

# U.S. STRATEGY TOWARD SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

AUGUST 2022



THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON



“ We believe in the nations of Africa,  
in the continent-wide spirit of  
entrepreneurship and innovation. And  
through the challenges ahead, although  
they are great, there is no  
doubt that our nations, our people, the  
African Union — we’re up to this task.

President Joe Biden  
African Union Summit  
February 5, 2021





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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Sub-Saharan Africa is critical to advancing our global priorities. It has one of the world's fastest growing populations, largest free trade areas, most diverse ecosystems, and one of the largest regional voting groups in the United Nations (UN). It is impossible to meet this era's defining challenges without African contributions and leadership. The region will factor prominently in efforts to: end the COVID-19 pandemic; tackle the climate crisis; reverse the global tide of democratic backsliding; address global food insecurity; strengthen an open and stable international system; shape the rules of the world on vital issues like trade, cyber, and emerging technologies; and confront the threat of terrorism, conflict, and transnational crime.

“ **This strategy reframes the region's importance to U.S. national security interests.**

This strategy reframes the region's importance to U.S. national security interests. In November 2021, Secretary of State Antony Blinken affirmed that “Africa will shape the future—and not just the future of the African people but of the world.” Accordingly, this strategy articulates a new vision for how and with whom we engage, while identifying additional areas of focus. It welcomes and affirms African agency, and seeks to include and elevate African voices in the most consequential global conversations. It calls for developing a deeper bench of partners and more flexible regional architecture to respond to urgent challenges and catalyze economic growth and opportunities. It recognizes the region's youth as an engine of entrepreneurship and innovation, and it emphasizes the enduring and historical ties between the American and African peoples. And it recasts traditional U.S. policy priorities—democracy and governance, peace and security, trade and investment, and development—as pathways to bolster the region's ability to solve global problems alongside the United States.

This strategy outlines four objectives to advance U.S. priorities in concert with regional partners in sub-Saharan Africa during the next five years. The United States will leverage all of our diplomatic, development, and defense capabilities, as well as strengthen our trade and commercial ties, focus on digital ecosystems, and rebalance toward urban hubs, to support these objectives:

- 1. Foster Openness and Open Societies**
- 2. Deliver Democratic and Security Dividends**
- 3. Advance Pandemic Recovery and Economic Opportunity**
- 4. Support Conservation, Climate Adaptation, and a Just Energy Transition**



This strategy represents a new approach, emphasizing and elevating the issues that will further embed Africa's position in shaping our shared future. It resolves to press for the necessary resources and prize innovation in our efforts to strengthen vital partnerships. The United States will both address immediate crises and threats, and seek to connect short-term efforts with the longer-term imperative of bolstering Africa's capabilities to solve global problems. The strategy's strength lies in its determination to graduate from policies that inadvertently treat sub-Saharan Africa as a world apart and have struggled to keep pace with the profound transformations across the continent and the world. This strategy calls for change because continuity is insufficient to meet the task ahead.



## STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT

Sub-Saharan Africa's governments, institutions, and people will play a crucial role in solving global challenges. The continent will be home to one quarter of the world's population by 2050 and hosts vast natural resources, including the world's second-largest rainforest and 30 percent of the critical minerals that power our modern world. Moreover, it is situated along major sea lines of communication and trade in the Atlantic Ocean, Indian Ocean, and Gulf of Aden. The region holds three non-permanent seats in the UN Security Council, and it represents one of the largest regional voting groups (28 percent) at the UN and other multilateral bodies. Africans currently sit at the top of several of the most important international institutions, including the World Health Organization and World Trade Organization.

