> July 2023, Her Excellency Honourable Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah stated:

While many challenges [that we face today] are not new, it is clear that they are bigger in scale, unfolding in the same timeline and tend to reinforce each other. They are also taking place at a time of major global power shifts and worrying geopolitical rivalries...for the continent of Africa, this would mean that our collective effort should go beyond presenting a good case for securing the interest of Africa. It should also include articulating proposals on how to reform the multilateral system in a way that it also meets the just expectations and needs of the whole of humanity.

This report aims to respond to this ambition of articulating an African vision of a multilateralism that serves Africa and the world. The report is compiled based on contributions by members of the African High-Level Panel of Experts. The report is **an independent contribution** that aims to share analysis and identify pathways that can constitute elements on which African states can build for formulating African position on the transformation of multilateral system that informs various processes of reform including in the context of the Summit of the Future and beyond.

In drafting the report, members of the Panel considered existing African positions on issues such as the reforms of the UN Security Council and reflected on how countries can further advocate for such position through complementary coalition-forming and consensus-building processes. The Panel also recognised that there are policy areas where African positions are insufficiently articulated, fragmented, or evolving. In this regard, the Panel sought to provide input with recommendations that would articulate An Africa agenda and Africa's vision for a reformed multilateralism that works for all.



## II. CONTEXT: ‘REFORM OR RAPTURE’

***Global governance is stuck in time...  
It is high time to renew multilateral institutions...  
It's reform or rupture.***

**– United Nations Secretary General,  
António Guterres,  
19 September 2023**

The COVID-19 pandemic constituted one of the major recent occasions when the multilateral system failed the test of mobilizing collective action for a truly extraordinary and global emergency. Instead of pulling their efforts together and championing multilateral collective action, states, particularly in major centres of global power, became inward-looking. Global cooperation broke down in various arenas of the multilateral system. This breakdown of cooperation and solidarity has persisted as countries face major socio-economic and social and humanitarian consequences of the pandemic. For example, when the International Monetary Fund (IMF) made the general Special Drawing Rights (SDR) of \$650 billion in 2021 for easing the economic woes facing countries, high-income countries, which are least likely to require or utilize SDRs, received approximately \$450 billion, constituting almost 70% of the total allocation. Africa, which needs the SDRs the most, received only 5% of the SDR allocation.

These failures not only dealt a significant blow to the multilateral system but also exposed its inherent structural flaws and biases. Additional global events, such as the ongoing tragedy in the Gaza and the Occupied Palestinian Territories and the world's neglect of the civil war in Sudan, underscore the flawed nature of the process of determining breaches of international norms within the framework of the so-called rules based international order. Like the response to COVID-19, conflicts also witness unequal application and enforcement of rules of the UN Charter and international law. There are two issues at play here. The first of this is the view from much of the world that those who pay the price for double standards are always the weak or those at the margins of the global power structure. Second, there is also the design bias of the rules. Dimming the prospect of achieving one of the promises of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), extreme poverty is resurging reversing years of progress, and developing countries' manoeuvring space on economic transformation policy has shrunk considerably. These are in no small measure due to the terms and operations of the global economic and financial system, which, according to Antonio Guterres, is 'outdated, dysfunctional, and unfair,' and favours rich countries that designed it nearly 80 years ago'.

The multilateral system is stuck, confronted with crises of legitimacy that compel the world to confront a stark choice: 'reform or rupture.' For Africa, the system in its current form and mode of operation is not serving its interests as it fails much of the global South. At the same time, a more chaotic and fragmented international order is detrimental for Africa's interest. In this context, **the choice for Africa is reform or transformation of the multilateral system.**

Considering the challenges for achieving the kind of reform that serves Africa and all other parts of the world, Africa must be mindful of the fact that there may be no linear or single path for a reform or transformation of the multilateral system. Various reform processes are at play. These processes take two forms: reform efforts from outside of the system and those from within the system.

Old and new, large and medium powers, while engaging in discussions and negotiations within the UN system, are also pushing initiatives that embody the makings of an order centred on the core powers of the post WWII system and of an alternative order. These reform processes involve *minilateralism* of various kinds ranging from the groupings of likeminded states to those, despite their differences, see better prospects in working together at the periphery of the current multilateral order. Examples that fall in this category may include the G20 and the BRICS. Even though these processes operate outside of the

UN system, they also provide the impetus for reform processes within the system itself.

Various reform processes within the system itself are also underway concurrently. These include the efforts to reform the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), the reform the IMF and World Bank the so-called Bretton Woods institutions, through the Evolution Roadmap, as well as the reforms of the World Trade Organisation (WTO). In addition, specialized thematic and some new frameworks of international cooperation are also under negotiations. These include a new Global Tax Convention within the framework of the United Nations, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Paris Agreement negotiations, a Pandemics Preparedness Treaty, the UN Cybercrime Convention, among others.

As distilled from the various convenings of the Panel including its consultations with the Africa Group in New York in September 2023, there are several factors that have made the reform of the multilateral system a strategic imperative rather than a policy choice both for Africa and the world at large.

The first factor pertains to the historical origins and formation of the structures and processes of the multilateral system. The structure and shape of the prevailing multilateral system including the UN came into existence after the end of the second world war (WWII). Not surprisingly, the multilateral system as

designed and instituted during this period largely mirror in representation, authority and influence the power relations and dynamics prevalent immediately after 1945. Therefore, a significant majority of the world's 193 countries, and all of the African continent, were not represented in the establishment of these global institutions. The multilateral system as designed, instituted, and operated over the years not only lacked the representation and full participation of Africa but also did not reflect Africa's interest and needs. If anything, it entrenched Africa's marginalization. In the realm of security, for example, it led to the historic injustice of excluding a continent, which came to constitute the largest block in UN membership, from a permanent seat in the UN Security Council.

Related but distinct from the above is the second factor. The current multilateral system is not delivering to all countries and communities in an equitable manner. This is in the main due to the inherent biases in the design of the institutions. As illustrated by the example of the IMF's allocation of SDRs, this inability to work equitably for all has left a significant part of the world in a disadvantaged position.

Thirdly, the prevailing architecture of the multilateral system has become outdated. It no longer reflects the current realities and power dynamics of the world, including Africa's conditions. Apart from the end of the post-Cold War international order as an outgrowth of the post WWII international order and the rise of

new and emerging powers which characterizes the emerging plurality, if not multipolarity, of this moment, Africa's position in global power relations have also changed. Africa is increasingly using its coalitional power for projecting influence on the global arena. This is reflected through the common positions on climate change, the organization of African members of the UN Security Council as a block and the collective leadership Africa provided in championing the UN General Assembly Resolution on global tax cooperation adopted in November 2023. Africa, as the part of the world which in demographic terms constitutes one fifth of the population of the world in only a few years' time, is the main frontier of the future of the global workforce. Its growing economies together with large population mean that Africa has a growing and vast consumer market. Significantly, Africa also possesses the natural resources critical to solving some of the pressing challenges facing the human family today. Yet, Africa is and remains to be peripheral in the decision-making structures and processes of the multilateral system. In other words, the multilateral system suffers from both lack of fairness and **serious crises of legitimacy**. The only way to address the injustice suffered particularly but not limited to Africa and this deepening legitimacy crises is to reform the system by ensuring multilateral institutions are more effective in tackling pressing issues facing humanity due to climate change and new technologies and second Africa's meaningful representation at the decision-making table.

Fourthly, the magnitude and interconnectedness of numerous challenges affecting every corner of the globe necessitate robust cooperation, and effective and mutually reinforcing multilateralism that leverages various centres of multilateral processes. Despite the increasingly widespread and devastating impacts of climate as aptly captured by UNSG Guterres in terms of a shift from ‘global warming’ to ‘global boiling’, the nature of global collective action to meet the Paris Climate Accord target remains not commensurate with the urgency and scale of the climate emergency. While the development of new technologies notably artificial intelligence continues to unfold at very rapid pace, the multilateral system is not anywhere near putting in place the requisite guardrails and mechanisms of global digital and AI governance both for ensuring fair share of the benefits of and putting in place effective instruments for avoiding and redressing the perils posed by these technological advances. Accordingly, there is a need and urgency for both adapting the multilateral system to new realities and future proofing it for emerging challenges.

Finally, there is a critical need to ensure that the global community organizes the system to also cater for the needs and interests of various sectors of societies notably women and youth as well as future generations. The pursuit of reforms, therefore, becomes a dynamic process aimed not only at addressing past injustices but also at fostering a resilient, inclusive, and forward-looking multilateral system that can effectively address

the evolving needs of our interconnected world.

It is evident that there are several compelling factors rendering reform, if not transformation, of the multilateral system a collective global imperative. In light of this, Africa, as a bastion of multilateralism and a region with a major stake, should embrace and actively engage in the diverse reform endeavours currently underway.

The ongoing reform efforts are taking place against the backdrop of heightened geopolitical tensions affecting different facets of multilateral governance; from peace and security to trade to finance to climate change, to name but a few. This reality has not only put the functioning of multilateral institutions under pressure; it also complicates efforts to negotiate a collective path forward on multilateralism. However, for Africa, there are potential benefits amidst these challenges. When Africa, alongside other countries of the global South, exercises its agency to pursue its autonomous policy positions, informed by its realities, it can assume a moderating role that ameliorates polarization. This role can facilitate the emergence and consensus-building process, fostering common positions between rival geopolitical blocs.

It's crucial to recognize that amidst the turbulence, this period also signifies a transition. It is inevitable that a new transformed or reformed world order will emerge at the end of the transition. Those who lay

the groundwork for its framework early on stand to benefit once a new balance of power emerges. This prospect is the other reason why African countries need to dedicate sufficient energy to shaping the governance of the multilateral order that will inevitably emerge. This will require a clear articulation of the underpinning characteristics of multilateralism Africa would want to see and all of humanity needs.

### ***2024 and beyond: opportunities for the reform of multilateralism***

In 2024, numerous opportunities arise for African endeavors to contribute to the reform of the multilateral system and actively advocate for Africa's positions. Notably, on 8<sup>th</sup> September 2022, the UN General Assembly passed resolution 76/307, establishing the Summit of the Future is an important opportunity for Africa to provide inputs into the pre-negotiations and consultations that will contribute towards compiling the "Pact of the Future" as an outcome of the global meeting. Beyond 2024, there will be a summit on social development and finance in 2025 and the review of the UN Peacebuilding Commission.

