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A NEW ERA OF PARTNERSHIPS: CANADA'S ENGAGEMENT WITH AFRICA

**Report of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and
International Development**

Ali Ehsassi, Chair

**NOVEMBER 2024
44th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION**

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NOTICE TO READER

Reports from committees presented to the House of Commons

Presenting a report to the House is the way a committee makes public its findings and recommendations on a particular topic. Substantive reports on a subject-matter study usually contain a synopsis of the testimony heard, the recommendations made by the committee, as well as the reasons for those recommendations.

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has the honour to present its

TWENTY-EIGHTH REPORT

Pursuant to its mandate under Standing Order 108(2), the committee has studied Canada's approach to Africa and has agreed to report the following:

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LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of their deliberations committees may make recommendations which they include in their reports for the consideration of the House of Commons or the Government. Recommendations related to this study are listed below.

Recommendation 1

That the Government of Canada publish a comprehensive strategy for Africa that achieves policy cohesion in relation to diplomacy, trade and investment, development, humanitarian action, human rights, women and girls, security assistance, and people-to-people ties. 67

Recommendation 2

That the Government of Canada base its Africa strategy on the principles of partnership, mutual interests, and shared priorities, focused on the convergence of Canada’s skills and assets with African priorities, as identified in Agenda 2063. 67

Recommendation 3

That the Government of Canada include strategic objectives as well as short- and long-term benchmarks for success in its Africa strategy..... 67

Recommendation 4

That the Government of Canada identify priority sectors in its Africa strategy that reflect an assessment of areas in which the strengths of Canada’s public institutions, non-governmental organizations, and private sector actors overlap with the priorities established by Canada’s African partners. 67

Recommendation 5

That, in its Africa strategy, the Government of Canada address the specific challenges being experienced in fragile and conflict-affected states with the goals of advancing human security and community resilience..... 67

Recommendation 6

That the Government of Canada continue to support and garner more international partners for the Elsie Initiative and other initiatives that promote a stronger role for women in the peace and security of African partners. 67

Recommendation 7

That, as part of the finalization of its Africa strategy, the Government of Canada continue to consult widely with African governments, regional and continental institutions, youth, women and girls, Indigenous peoples, and civil society, as well as with African diaspora communities and organizations in Canada, and, as part of its implementation of the strategy, continue ongoing engagement with these groups and consider hosting a Canada-Africa summit at the level of Heads of Government. 67

Recommendation 8

That the Government of Canada make the necessary investments to ensure that the departments and agencies responsible for its Africa strategy have personnel with in-depth knowledge about African countries, regions, and institutions, as well as specialized expertise in the strategy’s priority sectors. 68

Recommendation 9

That the Government of Canada explore funding mechanisms that could support policy-oriented research—in Canada and Africa—on sectors and issues that are relevant to Canada’s Africa strategy, Canada’s relationships with African countries and institutions, and the perspectives and needs of African people..... 68

Recommendation 10

That the Government of Canada collaborate with African partners to assess healthcare structures and equity gaps in primary care diagnostics, strengthen pandemic preparedness through increased research and development and knowledge-sharing, and address the impact of climate change on healthcare crises..... 68

Recommendation 11

That the Government of Canada continue to expand its support for the enhancement of food security in Africa by leveraging Canadian agricultural and technological expertise alongside Africa’s expertise, vast arable land, and young workforce, and by focusing on the advancement of agricultural productivity, sustainable farming practices, and climate-resilient agricultural systems. 68

Recommendation 12

That, to the extent possible, the Government of Canada enhance its diplomatic capacity in Africa by increasing the number and size of its missions, where appropriate, and by creating and staffing additional Canadian foreign service and trade commissioner positions in African countries. 68

Recommendation 13

That the Government of Canada ensure that all its missions in Africa have the capacity to engage diplomatically and deliver services in French and English. 69

Recommendation 14

That the Government of Canada ensure that French is the language primarily used in Canadian diplomacy with countries that have French as an official language. 69

Recommendation 15

That the Government of Canada acknowledge and provide resources for the support and advancement of the French language in Africa through the work of both the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie and bilateral partnerships with Francophone member states in the education, research, and governance sectors and in other areas of mutual interest. 69

Recommendation 16

That the Government of Canada continue its robust engagement with African members of the Commonwealth and the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie as key channels for understanding and furthering the mutual goals of Canada and African member states..... 69

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Recommendation 21

That the Government of Canada address the institutional and situational issues that make it challenging for students from francophone Africa to come to Canada..... 70

Recommendation 22

That the Government of Canada work with Canada’s provincial and territorial governments and educational and vocational institutions as well as their counterparts in African countries to support two-way exchange programs. 70

Recommendation 23

That the Government of Canada continue to engage members of the African diaspora community informally in the implementation of its Africa strategy and explore mechanisms for their formal participation in furthering the strategy’s goals. 70

Recommendation 24

That the Government of Canada engage meaningfully with African countries throughout its 2025 presidency of the G7 and raise issues of concern to the African continent on the G7’s agenda. 70

Recommendation 25

That the Government of Canada adjust the channels it uses to deliver international assistance to Africa to ensure that a greater share is being provided to African civil society organizations and through Canadian civil society organizations that are supporting community- and youth-led projects in Africa. 70

Recommendation 26

That the Government of Canada simplify the procedures its uses to invite and approve project proposals from Canadian and African civil society organizations with the view to lessening administrative burdens and improving the transparency of available funding envelopes and the timeliness of decision-making, and that it complete this work in a timely manner in keeping with the Grants and Contributions Transformation Initiative. 70

Recommendation 27

That the Government of Canada continue increasing its International Assistance Envelope every year until 2030, and that it work towards the United Nations target of allocating 0.7% of gross national income for official development assistance and set a timetable for doing so..... 71



A NEW ERA OF PARTNERSHIPS: CANADA'S ENGAGEMENT WITH AFRICA

INTRODUCTION

The House of Commons Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development has studied Canada's approach to Africa. It did so in recognition of the Government of Canada's shared interests with African states and institutions, as well as Canadian ties with African people, and with a view to strengthening cooperation on shared priorities.¹ To arrive at the committee's recommendations, this study assessed the ways that Canada engages with Africa through diplomacy, trade and investment, security cooperation, and development and humanitarian assistance. Throughout the study, the committee sought to determine whether the Government of Canada needs to recalibrate and further invest in its approach to Africa, and to identify any policy changes required to do so. In support of the recommendations, the committee's findings reflect oral testimony and written submissions that were received from Canadian government officials, researchers, academics, and representatives of multilateral and civil society organizations. These individuals and organizations are listed in the report's appendices.

The key themes of this report are reflected in its title: *A New Era of Partnerships*. The report makes clear that Africa has changed, and that Canada's approach must change with it. Africa is growing economically, coalescing politically, and emerging strategically. The members of the African Union (AU) have established a collective vision and roadmap—*Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want*²—which aims for the 21st century to be “the African Century.” The international community has been asked to respect this Pan-African plan for “transformation” and “to align their partnerships appropriately.”³

The persistence of extreme poverty and multidimensional security challenges will need to be overcome if this vision is to be realized. Africa's economic and demographic potential is examined in the first half of this report, alongside the stresses that are being

1 House of Commons, Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development (FAAE), [Minutes of Proceedings](#), 44th Parliament, 1st Session, 29 January 2024.

2 Agenda 2063 was adopted by African Heads of State and Government during the golden jubilee celebrations of the Organisation of African Unity / African Union in May 2013. For additional context, see African Union Development Agency—NEPAD, [Second Continental Report on the Implementation of Agenda 2063](#), February 2022.

3 African Union Commission, [Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want](#), 2015.



generated by rapid population growth, climate change, and armed conflict. After considering Africa’s increasing geopolitical importance and the political significance of Agenda 2063, the report then provides a detailed overview of Canada’s current level of engagement with Africa. This baseline was included to illuminate the gaps that will need to be filled and the activities and mindsets that will need to change as Canada embraces a new era of partnerships. The second half of the report summarizes the evidence leading to the committee’s conclusion that Canada will need to approach this new era equipped with a strategy for Africa that is comprehensive, clear, and coherent, and supported by enhanced dialogue and diplomatic capacity.

This committee’s reports typically put forward recommendations as issues arise in the text. In this case, the committee decided that the structure of its report should reflect the three main messages to emerge from this study: that Canada’s approach to Africa needs to be holistic, implemented according to the convergence of mutual interests and priorities, and based on Canada’s experience and expertise. All the committee’s recommendations are, therefore, grouped together at the end of the report. Even though they reflect the conclusion of the committee’s work, the committee has tried to avoid being overly prescriptive. Respecting the testimony that emphasized the importance of meaningful communication and peer-to-peer relationships, and conscious of the limitations of any study that seeks to grapple with the complexity of an entire continent, the committee sees its recommendations as a starting point. They are meant to articulate the parameters around which the committee believes that the Government of Canada’s new terms of engagement should be built.

AFRICA’S CONTEXTS

As a continent of more than 1.4 billion people and 54 United Nations (UN) member states, Africa is defined by its diversity.⁴ Each of Africa’s regions and, indeed, countries, has its own historical, political, social, economic and security dynamics. According to the World Bank, Sub-Saharan Africa comprises “low, lower-middle, upper-middle, and high-income countries—22 of which are fragile or conflict-affected—and 13 small states characterized by a small population, limited human capital, and a confined land area.”⁵

4 The African Union (AU) has 55 members because it also recognizes the Sahrawi Republic in Western Sahara.

5 World Bank Group, “[Overview](#),” The World Bank in Africa.

Figure 1—Map of the African Continent



Source: Map prepared in 2024, using data obtained from Natural Earth, [1:50m Cultural Vectors](#) and [1:50m Physical Vectors](#), version 5.1.1; Kröner, Alfred et al., "[Africa](#)," *Encyclopedia Britannica*,



23 October 2024; and Schaetzl, Randall J. et al., "[North America](#)," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 22 October 2024. The following software was used: Esri, ArcGIS Pro, version 3.2.2.

Testimony provided to the committee reiterated that the African continent cannot be painted with one brush stroke or interpreted through a single lens.⁶ Despite the growing importance of the AU and its continental vision, one witness cautioned against speaking only in terms of "an" Africa and instead emphasized the existence of "multiple Africas," which are "often fractious with each other" and "at very different levels of potential."⁷ Despite having an economic upside that may be greater than that of any other region in the world, Africa's "security and humanitarian challenges are more widespread in ways that have systemic impacts and could greatly limit its potential."⁸

To ensure that Canada pursues an effective approach, the committee was advised to reject the "two extreme interpretations" of what is transpiring in Africa.⁹ The overly optimistic one foresees Africa's inevitable geopolitical ascendance, stressing the continent's demographic and economic potential and its resource abundance, while the overly pessimistic one "highlights a resurgence of coups, authoritarian drifts and an unending high level of political violence and war."¹⁰ As the paragraphs that follow show, neither interpretation, on its own, reflects continental trends, as a whole.

Trendlines of Promise and Risk

Sub-Saharan Africa recorded an economic growth rate of 3.4% in 2023, with growth forecasted to reach 3.8% in 2024. This is higher than the projected growth rate for the world's advanced economies (1.7%), as well as the countries of the Middle East and Central Asia (2.8%), and Latin America and the Caribbean (2.0%), but lower than the countries included as part of "emerging and developing Asia" (5.2%).¹¹ As of April 2024, 9 of the 20 economies in the world that were forecast to experience the fastest growth rates in 2024 were in Africa: Niger (10.4%), Senegal (8.3%), Libya (7.8%), Rwanda (6.9%), Côte d'Ivoire (6.5%), Djibouti (6.5%), Ethiopia (6.2%), the Gambia (6.2%), and Benin

6 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 10 April 2024, 1705 (Cheryl Urban, Assistant Deputy Minister, Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development).

7 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 15 April 2024, 1555 (David Black, Full Professor, Dalhousie University, as an Individual).

8 Ibid., [1535](#).

9 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 15 April 2024, 1540 (Christopher W. J. Roberts, Fellow, Canadian Global Affairs Institute, as an Individual).

10 Ibid. Also see Christopher W. J. Roberts, [written brief](#), 16 April 2024.

11 International Monetary Fund (IMF), [World Economic Outlook – Steady but Slow: Resilience amid Divergence](#), April 2024, p. 10.

(6.0%).¹² That said, annual growth rates at the country level can be affected by various domestic and global factors, from conflicts to commodity prices. Taking a step back, figure 2 shows average annual growth rates in Africa from 2013 to 2022, organized according to the size of African economies. During this period, 19 economies in Africa experienced average annual growth of at least 4%.