The world is keenly aware of Africa's importance, spurring countries to expand their political, economic, and security engagement with African states. This presents new opportunities and challenges for U.S. interests in the region. Allies and partners in Europe, the Middle East, and the Indo-Pacific increasingly regard Africa as integral to their national security, and many are committed to working with the United States to advance high-standards, values-driven, and transparent investments, as well as address political and security crises. The People's Republic of China (PRC), by contrast, sees the region as an important arena to challenge the rules-based international order, advance its own narrow commercial and geopolitical interests, undermine transparency and openness, and weaken U.S. relations with African peoples and governments. Russia views the region as a permissive environment for parastatals and private military companies, often fomenting instability for strategic and financial benefit. Russia uses its security and economic ties, as well as disinformation, to undercut Africans' principled opposition to Russia's further invasion of Ukraine and related human rights abuses.

### THE REGION BY NUMBERS



#### POPULATION:

- ◆ Will be 25% of the world's population by 2050

#### GEOGRAPHY:

- ◆ World's 2<sup>nd</sup> largest rainforest
- ◆ 30% of critical minerals

#### INFLUENCE:

- ◆ At 28%, is one of the largest UN voting groups



The United States is both responding to growing foreign activity and influence in sub-Saharan Africa, as well as engaging in a region undergoing significant transformations to its socioeconomic, political, and security landscape. Africa’s population is growing faster than that of any other region and will be majority urban by the end of the decade. The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), once fully implemented, would be the fifth-largest economy in the world with the potential to have a combined gross domestic product of more than \$3.4 trillion. The region is influencing global entertainment, including film, fashion, literature, and music, in an unprecedented manner.

These positive developments, however, have been blunted by the convergence of armed conflict and terrorism; climate change; food insecurity; and COVID-19 pandemic-induced health and economic woes that have set back 20 years of development gains and resulted in unprecedented levels of displacement and hunger. Armed conflicts and humanitarian crises in Cameroon, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Nigeria, Somalia, and across the Sahel constrain sub-Saharan African countries from supporting our shared global priorities and require funding of multiple peacekeeping missions and historic levels of humanitarian assistance. Moreover, the resulting fragility provides fertile ground for expanding terrorist activity. ISIS and al-Qaida maintain a presence in many African countries, conducting attacks that have killed thousands and posing a threat to U.S. persons and interests.

Despite the strong popular support in sub-Saharan Africa for democracy—some 69 percent, according to recent polling—democracy remains in short supply. A string of military coups and democratic setbacks have gripped Africa in recent years, risking further deterioration of governance and security conditions, as well as negative ripple effects on neighboring countries. In 2022, Freedom House classified only eight sub-Saharan African countries as free—the fewest since 1991. These setbacks have widened openings for undue foreign influence and reflect the growing number of governments that exploit surveillance technology, spread disinformation, leverage corruption, and perpetrate human rights violations with impunity. While democratic forces recently triumphed at the ballot box in Malawi and Zambia, autocratic leaders elsewhere retain a tight hold on power. The gap between public aspirations and closing civic space in some countries has given rise to increased volatility and a wave of protest movements.



## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

The United States will pursue four objectives in sub-Saharan Africa—each in coordination with our allies and partners in the region and around the world, as well as with regional and global institutions. This strategy recognizes the tremendous, positive opportunities that exist to advance shared interests alongside our African partners. At the same time, we acknowledge that Africa’s potential will continue to be challenged as long as deadly conflicts divide its societies, corruption impedes economic progress, mismanagement squanders natural resources, food insecurity heightens the risk of famine and malnutrition for the most vulnerable populations, and repression stifles human rights and democratic expression.



## Foster Openness and Open Societies

The United States has an abiding interest in ensuring the region remains open and accessible to all, and that governments and publics are able to make their own political choices, consistent with international obligations. Open societies are generally more inclined to work in common cause with the United States, attract greater U.S. trade and investment, pursue policies to improve conditions for their citizens, and counter harmful activities by the PRC, Russia, and other foreign actors.