In its present report, the High-Level Panel of African Experts on the Reforms of the Multilateral System aims to contribute to discussions on how Africa can capitalize on these opportunities. To achieve this, the panel outlines recommendations focusing on the following areas:

1. Principles for a reform that delivers a multilateral system that works for Africa and for all;
2. Reform of the collective peace and security system of the: Redressing the historical injustice and making it fit for a multipolar world
3. Reforming the Global Financial Architecture (GFA);
4. Strengthening Cooperation on the Global Digital Architecture;
5. Collective Action to Avert the Climate Emergency;
6. Regional organizations as pillar of a reformed multilateral system; and
7. Promoting Gender Equality and youth participation in Multilateral processes



### III. PRINCIPLES FOR A REFORM THAT DELIVERS A MULTILATERAL SYSTEM THAT WORKS FOR AFRICA AND FOR ALL

*If the purposes of the (UN) Charter are to be achieved, redressing the pervasive historical imbalances that characterize the international system – from the legacies of colonialism and slavery to the deeply unjust global financial architecture and anachronistic peace and security structures of today – must be a priority.*

**Antonio Guterres,  
The New Agenda for Peace**

#### 3.1. Effective Representation

Africa is unrepresented and significantly underrepresented in an international system that is deciding daily on its socio-economic and political interests, be it at the UN Security Council, the international financial institutions such as the World Bank Group and the IMF, or several other international bodies. Africa should be present at every table where its interests are at stake. Despite efforts to increase African representation in key decision-making structures, these remain significantly limited. At times, where representation is expanded, it tended to be symbolic or tokenistic and hence with limited real decision-making influence.

Apart from a seat at the decision-making table, it was pointed out during the Panel's consultation with the Africa Group in New York in September 2023 that there is a need for **reconfiguring the current system of allocation of dedicated regional sections and leadership roles** in global institutions to ensure effective and fair representation of Africa. Similarly, members of the Africa Group highlighted in the same consultation that the importance of effectiveness of representation and meaningful participation in decision-making processes. To this end, emphasis is put on democratizing the working methods and decision-making processes of institutions of global governance.

Representation is not merely a democratic imperative, but has intrinsic role for improving the quality and relevance of multilateral institutions as well as for redressing 'historical injustices and imbalances that characterise the international system.' The blind spots that characterise the current system and its representational flaws, due to lack of presence of the broad spectrum of countries with diverse experiences and perspectives, can only be rectified by ensuring that such diversity is reflected in the decision-making processes of multilateral institutions. This is a critical step for making the design and operation of multilateral institutions fit for purpose in the twenty-first century and the future.

## 3.2. Equity, fairness and justice

Equity, justice, and fairness are essential for ensuring the effectiveness, legitimacy and resilience of the multilateral system and its functioning for all, not just a privileged few. The importance of this for redressing the injustices and imbalances arising from historical injustices including slavery and colonialism that Antonio Guterres highlighted in his Agenda for Peace cannot be overemphasized. Additionally, equity, justice and fairness command and catalyse global collective action on pressing global issues, including in delivering on the Sustainable Development Goals and responding to the climate emergency at a commensurate speed and scale. As constitutive elements of the UN Charter's commitment 'to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom', **adherence to these fundamental precepts of legitimacy notably in respect of these pressing global issues not only consolidates the foundation of multilateralism but also entrenches and restores trust in it.**

Equity, justice, and fairness must be integral components of the rules and processes governing multilateral decision-making and for shouldering collective obligations on the basis of common but differentiated responsibilities. While **recognizing the influence of power in shaping these rules and processes, a reformed multilateral system must include built-in mechanisms that prioritize designing and operating rules in a manner that**

## **guarantees equitable outcomes for those who are less powerful but profoundly impacted by decisions.**

Equity, justice and fairness also ensure the creation of even-playing field in the process of decision-making, by facilitating working methods – how agenda for decision-making is set, the initiation of draft decisions, the negotiation over decisions and the conduct of the proceedings for adoption of decisions – that enhance effective participation of all. This is especially crucial to ensure that multilateral rules and institutions can weather periods of heightened tensions and economic turbulence effectively.

### **3.3. Equality of the dignity of all nations and peoples**

The principle of equality of the dignity of all nations and peoples, along with the accompanying concept of universality in the applicability of international law rules to all countries equally, is a pre-requisite for restoring trust in the multilateral system. Universality extends not only to the criteria and processes governing the application of the principles and rules in the UN Charter and international law but also to the enforcement and punishment of breaches of these principles and rules. This principle constitutes the embodiment of and essential condition for realizing the UN Charter’s commitment to ‘the equal rights of ... nations large and small.’

### 3.4. Transparency

This principle is concerned with two issues. The first of this is ensuring that there is an even playing field for those joining the decision-making table to present their case and have their voice reflected in decisions. It thus focuses on the conditions that makes representation on the decision-making table count and turn it into meaningful participation and influence.

The other dimension of transparency concerns use of independent mechanisms that provide verifiable data, information and analysis on global events and developments and the various ways that they affect different parts of the world. Such mechanisms are particularly necessary in the growing multipolarity of the world for providing common basis for decision-making in various arenas of the multilateral system and for minimizing the scope for divergence on what those events and developments are and their implications.

### 3.5. Reaffirmation of commitment for the principles of the UN Charter and international law

This moment calls for the consolidation of respect for international law. It necessitates reaffirmation of the commitment of member states of the UN in the very fundamental principles of the UN Charter including respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all states at all times in all parts of the world and total rejection of impunity for mass killings irrespective of the circumstances. It also calls for the reaffirmation of the

centrality of the principle of the peaceful settlement of disputes as the cornerstone of peaceful coexistence among nations and of an effectively functioning international relations and multilateral system.



## IV. REFORM OF THE COLLECTIVE PEACE AND SECURITY SYSTEM OF THE UN: REDRESSING HISTORICAL INJUSTICE AND MAKING IT FIT FOR A MULTIPOLAR WORLD

***Building this new multilateralism must start with action for peace; not only because war undermines progress across all our agendas, but because it was the pursuit of peace that in 1945 united states around the need for global governance and international organization.***

**Antonio Guterres,  
The New Agenda for Peace**

The multilateral peace and security architecture, with the UN Security Council (UNSC) as its primary forum for the maintenance of international peace and security, remains largely based on its 1945 Post-World War II power configuration when the UN was created. One feature of the flaw of this configuration of the UNSC is the injustice of the exclusion particularly of Africa from membership in the UNSC from the start. The other aspect has to do with the fact that the UNSC has become out of sync with the major changes in power relations of the world of the 21<sup>st</sup> century with some parts of the world, representing small portion of the population of the world and declining economic power, being over represented in the UNSC.

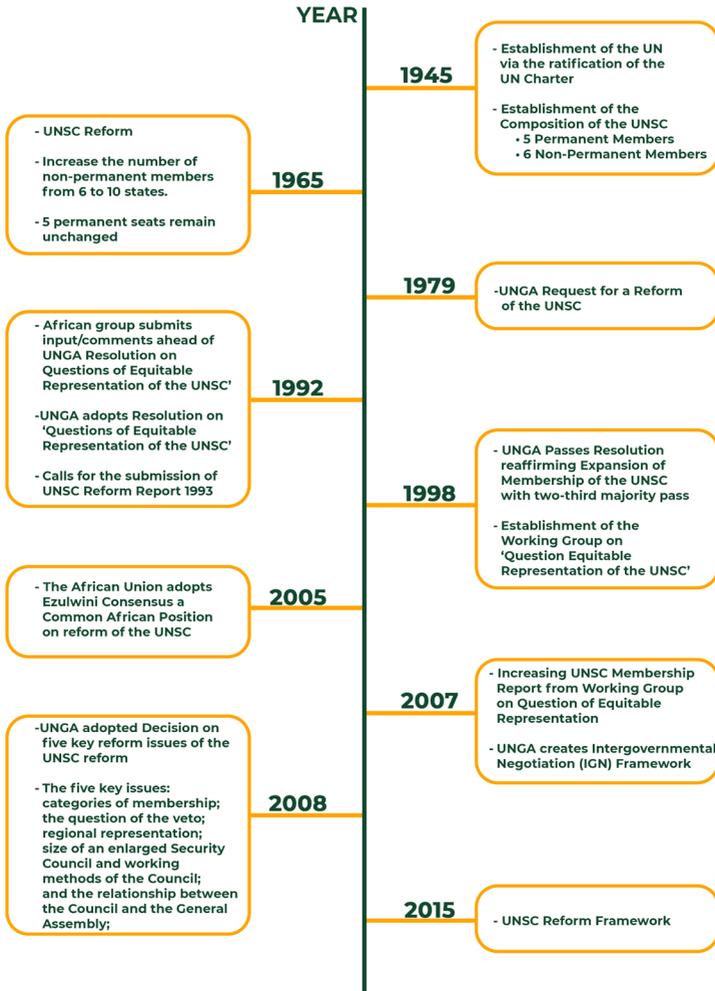
Additionally, at various junctures, the UNSC has been gripped by big powers politics, including the use of veto, sometimes at the expense of upholding international norms and safeguarding international peace and security. The dysfunctions that are more and more manifest in the workings of the UNSC in recent years could thus be located in the collapse from the outset of the doctrine of collective security on which the multilateral peace and security architecture and the power of the UNSC was built once the permanent five became ranged against each other in rival Cold War blocs. Part of the problem is accordingly those from whom so much is expected for peace are seen to do very little and, in fact, have become a bane for peace. In what is becoming very alarming, the situation continues to deteriorate and global goods are becoming bereft of reliable custodians.

## 4.1. UNSC Reform

This longstanding challenge manifesting itself today through the unfolding conflict events (from Sudan to Ukraine and to Gaza) and the emerging multipolar global power structure necessitate the imperative of not merely reforming the UNSC through expanding its membership. But it also requires rethinking how the UN Security Council works in general and most notably how the permanent members (mis)use and abuse their prerogatives at the expense of their responsibilities under the UN Charter. **A key aspect of the reform agenda is accordingly the institution**

of mechanisms that guarantee that the appropriate balance is struck between the responsibilities and the privileges of permanent membership in order to ensure that the UNSC is able to carry out its functions in a way that meets the objectives of the UN Charter.

### Key Moments in the UNSC Reform Process



Since the 1965 reform of the UNSC that increased the number of elected seats from six to 10, there has been no reform despite major changes in the world and the increasing ineffectiveness and illegitimacy of the Council. Yet reform of the UNSC has been on the agenda of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) since 1979 when the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council was included in the agenda of the UNGA. Reform of the UNSC continues to be illusive despite the fact that since the 47<sup>th</sup> session of UNGA in 1992 there has been annual consideration of the issue in the UNGA.

Recent failures of the UNSC in relation to the wars in Gaza, Sudan and Ukraine, among others, have rekindled the call for the reform of the UNSC as highlighted by the large number of leaders of the world including several permanent members of the UNSC who expressed support for UNSC reform during the 78 UNGA. A recent development that powerfully illustrates the urgency of reforming the UNSC was the extraordinary decision of the UN Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, to invoke Article 99 of the UN Charter on 6 December 2023 in relation to the war on Gaza on account of the UNSC's failure to assume its responsibilities by taking appropriate actions in situations of concern. There are also calls by some Member States and the Secretary-General's Advisory Panel on Effective Multilateralism for a United Nations Charter Review Conference, by invoking Article 109.

The Global South in general, and Africa in particular, have been demanding for the fundamental reform of the UNSC, not only to establish seats at the table but to also ensure that they are able to influence the decision-making processes within the Council. For the African continent, this is particularly important not only for reasons of justice but also because it has been on the receiving end of the injunctions of the Council without having any effective say.