12 IMF, "[Real GDP growth: Annual percent change](#)," *World Economic Outlook (April 2024)*, IMF DataMapper, accessed 13 August 2024.



Figure 2—African Economies and Growth Rates

	Gross domestic product (GDP) in 2022 (billions of US dollars)	GDP per capita at purchasing power parity in 2022 (international dollars)	Average annual growth rate of GDP from 2013 to 2022 (percent)
Nigeria	477	5,904	1.9
Egypt	475	16,160	4.5
South Africa	405	15,715	0.7
Algeria	226	14,776	1.9
Morocco	131	9,891	2.2
Angola	123	6,938	-0.1
Ethiopia	119	3,432	8.2
Kenya	114	6,145	4.5
Tanzania	74	3,378	6
Ghana	72	6,746	4.2
Côte d'Ivoire	72	6,045	6.5
Democratic Republic of the Congo	66	1,403	4.8
Uganda	48	3,035	4.9
Tunisia	46	12,778	1.1
Cameroon	45	4,420	3.8
Libya	43	21,405	-2.5
Sudan	34	4,363	0.5
Zimbabwe	31	2,687	1.6
Zambia	29	3,971	3.2
Senegal	28	4,114	5.4
Gabon	21	18,191	2
Botswana	20	18,307	3
Guinea	20	3,029	6.1
Burkina Faso	19	2,535	4.8
Mali	19	2,507	4.3
Mozambique	18	1,476	3.7
Benin	17	4,049	5.3
Chad	16	2,433	1.2
Niger	15	1,517	5.7
Madagascar	15	1,816	2.7

	Gross domestic product (GDP) in 2022 (billions of US dollars)	GDP per capita at purchasing power parity in 2022 (international dollars)	Average annual growth rate of GDP from 2013 to 2022 (percent)
Congo	14	4,343	-1.4
Rwanda	13	2,902	6.4
Mauritius	13	26,975	2
Namibia	13	11,071	1
Malawi	13	1,626	3.4
Equatorial Guinea	12	19,449	-4.2
Somalia	10	1,926	2.8
Mauritania	10	6,866	3.5
Togo	8	2,592	4.9
South Sudan	8	430	-3
Eswatini	5	11,156	2.3
Sierra Leone	4	1,997	0.6
Liberia	4	1,688	0.8
Burundi	4	855	1
Djibouti	4	6,540	5.2
Central African Republic	2	1,080	2.5
Lesotho	2	2,986	-0.3
Cabo Verde	2	9,056	2.1
Gambia	2	2,668	3.7
Seychelles	2	38,663	5
Guinea-Bissau	2	2,909	4.2
Comoros	1	3,357	2.2
Sao Tome and Principe	1	4,064	3

Created with Datawrapper

Notes: The International Monetary Fund describes several of the values listed or used in the table as estimates. Numbers have been rounded for visualization purposes. Gross domestic product (GDP) values are at current prices and in billions of US dollars. The GDP per capita values are expressed using [purchasing power parity](#) exchange rates and current prices, and presented in international dollars. Average annual growth rates of GDP for the 2013–2022 period have been calculated using values expressed in constant dollars to account for inflation. The year 2022 is the most recent year for which actual data were available for most African countries. Eritrea is not included in the table due to missing data.



Sources: Chart prepared using data obtained from the International Monetary Fund, "[World Economic Outlook Database](#)," April 2024 Edition, accessed 29 August 2024. The following data tables were used: "Gross domestic product, current prices (U.S. dollars)," "Gross domestic product per capita, current prices (purchasing power parity; international dollars)," and "Gross domestic product, constant prices (national currency)." Microsoft Excel and Datawrapper were used to create the chart.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) indicates that governments in Sub-Saharan Africa "continue to grapple with financing shortages, high borrowing costs, and rollover risks amid persistently low domestic resource mobilization."¹³ The risks to the IMF's April 2024 economic outlook for the region are characterized as being "tilted to the downside."¹⁴ This is because Sub-Saharan Africa "continues to be more vulnerable to global shocks, particularly from weaker external demand and elevated geopolitical risks." Moreover, there is "rising political instability" to contend with, as well as "frequent climate shocks."¹⁵

The proportion of people across Sub-Saharan Africa who were living below the international poverty line—US\$2.15 per day¹⁶—decreased from an estimated 54.6% in 1990 to 36.7% in 2019. Nevertheless, over the same period, much greater poverty reduction was recorded elsewhere. In East Asia and the Pacific, for example, the proportion decreased from an estimated 65.2% in 1990 to just under 1.0% in 2019.¹⁷ Despite the economic growth in Sub-Saharan Africa, a World Bank publication indicates that "the pace of economic expansion in the region remains below the growth rate of the previous decade (2000–2014) and is insufficient to have a significant effect on poverty reduction."¹⁸ Overall, the region "stands out globally as having the highest extreme poverty rate, high levels of inequality, and the weakest transmission of growth

13 IMF, [Regional Economic Outlook: Sub-Saharan Africa, A Tepid and Pricey Recovery](#), April 2024, p. viii.

14 Ibid.

15 Ibid.

16 The poverty line of US\$2.15 is based on 2017 international prices (i.e., purchasing power parity, PPP). The proportion of population living below this poverty line is one of the indicators used to measure progress towards Goal 1 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals—"end poverty in all its forms everywhere."

17 Of the approximately 684 million people in the world who were living on less than US\$2.15 per day in 2019, some 411 million were in Sub-Saharan Africa. See World Bank, "[Poverty rate, percent \\$2.15: Poverty headcount ratio \(2017 PPP\) \(% of population\)](#)," *Poverty and Inequality Platform*, database, accessed 30 September 2024.

18 Office of the Chief Economist for the Africa Region, World Bank, "[Tackling Inequality is Necessary for Growth and Poverty Reduction](#)," *Africa's Pulse*, April 2024, World Bank.

to poverty reduction.”¹⁹ The committee was told that “almost all of the world’s least developed countries will be in Africa as of 2030.”²⁰

When taking a longer-term view, significant attention is being paid to Africa’s demographic potential. Africa is the youngest continent in the world—“the only continent where 70% of its people are under the age of 30.”²¹ Its share of the global population was 13% in 2000, but is forecast to exceed 25% by 2050.²² According to one submission the committee received, Africa’s under-18 population will be approximately equal to the total population of Europe by 2030.²³ Another indicated that Africa’s young workforce will surpass those of China and India by 2040.²⁴ The committee was told that the continent “is going to become more and more important as a market.”²⁵ The trendlines are expected to result in increased consumer and business spending.²⁶

That said, many factors can prevent population growth from translating into broad-based prosperity. It was remarked to the committee that having the “fastest increase globally in working-age populations” will necessitate “access to education, jobs and support for entrepreneurship.”²⁷ At present in Sub-Saharan Africa, some “60% of young people between the ages of 15 and 17 are not in school.”²⁸ Furthermore, “youth employment opportunities lag behind the growth rate,” a gap that can provide “fertile ground for illegal migration, resource-driven conflict, and civil unrest.”²⁹ Analysis indicates that more than 10 million African youth are joining the workforce every year,

19 Office of the Chief Economist for the Africa Region, World Bank, “[Tackling Inequality to Revitalize Growth and Reduce Poverty in Africa](#),” *Africa’s Pulse*, Volume 29, April 2024, World Bank, p. 52.

20 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 10 April 2024, 1645 (Cheryl Urban).

21 World Bank Group, “[Realizing a Brighter Future for a Young, Energized, and Connected Africa](#),” *Feature Story*, 14 August 2023.

22 Andrew Stanley, “[African Century](#),” *Finance and Development Magazine*, IMF, September 2023.

23 Cooperation Canada, [written brief](#), 26 August 2024.

24 MEDA, [written brief](#), 11 July 2024, p. 2.

25 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 8 May 2024, 1650 (Philippe Dongier, Executive Director, Centre for International Studies and Cooperation).

26 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 17 April 2024, 1815 (Landry Signé, Senior Fellow, The Brookings Institution, As an Individual).

27 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 10 April 2024, 1645 (Cheryl Urban).

28 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 8 May 2024, 1800 (Marie-Pierre Nogarède, Deputy Executive Director, Fondation Paul Gérin-Lajoie).

29 Cooperation Canada, [written brief](#), 26 August 2024.



but current growth patterns are only generating 3 million formal jobs annually.³⁰ A related trend across the continent is urbanization. Projections indicate that, by 2050, “African cities large and small will be home to nearly a billion more people.”³¹ The committee also heard, however, that 74% of women in these urban centres “work in the informal sector with little to no social protection.”³²

Climate change is another systemic risk that could dampen Africa’s economic potential. Even though the continent has contributed little historically to global greenhouse gas emissions, the committee was told that the observed effects of climate change in Africa “are very significant, and they are likely to get worse in the future.”³³ The projected consequences include “more extensive flooding, the risk of worsening drought in some regions, such as southern Africa, northern Africa and the western Sahel, as well as tropical cyclones, which may become more intense.”³⁴

Climate shocks are already having an impact. The committee learned that countries in southern Africa—including Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Malawi—were experiencing “the most severe El Niño impact since the 1980s, resulting in drought and crop failures.”³⁵ After noting that the Horn of Africa “has been dealing with the worst drought it has ever seen,” another witness recounted speaking “to pastoralists in Kenya and Somalia who have lost their livestock—their livelihood—and families are now facing starvation or acute food insecurity.”³⁶ With testimony referencing the rise in “climate-related migration”³⁷ and the increasing prevalence of conflicts in “climate-vulnerable states,”³⁸ the committee was reminded of the pressures that climate change could have on Africa’s stability. It is similarly aware that conflicts “are often the result of diminishing resources, such as water.”³⁹ Furthermore, in part related to the need to manage drought

30 Office of the Chief Economist for the Africa Region, World Bank, “[Delivering Growth to People through Better Jobs](#),” *Africa’s Pulse*, Volume 28, October 2023, World Bank, p. 3.

31 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 8 May 2024, 1650 (Philippe Dongier).

32 Ibid.

33 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 22 May 2024, 1705 (Benjamin Sultan, Director of Research, French National Research Institute for Sustainable Development).

34 Ibid.

35 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 22 May 2024, 1720 (Edith Heines, Director of Programme, Policy and Guidance, United Nations World Food Programme).

36 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 29 April 2024, 1655 (Amali Tower, Founder and Executive Director, Climate Refugees).

37 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 22 May 2024, 1705 (Benjamin Sultan).

38 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 22 May 2024, 1710 (Modou Diaw, Regional Vice-President for West Africa, International Rescue Committee).

39 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 22 May 2024, 1750 (Benjamin Sultan).

conditions, concerns over water security can contribute to diplomatic tensions between countries that share vital waterways.⁴⁰

The committee was also briefed on broad trends in Africa's domestic political contexts. Senegal averted a potential constitutional crisis through the work of strong civil society groups and strong public institutions, which saw power transferred to a 44-year-old member of the opposition through a March 2024 presidential election.⁴¹ Beyond such exceptions, however, there is a mismatch between Africa's growing youth population and its political leadership. In suggesting that youth involvement "in different aspects of African political life is going to be key," one witness observed that the median age of Africa's population is 18.8, yet "the median age of African leaders is about 62."⁴² Another witness asserted that this spread "is a factor in the nine coups d'état that African nations have experienced in the last five years."⁴³ It was further argued that the age gap "underpins the declining democratic trends across the continent today, which see fewer people living under democratic rule than at any time since 1991."⁴⁴

At the same time, other testimony pointed to increased citizen engagement within Africa in relation to international issues. The committee heard that this engagement is creating new forms of what could be called "veto points" over external relations, particularly as concerns relations with Western states.⁴⁵ Citizen engagement is being driven by factors that include rapid urbanization, the "narrowing of the digital divide," the "widespread use of social media," and the "development of local applications that use local languages and that are easy to access, even for people who didn't attend school."⁴⁶ These new political dynamics are also being "supported by the emergence of a middle class and an educated diaspora with a growing connection to the continent."⁴⁷

40 For additional information, see "[Why is Egypt worried about Ethiopia's dam on the Nile?](#)" *BBC*, 13 September 2023.

41 Gilles Yabi and Saskia Holman, *Senegal: From Constitutional Crisis to Democratic Restoration*, Article, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1 April 2024.

42 FAAE, *Evidence*, 17 April 2024, 1735 (Thomas Kwasi Tiekou, Professor of Politics and International Relations, King's University College at Western University Canada, as an Individual).

43 FAAE, *Evidence*, 17 April 2024, 1655 (Cameron Hudson, Senior Fellow, Center for Strategic and International Studies).