- The United States will work with African governments, civil society, and publics to increase transparency and accountability, including by supporting investigative journalism, combating digital authoritarianism, and enshrining laws, reforms, and practices that promote shared democratic norms. Consistent with the first-ever *U.S. Strategy on Countering Corruption*, the United States—working with our African partners—will seek to improve fiscal transparency, expose corruption, and support reforms.
- The United States will increase its focus on rule of law, justice, and dignity to deepen resilience and undercut negative influences. Supporting independent judiciaries serves as a bulwark against democratic backsliding, including constraining leaders who attempt to embezzle funds, change constitutions illegally, or steal elections. An independent judiciary also provides a forum for citizens to seek redress for criminal activities, civil disputes, and human rights abuses.
- The United States will assist African countries to more transparently leverage their natural resources, including energy resources and critical minerals, for sustainable development while helping to strengthen supply chains that are diverse, open, and predictable. In addition, the United States will work closely with African and multilateral partners to address the drivers of food insecurity and boost food production to mitigate the risk of malnutrition and famine that the UN estimates is affecting nearly 800 million Africans.

## Deliver Democratic and Security Dividends

The region's commitment and capacity to renew its democracies, as well as anticipate, prevent, and address emerging and long running conflicts, can lead to more favorable outcomes for Africans and Americans. There are strong linkages between poor and exclusionary governance, high levels of corruption, human rights abuses, including sexual and gender-based violence, and insecurity, which are often exploited by terrorist groups and malign foreign actors. By simultaneously addressing these challenges and reaffirming that democracy delivers tangible benefits, the United States can offer choices to Africans as they determine their own future, limit openings for negative state and non-state actors, and obviate the need for costly interventions.

- The United States will seek to stem the recent tide of authoritarianism and military takeovers by working with allies and partners in the region to respond to democratic



backsliding and human rights abuses, including through a targeted mix of positive inducements and punitive measures such as sanctions. At the same time, the United States will partner with other governments and regional bodies, including the African Union (AU), to address public dissatisfaction with the performance of some democracies, which provides a pretext for aspiring coup plotters, populist movements, and authoritarian leaders to undercut democratic values.

- The United States will support African democracies by backing civil society, including activists, workers, and reform-minded leaders; empowering marginalized groups, such as LGBTQI+ individuals; centering the voices of women and youth in reform efforts; and defending free and fair elections as necessary but insufficient components of vibrant democracies. The United States will support democratic openings and opportunities by building on the *Presidential Initiative for Democratic Renewal*, the Summit for Democracy, and the Year of Action.
- The United States will focus its diplomatic efforts, leverage its development programs, and use its defense tools to strengthen and enable partners to respond to the drivers of conflict across the region. We will focus on improving the capacity of African partners to advance regional stability and security by enabling more professional, capable, and accountable government security actors that can provide internal security. We also will invest in locally-led prevention and peacebuilding efforts to mitigate and address vulnerabilities, leveraging the bipartisan Global Fragility Act in coastal West Africa and in Mozambique.
- The United States will prioritize counterterrorism (CT) resources to reduce the threat from terrorist groups to the U.S. Homeland, persons, and diplomatic and military facilities, directing unilateral capability only where lawful and where the threat is most acute. We will primarily work by, with, and through African partners, in coordination with our key allies, on a bilateral and multilateral basis to achieve shared CT objectives and promote civilian-led, non-kinetic approaches where possible and effective. As part of this approach, we will employ tailored programs to build the capacity of local partners' security, intelligence, and judicial institutions to identify, disrupt, degrade, and share information on terrorists and their support networks.

### **Advance Pandemic Recovery and Economic Opportunity**

It is essential to address two of the region's most pressing problems: the COVID-19 pandemic and its attendant economic and social consequences. These challenges have been compounded by supply chain problems and food insecurity stemming from Russia's war of aggression in Ukraine. The United States is committed to working with regional governments and international partners to build more stable and inclusive African economies. U.S. support for the region's equitable recovery is a prerequisite to regaining Africa's trust in U.S. global leadership, increasing U.S. trade and investment, and creating U.S. and African jobs.

