



# U.S. STRATEGY TOWARD SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

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THE WHITE HOUSE

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Nearly 3 years ago, I remarked in front of the Ghanaian Parliament that Africa is a fundamental part of our interconnected world. Since that time, we have partnered with leaders, youth, and civil society in Africa to deepen the principles of democracy and human rights, to expand economic opportunity, and to support those who seek peace where war and deprivation have plagued communities. Africa and its people are partners with America in creating the future we want for all of our children—a future that is grounded in growth, mutual responsibility, and mutual respect.

As we look toward the future, it is clear that Africa is more important than ever to the security and prosperity of the international community, and to the United States in particular. Africa's economies are among the fastest growing in the world, with technological change sweeping across the continent and offering tremendous opportunities in banking, medicine, politics, and business. At the same time, the burgeoning youth population in Africa is changing economies and political systems in profound ways.

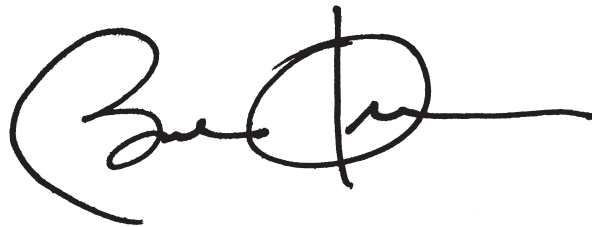
Addressing the opportunities and challenges in Africa requires a comprehensive U.S. policy that is proactive, forward-looking, and that balances our long-term interests with near-term imperatives. This *U.S. Strategy Toward Sub-Saharan Africa* solidifies and advances many of the initiatives that we have launched since I took office in order to help achieve that balance, and elevates two efforts that will be critical to the future of Africa: strengthening democratic institutions and boosting broad-based economic growth, including through trade and investment. Strong, accountable, and democratic institutions, sustained by a deep commitment to the rule of law, generate greater prosperity and stability, and meet with greater success in mitigating conflict and ensuring security. Sustainable, inclusive economic growth is a key ingredient to security, political stability, and development, and it underpins efforts to alleviate poverty, creating the resources that will bolster opportunity and allow individuals to reach their full potential.

While many countries on the continent have made tremendous strides to broaden political participation and reduce corruption, there is more work to be done to ensure fair electoral processes, transparent institutions that protect universal rights, and the provision and protection of security and public goods. Our message to those who would derail the democratic process is clear and unequivocal: the United States will not stand idly by when actors threaten legitimately elected governments or manipulate the fairness and integrity of democratic processes, and we will stand in steady partnership with those who are committed to the principles of equality, justice, and the rule of law.

America believes in Africa as a region of growing opportunity and promise, for Africa, for America, and for our people and our economies. We believe that Africa can be the world's next major economic success story. We will work with our African partners to build strong institutions, to remove constraints to trade and investment, and to expand opportunities for African countries to effectively access each other's markets and global markets, to embrace

sound economic governance, and diversify their economies beyond a narrow reliance on natural resources, and—most importantly—create opportunities for Africa’s people to prosper. As we support these efforts, we will encourage American companies to seize trade and investment opportunities in Africa, so that their skills, capital, and technology will further support the region’s economic expansion, while helping to create jobs here in America.

Across all of these efforts, the United States will prioritize efforts to empower the next generation of African leadership. These young men and women have shown time and again the willingness and ability to change their communities and their countries for the better, and the United States will continue to be their steadfast ally and partner. America’s partnership with this new generation of Africans will extend beyond our Government to the broad and deepening relationships between our peoples, businesses, and institutions. These roots will drive our path to a future of democracy, peace, and prosperity for generations to come.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Barack Obama', written in a cursive style.



# U.S. Strategy Toward Sub-Saharan Africa

## Introduction

Upon taking office, President Obama committed to supporting strong, open, and accountable governments and sustainable development in Africa. In his speech before the Ghanaian Parliament in July 2009, the President asserted that Africa is a fundamental part of our interconnected world, and called for a partnership with Africa that is “grounded in mutual responsibility and mutual respect.” The National Security Strategy, released in May 2010, reinforces this vision, and calls for partnership with African nations as they grow their economies and strengthen their democratic institutions and governance. In June 2012, the President approved a Presidential Policy Directive that outlines his vision with respect to U.S. policy toward sub-Saharan Africa. This document is drawn from and reflects that Directive.

Over the last three and a half years, we have worked to translate the President’s words to the Ghanaian Parliament into action. We have supported democratic development by strengthening institutions and challenging leaders whose actions threaten peaceful political transitions, including in Cote d’Ivoire. We have advanced peace and security by playing an integral role in the birth of South Sudan, supporting the African Union Mission in Somalia, and working with regional partners to counter the predatory Lord’s Resistance Army. We have engaged young African leaders who will shape the continent’s future. We have invested in development partnerships to foster sustained economic growth, promote food security, increase resilience to climate change, and improve the capacity of countries and communities to address HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other health threats. We have been the world’s leader in responding to humanitarian crises, including in the Horn of Africa, while at the same time working with our African partners to promote resilience and prevent future crises.