44 Ibid.

45 FAAE, *Evidence*, 29 April 2024, 1600 (Mamoudou Gazibo, Full Professor of Political Science, Université de Montréal, as an Individual).

46 Ibid.

47 Ibid.



Areas of Crisis

As it was advised to do at the outset of this study, the committee has endeavoured to prepare a report that reflects evidence-based analysis rather than narratives. When it comes to human security, grappling with this complexity begins with recognition that the African continent is not, as a whole, beset by disaster, but also with acknowledgement that there are countries, communities, and populations facing extreme vulnerability within it. One devastating example is the 2020–2022 civil war in Ethiopia’s Tigray region. While estimates vary, as many as 600,000 people may have died.⁴⁸

In 2023, Africa’s 28 state-based conflicts were both the most in the world by region—followed by Asia, with 17—and nearly double the 15 that affected Africa in 2013.⁴⁹ At the same time, Africa has seen a decrease in non-state conflicts in the past six years.⁵⁰ However, Sub-Saharan Africa accounted for almost 59% of all global fatalities from terrorism in 2023. Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger accounted for most of the terrorism-related deaths in the epicentre of this violence, the Sahel, the semi-arid region that spans Africa beneath the Sahara Desert.⁵¹

Several witnesses addressed the situation in these countries of the central Sahel. Canada’s Ambassador to Algeria indicated that the security trends there are “negative” and “alarming,” both for Canada and for Algeria, which shares a border with Mali and Niger.⁵² Another witness explained how the threat that emerged in northern Mali in 2013 has “spread to all of Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger through two al Qaeda jihadist franchises: the Islamist State in the Greater Sahara, or ISGS, and al Qaeda in the Islamic

48 José Naranjo, [“Ethiopia’s forgotten war is the deadliest of the 21st century, with around 600,000 civilian deaths,”](#) *EL PAÍS*, 27 January 2023. For additional information on the war in Ethiopia’s Tigray region, see David Pilling and Andres Schipani, [“War in Tigray may have killed 600,000 people, peace mediator says,”](#) *Financial Times*, 15 January 2023. When the committee held a briefing on the war in 2022, it was told that humanitarian needs had reached “catastrophic levels.” See FAAE, [Evidence](#), 17 February 2022, 1540 (Tarik Khan, Acting Assistant Deputy Minister, Sub-Saharan Africa Branch, Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development).

49 Siri Aas Rustad, [Conflict Trends: A Global Overview, 1946–2023](#), Peace Research Institute Oslo, 2024, p. 14. In this data program, a state-based conflict is defined as follows: “A contested incompatibility over government and/or territory, where at least one party is a state and the use of armed force results in at least 25 battle-related deaths within a calendar year.”

50 Ibid., p. 17. In contrast, the data program defines a non-state conflict as: “The use of armed force between organized groups, none of which is the government of a state, resulting in at least 25 battle-related deaths within a year.”

51 Institute for Economics and Peace, [Global Terrorism Index 2024: Measuring the Impact of Terrorism](#), February 2024, p. 3.

52 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 27 May 2024, 1610 (Michael Callan, Ambassador of Canada in Algeria, Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development).

Maghreb, or AQIM.”⁵³ Even so, these terrorist groups are not the only source of insecurity. Mali has been grappling with a “whole system of conflicts,” including a secessionist conflict against the state in the north, as well as intercommunal conflicts and violence stemming from the trafficking of drugs.⁵⁴

Following a “wave of coups” that began in 2020, the military regimes in Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger moved to dismantle the architecture of external security assistance that had been put in place over years, namely UN peacekeeping and European and U.S. counter-terrorism missions.⁵⁵ These regimes have also broken with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) “in order to create their own alternative regional bloc.”⁵⁶ This “reversal of diplomatic and security alliances,”⁵⁷ the committee heard, has allowed mercenaries and paramilitary groups, including the Russian Wagner Group, to expand their footprint.⁵⁸ The playbook they follow is “to exploit local natural resources in exchange for the protection of the local regime.”⁵⁹

Moving across the Sahel and further south, the conflicts in Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) were also highlighted during the committee’s study. They are part of different regional dynamics and are being driven by their own mix of actors and causes. That said, the two conflicts share some attributes at a very high level that are relevant for this report, which is examining Canada’s approach to Africa from a continental perspective, and not seeking to make recommendations in response to—or based on—any single case.

Both conflicts are having a devastating impact on the civilian population. For the second year in a row, Sudan topped the “Emergency Watchlist” that the International Rescue Committee (IRC) uses to determine which countries are facing the worst deterioration from the perspective of humanitarian needs. In 2024, 8 of the top-10 countries at risk—including the DRC—are in Africa.⁶⁰ Sudan and the DRC were also two of the four

53 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 17 April 2024, 1650 (Thierry Vircoulon, Research Fellow of the French Institute for International Affairs, as an Individual).

54 Ibid.

55 Ibid.

56 Ibid.

57 Ibid.

58 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 29 April 2024, 1605 (Alessandro Arduino, Affiliate Lecturer, Lau China Institute, King’s College London, as an Individual).

59 Ibid.

60 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 22 May 2024, 1710 (Modou Diaw); and International Rescue Committee, [2024 Emergency Watchlist](#), 13 December 2023.



“corporate-level emergencies” the World Food Programme (WFP) informed the committee that it was addressing.⁶¹

In Sudan, Doctors Without Borders has witnessed a “harrowing level of violence against civilians, including death and injury in the hostilities, sexual violence, arbitrary detention, harassment and torture.”⁶² The UN has assessed that every second person in Sudan (24.8 million people) will need humanitarian assistance in 2024.⁶³ As only one indicator of the severity of these needs, the committee heard that, in the Zamzam internally displaced persons camp in North Darfur, 30% of the 46,000 children and 33% of the 16,000 pregnant and breastfeeding women who were screened were found to be acutely malnourished.⁶⁴ After reviewing the evidence, the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification Famine Review Committee reported that it was plausible that famine was ongoing in the Zamzam camp as of July 2024. While the report focused on the camp, it conveyed that “other areas of Sudan, both within Darfur and elsewhere, are potentially experiencing Famine, and will remain at risk of Famine as long as the conflict continues, and humanitarian access is denied for the provision of aid at the scale and urgency necessary.”⁶⁵

Although the situation in the eastern DRC is a more localized and protracted conflict that does not resemble the same rapid and country-wide collapse as has been seen in Sudan since April 2023, basic needs in the DRC are still “immense.”⁶⁶ Around “one-quarter of the population, or 23.5 million people, is facing emergency levels of hunger,”⁶⁷ and violence against civilians has been “widespread.”⁶⁸ For example, in 2023, clinics supported by Doctors Without Borders “provided care for 20,556 survivors of sexual violence across

61 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 22 May 2024, 1720 (Edith Heines).

62 Doctors Without Borders, [written brief](#), 31 May 2024, p. 4.

63 [Situation in the Sudan pursuant to Security Council resolution 2715 \(2023\): Report of the Secretary-General](#), United Nations Security Council, S/2024/204, 29 February 2024, para. 38.

64 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 8 May 2024, 1755 (Dr. Jason Nickerson, Humanitarian Representative to Canada, Doctors Without Borders).

65 Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), [Famine Review Committee: Combined Review of: \(i\) The Famine Early Warning System Network \(FEWS NET\) IPC Compatible Analysis for IDP Camps in El Fasher, North Darfur; and \(ii\) the IPC Sudan Technical Working Group Analysis of Zamzam Camp \(North Darfur\), Sudan – Conclusions and Recommendations, July 2024](#), 1 August 2024, p. 1. The IPC is an international mechanism that uses evidence-based analysis—from a wide range of partners and technical experts—to conclude whether famine is happening or projected to occur in a country. Famine is the most acute phase—Phase 5—that an area can be experiencing according to the IPC classification scale for acute food insecurity. For further background, see IPC, [Fact Sheet: The IPC Famine](#), March 2024.

66 Doctors Without Borders, [written brief](#), 31 May 2024, p. 2.

67 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 22 May 2024, 1720 (Edith Heines).

68 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 8 May 2024, 1755 (Dr. Jason Nickerson).

North Kivu, including more than 15,000 people in Goma, the provincial capital, alone.”⁶⁹ The organization knows that even this large number “represents only a fraction of the true need.”⁷⁰

Nevertheless, when it comes to both the DRC and Sudan, reports show that the humanitarian response plans have been underfunded by donors.⁷¹ The committee learned that the DRC was among the eight crises in Africa—“the most in any region”⁷²—that the European Union identified in its assessment of “forgotten crises” for 2024.⁷³ The list reflects crises “that have been forgotten by international media and donors, leading to a dire lack of funding and an absence of any meaningful efforts to resolve their situation.”⁷⁴

Testimony about Sudan and the DRC drew attention to the need for renewed diplomatic energy from the international community, including Canada, both in terms of conflict prevention and resolution. To this point, the committee was told that the conflict in Sudan “was entirely predictable.”⁷⁵ The dispute that erupted in April 2023 between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces was borne from a failed democratic transition and triggered by the “effort to reform both [forces] and incorporate them into one new national army.”⁷⁶ Once these two forces, who had been largely left to themselves to negotiate this merger, determined that “there was little recourse but to fight, there was no one there to step in.”⁷⁷ When the battle began in Khartoum and then spread, Western governments “were all far too concerned with getting their own nationals and their own diplomats out of Sudan,” which caused them to lose their “footing in the country.” There has been a “diplomatic deficit” ever since.⁷⁸

69 Doctors Without Borders, [written brief](#), 31 May 2024, p. 3.

70 Ibid.

71 United Nations, “[Military Group’s Expansion in Democratic Republic of Congo ‘Carries Very Real Risk of Provoking Wider Regional Conflict’](#), Mission Head Tells Security Council,” *Meetings Coverage and Press Releases*, SC/15760, 8 July 2024; United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Sudan, [Briefing to the Security Council on the Humanitarian Situation in Sudan \(18 June 2024\)](#), 19 June 2024; and OCHA, Financial Tracking Service, [Coordinated plans 2024](#), accessed 25 July 2024.

72 Canadian Red Cross, [written brief](#), 24 May 2024, p. 3.

73 European Commission, European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations, [Forgotten crises](#).

74 Canadian Red Cross, [written brief](#), 24 May 2024, p. 3.

75 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 17 April 2024, 1720 (Cameron Hudson).

76 Ibid.

77 Ibid.

78 Ibid.



It was impressed on the committee that “resolving conflicts is not the work of humanitarians. It’s the responsibility of states.”⁷⁹

The stability of these two countries is systemically important for Africa. The DRC has an estimated population of 115 million people. The country is the heart of Central Africa, with nine surrounding neighbours. Sudan, a country of some 50 million people that borders seven states, is considered one of the bridges between North and Sub-Saharan Africa, and between Africa and the Gulf states. In June 2024, the UN Secretary-General warned the Security Council about “the risk of the imminent, fully fledged regionalization of the conflict in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo.”⁸⁰ In this study, the committee was reminded of the spillover of the conflict in Sudan, which has also been affected by regional meddling.⁸¹ At the same time, Chad has been “bearing a significant amount of the humanitarian burden” from the conflict in Sudan. Yet those who have been forced to flee into eastern Chad “have been met with a deeply insufficient humanitarian response and located in camps with extremely difficult environmental conditions.”⁸² Chad, which was another of the WFP’s “corporate-level emergencies” in 2023, has been hosting “more than one million Sudanese refugees, making it home to one of the largest and fastest-growing refugee populations in Africa and the world.”⁸³

Finally, while the conflicts in the eastern DRC and Sudan have unfolded over different time spans and are being driven by their own complexities, one common thread may be fragility. Of the countries around the world that were assessed to be of greatest concern on the Fragile States Index for 2024, Sudan ranked 2nd and the DRC ranked 5th.⁸⁴ The variations across the African continent according to indicators of fragility can be seen in figure 3.

79 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 8 May 2024, 1755 (Dr. Jason Nickerson).

80 [United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo: Report of the Secretary-General](#), United Nations Security Council, S/2024/482, 20 June 2024, para 93. For detailed information on the use of armed groups in the DRC as proxies and the engagement of regional military forces in the DRC, see [Final report of the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo](#), United Nations Security Council, S/2024/432, 4 June 2024.

