



# A thematic understanding of the role of G20 Summit in Africa

## OPINION

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Just like the African homestead tradition, the G20 summit is a premium forum for geopolitical world leaders to convene around a traditional evening fire at Oshoto and descend into the economic intellectual arena. The discussion is to acknowledge historical economic pathways and share knowledge as the tool to transform society and shift the global village into a more diverse and appealing world for people to secure economic sustainability.

The world is experiencing significant and increasingly apparent transformations, the scale of which some were witnessed previously during the Cold War, the fragmentation of the Soviet Union and the collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1989, which were monumental historic events. Since then, the world has been shaped by a preponderance

of an Anglo-Saxon worldview, a narrative hegemony led by the United States, Britain and other western states. During this era, western values and systems of political and economic governance have been dominant, if not prescriptive, particularly to developing countries.

The global 'free market' and 'liberal democracy' have been at the forefront to inform and entrench western views as 'the only game in town' and the imagination of African leaders and institutions that reshaped traditional cultures. In that epoch, most of the developing world assimilated competitive western standards of meritocracy and performance based on measurable outcome and output.

However, the Euro-American economic challenges of 2008 surfaced with ominous signs through a series of crises in global capitalism and liberal democracy, signalling a far more important shift in world history.

Endless wars and economic strains have tested the legitimacy and hegemony of conventional criteria of economic performance, regardless of the focus of intelligence agencies on mind control, as evidenced by the banality of evil in human and child trafficking and the 'divide and rule' support extended to African leaders who act as puppets within a vast network controlled by some of the most influential and wealthy families, such as the Rothschilds.

The livelihood of African people and their middle class has sparked socio-economic analysts to question if liberal democracy can bring about a better quality of life. In Africa, the promise of freedom, peace and development could not be achieved, more so because of the neocolonial ways and the many untransformed, western-adopted corporate governance principles as the only way to progress good governance.

On the academic front, there has been knowledge assimilation of unquestioned Euro-American principles of



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consumerism and protection of a knowledge-based society which has shifted away from globalisation to the African village, where the quest remains for economic self-governance.

In this shift, it must be said that all blame cannot be laid on the doorstep of the western countries. In fact, no blame can be laid on any western country, because Africans have been willingly enslaved. The inability of African academics and thought leaders to make themselves heard to African and global leaders at the World Economic Forum, United Nations and G20 remains their own deficit of bad debt.

The American thought leader and economist, Jeffery Sachs, said at a gathering the previous week at the University of South Africa (Unisa) that Africa is gradually overtaking America's economy. However, this is a very provocative statement, maybe his dream, without verifiable empirical evidence. Sach's prediction is premised on what Adam Smith wrote nearly 240 years ago in 1776 about "the world rebalancing".

Adam's words and those of Sachs resonate with the notion of Africa realising its resource and population potential as the next economic growth frontier – probably the only remaining natural resource frontier – and reclaiming its future. However, several questions can be raised: Will this be a trap? Will it materialise? When there's one dominant power rising and the other one declining slowly, does it lead to political conflict, or what does it really lead to? Will the transition to enduring peace and sustainable world order eventually be accessible to Africans?

### **Reclaim**

For many in Africa and the global South, it is important to engage critically with the seriousness of mobilising independence of energy resources and innovation in



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cluding the need for technical capacity.

Africa needs to reclaim its position in the world. It should foster economic development and resolve the most pressing issues in our regions, such as poverty and education, and focus on the creation of the betterment of the lives of our biggest under-utilised resource, our people. In the words of a Tanzanian development economist and theologian, Rogate Mshana, "We must engage ourselves in advocating for poverty eradication, and not for poverty reduction." The way to economic freedom is by focusing on quality and applied education, not by focusing first on our natural resources.

The many questions that surfaced at the G20 summit are fuelled by various existential disciplines of transformation in areas of technology, medical science and the changing nature of geo-economic politics. However, this does not exclude others such as funding and 'follow the money', information sharing and political leadership. The G20 is an ideal forum for a sustainable strategy for complex African issues and economic reforms. But Africa must reform itself first before it can claim to reform the world.

Although Africa has the potential to emerge as a major force in global economic relations, hosting the G20 on African soil would be largely symbolic. Ideally, the continent could move beyond merely reacting to global issues and begin to reset the baton, positioning itself to help shape a world economic order historically dominated by western perspectives.

African perspectives are fundamentally mixed, reflecting both positive and negative attitudes. One key shortcoming is the absence of the US, which could undermine the perceived legitimacy of the summit.

the same time, it may limit America's influence over major global outcomes and prompt US businesses to reassess geo-economic and political risks.

Within this context, featured with unusual diplomatic behavioural patterns of unforeseen scenarios, realignments and diversifications will always manifest. South Africa may deepen economic ties with non-western nations, for which tourism and other areas of development are creating opportunities and multilateral cooperation beyond traditional western donors.

The withdrawal of America has short-term deficits and may have long-term trade prospects, although not without tensions and uncertainties. America and the global South may continue to share substantial economic ties, and they may even strengthen, but within multipolar contexts. Both the US and the global South's executive leadership should not corrode future trade opportunities by mutually recognising distinctive socio-economic values and their strategic partnership.

### **Invest in people**

The authors of this article foresee continued engagement on AGOA and/or similar frameworks with an understanding of mutual benefits as a prerequisite, because the US will not tolerate free riders anymore. South Africa should foster the African Continental Free Trade Agreement with cautious impulse for other African states, however, focusing on internal African trade and removing barriers to trade internally.

The African green energy and digital economy highlighted a substantial influence on the first day of the G20 with future conditional cooperation.

Despite diplomatic ties, American companies may undergo investment and governance reforms, although this may be pure speculation. Whatever the outcome of the G20, Africa should free itself from blaming western countries for its economic dependency and reform itself towards economic self-reliance, not remain dependent on European, American, or any other 'strings attached' funding, but invest in its biggest movable asset, its people, to unlock its natural resources in the best way possible.