Fundamentally, reform of the Council by rectifying the historic injustice of not having any seat in the permanent category meted out against Africa is long overdue. Beyond submitting comments as a regional group to inform the report of the Secretary-General in 1992, in 2005, the AU adopted the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration as the continent's common position on the reform of the UNSC. Ezulwini consensus calls for two permanent seats and additional three non-permanent ones. These demands seek to rectify the historical injustice of Africa's exclusion from permanent membership in the Council and its gross underrepresentation in the non-permanent category.

Despite uncertainties about whether and how this moment, such as in the context of the Summit of the Future and beyond, offers an opportunity to advance the agenda of UNSC reform, African States can ill afford to remain indifferent to the heightened policy discourse on reform. It is opportune for them to elevate their engagement for enhancing wider buy

in to Africa's common position while being mindful of the challenge the current geopolitical context presents to the pursuit of the agenda of the reform of the UNSC. In addition, it is also worth noting that there are also procedural challenges. A reform that meets the demands of expansion of the UNSC seats would necessitate amending the [UN Charter](#), which according to its Article 108, requires approval by two-thirds of the members of the General Assembly. Of significance is also the additional requirement of ratification by two-thirds of UN members' legislatures, including the legislatures of all five permanent members of the Security Council. Any change in Security Council membership would require revising Articles 23 and 27 of the Charter as well.

### ***Robust and collective engagement for affirming the legitimacy of Africa's common position in the Pact of the Future***

While cognizant of these challenges, the ongoing policy discussions and efforts for reform necessitate that African states engage robustly, as a collective and exploring all possible options for reform. In this regard and building on the Ezulwini Consensus, African states need to seize the current window of opportunity and ensure the clear affirmation of the legitimacy of Africa's position on the reform of the UNSC in the ongoing negotiations on the Pact of the Future. To this end, they should demand that **the Pact of the Future** recognizes the need for rectifying the historical injustice that Africa suffered with respect

to UN Security Council membership due to its non-representation in the permanent category and under-representation in the non-permanent category. They should also get Africa's situation to be treated as a special case deserving priority in the reform.

### ***Enlargement of the size of the UNSC in both permanent and non-permanent categories***

The common position of Africa entails the enlargement of the size of the Council both in the permanent and non-permanent categories critical to enhancing the legitimacy of the Council as well as address the exclusion of Africa in the permanent category and its under-representation in the elected category. Beyond meeting the demands of the principle of legitimacy, enlargement of the size of the Council, through allocation of permanent and non-permanent seats within the Ezulwini framework, has also the role of injecting into the Council members who have more stake in the effective functioning of the Council and hence have the incentive to operate as moderating force for breaking the gridlock that from time to time paralyses the Council owing to geopolitical contestations between rival major powers in the UNSC.

### ***Model of allocation of new permanent seats***

It is also necessary to enhance engagement for ensuring that support for Africa's position should not be conditional but is informed by the requirement of rectifying the historic injustice and the principles of equitable representation and legitimacy. Of particular

significance in this respect is the abandonment by some states of the informal demand for Africa to designate states that will take up the permanent seats and their acceptance of the legitimacy of the option for allocating seats to Africa as a region rather than specific countries. The position of the AU, as captured in the February 2024 report of the Committee of Ten Heads of State and Government of the AU Assembly (Committee of Ten) on the Reform of the UNSC is that '[t]he African permanent Members will be chosen by the African Union.'

### ***On veto power for new permanent members and responsibility for its use***

Regarding the veto, Africa's position has been and should remain premised on the principle of equality enunciated in the preamble and Article 2 of the UN Charter. Thus, the Panel supports the position advanced in the Report of the Committee of Ten that 'On the Veto, Africa wants it to be abolished.' **The experience of the Peace and Security Council of the AU highlights that the functioning of the UNSC without the veto is feasible** and could be the only pathway for sparing the UNSC from paralysis that has become recurrent and for making it fit for a multipolar world. The Panel further supports the view that 'If, however, Member States wish to retain the veto it must be extended to all new Permanent Members.' This is consistent with the Ezulwini Consensus position that Africa's demand for two permanent seats is 'with all the rights and prerogatives of current members, including the right

of the veto, if retained’.

It would be consistent with the Ezulwini consensus should African member states support limitations to and accountability for the use of veto. In this respect, building on the recent inclusion of the convening of a GA meeting after the use of veto by any permanent member, consideration may be given to another UNGA resolution that allows 2/3 majority of members of the UNSC to refer a resolution vetoed by a permanent member (hence deemed to impede the collective action that is necessary for the maintenance of international peace and security) to the UNGA for review by a super majority the members of UNGA.

### ***Strengthening the Role of the UN General Assembly in peace and security***

One of the five clusters identified for UNSC reform under General Assembly’s [Decision 62/557](#) for the Intergovernmental Negotiation (IGN) it established in 2008 is the relationship between the Council and the UNGA. The UNGA is the UN organ where all states parties to the UN Charter are represented. As a body of the UN where all member states enjoy equal rights, the UNGA is a democratic body and enjoys legitimacy from the wider UN membership. African member states constitute the largest regional bloc in UNGA and constitute an influential voting bloc. The UNGA is where the legitimacy of UN action on peace and security can best be gaged and the member states of the UN express their views by voting whenever an

international peace and security matter is tabled for consideration of the wider UN membership. While UNGA is not the primary body for peace and security decision-making and its resolutions are not binding, it plays and can play important role in peace and security in accordance with Article 12 of the UN Charter.

As in past instances of Security Council inaction, the deepening paralysis in the Council and the recurrent abusive use of the veto for blocking Council actions in recent years has prompted increased interest both in the role of and calls to further empower the UNGA on matters of international peace and security. UNGA's role in the maintenance of international peace and security becomes particularly imperative when the Security Council fails or is unable to act in the face of a threat to international peace and security. In this regard, in accordance with UNGA Resolution 377(V), *Uniting for Peace*, the General Assembly has the power to act to maintain or restore international peace and security in case of failure by the SC to exercise its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. To date, 11 emergency special sessions of the UNGA have been convened under this resolution.

UNGA's role acquired particular significance during the past two years. This came following the referral on 27 February by Security Council of the situation in Ukraine to the General Assembly following its own failure to adopt a draft resolution after Russia launched attack

against Ukraine. It marked the first invocation by the UNSC of the UNGA '**Uniting for Peace**' resolution in 40 years. Apart from the situation in Ukraine, the UNGA was also called on to address the situations in Gaza and Myanmar. With respect to Myanmar, it endorsed a resolution calling for arms embargo on the country. The role of the UNGA was further bolstered through a resolution of April 2022 (A/RES/76/262) empowering the President of the General Assembly to convene a formal meeting within 10 working days of the casting of a veto by one or more permanent members of the Security Council.

For Africa, the significance of the role of UNGA goes beyond the sphere of international peace and security. As the AU pointed out in 2012, *the role of the General Assembly should be broadened to include the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), whose mandate straddles the development and security spheres. The now widely accepted nexus between security and development provides a strong imperative for a more pronounced role for ECOSOC in the partnership. This would help to restore the balance between day-to-day peace and security issues and long-term socio-economic development.* Leveraging their size in UNGA, African member states can promote UNGA initiatives for a fairer and more equitable international economic relations that help facilitate the socio-economic and development advancement of peoples of Africa and others in the developing world. A case in point that illustrates this potential is the November 2023 UNGA

resolution on a UN convention on international tax cooperation championed by the Africa Group under Nigeria's leadership. Moreover, the General Assembly's oversight function on the UN's financial matters puts it at the heart of discussions relating to financing UNSC authorized AU-led operations.

### ***Pathways for UNSC reform***

In terms of how to proceed to formal negotiations for UNSC reform, UN member states advance various positions. The first of these is what is called text-based negotiations (TBN). Thus far this has not received the support of the wider membership of the UN. On the part of the AU, the position until recently has been that Africa would not engage in text-based negotiations before consensus has been reached among member states of the UN on all issues pertaining to UNSC reform. This position has not changed. Thus, as reflected in the February 2024 report of the C10, the position in the AU is that 'Africa to only engage in text-based negotiations provided there is prior consensus among all member States of the United Nations on the five clusters and an agreed framework, which broadly addresses the issue of historical injustice, and a model of reform which clearly addresses expansion in both categories of the UN Security Council.' This position was further reconfirmed in the outcome document of the eleventh ministerial meeting of the AU Committee of Ten Heads of States and Government on the reform of the UN Security Council (C10) held in Algiers on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2024.

The other, which has UNGA resolution basis, is the intergovernmental negotiation (IGN). This was established in 2008 through the General Assembly's [Decision 62/557](#), whereby states continue to submit their proposals on the five clusters that have been agreed to regarding the reform of the UNSC. Under this approach, the reform process moves forward based on the consensus of UN member states on the various areas of reform.

The Panel supports the position of the C10 that emphasizes the imperative of maintaining the unity of the African group. Considering that Africa's influence lies in leveraging its number in the UN, the importance of maintaining the unity of the position of AU member states cannot be overemphasized. As such, for Africa the option of the Charter review conference can only be taken on the basis of agreement among AU member states on Africa speaking with one voice and firm recognition of the legitimacy of Africa's demand for membership in the permanent category with veto rights and expansion of representation in the non-permanent category.

## 4.2. Reform of UNSC working methods

Short of more systemic UNSC reform, African member states of the UN and other non-permanent members of the UN have also been active in pushing for a more transparent and inclusive working methods of the UNSC. Improving the functioning of the Council

through a review of its working methods could open new avenues for African countries to shape the scope and form of UNSC engagement on key issues. There are three areas of UNSC working methods that stand to contribute to inclusive, transparent and consultative UNSC decision-making process reflective of Africa's policy positions.

### ***Democratizing the penholder system***

The first and of particular interest are the rules around the penholder system. Introduced in 2003, this is the informal practice by virtue of which some members of the UNSC arrogate to themselves leadership in crafting the engagement of the Council such as requesting the convening of Council meetings, leading field missions and drafting Council products on various conflict files on the agenda of the Council. It has granted a disproportionate influence and the ability to mould and shape the agenda of the Council, primarily to the P3 (France, UK, US, UK). This is particularly the case with respect to African files. In 2023, only one African country, Gabon, is acting as a sole penholder. Furthermore, Ghana is a co-penholder on West Africa, including the Sahel. By contrast, the P3 – France, UK and US - currently act as penholders of 14 of the 15 African situations, which perpetuates a system of paternalism by Western countries towards Africa and replicates the power relations that existed during colonialism and the Cold War.