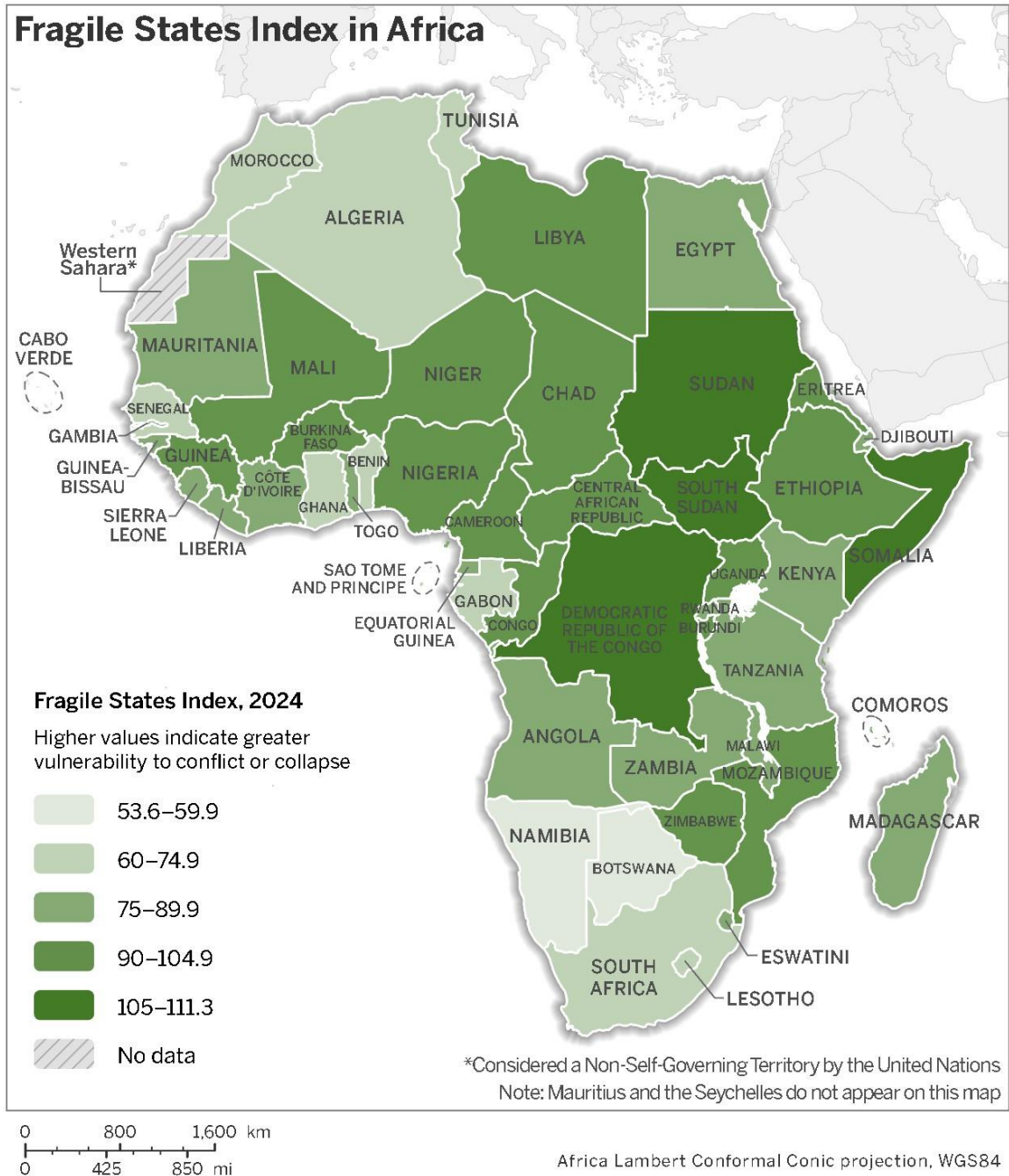
81 One witness said that Sudan’s civil war had spread “to the point that we can now talk about a Middle Eastern war unfolding in Sudan.” See FAAE, [Evidence](#), 17 April 2024, 1650 (Thierry Vircoulon). For further discussion of the influence of regional powers on Sudan’s war, see “[The ripple effects of Sudan’s war are being felt across three continents](#),” Briefing, *The Economist*, 29 August 2024.

82 Doctors Without Borders, [written brief](#), 31 May 2024, p. 4.

83 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 22 May 2024, 1720 (Edith Heines).

84 The Fund for Peace, “[Global Data](#),” *Fragile States Index*.

Figure 3—Fragility Across the African Continent



Sources: Map prepared in 2024, using data obtained from the Fund for Peace, [Fragile States Index 2024](#); Natural Earth, [1:50m Cultural Vectors](#) and [1:50m Physical Vectors](#), version 5.1.1. The following software was used: Esri, ArcGIS Pro, version 3.2.2.



AFRICA'S STRATEGIC EMERGENCE

Commercial and geopolitical considerations are driving Africa's strategic emergence. The economic drivers, including the continent's youthful population, were outlined earlier in this report. This section is concerned with Africa's increasing diplomatic importance, which one witness said, places Africa "at the fulcrum of growing world order tensions."⁸⁵

A Highly Competitive Environment

According to Global Affairs Canada, Africa has become "strategically important amidst growing polarization globally, changing multilateral collaboration and evolving global value chains."⁸⁶ The department summarized the implications as follows:

African leaders are diversifying their international partnerships and fostering stronger relationships with global economic powers like China and India, partners like [Türkiye] and the Gulf States, and, in some cases, engaging in open military relationships with Russia. They are doing this bilaterally and through multilateral fora such as BRICS and the [Group of Twenty, G20].⁸⁷

In addition to these fora, the committee was reminded that African states hold three of the non-permanent seats on the 15-member UN Security Council and that, as a region, the 54 African countries represent the largest voting bloc in the UN General Assembly.⁸⁸ They are seeking permanent representation on the Security Council as part of the drive to correct inequities in the governance of key international institutions and ensure that Africa is an influential global player.⁸⁹

85 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 15 April 2024, 1535 (David Black).

86 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 10 April 2024, 1650 (Cheryl Urban).

87 Ibid. BRICS was originally conceived as a grouping of key emerging economies—Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa. At the 15th BRICS summit in 2023, Egypt and Ethiopia were among the countries that were invited to join as of 1 January 2024. See Marc Jütten and Dorothee Falkenberg, [Expansion of BRICS: A quest for greater global influence?](#), Briefing, European Parliamentary Research Service, March 2024, p. 2.

88 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 17 April 2024, 1655 (Cameron Hudson).

89 This is aspiration 7 of Agenda 2063. Also see African Union Commission, [Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want](#), 2015, para 62. What is known as the "Common African Position" calls for Africa "to have two permanent seats with veto rights and five non-permanent seats on the Security Council." See "[High-level Debate on 'Addressing the historical injustice and enhancing Africa's effective representation on the UN Security Council'](#)," *What's in Blue*, Security Council Report, 9 August 2024.

Canadian Ambassadors posted in African countries described a “highly competitive environment”⁹⁰ in both the commercial and diplomatic spaces. Other states are recognizing the stakes, the committee was told, and “really bringing everything they can to the table.”⁹¹ Türkiye, for example, has significantly expanded its diplomatic capacity in Africa.⁹² Reporting indicates that Türkiye now has 44 embassies on the continent.⁹³ In other words, twice as many as Canada.

Two key players are Russia and China, whose objectives were addressed by several witnesses. Russia’s activities in Africa and the motives driving them were framed with greater concern. The committee heard that,

Russia ... in recent years has found in the region 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 Africa’s principled opposition to Russia’s invasion of Ukraine and related human rights abuses and to sow dissent against Africa’s traditional partners. It portrays Moscow, in the historical image, as siding with Africa’s independence-minded leaders against what many on the continent see as a kind of western neo-colonialism.⁹⁴

Despite the narratives that Russia projects about itself as part of its quest to build influence in Africa, the evidence shows that its activities are having negative impacts on civilians. For example, previous testimony the committee received about the Wagner Group linked it to accusations of human rights violations, including reports “that its troops regularly targeted civilians and attacked them opportunistically, including by committing sexual violence and pillaging.”⁹⁵

China has significant commercial interests in Africa, including with respect to infrastructure, critical mineral supplies, and other commodities. It has also long seen

90 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 27 May 2024, 1630 (Christopher Thornley, High Commissioner for Canada in the Republic of Kenya, Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development).

91 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 27 May 2024, 1630 (Ambassador Michael Callan).

92 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 27 May 2024, 1630 (High Commissioner Christopher Thornley).

93 Aanu Adeoye, Adam Samson and Aditi Bhandari, “[Turkey’s expanding leverage in Africa](#),” *Financial Times*, 27 August 2024.

94 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 17 April 2024, 1655 (Cameron Hudson).

95 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 13 June 2023, 1110 (Heidi Hulan, Assistant Deputy Minister and Political Director, International Security, Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development).



Africa as “an important arena in which to challenge the rules-based international order and advance its geopolitical interests.”⁹⁶

Yet, testimony drew attention to nuances, cautioning the committee against viewing Russia and China interchangeably. One academic argued that the two powers are pursuing different means and ends in Africa. According to this perspective, “Russia is certainly trying to disrupt democracy, freedom and security,” but “China is basically interested in stability.”⁹⁷ After suggesting that Russia’s agenda in Africa is largely “political,” while China “mainly competes at the economic level,” this same witness stressed that the emerging strategic context in Africa involves multiple state actors and “is highly complex.”⁹⁸ Although he later acknowledged that there are “certainly both economic and strategic objectives” underlying the infrastructure corridors that China is trying to establish across Eurasia and Africa, he does not believe that the aim is to transform regimes along the way.⁹⁹ To make this point, he noted that China had been on “good terms” with the government that was ousted by a military coup in Niger. Once the situation settled with the new regime, it was “back to business as usual.”¹⁰⁰

Testimony also emphasized that Africa should not be viewed as a passive arena in which external ambitions are playing out. African perspectives are critical to understanding the relationships that are forming and thriving, as well as the positions that are being adopted on international issues.

These perspectives are being influenced by a “deep sense of disaffection with the world as it has been constituted” and “anti-colonial push-back.”¹⁰¹ As one witness explained, “Many African leaders see their countries as victims of the post-World War II international order.”¹⁰² This view stems, in part, from the negative impacts of the structural adjustment programs and policy conditionalities that were advanced and imposed by the international financial institutions and Western donors. It is also a reaction to the West’s “long-time support for African strongmen,” as well as the West’s “willingness to topple those opposed to its interests,” as is perceived to be the case with the 2011 NATO operation against

96 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 17 April 2024, 1655 (Cameron Hudson).

97 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 29 April 2024, 1620 (Mamoudou Gazibo).

98 [Ibid.](#)

99 [Ibid.](#)

100 [Ibid.](#)

101 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 15 April 2024, 1620 (David Black).

102 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 17 April 2024, 1655 (Cameron Hudson).

Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi.¹⁰³ All these considerations, the committee was told, “have hurt the west’s credibility with African partners that it now tries to sell on an agenda of shared values.”¹⁰⁴

Although China and Russia “are effectively using this history to advance their agendas,” the AU’s own vision for the continent’s future—which will be discussed next—identified the creation of a multipolar international system as being “in Africa’s interest.”¹⁰⁵ Such a system is seen as offering more options for relationships and greater competition for Africa’s influence. Or, put another way, less dependence on traditional partners and more “strategic leverage.”¹⁰⁶

A New Pan-Africanism

In 2013, the AU members put forward a “collective vision and roadmap” that established, in their words, “The Africa We Want.”¹⁰⁷ Agenda 2063 is meant to be achieved through the prioritization of “inclusive social and economic development, continental and regional integration, democratic governance and peace and security,” with the view to “repositioning Africa to becoming a dominant player in the global arena.”¹⁰⁸ The agenda includes seven aspirations, underpinned by targets.¹⁰⁹ It was framed to the committee as “the cornerstone of the continent’s future.”¹¹⁰

Agenda 2063 represents a re-dedication to the principles and ideals of Pan-Africanism, which reflect the desire to build a continent that is integrated, prosperous and peaceful, driven by its own citizens, responsible for its own destiny, and fulfilling its rightful place in the international system.¹¹¹ This Pan-African movement has taken shape over

103 Ibid.

104 Ibid.

105 Ibid., 1700.

106 FAAE, *Evidence*, 29 April 2024, 1600 (Mamoudou Gazibo).

107 African Union Commission, *Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want*, 2015.

108 African Union, “*Overview*,” *Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want*.

109 FAAE, *Evidence*, 17 April 2024, 1820 (Issiaka Mandé, Professor, Université du Québec à Montréal, as an Individual). Also see African Union, “*Our Aspirations for the Africa We Want*,” *Agenda 2063*.

110 FAAE, *Evidence*, 27 May 2024, 1600 (Ben Marc Diendéré, Permanent Observer to the African Union and United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development).