- The United States will prioritize policies and programs, as well as strengthen existing partnerships, to end the acute phase of the COVID-19 pandemic and enhance health



security. Closing critical gaps in African countries' pandemic preparedness and response capacities is pivotal to U.S. and global health security. By July 2022, 25 percent of Africans had received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, with the United States leading in providing over 200 million vaccine doses to the continent. We will continue to provide critical delivery support and activities to encourage and accelerate vaccine uptake, as well as support for the overall response to COVID-19, including diagnostics, surveillance, and training.

- The United States will build core capacities to prevent, detect, and respond to infectious disease threats; address challenges for procuring and delivering vaccines, diagnostics, and therapeutics; support manufacturing initiatives for vaccines and other medical countermeasures; and strengthen global supply chains to increase preparedness for the next health threat. Public-private partnerships and regional leadership, through the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention and the West African Health Organization, for example, will serve as a critical backbone for U.S.-led support and interventions.
- The United States will work with African countries to promote a stronger growth trajectory and debt sustainability, including by leveraging multilateral institutions, global partners, and international initiatives, to support the region's economic recovery. Through the Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment (PGII), which the G7 committed to mobilize \$600 billion globally, we will leverage and streamline financing and co-invest to deliver game-changing projects to strengthen economies, diversify supply chains, and advance U.S. and African national security. PGII will complement new and existing efforts, including Prosper Africa, Power Africa, Feed the Future, and a new initiative for digital transformation, to help close the global infrastructure gap and support resilient and dynamic economies.
- The United States will also partner with African countries to rebuild the human capital and food systems that were further weakened due to the pandemic and fallout from Russia's war against Ukraine. The United States will strengthen efforts to address losses, prevent further declines, address vulnerabilities in household income and food security, help children—particularly girls—return to school, and prepare African youth to gain the skills and expertise to participate in a 21<sup>st</sup> century economy.

### **Support Conservation, Climate Adaptation, and a Just Energy Transition**

Africa's efforts to conserve and restore the continent's ecosystems and rich natural resources—while also realizing energy access and energy security goals, diversifying its energy mix, and building sustainable supply chains—are central to tackling the global climate crisis. Although the region is responsible for extremely low emissions per capita, it stands to suffer from some of the most severe effects of climate change. As Africa's energy demands increase to support economic growth, we will use our influence, development assistance, and financing to help African partners adapt and build resilience to climate impacts and promote mitigation strategies to achieve a sustainable and low-carbon future.



- The United States will partner with African governments, civil society, and local communities to conserve, manage, and restore the continent's rich natural ecosystems, which can help reduce global carbon emissions and dampen climate change impacts. We will also continue and work to expand our efforts to combat wildlife trafficking and illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing. The United States will back current and potential climate and environment champions, including through U.S. initiatives such as the *U.S. Plan to Conserve Global Forests: Critical Carbon Sinks* and the Central Africa Regional Program for the Environment.
- The United States will work closely with countries as they determine how to best meet their specific energy needs, which include pursuing energy access and economic development goals through technologies such as energy efficiency and renewable energy, as well as gas-to-power infrastructure. This work will be consistent with our overarching policies on climate and energy, addressing the development and geostrategic implications of the projects we choose to support. The United States will work with countries to support just energy transitions in line with their economic and social objectives. Finally, we will harness U.S. and African private sector investment to support the energy transition, enable energy diversification, and promote energy security, climate objectives, and economic development.
- Under the auspices of the *President's Emergency Plan for Adaptation and Resilience (PREPARE)*, the United States will continue to work with African governments that are acutely exposed to climate impacts and have limited adaptive capacity to respond with urgency and at scale to the priorities identified by our African partners.
- Lastly, the United States will continue pursuing public-private partnerships to sustainably develop and secure the critical minerals that will supply clean energy technologies needed to facilitate the global energy transition. The United States will encourage countries to enact necessary reforms to enable transparent and world-class investment in the region's critical minerals sectors, while upholding human rights and complying with international environmental and social safeguards.