## 2023 Penholders ([Source](#): Security Council Report)

| Country situation or thematic matter (total 44)                                 | Penholder  |
|---|--|
| Burundi   | France   |
| Central Africa (UNOCA/LRA)  | UK   |
| Central African Republic  | France   |
| Democratic Republic of the Congo  | France   |
| Ethiopia/Tigray   | Ireland  |
| Great Lakes Region  | France   |
| Guinea-Bissau   | N/A  |
| Liberia   | USA  |
| Libya   | UK   |
| Libya-authorisations to inspect vessels on the high seas off the coast of Libya | France   |
| Mali  | France   |
| Somalia   | UK   |
| Sudan and South Sudan   | The UK is the penholder on Sudan; The US is the penholder on South Sudan, Sudan/South Sudan, Sudan sanctions and South Sudan sanctions |
| West Africa, including the Sahel  | Ghana & Switzerland  |
| Western Sahara  | US   |
| International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals                         | Gabon  |
| Peace and Security in Africa  | N/A  |

The penholder practice, as noted in key documents such as Paragraph 79 of UN Security Council Presidential Note, S/2017/507, is informal. This makes it more susceptible to being reconfigured, especially given the repeated demands from African countries for a review of this practice since at least 2012. The Aria-Formula meeting on penholdership, convened in 2022, included several African countries that called for the democratization of the system to ensure their active participation and representation in influencing and shaping decisions that affect their societies.

A major step towards achieving this enhanced role of A3 members would be the implementation of the decisions of the PSC from its 397<sup>th</sup> and 983<sup>rd</sup> sessions held in September 2012 and March 2021 respectively. Of particular significance is the PSC Heads of State and Government meeting held in September 2012 calling for 'effective involvement of the African members of the Security Council in the drafting of resolutions, presidential statements and statements to the press concerning Africa, including through the designation of African states as pen holders/co-pen holders on African matters, as part of the overall efforts to ensure that lead roles for country-specific situations and thematic issues are fairly distributed among all the members of the Security Council.' This underscores the paramount importance of A3 members assuming penholdership and are guided, in the exercise of this role, by the collective position articulated in AU decisions, notably by the AU Peace and Security

Council (PSC). To ensure that African states assuming the role of a penholder are adequately capacitated, it is necessary to enhance the technical capacity of both the permanent missions of these African States and the AU Permanent Observer Mission to the UN. One option to consider would be the establishment of a dedicated unit comprised of a team of African experts to support African (co)penholders.

### ***Inclusive consultation and opportunity for inputting into draft UNSC products***

The second area concerns the availability of adequate and substantive consultation and the provision of sufficient opportunity for the engagement of African states in the crafting of UNSC decisions. During the Area-Formula meeting in 2022, Ghana proposed that ‘the drafting and negotiation process, should be characterised by an extensive, exhaustive, transparent, inclusive process of consultations and timely exchange of information.’ In this respect, one course of action could be the establishment of a predictable and transparent framework outlining the processes and timelines for consultations and soliciting substantive engagement and contribution of all member states as well as requirements for sharing draft resolutions, presidential statements or press elements and affording reasonable enough a timeline for submission of inputs by member states.

### ***Systematically consult the Peace and Security Council on decisions pertaining to African files***

The third area concerns the close working relationship between the UNSC and the PSC. In this respect as well, the implementation of the September 2012 decision of the PSC Heads of State and Government meeting would be a good starting point. The communique of the meeting called for ‘systematic consultations between the two Councils, including through their Chairs, prior to taking decisions on matters relating to the continent.’ It also underscored the need for ‘adoption of practical steps to ensure that the joint annual consultative meetings between the two Councils are more structured and substantive’ and the ‘implementation of the existing agreement by the two Councils to undertake joint field missions to enhance synergy and facilitate the formulation of cohesive positions and strategies in dealing with conflict situations in Africa.’ These have to be translated into operational practices.

### **4.3. Making the international peace and security architecture fit for a multipolar world**

The ability of the multilateral system to uphold peace and security in the world depends on the shared understanding by its members of common threats. As conditions of multipolarity accelerate in international relations, there is increasing need for mitigating the paralysis in the UNSC and enabling minimum common ground for the functioning of the UNSC. A reform

process could therefore envisage the establishment of an evidence-driven Intergovernmental Panel on Threats to International Peace and Security as a standing mechanism to help provide evidence-driven report that establishes the nature both in scale and gravity and impacts of developments threatening international peace and security.

#### **4.4. Expanding the regional sections for and leadership role of Africa in various UN Agencies**

The space both for reflecting the voice of Africa in the structures of decision-making and leadership role of Africans in the various global governance institutions including UN agencies remains hugely limited. This is one of the major factors for the fact that Africa is either excluded from certain global governance platforms and/or is severely underrepresented. There is thus a need for expanding the space for reflecting Africa's voice through increasing regional sections/divisions and increasing leadership roles of Africans. In the peace and security realm, it is also critical to increase the number of appointment of Africans in senior leadership positions particularly at UN headquarters.

## 4.5. Enhancing the role of and leveraging the particular attributes of other UN bodies such as the Peacebuilding Commission

Established in 2005 to support UN efforts in consolidating peace in countries emerging from conflict, the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) role grew in significance over the years. Its inclusive nature makes it an important platform for a more legitimate decision-making that earns the support of the wider UN member states. As it the case with the UNGA, the mandate of the PBC is advisory in nature, but it can act as an important leverage to promote a redefinition of the scope and approach to issues tackled by the UNSC. In the broader context of UN reform, the PBC emerges as a catalyst for the negotiation process, actively influencing discussions on reshaping the UNSC to better meet the demands of a changing global landscape.

The nature of conflicts and the global context necessitate a multidisciplinary approach to both the prevention and resolution of conflicts. This means that rather than a narrow security focused approach, processes for the prevention and resolution of conflicts need to harness and complementarily deploy peacebuilding, socio-economic development and inclusive systems of governance and state strengthening tools. Accordingly, there is increasing need for tapping into and enhancing the role of international and regional financial institutions and development tools. The PBC is best placed to and can

play the role of both facilitating the integrated use of such instruments and promoting their use (by the UNSC). In the context of the Summit of the Future and the 2025 review of the UN Peace Building Architecture, **African States should champion the enhancement of the mandate, authority, and role of the UN PBC.**



## V. REFORM OF THE GLOBAL FINANCIAL AND ECONOMIC ARCHITECTURE: DELIVERING ON THE SDGS AND THE UN CHARTER'S PROMISE FOR 'SOCIAL PROGRESS AND BETTER STANDARD OF LIFE IN LARGER FREEDOM'

The Panel builds on the OAU's position, articulated by Salim Ahmed Salim the then Secretary-General of the OAU at the Summit on Agenda for Africa at the Dawn of the Third Millennium held in Libreville, Gabon, in January 2000, that an equitable international economic system committed to development by addressing the scourge of poverty requires

increasing the level of resource flows into the continent both through additional quantities and also improving accessibility to such facilities. It is necessary in this regard to ensure that the little growth that is being achieved is reinvested within the countries. The evident trend of repatriating the surplus generated from growth specifically to meet debt servicing schedules also accounts for the continued prevalence of acute poverty despite some economic growth in our countries...strengthening and expanding...initiatives...to alleviate the debt burden, improving the conditions of international trade, ensuring that Africa's voice in global forums is reinforced.

The discussions on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were initiated almost 10 years ago, with considerable attention devoted to deliberations on its Means of Implementation (Mol), particularly focusing on financing. However, the current financing for the SDGs has fallen short, leaving a significant gap of approximately [US\\$4.2 trillion per year globally](#). Africa, in particular, faces a substantial funding gap of [US\\$200 billion annually](#) in order to achieve its SDG targets by 2030.

The urgency of addressing the climate change crisis compounds the developmental challenges faced by African countries, further constraining their ability to allocate resources towards achieving their developmental goals. Presently, African countries endure economic [losses ranging from 5% to 15% of their GDP](#) due to climate change, as reported by the African Development Bank (AfDB). Additionally, the AfDB estimates that African nations allocate up to 10% of their budgets towards responding to climate change. Reforming the policies and practices of Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) and International Financial Institutions (IFIs) is therefore crucial to bolster their lending capacities in supporting developing countries to finance their development needs and bolster climate action. As outlined in the Sharm El-Sheikh Implementation Plan of COP27, this objective can be achieved by allocating additional resources to these institutions without merely rebranding or repackaging them as climate

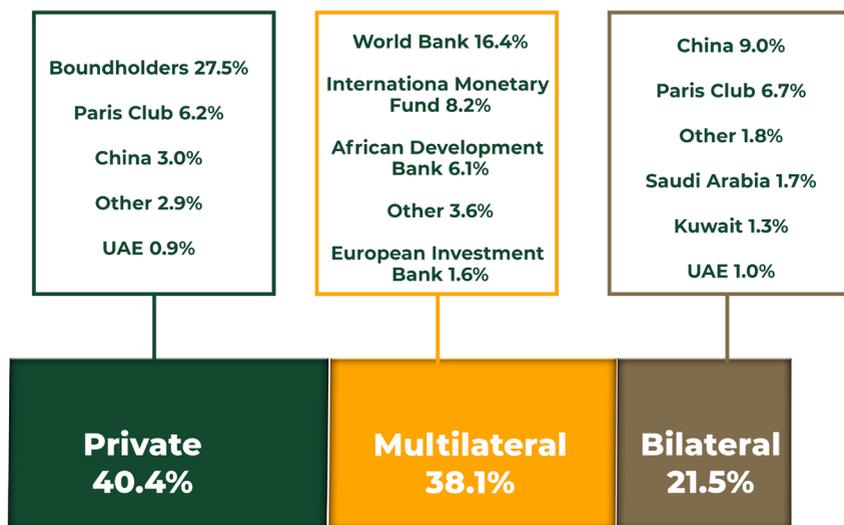
finance. Furthermore, facilitating access to finance for developing countries and delivering it through highly concessional instruments, grants, and other non-debt instruments is essential.

Moreover, the series of global crises witnessed in recent years have exacerbated the challenge of accessing finance. Indeed, by 2022, the continent's total external debt had surged to [US\\$1.1 trillion](#) and was projected to rise to US\$1.13 trillion in 2023. Presently, the debt servicing expenses of Africa's 16 most indebted nations are anticipated to amount to US\$22.3 billion. Alarming, over half of Africa's population resides in countries where spending on debt interest surpasses that on education or health. African nations are expected to continue grappling with record debt service payments in the foreseeable future.

In 2021, [40.4% of this external debt was held by private creditors](#). They're followed by 38,1% to multilateral institutions with the World Bank Group and the IMF holding the largest share and 21.5% to bilateral creditors with China holding 9% and the Paris Club 6.7%. This new reality has brought with it significant challenges. Private creditors do not fall under international frameworks for debt negotiations, such as the G20 common framework for debt treatments. Unrealistic conditionalities by private creditors, some infringing on national sovereignty principles and attempting to secure access to Africa's natural resources at lower costs, have led to protracted negotiations that continue

to ravage domestic economies.

Efforts to bring some relief remain inadequate. Of the \$650 billions of SDRs issued by the IMF in 2021, only \$33 billion (5% of the total) were reallocated to Africa. The G20's COVID-era [Debt Service Suspension Initiative \(DSSI\)](#) resulted in the suspension of a mere [US\\$10.2 billion from African countries](#). Other efforts of the G20 under the Common Framework have so far delivered a debt deal for Zambia and Ghana, although following painstakingly long negotiations.