111 *50th Anniversary Solemn Declaration*, Adopted by the 21st Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union, at Addis Ababa, 26 May 2013.



decades, but the committee was told that Agenda 2063 represents a new phase.¹¹² Under the auspices of the AU, which in 2023 became a permanent member of the G20, African countries “have moved much more systematically towards that vision and to operationalizing that vision.”¹¹³ In addition to functioning “increasingly as a bloc in a variety of multilateral settings,” African countries are shifting away from being “policy takers” and becoming “much more policy asserters.” Canada and others, the committee was told, must now “get used to that idea.”¹¹⁴

One of Agenda 2063’s “flagship projects” is the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).¹¹⁵ Testimony cited a World Bank study¹¹⁶ which indicated that this agreement “will create the largest free trade area in the world measured by the number of countries participating.”¹¹⁷ These countries have a combined gross domestic product valued at US\$3.4 trillion. By 2035, the agreement has the potential to lift “an additional 30 million people from extreme poverty and 68 million people from moderate poverty.”¹¹⁸ Real income gains could increase by 7%, or nearly US\$450 billion, although these “aggregate numbers mask the heterogeneity of impacts across countries and sectors.”¹¹⁹ In general, all the agreement’s estimated gains depend on its full implementation. Given the national policy reforms and trade facilitation measures involved, the road ahead is expected to be long.¹²⁰ As testimony put it, this continental initiative is “the real name of the game at the moment,” but it is “nascent” and must be given time to develop.¹²¹ The Canadian government has committed funding in support of AfCFTA’s implementation through the African Trade Policy Centre of the UN Economic Commission for Africa.¹²²

112 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 10 April 2024, 1745 (Susan Steffen, Director General, Pan-Africa Bureau, Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development).

113 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 15 April 2024, 1625 (David Black).

114 Ibid.

115 African Union, “[Flagship Projects of Agenda 2063](#),” *Agenda 2063*.

116 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 17 April 2024, 1815 (Landry Signé).

117 World Bank, [The African Continental Free Trade Area: Economic and Distributional Effects](#), World Bank, 2020, p. 1.

118 Ibid., p. ix.

119 Ibid., p. 3.

120 Ibid., pp. 8–9.

121 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 10 April 2024, 1735 (Cheryl Urban).

122 Prime Minister of Canada, Justin Trudeau, [Prime Minister Trudeau announces additional support for hard-hit African economies](#), 18 May 2021.

CANADA'S LEGACIES AND LAPSES

As Canada navigates the new political and economic dynamics in Africa, there is a historical record on which it can build. Prominent examples of engagement include the development and humanitarian projects delivered by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) over decades beginning in the 1960s.¹²³ Also notable is the role Canada played in supporting the struggle to end apartheid in South Africa in the 1980s, as well as its work to spearhead the African Action Plan when Canada hosted what was then the Group of Eight (G8)¹²⁴—and African leaders—in Kananaskis in 2002.

The committee heard, however, that, in the years that followed, the Government of Canada stepped back from Africa and lost its diplomatic momentum.¹²⁵ In the words of one witness, what had already been an “intermittent African impulse” largely dissipated after the mid-2000s.¹²⁶ The focus shifted elsewhere, including to Canada’s whole-of-government efforts to help stabilize Afghanistan.¹²⁷ Without any sustained or high-level interest in Africa at the level of official Canadian policy, a perception of “relative indifference” took hold.¹²⁸ This significant decline in Canada’s profile, presence, and relevance¹²⁹ occurred at “precisely the same time as many other governments were recognizing Africa’s growing economic, security, diplomatic and political importance and undertaking new initiatives to forge deeper and more strategic relationships.”¹³⁰

The task ahead, therefore, appears to be reversing this “disengagement”¹³¹ and entrenching an approach that will endure because it is based on shared interests and a

123 The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), which was created in 1968 to administer the bulk of Canada’s official development assistance (ODA), was amalgamated with Canada’s Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade in 2013 to form the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development. The amalgamated department was renamed Global Affairs Canada in 2015. The committee was told that CIDA had been “Canada’s most visible brand on the [African] continent.” See FAAE, [Evidence](#), 22 May 2024, 1755 (Nicolas Moyer, Chief Executive Officer, Cuso International).

124 Russia was formally admitted to the Group of Seven (G7) in 1997, creating a G8, but it was indefinitely suspended in 2014 in the wake of Russia’s illegal annexation of Ukraine’s Crimea region.

125 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 15 April 2024, 1710 (Edward Akuffo, Associate Professor and Head, Department of Political Science, University of the Fraser Valley, as an Individual).

126 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 15 April 2024, 1535 (David Black).

127 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 15 April 2024, 1710 (Edward Akuffo).

128 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 15 April 2024, 1535 (David Black).

129 See FAAE, [Evidence](#), 29 April 2024, 1705 (Jean-Louis Roy, President, Partenariat International); and FAAE, [Evidence](#), 1755, 22 May 2024 (Nicolas Moyer).

130 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 15 April 2024, 1535 (David Black).

131 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 22 May 2024, 1755 (Nicolas Moyer).



realistic assessment of the sectors in which Canadian advantages align with African priorities. Accomplishing this task, which is the focus of the remainder of this report, will not be easy. The committee was warned that Canada is starting from the point of being “at least two decades behind when it comes to deepening its engagement on the African continent.”¹³² Nevertheless, the window has not closed. Canada is still choosing to reengage at “a pivotal moment for security and economic transformation in the region.”¹³³ Time is, however, of the essence. It was impressed on the committee that the longer Canada’s “estrangement” with Africa persists, “the more challenging it will be to repair.”¹³⁴

CANADA’S BASELINE

Before considering how Canada should recalibrate its approach to Africa for the years to come, the committee sought to understand the details of Canada’s current level of engagement. This section provides that baseline—of Canada’s aid, as well as its trade and investment activity, security cooperation, and diplomatic network on the continent. Even though these paragraphs summarize Canada’s direct role, which is the subject of this report, the committee is also aware that Canada engages with African countries as a member of the G7, including through joint initiatives like the Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment.¹³⁵

International Assistance

Briefing documents prepared by Global Affairs Canada characterize development cooperation as still being “central” to Canada’s engagement with African countries and institutions.¹³⁶ In 2022–2023, 10 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa were among Canada’s top-20 recipients of international assistance. After Ukraine (\$5.44 billion), Nigeria was the second highest overall recipient of Canadian international assistance (\$277 million), followed by Ethiopia (\$251 million). In total, around \$4.1 billion was allocated to Africa in 2022–2023, or almost 26% of the \$16 billion Canada provided to all recipients that year.¹³⁷ Prior to the surge in support to Ukraine that followed Russia’s full-scale invasion

132 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 15 April 2024, 1635 (Edward Akuffo).

133 Ibid.

134 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 22 May 2024, 1755 (Nicolas Moyer).

135 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 10 April 2024, 1810 (Cheryl Urban).

136 Global Affairs Canada, [Deputy Minister of International Development appearance before the Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade \(AEFA\) on Canada’s engagements and interests in Africa](#), 3 May 2024.

137 Global Affairs Canada, [Statistical Report on International Assistance 2022–2023](#), 2024.

of that country on 24 February 2022, Africa accounted for a higher share of Canada's international assistance, as can be seen in table 1.¹³⁸

Table 1—Canadian International Assistance Allocated to Africa

Fiscal Year	2017–2018	2018–2019	2019–2020	2020–2021	2021–2022	2022–2023
Canadian International Assistance Allocated to Africa (\$ billions)	2.36	2.50	2.47	3.68	3.64	4.10
Total Canadian International Assistance (\$ billions)	6.10	6.39	6.62	8.43	8.40	16.05
Proportion of Total Canadian International Assistance Allocated to Africa	39%	39%	37%	44%	43%	26%

Notes: Figures have been rounded and reflect Canada's international assistance to Sub-Saharan Africa and North Africa.

In addition to expenditures allocated to regions, Canada's total international assistance for each fiscal year includes "unallocable aid," which the government's statistical reports indicate "cannot be identified for any particular recipient or sector (e.g. cost of refugees in Canada)." In fiscal year 2022–2023, this unallocable aid was almost \$2.5 billion.

Source: Government of Canada, *DevData dashboard: Global Affairs Canada*, database, accessed 10 July 2024.

Data indicate that Canada has been a consistent development partner for the African continent. Canada accounted for almost 5% of the official development assistance

138 In 2022–2023, for example, the Government of Canada provided \$4.85 billion in loans to Ukraine through the Department of Finance "to help meet Ukraine's urgent balance of payments needs and support its macroeconomic stability." Only the grant equivalent of these loans was reported as ODA. See Global Affairs Canada, *Statistical Report on International Assistance 2022–2023*, 2024.



(ODA)¹³⁹ that the 32 members of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) provided to Africa in 2012, and again in 2022.¹⁴⁰ That said, the committee was informed that the Government of Canada did not fulfill the commitment it made in its 2017 Feminist International Assistance Policy to devote 50% of Canada’s bilateral development assistance to Sub-Saharan Africa by 2021–2022.¹⁴¹

The bulk of Canada’s international assistance to Africa is being delivered through multilateral channels, as is shown in figure 4. Health is the sector that has received the most funding. The \$5.72 billion spent on health and sexual and reproductive health rights in Africa from 2017–2018 to 2022–2023, as shown in figure 5, comprised support for the following activities, among other sub-sectors: COVID-19 control (\$1.26 billion); control of sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS (\$618 million); malaria control (\$472 million); nutrition (\$470 million); infectious disease control (\$454 million); basic health care (\$451 million); reproductive health care (\$412 million); and health policy and administrative management (\$303 million).¹⁴² This study was not focused on health, or any other sector, but the committee was reminded of key indicators and their gender dimensions. Examples included that “70% of global maternal mortality is in sub-Saharan Africa,”¹⁴³ and that rates of HIV and new HIV infections among adolescent girls

139 ODA is a term used at the international level that allows for comparative analysis. It is defined by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) as “assistance that flows to countries and territories on the DAC list of ODA recipients and to multilateral institutions. Funding must be provided by official agencies, including state and local governments, or by their executive agencies. Each transaction must be administered with the promotion of the economic development and welfare of developing countries as its main objective and/or is concessional in character.” The Government of Canada usually reports statistics according to the term that it uses—“international assistance.” This assistance is defined as including “all financial resources and activities provided by Canadian governments (federal, provincial, territorial or municipal) to support economic, environmental, social and political development in other (primarily developing) countries.” According to the Government of Canada, the “vast majority” of Canada’s international assistance is ODA. The remaining “other official assistance”—also known as non-ODA—is generally allocated to security and stabilization programs (e.g., counter-terrorism capacity building). See Global Affairs Canada, [Statistical Report on International Assistance 2022–2023](#), 2024.

140 According to the OECD, Canada accounted for almost US\$1.82 billion of the more than US\$38.3 billion in ODA provided to Africa by all DAC members in 2012, and around US\$1.89 billion of the US\$39.6 billion in 2022 (in constant prices). See OECD, “[Detailed aid statistics: ODA Official development assistance: disbursements](#),” OECD International Development Statistics, 2024, database, accessed on 30 September 2024. For the 32 members of the DAC, see OECD, [Development Assistance Committee](#).

141 Results Canada, [written brief](#), 9 July 2024.

142 Government of Canada, [DevData dashboard: Global Affairs Canada](#), database, accessed 10 July 2024.

143 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 10 April 2024, 1800 (Cheryl Urban).

and young women in Africa are “three times higher than are rates for their male peers.”¹⁴⁴

In addition to the concerns that were raised by several organizations about vaccine production and vaccine equity in Africa, the committee was informed more specifically that Africa has equity gaps in accessing important diagnostics that are essential to basic primary health across the continent. One submission urged Canada to assist in the creation of diagnostic strategies, such as diagnostic priority lists, to help manage ongoing healthcare crises across the continent. It was noted that Africa has requested support regarding pandemic preparedness, with a focus on research and development, knowledge sharing, and collaboration to strengthen Africa’s health systems. The climate crisis is further exacerbating health crises on the continent, including with respect to malaria, dengue, and cholera. Information provided to the committee indicated that Canada should, therefore, consider how to address the climate crisis and its impacts on health. The committee was informed that Canada’s assistance in the healthcare sector, specifically for access to diagnostics relevant to primary care, can help to advance health security and universal health coverage (UHC) in Africa.¹⁴⁵

Almost 67% of Canada’s total international assistance to Africa contributed to the gender equality “policy marker” in a significant capacity, and 7.4% in a principal capacity.¹⁴⁶ The government uses these qualitative markers to code expenditures being made in all sectors to collect data on cross-cutting policy objectives.¹⁴⁷ Further to Canada’s Feminist International Assistance Policy, departmental officials framed Canada as “a leader and trusted partner in gender equality and feminist approaches in Africa.”¹⁴⁸ They told the committee that Canada has “carved out a niche for itself helping women and girls, focusing on education and on women’s and girls’ health.”¹⁴⁹

144 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 15 April 2024, 1700 (Meg French, Executive Director, Stephen Lewis Foundation).