The economies of sub-Saharan Africa are among the world’s most rapidly growing. An increasing number of African governments and regional organizations are taking a lead role in addressing the security and political challenges within their borders and beyond and are increasingly influential players in international fora. The African Union serves as an important leader on political, diplomatic, and peacekeeping issues across the continent. At the same time, urbanization and a burgeoning youth population are changing the region’s demographics in profound ways, and young people are increasingly making their voices heard.

While the continent has made important gains on democracy and institution building, those gains are fragile. There are still too many countries where the transition to democracy is uneven and slow, and leaders who resist relinquishing power. In many countries, corruption is endemic, and state institutions remain weak. In addition to eroding the legitimacy of governments, these factors impede local business activity and foreign investment. Despite having much of the world’s arable land and many of its richest fisheries, the agricultural sectors of many sub-Saharan African states are underperforming, and poverty still cripples the lives of too many. Transnational security challenges pose threats to regional stability, economic growth, and U.S. interests.

As the United States addresses these opportunities and challenges, we will be guided by our core interests in sub-Saharan Africa: ensuring the security of the United States, our citizens, and our allies and

partners; promoting democratic states that are economically vibrant and strong partners of the United States on the world stage; expanding opportunities for U.S. trade and investment; preventing conflict and mass atrocities; and fostering broad-based, sustainable economic growth and poverty alleviation.

Given the growing strategic importance of sub-Saharan Africa to the United States, over the next 5 years we will elevate our focus on and dedicate greater effort to strengthening democratic institutions and spurring economic growth, trade, and investment, while continuing to pursue other objectives on the continent. Stronger democratic institutions lead countries to achieve greater prosperity and stability; are more successful in mitigating conflict and countering transnational threats; and serve as stronger partners of the United States. Additionally, promoting sustainable, inclusive economic growth is a key ingredient of security, political stability, and development, and it underpins efforts to alleviate poverty, creating the resources to support health care, education, and other public goods.

## The Four Pillars of the U.S. Strategy Toward Sub-Saharan Africa

The United States will partner with sub-Saharan African countries to pursue the following interdependent and mutually reinforcing objectives: (1) strengthen democratic institutions; (2) spur economic growth, trade, and investment; (3) advance peace and security; and (4) promote opportunity and development. Across all objectives, we will: deepen our engagement with Africa's young leaders; seek to empower marginalized populations and women; address the unique needs of fragile and post-conflict states; and work closely with the U.N. and other multilateral actors to achieve our objectives on the continent.

### I. Strengthen Democratic Institutions

As the President said in Ghana, "Africa doesn't need strong men, it needs strong institutions." We will work to advance democracy by strengthening institutions at every level, supporting and building upon the aspirations of Africans for more open and accountable governance, promoting human rights and the rule of law, and challenging leaders whose actions threaten the credibility of democratic processes. As the National Security Strategy states, our support for democracy is critical to U.S. interests and is a fundamental component of American leadership abroad. We will pursue the following actions:

- **Promote Accountable, Transparent, and Responsive Governance.** The United States will expand efforts to support and empower key reformers and institutions of government at all levels to promote the rule of law, strengthen checks on executive power, and incorporate responsive governance practices. We will also seek to expand African membership in the Open Government Partnership and the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, which promote sound governance, transparency, and accountability.
- **Bolster Positive Models.** The United States recognizes that Africans must forge lasting solutions, and build their own democracies. To this end, we will support those leaders and actors who are creating vibrant democratic models, including elected leaders as well as young Africans who are leaders in civil society and entrepreneurship. We will use the facilitating power of the United States Government to help young African leaders network with one another, share innovative solutions, and demonstrate America's support for their efforts.

- **Promote and Protect Human Rights, Civil Society, and Independent Media.** The United States will amplify and support voices calling for respect for human rights, rule of law, accountability and transitional justice mechanisms, and independent media. Further, we will continue to focus on empowering women and marginalized populations, and opposing discrimination based on disability, gender, or sexual orientation.
- **Ensure a Sustained Focus on the Credibility of Democratic Processes.** The United States will take a strong and consistent stand against actions that undermine democratic institutions or the legitimacy of democratic processes. We will evaluate elections against the highest possible standards of fairness and impartiality. The United States will seek to expand adherence to the principle of civilian control of the military, and will support strong measures against individuals or groups that threaten legitimately elected governments.
- **Promote Strong Democratic Norms.** The United States will support efforts by regional and international bodies to enforce the consistent application of democratic practices, particularly the African Union's African Charter on Democracy, Elections, and Governance and other multilateral standards. We will support basic and civic education to ensure future generations are active, informed, and committed to the rights and responsibilities of democratic citizenship.