Against this backdrop, there are increasing calls for reforms of the global financial architecture to address the needs of African countries and other emerging and vulnerable regions. Beyond the immediate requirement to tackle liquidity issues, a series of reform measures are imperative. These include:

## 5.1. Governance structures and decision-making processes

The governance of the international financial system continues to reflect the power dynamics established in the post-WWII world. Despite repeated efforts to reform it to better represent its expanded membership and address diverse needs, progress has been slow. While there have been some timid concessions on representation, such as the inclusion of a third African seat on the Executive Board of the IMF in October 2023, these changes remain insufficient. A telling example of this disparity is the fact that several developed and developing economies are each represented by a dedicated Executive Director, while Africa's 54 members are represented by only three executive directors following the decision in 2023. This significantly limits the influence of the continent on decision making processes.

Africa's influence in decision making is limited by the quota system. Currently, Africa's voting rights account for only 6.47% of the total, a figure largely influenced by the quota system established in 1944. This system

favoured dominant powers of that era, resulting in significantly higher quotas and voting power for certain countries. However, these arrangements persistently disadvantage Africa. Previous adjustments to the quota system have further reduced the share of the four founding members from Africa. As new proposals on the quota formula are anticipated in 2025, it is imperative that any adjustments to rebalance the quota system in favour of emerging economies do not diminish Africa's quota shares. This is imperative. First, the current assessment of Africa's contribution to the global economy is based on a flawed system of valuation of the resources that historically enabled and currently fuel the industrial advances of various parts of the world. Second, relying solely on GDP as the measure for international economic cooperation overlooks other crucial factors. The multilateral system relies on enhancing trust, fairness and equity to prevent fragmentation and limits recurrent shocks and their impacts, making it essential to consider more than just GDP as a measure of relevance.

Reforming the quota system is crucial not only for its impact on voting rights but also due to its influence in guiding access to finance (and capital contributions). The borrowing limit is determined by a member's quota (set at 200 percent annually), as is the allocation of Special Drawing Rights (SDRs). In times when access to finance is essential for addressing the challenges of economic transformation towards a green global economy, the quota system becomes

vital for unlocking additional resources.

Beyond the quota system, there is a need for increasing dedicated regional sections/divisions and leadership roles in the IFIs to ensure Africa's effective representation.

Such reform of the governance structure and decision-making process can be especially effective when combined with a reformed business model of the international financial institutions that directs resources to where they are most needed, ensuring a mutually beneficial recovery and eventual transition. In a reformed business model of the IFIs, decisions are thus informed not only on the basis of the interests of creditors but also the needs of global development and socio-economic stability imperatives as well.

## 5.2. Addressing the debt challenge

The recurring and mounting debt crises afflicting developing countries, many of them in Africa, are symptomatic of the structural flaws of the global financial system. Currently, African countries are paying more for servicing debt than for investing in key social and economic sectors critical to meeting the SDGs. Among others, this is due to the extortionist and unfair process of risk assessment whereby African states are made to pay at least eight times more than the weakest economy in the developed world. The multilateral financial system is also organized around

and favours the interests of creditors and major shareholders. Additionally, the global financial system also gives little account for factors that continue to force spike in the sovereign debt of African states such as such as climate change, global economic shifts, rising interest rates, the adverse impact of sovereign debt on development policies of debtor States, increase of conflicts involving terrorist groups and recurring global economic shocks.

Ensuring that the global debt architecture is fit-for-purpose to promote inclusive growth and prevent the reversal of hard-won sustainable development gains requires the establishment of comprehensive and efficient mechanisms to address the structural sources of the recurrence of debt distress in both low-income and middle-income countries. The mechanisms for debt management should operate in a sustainable, predictable, and timely manner.

In this respect, African member states should give consideration for supporting the proposal from UNCTAD for an independent global sovereign debt authority that promotes global standards and practices that protect not only the interests of creditors as is currently the case but also those of debtors, which is currently missing.

African states should also collectively push both for reducing the cost of finance and debt servicing. In this regard, it is important to consider new issuance

of SDRs and heed the call of the AU and UNECA for rechannelling SDRs through Regional Development Banks (RDBs) to bolster global liquidity and ensure that the resources are leveraged for maximum impact. The Panel also echoes the call of African countries for the cancelation of IMF surcharges to optimize the impact of these resources.

Efforts should also extend to other forums. Simplifying processes for debt restructuring and establishing a platform for engaging private creditors are critical steps. The G20 Common Framework requires reform to ensure swift restructuring, particularly in response to the evolving structure of African debt, especially concerning private creditors and multilateral institutions. In this respect, the Summit of the Future and G20 Presidency could call for an International Panel to review challenges affecting the efficacy of the G20 Common Framework and its application and, on that basis, provide recommendations to ensure it is responsive to the pressing needs of affected countries, particularly in times of distress arising from international shocks.

Reforming the global financing architecture should also address debt sustainability analysis and the methodologies used by rating agencies, which have raised concerns among African states. These concerns stem from the bias that leads African countries to pay premiums up to eight times higher than those of developed countries when accessing finance from

the market. It is imperative to initiate international and transparent discussions on the role of credit agencies.

**The Panel recommends that the Africa group, particularly within the context of the Summit of the Future, proposes establishing an international expert group tasked with delivering a comprehensive report and a set of recommendations on credit rating agencies, addressing the structural sources of the recurrence of debt distress, and the cost of borrowing for sustainable development and reform of debt sustainability analysis.**

### 5.3. International Public Finance

Addressing debt challenges and the current liquidity crunch in African countries should be coupled with efforts to scale up accessible and affordable public finance. Despite efforts to attract private sector financing, it has become evident that it cannot substitute public finance. Indeed, this is illustrated by the challenges of raising climate finance in Africa through private finance. Africa received \$4.2 billion in private climate finance in 2019/2020 representing [14 % of total climate finance flows the continent received](#). In infrastructure, private sector participation in Africa is among the lowest globally. In fact, [2021 saw a 10% decrease in investment levels](#) compared to the previous year, and halved compared to 2013 levels when Africa experienced an infrastructure boom.

Apart from upscaling the available funds for concessional development finance and the easing of access to international public finance from multilateral banks, the Panel proposes that the role of regional banks needs to also be boosted due to their positive performance in several areas, including infrastructure finance, demonstrating often more impact than MDBs in this area. This would require a review of the division of labour between regional and multilateral banks.

## 5.4. Domestic finance

[Data](#) on Africa's development financing shows that domestic resources account for two thirds of total financial resources. Since the 1990, the contribution of Official Development Assistance (ODA) has indeed declined while tax collection has increased, growing from 14.8 in 2010 to 16.6 in 2019. Tax reforms to improve efficiency of tax collection could potentially increase the figure further. International cooperation to address lopsided international tax practices. If addressed, Africa could gain as much as [US\\$89 billion annually](#). To this end, African states should sustain their leadership role in the process for the adoption of a global tax convention within the framework of the UN and could seek support to the negotiation under the UN on this global tax convention during the Summit of the Future.

Amidst the financing challenges, discussions on implementing new international taxes as an alternative source of development finance, such as maritime shipping taxes and carbon taxes, are gaining momentum. As these discussions progress, it is crucial to adhere to the 'do no harm' principle. This entails conducting evidence-based developmental impact assessments of proposed taxes before implementation to ensure that their impacts are not disproportionately affecting livelihoods and that proposals move beyond a sole focus on resource mobilisation to one of development. Additionally, there is a need **to consider the redistribution architecture** to prevent further entrenchment of existing inequalities in the international tax system. A UN Tax convention plays a central role in framing such efforts and ensuring equity in taxation policies.

## 5.5. South-South cooperation

The evolving international financial architecture is seeing the rise of new actors whose contributions to African ambitions could be more substantial. Institutions like the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and the New Development Bank (NDB) are becoming increasingly relevant in African development finance, particularly in green infrastructure projects. However, it's imperative to take a proactive approach to ensure that their involvement in Africa doesn't repeat the shortcomings experienced with other multilateral banks.

## 5.6. Reform of the global trade regime

Reforms to the global financial architecture should go hand in hand with reforms that concern other Means of Implementation (MoI) impacting the achievement of the SDGs such as trade. In this regard, it is important to start reforming the World Trade Organization (WTO), capitalizing on the results of the organization's 13<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference (MC13), for a greater role of international trade in achieving global economic recovery and shared prosperity. This is to be achieved through member-driven, inclusive and transparent negotiations for enhancing the rules-based multilateral trading system, by reinforcing the centrality of the development dimension of the WTO in its work, and by achieving a full and well-functioning two-tier dispute settlement.

## 5.7. Strengthening the role of the UN in economic, financial and social policy making

Considering that development is a key pillar of the UN and delivering on the SDGs is a pre-requisite for restoring trust in the multilateral system, the necessity of restoring the centrality and strengthened role of the UN in global economic, financial and social policy making cannot be overstated.

As geopolitical contestations among global powers deepen in the absence of trust, risks of fragmentation of the global financial and economic system are accelerating. Instead of the resort to competing

'minilateralisms', which actually accentuate the problem and the race to the bottom, it is the affirmation of the UN as the central platform for economic, financial and social policy making that is sure to arrest this fragmentation and facilitate a more inclusive and global financial and economic system.

To this end, African member states of the UN with support from others including the Group of 77 ensure that there is commitment in the Summit of the Future both to affirm the role of the UN as the centre and hub of global multilateralism.



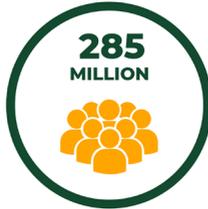
## VI. CRAFTING GLOBAL GOVERNANCE ON DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

The digital revolution brought with it significant benefits to humanity, albeit unevenly. But, like any innovation, it also generated new challenges. Like many global goods, they require global cooperation. Today, global cooperation on the digital agenda covers several sectors, which are clustered around three broad areas: equal access, the governance of new technologies, cybersecurity, and the fight against cybercrime, as well as the digital economy and digital trade.

Over the years, several efforts have been made to expanding connectivity to ensure equal access to internet to populations across the globe. Investments have been made and innovations tested to attempt to reach even the most remote of communities. In Africa, connectivity has significantly improved in recent years. The number of internet users doubled between 2015 and 2022 to reach 570 million users. Despite this growth, Africa remains one of the world regions with the lowest penetration rate (43% in 2021). Of concern is also the usage gap. While the coverage gap reduced, signalling more internet coverage across the continent, [61% of Africans who live in areas covered by a mobile broadband network in 2022 were not connected to mobile internet](#). Several factors contribute to this, including affordability of data and handsets being used.