145 FIND, [written brief](#), 10 September 2024.

146 Government of Canada, [DevData dashboard: Global Affairs Canada](#), database, accessed 12 August 2024.

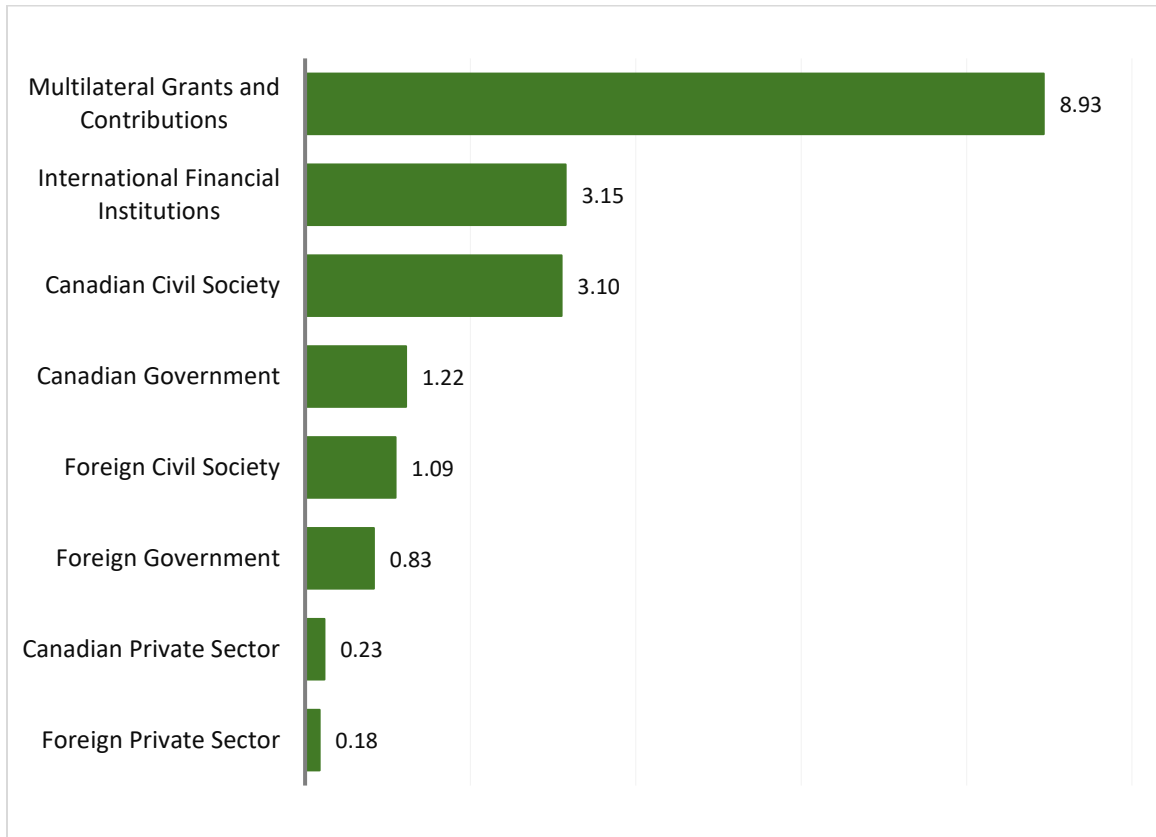
147 Another example of a “policy marker” is climate change adaptation. For further information, see Government of Canada, [Coding tables](#).

148 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 10 April 2024, 1650 (Cheryl Urban).

149 Ibid., [1705](#).

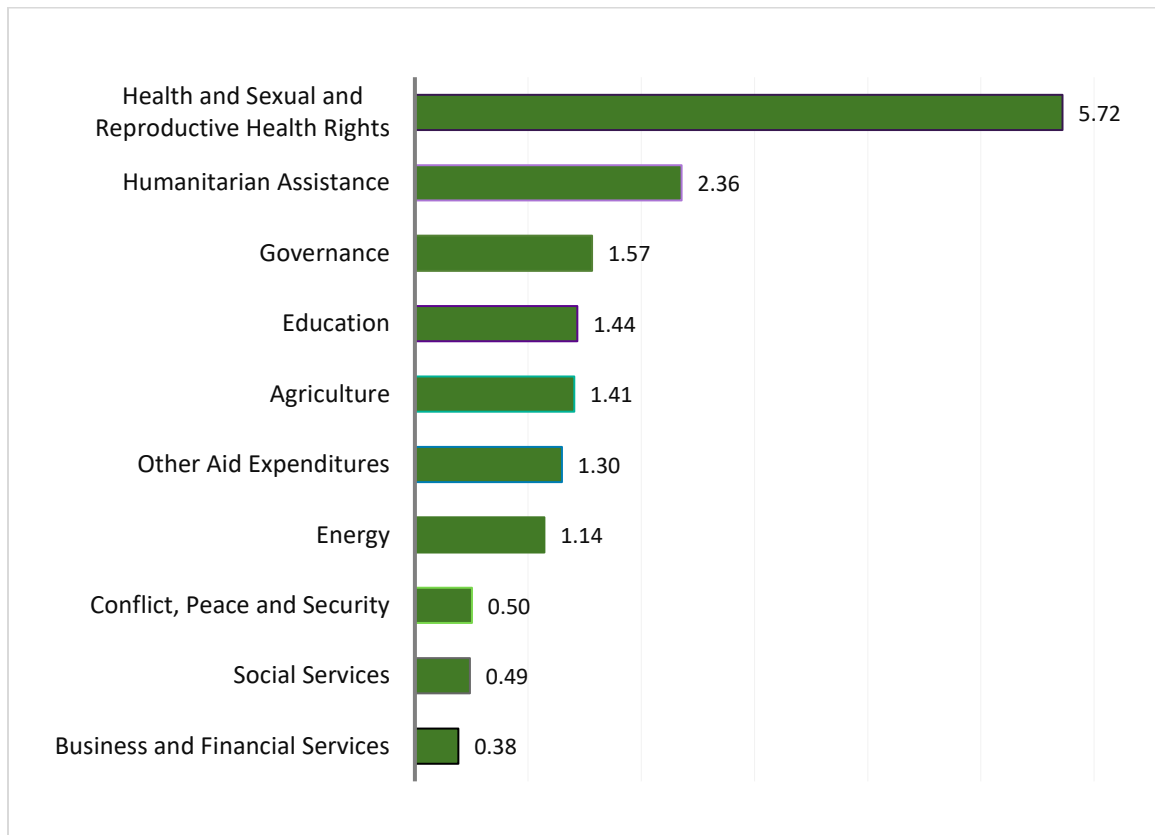


Figure 4—Channels of Canada’s International Assistance to Africa, Total, 2017–2018 to 2022–2023 (\$ billions)



Source: Government of Canada, [DevData dashboard: Global Affairs Canada](#), database, accessed 10 July 2024.

Figure 5—Top-10 Sectors of Canadian International Assistance Spending in Africa, Total, 2017–2018 to 2022–2023 (\$ billions)



Source: Government of Canada, [DevData dashboard: Global Affairs Canada](#), database, accessed 10 July 2024.

As can be seen below in table 2, the top country recipients of Canada’s international assistance are experiencing a range of development contexts, according to the UN human development index, which is a composite of life expectancy, educational attainment, and standards of living based on gross national income per capita. These 10 countries are also being governed by different types of regimes. When it comes to development assistance, the department did not provide any details regarding the Government of Canada’s criteria for prioritizing—or withdrawing from—countries and sectors, beyond the information noted above concerning the overall focus on women and girls. Humanitarian assistance, which is the other component of Canada’s international assistance, and designed to meet basic needs in situations of conflict and crisis, was described by a departmental official as



being relatively “constant.”¹⁵⁰ In 2022–2023, Canada provided \$409 million in humanitarian assistance to Africa.¹⁵¹ That figure was \$463 million in 2021–2022¹⁵² and \$458 million in 2020–2021.¹⁵³

150 FAAE, *Evidence*, 10 April 2024, 1830 (Marcel Lebleu, Director General, West and Central African Bureau, Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development).

151 Global Affairs Canada, *Statistical Report on International Assistance 2022–2023*, 2024.

152 Global Affairs Canada, *Statistical Report on International Assistance 2021–2022*, 2023.

153 Global Affairs Canada, *Statistical Report on International Assistance 2020–2021*, 2022.

Table 2—Top-10 Recipients of Canadian International Assistance in Africa, by Country

Country	Total International Assistance from Canada, 2022–2023	Human Development Index Ranking, 2022 (out of 193)	Regime type, 2023
Nigeria	\$277 million	161 st	Hybrid regime
Ethiopia	\$251 million	176 th	Authoritarian
Tanzania	\$229 million	167 th	Hybrid regime
Democratic Republic of the Congo	\$207 million	180 th	Authoritarian
Mozambique	\$173 million	183 rd	Authoritarian
Kenya	\$155 million	146 th	Hybrid regime
Senegal	\$139 million	169 th	Hybrid regime
South Sudan	\$136 million	192 nd	n/a
Mali	\$128 million	188 th	Authoritarian
Ghana	\$117 million	145 th	Flawed democracy

Notes: According to the Economist Intelligence Unit’s classification system, a “flawed democracy” is one in which there may be issues such as infringements on media freedom and institutional weaknesses, but free and fair elections are held, and basic civil liberties are respected. “Hybrid regimes” are those in which there are substantial election irregularities and prevalent government pressure on opposition parties and candidates.

Sources: Global Affairs Canada, *Statistical Report on International Assistance 2022-2023*, 2024; United Nations Development Programme, “*Human Development Insights*,” *Human Development Reports*, 2024; and Economist Intelligence Unit, *Democracy Index 2023: Age of Conflict*, 2024.

Trade and Investment

While Canada has free trade agreements that cover most of Europe, North America, and several countries in the Indo-Pacific and Americas regions, it has none with countries in Africa. In 2023, the total value of Canada’s merchandise exports to—and merchandise imports from—African countries was \$5.8 billion and \$10.5 billion, respectively. Export values did increase somewhat between 2014 and 2023, but as is shown in table 3 and figure 6, African countries still receive a very small proportion of Canada’s global



exports—0.76%. From a comparative perspective, figure 7 shows that, although Canada accounts for a relatively small proportion of Africa’s imports relative to the rest of the G7 and the other countries discussed in this report, the total value increased between 2003 and 2023.

There are 16 Canadian Trade Commissioners in Africa, as well as 47 locally engaged trade commissioners.¹⁵⁴ Global Affairs Canada told the committee that the presence of Canada’s trade commissioner network in Africa “is relatively small.”¹⁵⁵ The market coverage was described as “partial.”¹⁵⁶

154 Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development, written response to questions, 18 September 2024.

155 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 10 April 2024, 1815 (Marcel Lebleu).