## II. Spur Economic Growth, Trade, and Investment

It is in the interest of the United States to improve the region's trade competitiveness, encourage the diversification of exports beyond natural resources, and ensure that the benefits from growth are broad-based. We will pursue the following actions as we seek to accelerate inclusive economic growth, including through trade and investment:

- **Promote an Enabling Environment for Trade and Investment.** Building on U.S. programs such as the Partnership for Growth and New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition, as well as international programs such as the Open Government Partnership and the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, we will encourage legal, regulatory, and institutional reforms that contribute to an environment that enables greater trade and investment in sub-Saharan Africa. We will also encourage sub-Saharan Africa's private sector to engage governments to undertake these necessary reforms.
- **Improve Economic Governance.** We will help to build the public sector's capacity to provide services and improve protections against illicit financial activity. Greater economic governance facilitates effective management of public finances, more efficient and transparent use of (and less reliance on) donor aid, and increased transparency and accountability. In turn, strong public financial management helps increase transparency and effectiveness in government operations and broaden the revenue base.
- **Promote Regional Integration.** Increased African regional integration would create larger markets, improve economies of scale, and reduce transaction costs for local, regional, and global trade. We will work with regional economic communities, including through the U.S.-East African Community Trade and Investment Initiative, and national governments to reduce the barriers to trade and investment flows across the continent. In particular, we will promote

trade facilitation, customs modernization, and standards harmonization; support regulatory coherence and transparency; improve infrastructure that strengthens regional trade and access to global markets; and explore ways to remove impediments to efficient operation of supply chains in the region.

- **Expanding African Capacity to Effectively Access and Benefit from Global Markets.** Notwithstanding the tariff advantages afforded by the United States to sub-Saharan Africa, non-oil exports from Africa to the United States continue to grow slowly and have not reached their full potential. To increase Africa's capacity to produce goods for export that are diverse, competitive, and meet global standards, we will (1) work with the Congress to extend the unilateral preferences under the African Growth and Opportunity Act beyond 2015 and extend the Generalized System of Preferences beyond 2013, while also exploring ways to update these programs and enhance African capacity to fully utilize and benefit from these programs, including through the African Competitiveness and Trade Expansion Initiative; (2) increase cooperation and technical assistance on a range of issues, including building Africa's capacity to meet product standards, food safety and sanitary and phytosanitary requirements, product testing, and certification requirements; and (3) take steps to increase productive capacity and improve the competitiveness of African exports, including by helping to address a range of supply-side constraints that raise costs and reduce the efficiency of exports.
- **Encourage U.S. Companies to Trade with and Invest in Africa.** Many U.S. businesses – particularly small- and medium-sized enterprises – are unaware of opportunities for trade with and investment in Africa, or face challenges establishing business relationships in sub-Saharan African countries. In harmony with the National Export Initiative, we will develop a “Doing Business in Africa Campaign” to harness the resources of the United States Government to assist U.S. businesses in identifying and seizing opportunities in sub-Saharan Africa. We will also engage with members of the sub-Saharan African Diaspora in the United States, who are showing an increasing level of interest in investing in their countries of origin.

### III. Advance Peace and Security

African states are showing increasing capacity to take the lead on security issues on the continent. Nonetheless, international and domestic conflict and the inability of some governments to meet the basic security needs of their people continue to be key obstacles to effective democratic governance, economic growth, trade and investment, and human development. Only Africa's governments and people can sustainably resolve the security challenges and internal divisions that have plagued the continent, but the United States can make a positive difference. Recognizing this fact, we will pursue the following actions:

- **Counter al-Qa'ida and Other Terrorist Groups.** In our approach to counterterrorism, we will continue to be guided by the President's affirmation in the National Security Strategy that he bears no greater responsibility than ensuring the safety and security of the American people. Consistent with the National Strategy for Counterterrorism, we will concentrate our efforts on disrupting, dismantling, and eventually defeating al-Qa'ida and its affiliates and adherents



in Africa to ensure the security of our citizens and our partners. In doing so, we will seek to strengthen the capacity of civilian bodies to provide security for their citizens and counter violent extremism through more effective governance, development, and law enforcement efforts.