## Internet Users in Africa

Internet users in 2015



Internet users in 2022

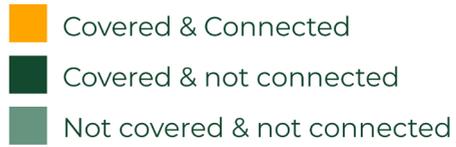
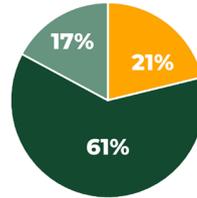


## Internet Coverage in Africa as of 2021

3G Coverage



4G Coverage



The growing internet penetration in Africa, reaching 28.2% in 2021, has already brought significant benefits to the continent, signifying the importance and urgency of expanding equal access. Notably, it allowed several regions to bank the unbackable thanks to the leapfrogging that was enabled by the mobile money innovation. Africa today leads the world in mobile money account ownership; [21% of adults in Sub-Saharan Africa own an account compared to a 10% average globally.](#) Even more encouraging is the fact that the mobile money revolution also contributed to narrowing the gender gap on account ownership.

The growth in digital payment platforms has also generated commercial benefits in Africa. While remaining below levels reached in Asia, Europe and North America, Africa's e-commerce revenue has been growing steadily. In 2022 it reached \$32.49 billion, up from US\$16.5 billion in 2020, and is projected to reach [\\$59.18 billion in 2027](#). Similarly, the application of new technologies to close data gaps could also be transformational.

New technologies for environmental data collection could play an important role in generating data that is significantly lacking but hugely important in the African context.

Internet access has, however, also come with challenges. Concerns around misinformation and disinformation as well as criminal and terrorist activities using social media platforms have been growing. Perhaps significantly, in this digital era where data has become increasingly most valuable resource akin to oil or gold, data protection is the other critical area for global digital governance. Data protection is key to safeguard the privacy and safety of individuals and to ensure the collection and use of personal data without consent are strictly regulated in compliance with human rights standards. Furthermore, a regulatory framework on data protection is not only related to the security of users and concerns around national security such as hate speech and protection of electoral processes from interference, but also to

the use of data of Africans for commercial purposes. It is against this backdrop that the African Union (AU) recently finalised the AU Data Policy Framework. The Framework provides detailed guidance on action needed within African countries to strengthen data governance systems. While this is commendable, the issues and challenges arising from digital technology are not susceptible for effective regulation at the continental level considering the enormous role of big tech companies and some states leading on the frontiers of new technology which are all outside of Africa, hence necessitating a multistakeholder system of global digital governance.

In addition, in the fast pace of changes and development of including most notably in the development and application of Artificial Intelligence (AI), questions are raised on safety standards, transparency in the development and use of AI both by private and public actors and ensuring effective human control over AI applications. The fast growth in the use of AI technologies have resulted in calls to introduce international legal safeguards. While such guardrails cover all areas where AI applications are used, they are particularly key to protect the lives of civilians and align existing international legal frameworks on the conduct of war to this new reality, not least to ensure that breaches could be adequately investigated, and justice brought to the victims.

The ongoing efforts by the UNSG and his Advisory Panel on Governing Artificial Intelligence for Humanity should introduce a discussion with the General Assembly with the view of passing legally-binding agreements defining the framework of the use of Artificial Intelligence in the context of armed conflict. In this regard, deeper conversations are required to better understand the use of AI in armed conflict, its facets and implications. Until global agreement on its regulation is reached, consideration should be given to introduce a ban on lethal autonomous weapons to safeguard human life.

The use of new technologies has also introduced new security concerns for states. The application of technologies for cybercrimes (military, political and economic) has driven several initiatives already to regulate it.

Complicating the conversations on the digital agenda is that it is subject to geopolitical contestation and posturing. Splinternets and competition around telecommunication standards have already demonstrated their relevance in African telecommunication companies' and governments' effort to build up new networks and increase access. Indeed, for many parts of the world, cooperative multilateral dialogues, standard setting and policy formulation toward global public goods is necessary.

Much is being done to govern the digital agenda domestically and continentally, including in Africa. However, such national measures require a global architecture that promotes cooperation to address fragmented approaches, promote digital inclusion and safeguard the digital economy as well as ensure human control over and application of international law rules including human rights and IHL in the use of lethal autonomous weapons. More specifically, the Summit of the Future should reflect on the principles that would allow the technological revolution to act as a positive force for all. Notably:

***Trust, safety and accountability:*** Member States shall promote trustworthy data environments that are safe and secure, accountable to data subjects, and ethical and secure by design.

***Transparency:*** agreement on minimum standards of transparency on the development and use of AI applications

***Comprehensive and forward-looking:*** the framework shall enable the creation of an environment that encourages investment and innovation through the development of infrastructure, human capacity and the harmonisation of regulations and legislation as well as the sharing of know-how.

In the light of the foregoing, the measures the Panel proposes include the following

## 6.1. Digital access to all

Bridging the digital divide, both within and between countries, remains a cornerstone of development. Despite considerable progress, the [poorest regions of Africa and globe](#) are still falling behind, effecting several facets of life from education to economic opportunities.

Therefore, Within the framework of the discussions on Our Common Future and the achievement of the SDGs, efforts should be centred on boosting investments in developing their technology capabilities and access to technologies as well as the building and expansion of the required infrastructure that supports the use and application of these technologies such as reliable supply of electricity. In this respect, international public finance needs to play a central role as an enabling equaliser to boost these investments. Trade measures to allow cheaper access to technology should also be encouraged.

## 6.2. Inclusive and coherent digital architecture

Development is increasingly intertwined with digital governance, especially data, and access to new technologies. The participation of African state and non-state actors is therefore important. There is

therefore a need to ensure that spaces and dialogue processes are not structured in a manner that favours the better-resources private actors as well as big economies but rather ensure inclusivity.

The global digital architecture should also help mediate different interests. Commercial interests at a time when data is increasingly becoming an important commodity should not come at the detriment of some regions in the world, including Africa. The international architecture should therefore be supportive of regional efforts to also reap the benefit of the digital transition to secure developmental gains and global commitments to development goals.

### **6.3. Accelerated dialogue to address technology-related common threats**

The use of new technologies in conflict situations is no longer a scenario. It is a reality. It is constituting a new arms race, which impact is yet to be adequately understood and addressed. The interim report of the High-Level Advisory Body on AI, entitled *Governing AI for Humanity*, provides an important base on which to build. More specifically, further consultations are required to better understand the implications of the new AI reality on peace and security in the world and the application of international law.

## **6.4. A global cybersecurity treaty that safeguards Africa's interests**

Given the noticeable rise in cybercrimes and cyber-attacks globally, Africa faces increasing challenges pertaining to cybersecurity, particularly given the lack of adequate digital security infrastructure in the continent. In this regard, it is imperative that African countries form a united position in negotiating the UN cybercrime treaty. The treaty, if approved and enacted in a manner that takes into account the concerns and development priorities of African countries, could prove to be an important tool in addressing cyber security given the enormous economic cost inflicted by cybercrimes which could have huge negative repercussions on the African continent.

## **6.5. Human control over and application of international law rules in the use of lethal autonomous weapons**

The world is experiencing an increase in the development and increasingly use of lethal autonomous weapons in conflict settings. This poses various challenges particularly for parts of the world such as Africa where historically new weapons were deployed for testing their effectiveness. Perhaps the most serious challenge arises from the assignment of decision-making in attacking targets to algorithm, thereby removing human judgement. The Panel is of the view that given the danger this poses to protection of civilians and compliance with the rules of war and

to applicable international law rules in general, the Summit of the Future and the various UN processes on the subject should ensure that the use of lethal autonomous weapons should be subject to meaningful human control as essential condition for upholding legal and humanitarian standards and obligations. As a corollary to the imperative of meaningful human control and the prohibition of the deployment of lethal autonomous weapons without meaningful human control, mechanisms should be established for holding individuals and entities accountable in terms of the sale, transfer, use or misuse of such weapons.

## **6.6. A New Technologies Alliance for Global Public Goods**

New technologies could be powerful tools to support action on global public goods such as the collection of climate data or new technologies for resilient agriculture. Access to these technologies is currently concentrated in a handful of countries and a set of actors and vulnerable communities and countries have limited access to them.

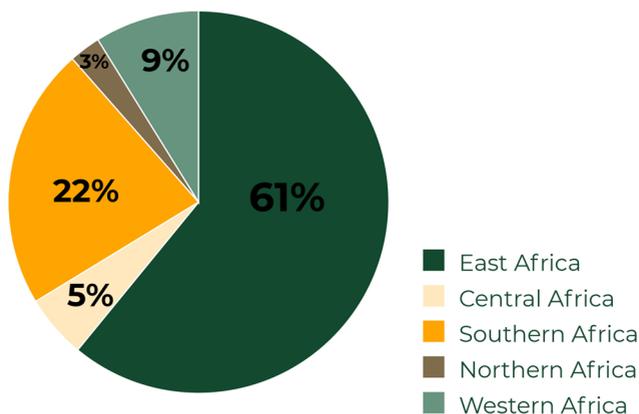
As the world seeks to address global challenges such as climate change together, a new alliance can be established under the leadership of the UN to bring together public and private sector to avail at a low-cost specific technology to support action on global public goods. Africa can lead in shaping such Alliance considering the ongoing efforts of several African countries to build partnerships in this direction.



## VII. COLLECTIVE ACTION TO AVERT AND SUPPORT REGIONS MOST AFFECTED BY BUT LEAST RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY

Africa contributed the least to climate change. Yet, across the African continent people, the environment and the economy are suffering as a result of recurrent extreme weather events induced by the climate emergency. The latest report of the [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change \(IPCC\)](#) notes with “high confidence” that “key development sectors have already experienced widespread losses and damages attributable to human-induced climate change, including biodiversity loss, water shortages, reduced food production, loss of lives and reduced economic growth”. The Global Centre on Adaptation (GCA) estimates that [52 million Africans were impacted by different manifestations of climate change](#) in 2021 and 2022. This is expected to worsen as the region lacks the means for adaptation. All African countries, regardless of their geography are vulnerable. For Africa’s Small Island States (SIDS), climate change is causing significant weather and oceanographic events, thus significantly affecting livelihoods and economies. Coastal states see their sea levels rise at the detriment of coastal communities who depend on fishing. Arid and desert regions are witnessing more climate events causing significant draughts and leading to population movement and even insecurity.

## Total Percentage Affected by Climate Disaster Per Region in Africa January 2021 to September 2022



It is indeed often recalled that Africa is one of the most affected regions by climate change. Yet, historically, it contributed a mere 7% of global GHG emissions, including less than 4% of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. According to the International Energy Agency (IEA), by 2050, Africa would still account for a mere 4% of global emissions, regardless of the scenario.

Finance has been put at the heart of the transition debate. After decades of negotiations, the decision to establish a “Loss and Damage Fund and Funding Arrangements” was reached at COP27 in Sharm el Sheikh and consolidated at COP28. The second replenishment of the Green Climate Fund (GCF), the world’s largest multilateral fund dedicated to supporting developing countries respond to climate

change and which depends on the voluntary contribution of industrialized countries, also secured a slight increase in pledges from US\$10 billion under the first replenishment to US\$12.8 billion under the recent second replenishment (as of 31 December 2023).

There have also been attempts to develop alternative models for financing climate initiatives, often operating outside the formal framework of the UNFCCC negotiations. Notably, these efforts encompass agreements, albeit contested, such as the Just Transition deals reached with South Africa and Senegal.