156 [Ibid.](#)

**Table 3—Top-10 Destinations in Africa for Canadian Merchandise Exports
in 2023**

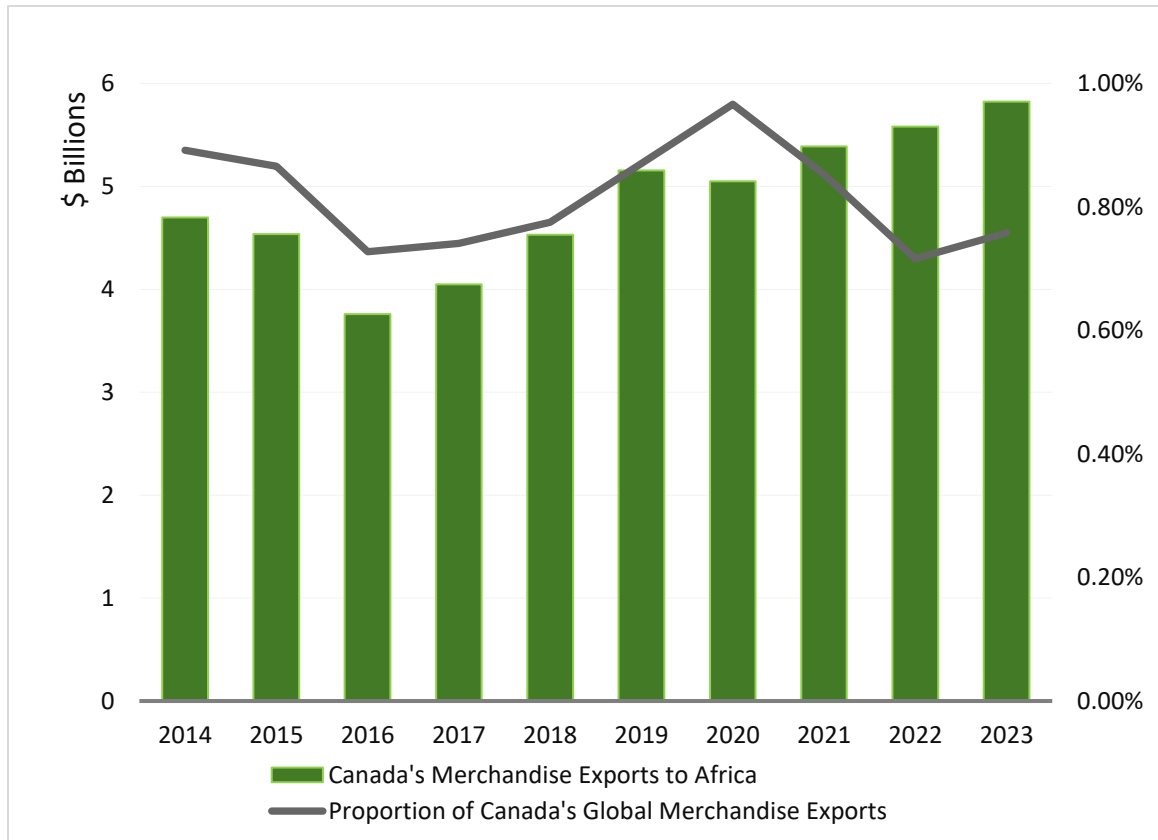
Country	Value (\$)
Algeria	1.3 billion
Morocco	797 million
Nigeria	571 million
South Africa	462 million
Egypt	395 million
Botswana	340 million
Ghana	281 million
Tunisia	173 million
Libya	133 million
Côte-d'Ivoire	131 million
Total for Top-10 Export Destinations in Africa	4.6 billion
Total for All Countries in Africa	5.8 billion
Total for All Countries Globally	768.3 billion

Note: All figures in the table have been rounded.

Source: Statistics Canada, "[Canadian total exports](#)," *Trade Data Online*, database, accessed 13 August 2024.



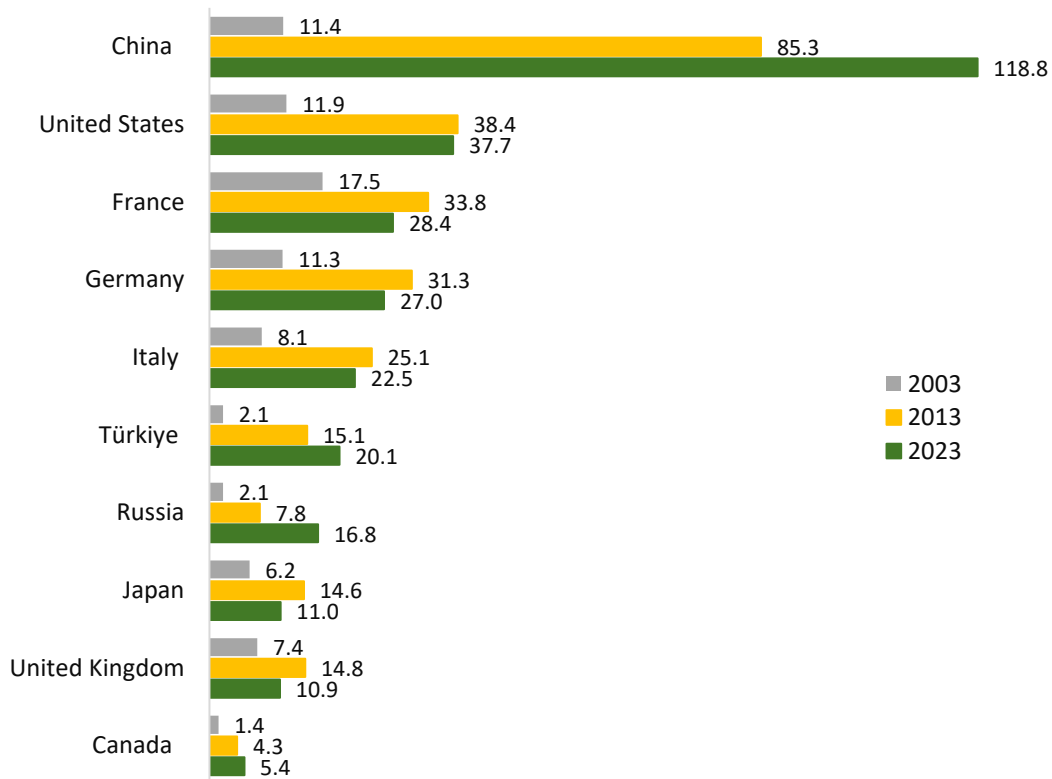
Figure 6—Canadian Merchandise Exports to African Countries, 2014–2023



Note: The calculations reflect the 55 [members](#) of the African Union.

Source: Statistics Canada, "[Canadian total exports](#)," *Trade Data Online*, database, accessed 11 July 2024.

Figure 7—Africa’s Merchandise Imports from Selected Countries (2003, 2013 and 2023), \$US billions



Note: Numbers have been rounded for visualization purposes.

Source: International Monetary Fund, “Imports CIF from Partner Countries, Africa, US Dollars Millions,” database, accessed 11 October 2024.

Canada has Foreign Investment Promotion and Protection Agreements (FIPAs) with eight countries in Africa—Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d’Ivoire, Egypt, Guinea, Mali, and Senegal. Several other countries have been the subject of FIPA negotiations, while the Canada–Tanzania FIPA was terminated at the latter’s request.¹⁵⁷ The committee was told that these agreements provide Canadian investors with greater protection and increased predictability.¹⁵⁸ However, from Canada’s list of FIPAs, only Egypt (2nd largest) and Côte d’Ivoire (tied for 10th) were among Africa’s 10-largest economies as of 2022 (as listed earlier in figure 1). Overall, as shown in table 4, Canada’s stock of investments in

157 Government of Canada, *Trade and investment agreements*.

158 FAAE, *Evidence*, 10 April 2024, 1650 (Cheryl Urban).



Africa is low relative to other regions of the world. It is also highly concentrated in mining.¹⁵⁹ Canada is not among the top-10 investors in Africa. To put the scale of Canada’s investment stock in a context, the Netherlands had the most foreign direct investment stock in Africa in 2022, with US\$109 billion, followed by France at US\$58 billion.¹⁶⁰

Table 4—Top-10 Destinations in Africa for Canadian Direct Investment Abroad, 2023

Country	Total Book Value (\$)
Mauritius	4.9 billion
Mali	1.9 billion
Namibia	1.1 billion
Burkina Faso	1.1 billion
South Africa	604 million
Côte d’Ivoire	365 million
Eswatini	328 million
Democratic Republic of the Congo	310 million
Senegal	236 million
Ghana	190 million
Africa Total	12.0 billion
All Countries Globally	2.2 trillion

Note: All figures in the table have been rounded.

Source: Statistics Canada, [Table 36-10-0008-01: International investment position, Canadian direct investment abroad and foreign direct investment in Canada, by country, annual \(x 1,000,000\)](#), accessed 12 August 2024.

159 Ibid. For details, see Statistics Canada, [Table 36-10-0659-01: International investment position, Canadian direct investment abroad and foreign direct investment in Canada, by industry and select countries, annual \(x 1,000,000\)](#), accessed 4 September 2024.

160 United Nations Trade and Development (UNCTAD), [Africa: Foreign investment in clean energy boosts sustainability momentum](#), 20 June 2024.

Security Assistance

When reflecting on Canada's contributions to Africa's peace and security architecture, one witness highlighted Canada's past role "working within the UN system for human security in Africa and around the world."¹⁶¹ Canadians led four UN peacekeeping forces in Africa in the 1990s, but have led none since that time.¹⁶²

As of June 2024, Canada was deploying 19 personnel—11 police officers and 8 staff officers—to the UN peacekeeping mission in the DRC, and 9 staff officers to the mission in South Sudan.¹⁶³ Nine of these 28 uniformed personnel were women.¹⁶⁴ An additional 39 Canadian Armed Forces members were deployed with the non-UN Multinational Force and Observers mission in Egypt's Sinai Peninsula.¹⁶⁵ To put Canada's contributions in context, there were more than 12,100 total personnel deployed to the UN mission in the DRC and more than 15,400 personnel deployed in South Sudan. More than 17,000 personnel—not including any Canadians—were also serving in the UN peacekeeping mission in the Central African Republic, and more than 3,200 were monitoring the disputed region of Abyei, which straddles the border between Sudan and South Sudan.¹⁶⁶ In all, Canada was contributing not quite 0.6% of the uniformed personnel deployed to UN missions in Africa.¹⁶⁷

These figures must also be understood within their broader national and geopolitical contexts. The UN Security Council has not authorized any major new deployments of UN peacekeepers in Africa since 2014.¹⁶⁸ The committee learned that there has been a

161 FAAE, *Evidence*, 29 April 2024, 1555 (Walter Dorn, Full Professor, Royal Military College of Canada, Department of Defence Studies, as an Individual).

162 Ibid.

163 United Nations Peacekeeping, *Contribution of Uniformed Personnel to UN by Mission, Country, and Personnel Type, as of 30 June 2024*.

164 United Nations Peacekeeping, *Contribution of Uniformed Personnel to UN by Country, Mission, and Personnel Type*, as of 30 June 2024.

165 FAAE, *Evidence*, 10 April 2024, 1720 (Major-General Gregory Smith, Director General, International Security Policy, Department of National Defence).

166 United Nations Peacekeeping, *Contribution of Uniformed Personnel to UN by Mission, Country, and Personnel Type, as of 30 June 2024*.

167 Ibid. The calculation is based on the total uniformed personnel deployed to the missions in the Western Sahara, Abyei, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and South Sudan as of 30 June 2024.

168 Obi Anyadike, *"The changing face of peacekeeping: What's gone wrong with the UN?," The New Humanitarian*, 9 July 2024.



“broader movement” underway to end these large UN missions.¹⁶⁹ Analysis also points to a shift in favour of “regionally led initiatives,” including those led by the AU.¹⁷⁰ The UN peacekeeping mission in Mali ended in December 2023. The mission in the DRC is undergoing a phased withdrawal, which was supposed to be completed by December 2024, but will likely now be extended due to the deteriorating security conditions.¹⁷¹ While the withdrawal demanded by Mali’s military authorities is considered a “special case,”¹⁷² perhaps reflecting the desire to avoid UN “oversight” of the regime’s human rights record,¹⁷³ the effectiveness of the mission in the DRC has been questioned, including by the host government. Even though the initial iteration of this mission was established in 1999, insecurity has persisted. As of 2024, there were “seven million displaced persons in eastern [DRC] and about 150 armed groups.”¹⁷⁴

The security challenges in Africa do not necessarily resemble those of previous decades when Canada was playing a more significant role. One witness noted the “positive” though “unsung” record of UN peacekeeping missions from the 1960s to 1990s.¹⁷⁵ However, another remarked that the conflict in the eastern DRC has taken on dimensions akin to “war fighting,” involving complexities that go beyond what would be considered “traditional” peacekeeping.¹⁷⁶

In addition to Canada’s financial contributions,¹⁷⁷ deployments, and tactical airlift in limited support of UN missions in Africa, Canada has also championed a diplomatic initiative—the Elsie Initiative. Its goal is “to help increase the meaningful participation of

169 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 17 April 2024, 1730 (Thierry Vircoulon).

170 Benjamin Petrini and Erica Pepe, “[Peacekeeping in Africa: from UN to regional Peace Support Operations](#),” *Online Analysis*, International Institute for Strategic Studies, 18 March 2024.

171 United Nations, “[Security Council Adopts Sweeping Resolution 2717 \(2023\) Outlining Peacekeepers’ Gradual, Responsible, Sustainable Withdrawal from Democratic Republic of Congo](#),” *Meetings Coverage and Press Releases*, SC/15538, 19 December 2023; and “[Congo UN peacekeepers pausing pullout, no timeline for next phase](#),” *Reuters*, 9 July 2024.

172 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 17 April 2024, 1730 (Thierry Vircoulon).

173 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 29 April 2024, 1615 (Walter Dorn).

174 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 17 April 2024, 1730 (Thierry Vircoulon).

175 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 29 April 2024, 1555 (Walter Dorn).