- **Advance Regional Security Cooperation and Security Sector Reform.** We will deepen our security partnerships with African countries and regional organizations and their stand-by forces by expanding efforts to build African military capabilities through low-cost, small-footprint operations, consistent with the vision set forth in “Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense.” We will also seek to strengthen the capacity of civilian bodies and institutions to improve the continent’s ability to provide security and respond to emerging conflicts. Moreover, U.S. military and civilian agencies will help establish effective partner nation security forces, intelligence organizations, and law enforcement and border control agencies that are subordinate to and operating jointly with their constitutional civil authorities.
- **Prevent Transnational Criminal Threats.** We will build comprehensive partnerships that leverage our land border, maritime, aviation, cybersecurity, and financial sector expertise to counter illicit movement of people, arms, drugs, and money, as well as guard against the criminal facilitation of weapons of mass destruction material and technology. We will work to curb armed robbery at sea and protect fisheries, and continue to implement our Counter-Piracy Action Plan off the coast of Somalia. Consistent with the Strategy to Combat Transnational Organized Crime, we will support efforts and build partner capacity to combat corruption and instability as well as to combat trafficking in persons.
- **Prevent Conflict and, Where Necessary, Mitigate Mass Atrocities and Hold Perpetrators Accountable.** Consistent with the objectives of Presidential Study Directive-10, we will address atrocity risks at the earliest stage possible to help prevent violence before it emerges, and bolster domestic and international efforts to bring perpetrators to justice. We will also cultivate deeper and broader support among governments and multilateral organizations to work toward the same objectives.
- **Support Initiatives to Promote Peace and Security.** We will support U.N. peacebuilding and peacekeeping missions in sub-Saharan Africa, including by working to ensure that peacekeeping missions are well-led, well-supported, and appropriately resourced in order to maximize their effectiveness. Within African countries, we will support those who work to overcome communal divisions in pursuit of sustainable and peaceful political processes.

#### IV. Promote Opportunity and Development

This Administration, including through the Presidential Policy Directive on Global Development, has charted a new approach that focuses on sustainable development outcomes and a new operational model for U.S. development assistance and builds on our work to date. Africa is the focus of three key Presidential development initiatives: the Global Health Initiative, Feed the Future, and the Global Climate Change Initiative. Additionally, two of the four Partnership for Growth countries (Ghana and Tanzania) are in Africa. In each of these efforts, we have highlighted the importance of reform and transparency

to development and prioritized good economic and project management to promote sustainability. We are investing in a growing number of good-performing countries and seeing the evidence in clear outcomes and the increased capacity and commitment of our partners. We will pursue the following actions as we strive to further accelerate development progress:

- **Address Constraints to Growth and Promote Poverty Reduction.** We will leverage our engagement via multilateral financial institutions to advocate for increased financing for poorer countries, and will focus on addressing constraints to growth. We will encourage governments to use revenues, particularly from energy sources, to more broadly benefit their populations, and we will continue to support the expansion and improvement of sub-Saharan Africa's education services.
- **Promote Food Security.** Food security will remain a priority, consistent with the commitments made by the United States at the L'Aquila Summit, through the Feed the Future Initiative, and the New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition launched at the 2012 G-8 Summit. We will build on the progress achieved thus far, while also intensifying our efforts to promote policy reforms, drive increased private capital to African agriculture, scale innovation, and reduce risk.
- **Transform Africa's Public Health.** We will work through the Global Health Initiative and our disease-specific programs, including the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief and the President's Malaria Initiative, to tackle other diseases and malnutrition while strengthening health systems for sustainable impact. We will continue to leverage the leadership being demonstrated by a growing number of African countries on global health in order to bolster our efforts to promote good governance, development, and economic growth, including as we pursue the expanded AIDS prevention targets announced on World AIDS Day in 2011 and through the June 2012 Child Survival Call to Action.
- **Increase Opportunities for Women and Youth.** We will continue to use our diplomacy and assistance programs to empower women, including through the African Women Entrepreneurship Program, implementing the U.S. National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security, and focusing on maternal and child health as a centerpiece of the Global Health Initiative. This includes enhancing efforts to protect women in the context of conflict and humanitarian emergencies. We will also continue engaging with Africa's next generation of leaders by advancing the President's Young African Leaders Initiative to provide tools to support leadership development, promote entrepreneurship, and connect young leaders with one another and the United States.
- **Respond to Humanitarian Crises While Promoting Resilience.** While continuing to lead the world in response to humanitarian crises in Africa, we will promote and bring to scale resilience policies and programs. In that context, we will work to prevent the weakening or collapse of local economies, protect livestock, promote sustainable access to clean water, and invest in programs that reduce community-level vulnerability to man-made and natural disasters.

- **Promote Low-emissions Growth and Sustainable Development, and Build Resilience to Climate Change.** We will continue promoting resilience and adaptation to impacts of climate change on food, water, and health in vulnerable African countries, supporting the adoption of low-emissions development strategies, and mobilizing financing to support the development and deployment of clean energy. We will also work to protect and encourage sustainable use of Africa's natural resources.