## **Reflections on Three Decades of U.S. Policy**

The United States has a long and proud history of bipartisan support for and engagement with African countries, built on a foundation of deep cultural connections and pursuit of shared goals. During the past three decades, U.S. policy, backed by strong bipartisan Congressional support, has prioritized development, including public health; trade and investment; democracy and governance; and peace and security.

These partnerships have helped more than 20 million individuals living with HIV/AIDS, prevented more than a billion cases of malaria, defeated an Ebola outbreak in West Africa, and electrified 29 million homes and businesses. The African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), passed by the Congress in 2000, substantially improved the export competitiveness of certain African products, especially apparel, and led to the creation of tens of thousands of jobs. U.S. support for democracy contributed to an expansion of political rights and civil liberties in the 1990s, 2000s, and part of the 2010s. The United States established Africa Command in 2007 to pursue a holistic approach to African security challenges and invested in regional peacekeeping and conflict resolution capabilities to enhance responses to security crises while building long-term partner capacity.

The United States continues to make vital contributions today, but some of our longstanding approaches have become insufficient to meet new challenges in a more contested and competitive world. As the President has said, the United States must root out systemic racism and advance efforts to create a more equitable country. African countries closely watch our progress.

Moreover, U.S. democracy promotion efforts and peace and security contributions have struggled to show the desired impact in recent years. Several African leaders have amended their constitutions to allow for additional terms and continue to repress and target political foes and civil society. The U.S. CT approach has removed high-value targets, disrupted plots to attack our interests, and invested in the civilian and military capacity of key partners to degrade the threat, but the threat posed by terrorism and other forms of violent extremism continues to demand our attention.

Reflecting on these historic achievements and current challenges, the U.S. Government is committed to revitalize and modernize its traditional tools of statecraft to advance U.S. interests across a changing continent.



# A 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY U.S.-AFRICAN PARTNERSHIP

The United States must reset its relations with African counterparts, listen to diverse local voices, and widen the circle of engagement to advance its strategic objectives to the benefit of both Africans and Americans.

- *Elevate the U.S.-African Partnership.* We will collaborate with and engage our African partners on global priorities, in addition to those issues impacting their own security and development. We will share our priorities, discuss their agendas, and identify mutual interests. We will broaden our vision of and expectations for senior level engagements, treating meetings with African counterparts as opportunities to advance outcomes favorable to U.S., regional, and global interests. Even when we have disagreements, we will lean in, agree to meet, and address differences head-on.
- *Engage More African States.* We will broaden our engagements, continuing to invest in the largest states while also deepening our relations with small and medium African states to advance our shared priorities, including the AU's Agenda 2063. Safeguarding U.S. national security interests requires as much engagement with the small countries as it does with the larger ones. We will engage with emerging African democracies, surging assistance and seizing opportunities to support promising democratic openings. We will develop a deeper bench of partners by increasing our interactions and deploying higher level U.S. interlocutors to promote greater policy alignment based on shared values, including at multinational forums and international courts.
- *Bolster Civil Society.* We are more likely to advance U.S. objectives if the region's civil society, including journalists and activists, as well as multilateral bodies and democratic institutions, stand up for shared democratic values, such as transparency, accountability, diversity, equality and equity, women's rights, and inclusion. By ensuring our assistance, engagement, and public statements are informed by diverse local voices, we will more effectively support reformers, prodemocracy movements, state institutions, and the region's youth and female leaders. This also entails recognizing the historical and ongoing connections between addressing racial justice and equality in sub-Saharan Africa and the United States.
- *Transcend Geographic Seams.* We will facilitate and support new geographic groupings, deepen our engagement with multilateral institutions, including the AU and Regional Economic Communities, and expand our foreign partnerships to advanced shared goals. We will integrate African states in Indian Ocean and Indo-Pacific forums; deepen cooperation with other coastal Atlantic countries across Africa, Europe, and the Western Hemisphere; and address the artificial bureaucratic division between North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa. Moreover, we will work with African, European, and multilateral institutions to



review the current regional architecture, seizing opportunities to address redundancies and rationalize mandates, priorities, and funding.