However, finance flows for Africa's transition are insufficient given the substantial financing needed by African nations. Notably, over half of the climate finance provided is in the form of loans, exacerbating the high debt burden experienced by many African countries. While funding predominantly targets the energy sector, which is responsible for [73% of greenhouse gas emissions](#) in Africa, there's a pressing need to diversify financing towards other vital sectors. Agriculture, for instance, has seen a rise in greenhouse gas emissions since 1990 and warrants increased attention and investment to mitigate its environmental impact.

Beyond financing for adaptation, Africa faces additional challenges in responding to climate change, including the impact of global reforms that extend across various policy domains. International partners have enacted

several trade and industrial competitiveness measures in response to climate change. For instance, the EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), set to be implemented in October 2023, presents a significant challenge for Africa. With many of Africa's industries not yet transitioned to the green economy, CBAM is projected to [cost the continent at least US\\$25 billion annually](#). Furthermore, least developed countries (LDCs) are also expected to bear substantial welfare costs due to CBAM's effects. Concerns extend to the agricultural sector as well, where developing countries and their farmers may face challenges transitioning without adequate support, potentially leading to issues with fair trade rules. It is estimated that by 2030, [approximately 73% \(\\$1.3 trillion\) of the nearly \\$2 trillion in global support to farmers could come in the form of border measures](#), potentially distorting trade and running counter to the principles of the Paris Agreement.

But beyond the challenges, climate change presents Africa with significant opportunities, as highlighted by the [Nairobi Declaration](#) of September 2023, including how the natural endowments of the continent contribute significantly to the global solution to climate change. It thus calls for reforms within the multilateral system to enable Africa to play a more active role in value addition, green growth, and industrialization.

Moreover, the Africa position on climate change, as prepared by the African Group of Negotiators, endorsed by the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) and the Committee of the African Heads of State and Government on Climate Change (CAHOSCC), outlines the main demands of the continent in relation to climate change negotiations, many of which were part of the COP27 outcomes. In particular, the clear request for reform of IFIs around three main elements; increasing scale of funds, easing access, and delivering through concessional instruments - mainly grants. This together with a full consideration of social and economic dimensions of the envisaged transition and transformation under the Paris Agreement, 'just transition pathways,' provides the African vision on ensuring that climate actions are supporting the achievement of sustainable development and poverty eradication including through green growth and industrialization, the fair and nationally owned leveraging of African natural assets, human capital and resources while contributing to global climate action, which was also reflected in the Nairobi declaration.

Maximizing the opportunities of a climate transition would require effective domestic action but also a multilateral system that is conducive for such transformation. The Summit of the Future should therefore place emphasis on the following issues:

## 7.1. Climate action that is in harmony with developmental goals

Development should remain a central objective of multilateral efforts to tackle climate change for climate change is not a standalone challenge. Adaptability to climate depend on a countries' resilience including their economic capabilities and development realities. Indeed, done well by considering the context of its implementation, climate action can be an important tool to reduce vulnerabilities of communities, build economic resilience through just energy transition, protect biodiversity, among other benefits. But implemented in isolation, climate action risks exacerbating social disparities, negatively impact socio-economic indicators, have negative economic knock-on effects, and slow down developmental progress, thereby undermining the SDGs.

## 7.2. Scale up financing and ease access

The outcome document of COP27 called “on the shareholders of multilateral development banks and international financial institutions to reform multilateral development bank practices and priorities, align and scale up funding, ensure simplified access and mobilize climate finance from various sources and encourages multilateral development banks to define a new vision and commensurate operational model, channels and instruments that are fit for the purpose of adequately addressing the global climate emergency, including deploying a full suite of

instruments, from grants to guarantees and non-debt instruments, taking into account debt burdens, and to address risk appetite, with a view to substantially increasing climate finance”. This agenda remains relevant as the reforms of the international financial institutions gathers pace (see section IV above).

Equally important is the need to develop a transparent accounting system for climate finance to restore trust in multilateral negotiations, ensure predictability and further support ambition on climate action. The forthcoming negotiations on the New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) at COP29 will come on the heels of the Summit of the Future should pave the way for a transparency mechanism.

### **7.3. Policy Alignment**

Financial flows alone will not be enough to ensure that Africa effectively resources its climate action. Policies currently being enacted by international partners, although arguably positive in their context, may have negative ramifications on Africa, therefore undermining its resilience and space for action if they are accompanied by effective mitigation measures to reduce their impact on regions such as Africa. Indeed, trade and industrialization measures being introduced in developed economies can be counterproductive as they are developed without adequate alignment to international agreements. This includes measures such as the European Union’s Carbon Border Adjustment

Mechanism (CBAM).

**The Pact of the Future should therefore reaffirm the principle of Article 3.5 of the UN Convention on Climate Change** as well as the outcome of COP28 which noted that ‘measures taken to combat climate change, including unilateral ones, should not constitute a means of arbitrary or unjustifiable discrimination or a disguised restriction on international trade’. Additionally, it is important to flag the risk of fragmented global trade that would result from uncoordinated measures.

Instead, it is important to promote a trade system that favors regional value chains as a measure to cut emissions and support African and other developing countries to develop green industries within their regions, notably resource-based industrialization, and regional value chains. This requires partners, from all corners of the world, to concretely commit to Africa’s industrialization ambitions, which offers cost benefits for partners and significant socio-economic advantages for Africa.

#### **7.4. Higher ambition is needed from high-emitters**

The world is not decarbonizing fast enough.

The principle of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities is a cornerstone of multilateralism in the climate change

sphere – and should remain so. While this is key to the African agenda, African countries have demonstrated laudable leadership. Despite the African continent’s limited contribution to global emissions – historically, currently and forecasted – African countries have recognized that the scale of impact of climate change on the continent requires them to actively engage in efforts on climate change by committing to ambitious decarbonization targets, allocating domestic resources in mitigation and adaptation and engage in good faith in efforts to raise additional financing.

However, actions taken by Africa will have an impact only if high emitters also take leadership. Far more ambitious is required on emission reduction targets than what is currently being envisaged by high emitters (as indicated in their NDCs as well as regional policy targets) to meet the net-zero target and our collective goal of leaving behind a livable planet for future generations around the globe.



## VIII. ‘INCLUSIVE AND EFFECTIVE MULTILATERALISM’: REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AS PILLAR OF A REFORMED SYSTEM OF GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

Both the nature and complexity of the challenges facing the world, along with the global context, underscore the increasing importance of regional multilateral bodies today more than ever before for injecting a much-needed boost for the global multilateral system. Moreover, the nature of today’s challenges and shifts in international relations necessitates networked multilateralism, which can effectively leverage the roles of multiple multilateral actors and foster more productive partnerships among them. Recognizing this imperative, the UN Secretary-General in 2021 called for a ‘more networked, inclusive and effective’ multilateralism.

The deepening polarization in the world, particularly among major powers, is among the key factors for the increasing fracturing of the multilateral system. The AU, whose member state make up 28 % of the UN, has unique reservoir of potential for playing a moderation role in the face of such polarization, paralyzing and fracturing the multilateral system. Tapping into this moderating role of the AU (and Africa’s positionality as the future of multilateralism) is key not just for arresting the fracturing of the multilateral system but also for making it fit for purpose.

As the part of the world where all the key pillars of the UN Charter (peace and security and development) need the most investment for restoring trust in and reforming the multilateral system, deepening the partnership between the UN and the AU is not a matter of choice nor is it just something 'nice to do'. This is rather a pre-requisite for delivering on the peace and security and development objectives of the UN Charter. While the UN Secretary General recognized in his Our Common Agenda report that regional organizations 'fill a critical gap in our global peace and security architecture', the state of relationship between the UN and the AU is far from adequate for the AU to effectively fill in this critical gap. One manifestation of this inadequacy is the lack of **a systematic and institutionalized global arrangement** for harnessing the full potential and role of the AU as part of the global collective security and development system anchored on the UN Charter.

The Article 24 of the United Nations Charter assigns to the Security Council the primary responsibility for the maintenance of peace and security. Article 53 of the UN Charter stipulates provisions for the engagement and utilization of regional organisations to undertake enforcement action to pursue and promote peace and security. The adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution 2719 acknowledges the mandate of the African Union Peace and Security Council to promote peace, security and stability in Africa, in line with the AU Protocol Establishing the Peace and Security

Council of the African Union. In particular, UNSC Resolution 2719 outlines a framework for “cooperation and collaboration between two organisations in responding to conflict and crisis in Africa” by provide direct support to AU-led Peace Support Operations (UNSC 2024). The UNSC Resolution 2719 represents the first significant, if not complete, attempt towards shifting the mostly ad hoc UN and AU relationship into a more systematic and institutionalized partnership that fully integrates AU tools as instruments for delivering on the peace and security and development agenda of the reformed multilateral system. This process that resolution 2719 concretely exemplifies in effect contributes to the transformation of multilateralism.

There are some key recent developments that highlight emerging efforts to meet the need to bring regional multilateral organizations like the AU to the center of the global peace and security (and development policy making) in a systematic way rather than on an a la carte basis. Notable in this regard are the admission of the AU into the Group of 20 (G20) in September 2023 and, as noted above, the adoption by the UNSC of Resolution 2719 in December 2023. Both of these developments attest to the growing recognition on the part of international actors the emergence of the AU as a pillar of the transformation multilateralism. This will contribute to the manner in which shared multistakeholder governance processes will shape the sharing of global authority in the twenty-first century.

Building on these experiences, the Pact of the Future can articulate, as part of the reformed multilateralism, ways to integrate regional multilateral organizations, notably the African Union (AU), into the global governance processes in a systematic manner, rather than on an ad hoc basis or merely tokenistically.

A reformed and networked multilateralism, which effectively utilizes the strengths of regional organizations and systematically integrates them into various aspects of global governance, requires enhancing the partnership between the UN and the AU across all the pillars of the UN.



## IX. PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY AND YOUTH PARTICIPATION AND SAFEGUARDING THE INTEREST OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

Amidst the multifaceted challenges addressed in this report, it is crucial to shine a spotlight on the importance of gender equality and youth participation within the broader context of multilateralism. This draws on the UN Charter's reaffirmation of 'faith in...the equal rights of men and women' and the AU Constitutive Act's recognition of the role of 'all segments of civil society, particularly women, youth'.

### 9.1. Women

Recognizing the central role of women in shaping global agendas, this section underscores the imperative for gender inclusivity across various realms.

#### 1. **Ensuring Representation in Decision-Making**

As the discourse on multilateralism unfolds, it is essential to address the historical underrepresentation of women in decision-making processes. Strengthening women's participation at all levels of governance enhances the effectiveness and legitimacy of multilateral institutions.

#### 2. **Gender-Responsive Policies and Agreements**

A commitment to gender equality necessitates integrating a gender perspective into policies and agreements. Ensuring that international frameworks consider the unique needs and

contributions of women is vital for fostering inclusive and sustainable development.

### 3. **Resolution 1325 Beyond protection: participation and decision-making of Women in Peace and Security**

While the work on the protection of women in conflict situations remains central to the women, the realization of resolution 1325 requires participation and stake in decision-making of women in peace and security processes. Acknowledging the centric role of women in conflict prevention and mediation, there is a need to amplify efforts to enhance the role of women in areas affected by conflict. Promoting the active involvement of women in peacebuilding initiatives contributes to more comprehensive and lasting solutions.

## 9.2. Youth

In an era where the demographic structure of the world is changing with much of the world population made up of young people, the participation of the youth has become a strategic imperative for the legitimacy of not only national but also multilateral decision-making. While this is generally applicable to various parts of the world, it has particular significance for Africa. Africa is the continent driving much of the changing demographic structure of the world. It is the continent that continues to register higher levels of population growth than other regions. It is projected

that the proportion of Africa in the world's population, with youth representation significant portion, will be 21% in 2035 and 26% in 2050. Accordingly, Africa is emerging to be the region that will shape both the global labour and mass consumer markets.

### **9.2.1. Enhance and institutionalize participation of youth**

Multilateral decision-making processes should expand opportunities for youth participation including through structured engagement platforms and clear modalities that ensure the integration of youth views in decision-making. As part of enhancing the participation of youth, there is a need to make the format, methodology and approach of youth engagement youth friendly.

Decisions made across different sectors need to give account of and ensure that the specific needs of youth are catered for. To this end, attention should be given to applying youth lens in the planning and development of policy/decision making.

### **9.2.2. Representativeness and inclusivity of the diversity of youth**

The youth of the world are not monolithic. They reflect the geographic, historical, social, political, socio-economic, gender and cultural diversity of the world. Ensuring that youth are afforded equal opportunities requires that processes and platforms for

youth inclusion and participation become deliberate in ensuring representation of the diversity of the youth, with particular attention to those historically marginalized.

### **9.3. Future generations**

The present generation is a custodian of the planet, having only use rights. As a custodian, it has the responsibility for bequeathing to the next generation a liveable planet and ensuring that its use rights are not at the expense of the interests and rights of future generations. The Summit of the Future should accordingly articulate the obligation of this generation for the preservation of the conditions of life for a more secure and liveable international order and planet.



## X. CONCLUDING NOTE

As African experts and practitioners who are dedicated to and support Africa's commitment to multilateralism, we hope that, through this report, our effort has contributed to providing direction on how to transform the international system in a manner that makes it more inclusive and equitable. The report also strived to articulate a perspective of Africa's vision of a multilateralism fit for the dynamic changes taking place in international power relations, the nature of challenges facing humanity and the pace and nature of technological advancements while recognizing and giving accommodation to Africa's particular needs.

The historical exclusion of a majority of the world in the design and operation of the global order needs to be redressed. Ensuring that the multilateral system reflects the contemporary realities of the world including by making it responsive to Africa's needs would contribute to mitigating the risks arising from the contested and polarized geopolitical landscape. While this report is not thematically exhaustive nor does it cover the equally important imperative of a continent-level rethink of multilateralism, the High-Level Panel has provided recommendations on how to organise Africa's positions on key policy areas for its future.

African countries have an important role to play in reforming a multilateral system that is failing a majority of the world's population. Pending the actualization of meaningful reform along the lines outlined above and in pursuit of ensuring that their interests and concerns are taken seriously, African governments, and the African Union, will continue to pursue a strategy of non-alignment and intentional ambiguity in their dealings with major powers.

As Africa navigates the complexities of the shifting global context, fostering a proactive and unified approach, both at the continental and regional levels, will be paramount. Embracing these opportunities in 2024 and beyond is sure to propel the continent towards enhancing its agency in shaping the future of multilateralism, thereby ensuring a meaningful impact on global governance.



## ANNEX

### Declaration on the reform of the multilateral system

**Noting** the various ongoing initiatives and policy dialogues on the reform of the multilateral system, notably the UN Secretary-General's proposed convening of the Summit of the Future, scheduled for September 2024;

**Building** on AU's Agenda 2063's vision of Africa as a dynamic force in the international arena and the lessons from the historical processes that led to Africa's marginalization;

**Recognizing** Africa as a bastion of multilateralism and a region with a major stake in the reform of the multilateral process;

**Highlighting** the imperative for the continent to actively engage in the ongoing dialogues aimed at reforming the multilateral system, while **stressing** the need for Africa to articulate and forge consensus on the changes it wishes to see and push for in the existing multilateral system;

**Cognizant** of the prevailing global context where the multilateral system is stuck, confronted with crises of legitimacy that compel the world to confront a stark choice of 'reform or rupture';

**Further underscoring** that the multilateral system in its current form and mode of operation is not serving the interest and needs of Africa;

**Also highlighting** that the existing multilateral system does not reflect the current realities and power dynamics of the world, including Africa's conditions;

**Specifically underscoring** the historical injustice within the UN System, notably the non-representation and underrepresentation of Africa in the permanent and non-permanent membership in the UN Security Council; the need for an equitable and fair global financial and economic architecture; the magnitude and interconnectedness of various challenges affecting the globe, such as climate change and cyber security, which require robust cooperation; and the necessity for the global community to organize the system in a way that caters for the needs and interests of various sectors of society, notably women, youth, and future generations;

**Noting** that Africa is the region of the world that has contributed the least to climate change but is disproportionately vulnerable to its impacts;

**Convinced** that reforming the multilateral system is a strategic imperative rather than a policy choice, both for Africa and the world at large;

**Also emphasizing** the need for addressing the structural flaws of the multilateral system and making it fit for the purpose of responding to current realities of the international order;

**In light of the above and as the UN prepares to host the Summit of the Future in September 2024,**

**I. On principles guiding the reform process of the multilateral system**

The following principles should guide the reform of the multilateral system:

1. Effective representation;
2. Equality of the dignity of all nations and peoples;
3. Equity, fairness and justice;
4. Transparency; and
5. Reaffirmation of commitment for the principles of the UN Charter and international law.

**II. On collective peace and security system of the UN**

1. Enlarge the size of the UN Security Council in both permanent and non-permanent categories in line with the Ezulwini consensus on the common African position on the UN Security Council reform;
2. Support limitations to and accountability for the use of veto, including through UNGA resolution that allows 2/3 majority of members of the

UNSC to refer a resolution vetoed by a permanent member to the UNGA for review by a super majority the members of UNGA.

3. Review the UN Security Council's working methods to ensure an inclusive, transparent and consultative UN Security Council decision-making process reflective of Africa's policy positions, including through the democratization of the penholder system, ensuring adequate and substantive consultation with and engagement of African states in the crafting of UN Security Council decisions, as well as systematic coordination with the AU Peace and Security Council particularly on African files;
4. Establish an evidence-driven an Intergovernmental Panel on Threats to International Peace and Security as a standing mechanism for establishing the nature both in scale and gravity and impacts of developments threatening international peace and security;
5. Expand the regional section and leadership role of Africans in various UN agencies; and
6. Enhance the role of and leverage the particular attributes of other UN bodies, notably the UN Peacebuilding Commission and Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), to facilitate a multidimensional approach to addressing peace and security challenges.

### III. On the global economic and financial architecture

1. Reform the governance structures and decision-making processes of the financial and economic architecture through, among others, the reform of the quota system of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for ensuring effective representation of Africa in the Fund's decision-making architecture and changing the business model of the international financial institutions;
2. Address the debt challenge systematically through an independent global sovereign debt authority, re-allocate the Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) having regard to the needs of countries and re-channel it through regional development banks, reduce the cost of financing and debt servicing, and reform the credit rating standards and institutions. In the context of the Summit of the Future, **the Africa Group may propose establishing an international expert group tasked with delivering a comprehensive report and a set of recommendations on credit rating agencies, debt, and the cost of borrowing for sustainable development and reform of debt sustainability analysis;**
3. Address debt distress and the current liquidity crunch in African countries along with efforts to scale up accessible and affordable public finance. To this end, AU member states propose increase the scale of concessional finance, enhance ease

- of access to such finance and a review of the division of labour between the regional development banks and the multilateral banks; and
4. Create conditions for expanding sources of domestic finance through international tax cooperation that tackles existing lacuna that deprive countries of much needed development finance through illicit financial flows and inadequate policy space for taxing international economic activities.
  5. Strengthen the role of the UN in global economic, financial and social policy making. To this end, the Panel invites African states to ensure that there is a commitment in the Summit of the Future both to affirm the role of the UN as the centre and hub of global multilateralism in global economic, financial and social policy making;

#### **IV. On global governance on digital technology and artificial intelligence**

1. Establish a global governance architecture on digital technology that promotes cooperation to address fragmented approaches, facilitate digital inclusion, safeguard the digital economy, and ensure human control over and application of international law rules in the use of lethal autonomous weapons;
2. Promote trustworthy data environments that are safe and secure, accountable to data subjects, and ethical and secure by design;

3. Agree on minimum standards of transparency on the development and use of digital technologies, including Artificial intelligence applications; and
4. Establish a framework that enable the creation of an environment that encourages investment and innovation through the development of infrastructure, human capacity and harmonization of regulations and legislation as well as the sharing of know-how.

## **V. On climate change**

1. Implement climate action that is in harmony with developmental goals;
2. Reform multilateral development bank practices and priorities, align and scale up funding, ensure simplified access and mobilize climate finance from various sources, in line with the outcome document of the 27<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties of the UN Convention on Climate Change (COP27), held in November 2022 in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt;
3. Ensure policy alignment to prevent the adverse impact of region-specific climate action policy measures for other regions; and
4. Envisage higher ambition by high emitters on emission reduction targets.

## **VI. On regional organizations as pillar of a reformed multilateral system**

1. Articulate ways to systematically integrate regional multilateral organizations, notably the AU, into the global governance processes in a systematic manner, rather than on an ad hoc or ala carte basis or merely tokenistically; and
2. Enhance the partnership between the UN and the AU across all the pillars of the UN
3. Ensure predictable, adequate and sustainable financing of peace support operations through full access to UN assessed contributions.
4. Institutionalize systematic consultation and consultative decision-making between the AU and the UN
5. Ensure the representation of the AU in various relevant multilateral institutions beyond the G20;

## **VII. On gender, youth and future generations**

1. Ensure representation in decision-making structures and processes;
2. Integrate a gender perspective into policies and agreements;
3. Pursue the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 in a manner that ensure not only in the protection of women in conflict situations but also importantly in their participation and role in decision-making in peace and

- 
- security processes;
4. Enhance and institutionalize participation of youth;
  5. Ensure the representativeness and inclusivity of the diversity of youth; and
  6. Articulate the obligation of the current generation for the preservation of the conditions of life for a more secure and livable international order and planate in the interest of future generations.

## **MEDIA AND RESEARCH SERVICES**

### **ABOUT AMANI AFRICA**

Amani Africa is an independent African based policy research, training and consulting think tank with a specialization and primary focus on African multilateral policy processes, particularly those relating to the African union.

We support the pan-African dream of peaceful, prosperous and integrated Africa through research, training, strategic communications, technical advisory services, and convening and facilitation.

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