- *Engage America's African Diaspora.* Our African Diaspora is a source of strength. It includes African Americans, descendants of formerly enslaved Africans, and nearly two million African immigrants who maintain close familial, social, and economic connections to the continent. The African immigrant population is among the most educated and prosperous communities in the United States. The AU has included the global African Diaspora—*i.e.*, people of native African origin living outside the continent—as a sixth region. We will elevate our diaspora engagement to strengthen the dialogue between U.S. officials and the diaspora in the United States. We will also support the UN's Permanent Forum for People of African Descent. Through these efforts, we will seek to better highlight U.S. policies, combat misinformation, foster partnerships, and deepen mutual understanding.
- *Leverage U.S. Private Sector and Domestic Leadership.* The U.S. Government will increase its partnership with the U.S. private sector, as well as work with states, cities, and communities to showcase how U.S. foreign policy delivers for the middle class. The U.S. private sector plays an important role in advancing U.S. relations and goals in the region across a number of areas—such as health, infrastructure, finance, defense, clean energy, climate change, and education. States and cities also contribute to U.S. foreign policy objectives. In 2017, the City and County of San Francisco Employees' Retirement System, for example, approved a \$100 million investment into power projects in Africa and other emerging markets. To cite another example, the Michigan National Guard, as part of its State Partnership Program, provided training for a military hospital in Liberia. In addition, we will facilitate more African leader travel beyond New York and Washington, D.C., reviving a tradition of U.S.-supported trips to boost trade and investment, reinvigorate cultural ties, and forge new connections to advance our priorities.



## OUR APPROACH

This new strategy will spur us to refocus, renew, and strengthen existing programs, as well as recommend and develop new initiatives. The United States will prioritize innovation and partner with Africans to tackle shared global challenges and thrive in a more connected, urban, and youthful region.

- *Revamp Public Diplomacy Efforts.* We will modernize our public diplomacy tools, and we will empower our ambassadors and officials to engage with African publics, especially youth and women, in more accessible and creative ways. We will also encourage more cultural exchanges, such as Ghana's Year of Return festivities. Finally, we will redouble efforts to ensure we have sufficient human and financial resources to plan, organize, and execute these critical programs.



- *Support Sustainable Development and Resilience.* The speed and the depth of the economic and sociopolitical fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic points to the need for accelerated and dedicated attention to reducing risk and improving state and institutional resilience. We will deepen our work with governments and regional bodies, including the AU, to support sustainable development “accelerators”: digital transformation, particularly in financial services and records; investments in health system core capacities, including workforce and infrastructure; improvements in supply chains for critical commodities; access to electricity; and sustainable job creation. The United States is the largest bilateral overseas development assistance donor to the continent, and we will continue to innovate, adopting tailored approaches, encouraging U.S. companies to increase their investments and partnerships, and tapping a range of tools from departments and agencies beyond the core “development” institutions. We will support development approaches that are environmentally sustainable, enhance food security, build social inclusion and gender equity that reduces fragility and mitigates conflict, and practice fiscal responsibility. Finally, we will continue to play a leadership role in coordinating and sequencing donor humanitarian and economic development activities.
- *Refine and Reinvest in U.S. Defense Tools.* Effective, legitimate, and accountable militaries and other security forces are essential to support open, democratic, and resilient societies and to counter destabilizing threats, including in Africa. We will review and reinvest in tools for engaging with African militaries, especially programs that support necessary institutional capacity-building, combat corruption, and advance security sector reforms. We will condemn human rights violations and coups by security forces, as well as the recruitment and use of child soldiers, and integrate these issues in bilateral and multilateral security dialogues. We will continue to develop and enhance our African partners’ capacity to lead and promote regional peace and security; counter terrorism and other forms of violent extremism; contribute to African-led maritime awareness; and deliver the security necessary for democracies and societies to thrive. In line with the 2022 National Defense Strategy, the Department of Defense will engage with African partners to expose and highlight the risks of negative PRC and Russian activities in Africa. We will leverage civil-defense institutions and expand defense cooperation with strategic partners that share our values and our will to foster global peace and stability. We will work with African security partners to build capacity in measuring climate risk exposure, implementing early warning systems, and improving resilience planning. In addition, we will engage the U.S. defense private sector via Prosper Africa to support sustainable technology and energy solutions for African militaries.
- *Strengthen Trade and Commercial Relations.* We will build on existing programs and policies to increase U.S. investment and trade with Africa. Through our Presidential initiatives, such as Power Africa, Prosper Africa, PGII, and an initiative on digital transformation, we will focus on sectors that both align with U.S. priorities and meet our African partners’ needs, such as agribusiness, energy, entertainment, healthcare, and technology, while facilitating transactions in sectors that will be critical to African economic growth. We will engage with our African partners to facilitate legitimate trade and travel, while exchanging information to secure the borders of African nations. We will work with willing African partners to deepen and broaden our trade relationship, including



through trade negotiations, to deliver equitable and inclusive prosperity. We will promote customs-to-business partnerships, increase the use of U.S. Government trade transit cargo security measures, and expand data sharing with African partners. We will work with the Congress on the future of AGOA, which expires in 2025, and will support the AfCFTA's implementation.

- *Drive Digital Transformation.* We will foster a digital ecosystem built on open, reliable, interoperable, and secure internet and information and communication technology across sub-Saharan Africa. U.S. companies and venture capital firms are bullish about the opportunities on the continent, building undersea cables, expanding the number of data centers, and investing in dynamic African businesses. We will work to ensure affordable access to the internet, increasing data rates, and lowering costs, while advocating for open technology platforms like Open RAN to advance secure and cost-competitive telecommunications infrastructure and cloud computing. We will expand digital democracy programming, defend against digital authoritarianism, fight back against disinformation, combat gender-based online harassment and abuse, and establish standards for responsible conduct in cyberspace. Finally, as part of our increased focus on ensuring African youth have improved access to a broader range of skills and knowledge, the Department of State and the United States Agency for International Development will seek to leverage U.S. academic institutions as well as the private sector, to facilitate the provision of online undergraduate and certificate-level courses in science, technology, engineering, and math fields.
- *Rebalance Toward Urban Hubs.* Consistent with President Biden's commitment to invest in urban renewal and infrastructure at home, the United States will help African cities plan for their growth in critical sectors like energy access, climate change, adaptation, transportation, and water and waste management. We will demonstrate a renewed commitment to subnational capacity building and harness existing interagency tools and capabilities to unlock the region's urban potential and foster thriving, green, and resilient cities and infrastructure. Borrowing from the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) compact investment model, these partnerships will work directly with municipal governments; conduct joint analysis to identify constraints and a work plan to address their causes; and establish time-bound municipal compacts and joint progress indicators. A forthcoming MCC threshold program with one major African city will test and refine some key elements of this approach before establishing a more formal structure, articulating roles and responsibilities, and working with the Congress to address any outstanding legislative issues.



## CONCLUSION

In his address to the AU in February 2021, President Biden reiterated how interconnected our world is—and how our fates are bound up together. Africa's peace and prosperity are prerequisites to bolstering Africa's ability to solve global problems. We recognize that we have vital interests in common, and our path toward progress rests on a commitment to working



together and elevating African leadership to advance our shared agenda. President Biden noted that “none of this is going to be easy” but affirmed “there is no doubt that our nations, our people, the African Union – we’re up to this task.”

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