176 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 10 April 2024, 1720 (Major-General Gregory Smith).

177 Canada was the 8th largest contributor to the assessed budget for UN peacekeeping in 2023–2024, providing approximately \$191 million. Further to UN Security Council Resolution 2719, there is now a framework for using such assessed contributions to fund AU-led peace operations, on a case-by-case basis. See Global Affairs Canada, [Deputy Minister of International Development appearance before the Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade \(AEFA\) on Canada’s engagements and interests in Africa](#), 3 May 2024.

women in UN peace operations.”¹⁷⁸ Encompassing women serving in both police and military roles, the initiative aims to ensure “that substantially more women are represented across ranks and functions—in non-traditional roles and positions of authority; in assignments that correspond to their experience and training; and in an environment that offers parity of deployment conditions and a professional culture conducive to their participation.”¹⁷⁹ Ghana is Canada’s “primary bilateral partner in Africa” for this initiative.¹⁸⁰ Regarding other partners, the committee heard about the tangible results of the support that has been provided to Zambia. Policewomen there have had a pass rate of almost 100% in terms of the exams required to participate in peacekeeping missions.¹⁸¹

Beyond the UN system, Canada is currently serving as the NATO contact point for the AU. The Canadian military also delivers “episodic capacity development training” to some African countries through its military training and co-operation program.¹⁸²

Diplomatic Representation

There are 28 Canadian mission offices in Africa,¹⁸³ including 22 embassies (which are known as “high commissions” in Commonwealth countries). These are shown in figure 8.¹⁸⁴ Only one of Canada’s top-10 missions in the world, by size, is in Africa—in Nairobi, Kenya.¹⁸⁵ The mission in Nairobi is an example of one that serves as a regional hub. It also provides services to Canadians in Burundi, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, and Uganda.

178 Government of Canada, *Elsie Initiative for Women in Peace Operations*.

179 Ibid.

180 FAAE, *Evidence*, 10 April 2024, 1650 (Major-General Gregory Smith).

181 FAAE, *Evidence*, 10 April 2024, 1730 (Caroline Delany, Director General, Southern and Eastern Africa Bureau, Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development).

182 FAAE, *Evidence*, 10 April 2024, 1650 (Major-General Gregory Smith).

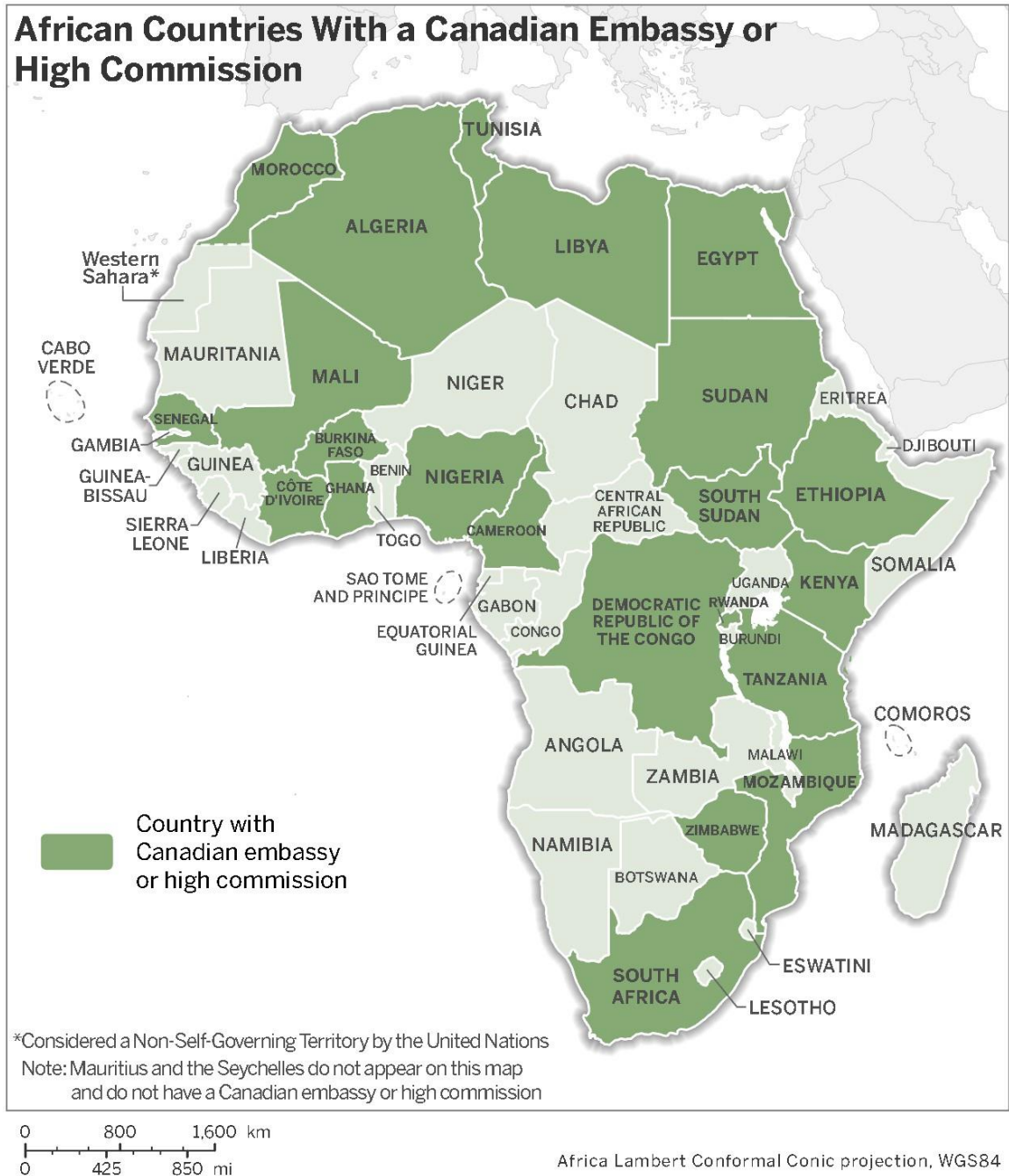
183 Global Affairs Canada, *Launch of public consultations on Canada’s approach to partnerships in Africa*, News release, 14 August 2024.

184 Embassies and High Commissions provide the full range of diplomatic services, including consular services.

185 Global Affairs Canada, *Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs appearance before the Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade (AEFA) on cultural diplomacy*, 3 November 2023.



Figure 8—African Countries with a Canadian Embassy or High Commission



Source: Map prepared in 2024, using data obtained from Government of Canada, [Embassies and consulates by destination](#); Natural Earth, [1:50m Cultural Vectors](#) and [1:50m Physical Vectors](#), version 5.1.1. The following software was used: Esri, ArcGIS Pro, version 3.2.2.

Canada is a long-standing member of both the Commonwealth and La Francophonie, and it became a member of the African Development Bank in 1982. Furthermore, as part of its diplomatic network in Africa, Canada has been accredited as a permanent observer to the AU since 2009. In 2023, the government appointed a full-time ambassador to lead Canada's permanent observer mission to the AU, which is headquartered in Addis Ababa.¹⁸⁶ Previously, the observer role had been managed by Canada's ambassador to Ethiopia. Through this dedicated capacity, Canada is trying to strengthen its engagement with the AU at both the political and technocratic levels.¹⁸⁷

Towards this same goal, in October 2022, the first-ever Canada-African Union Commission High-Level Dialogue was co-hosted by the Commission's chairperson and Canada's minister of foreign affairs, with Canada's trade and development ministers also in attendance.¹⁸⁸ This high-level dialogue, the committee was told, will be repeated "in due time."¹⁸⁹ While in Ottawa, the AU Commission chairperson met with Prime Minister Trudeau, who was the first Canadian prime minister to attend an AU Summit, in 2020.¹⁹⁰ In addition, the Government of Canada is pursuing trade and development policy dialogues with the AU Commission.¹⁹¹ During the development policy dialogue, which was held in May 2024, Canada announced that it would be doubling its grant to the AU Commission.¹⁹²

Canada is one of only five countries—along with the United States, Italy, Switzerland, and Japan—to have established a diplomatic representative who is dedicated to relations with the continent.¹⁹³ Even so, testimony referenced the need to balance

186 Global Affairs Canada, *Minister Joly announces expansion of diplomatic relations with Rwanda and appointment of new ambassador to African Union*, News release, 22 June 2022; and Global Affairs Canada, *Minister Hussen announces \$194-million funding to support education, sexual and reproductive rights, climate action, and peace and security in Ethiopia and Tanzania*, News release, 16 May 2024.

187 FAAE, *Evidence*, 10 April 2024, 1730 (Susan Steffen).

188 Global Affairs Canada, *Canada and African Union Commission conclude first high-level dialogue*, News release, 28 October 2022.

189 FAAE, *Evidence*, 10 April 2024, 1745 (Susan Steffen).

190 Prime Minister of Canada, Justin Trudeau, *African Union Commission Chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat to visit Canada*, News release, 21 October 2022.

191 Global Affairs Canada, *Minister Ng successfully concludes first Trade Policy Dialogue with African Union Commission*, News release, 17 May 2023; and Global Affairs Canada, *Minister Hussen announces \$194-million funding to support education, sexual and reproductive rights, climate action, and peace and security in Ethiopia and Tanzania*, News release, 16 May 2024.

192 African Union, *Inaugural Canada-AUC Dialogue Paves the Way for Stronger Africa-Canada Development Cooperation*, News release, 23 May 2024.

193 FAAE, *Evidence*, 27 May 2024, 1620 (Ben Marc Diendéré).



engagement with the AU, as an institution, and the national perspectives of Africa’s diverse countries. The committee was told that Canada is “the only G7 country not to have yet planned an in-country African summit.”¹⁹⁴ In addition to these G7 countries, such summits have been hosted by Russia, China, and Saudi Arabia, among others.¹⁹⁵

CANADA’S APPROACH

The Government of Canada’s engagement with Africa is being guided by the AU’s strategic vision for the continent, as expressed in Agenda 2063. According to Global Affairs Canada officials, Canada’s approach is also being anchored by “mutual priorities” and “informed by African solutions to African and global challenges.”¹⁹⁶ Fully embracing this approach is necessitating a shift in activities and mindsets. Africans are signalling to Canada that they “seek to move beyond the traditional donor-aid recipient relationship to mutually beneficial partnerships.”¹⁹⁷ They want to engage as peers.¹⁹⁸

The parameters of the Government of Canada’s approach to Africa and its level of ambition still appeared to be under consideration at the time of the committee’s hearings. When they testified in early April 2024, departmental officials noted that Canada’s Minister of International Trade had been mandated at the end of 2021 to develop an economic cooperation strategy for Africa.¹⁹⁹ Officials also referenced “a whole series of extensive consultations in Canada and Africa” that were held “with a view to getting input into how we can think about engagement with African countries.”²⁰⁰ These consultations took place “over a long period of time” and the inputs they gathered had been reviewed. The department indicated that it was in the process of articulating how all this information

194 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 15 April 2024, 1645 (Garreth Bloor, President, The Canada-Africa Chamber of Business).

195 Ibid.

196 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 10 April 2024, 1645 (Cheryl Urban).

197 Ibid., 1650.

198 Ibid., [1655](#).

199 The minister was mandated to develop a “strategy for economic cooperation across Africa, including support for the African Continental Free Trade Area, facilitation of increased infrastructure investment and expansion of partnerships in research and innovation.” See Prime Minister of Canada, Justin Trudeau, [Minister of International Trade, Export Promotion, Small Business and Economic Development Mandate Letter](#), 16 December 2021. According to the public consultation, which closed on 31 July 2023, the envisioned strategy “will seek to enhance commercial and economic cooperation relations with African countries and aim to support Canada’s overall goal of increasing and diversifying trade, investment and innovation with African partners.” See Government of Canada, [Join the discussion: consulting Canadians on a proposed economic cooperation strategy with Africa](#).

200 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 10 April 2024, 1710 (Cheryl Urban).

could “inform a Canadian strategy.”²⁰¹ Nevertheless, on 14 August 2024, Canada’s ministers of foreign affairs, trade, and development announced the launch of new public consultations on Canada’s approach to partnerships in Africa, which closed on 15 September 2024.²⁰² The accompanying documentation framed these consultations as the “final round.”²⁰³

When asked in April 2024 what the government’s process was intended to achieve, a departmental official replied that the “thoughts on engagement” that were being pulled together had not yet been given a name.²⁰⁴ It was therefore not clear to the committee whether the government intended for the process it had undertaken to result in a published strategy or something else. What the committee was told is that consultations were being used to determine how Canada can maximize its impact in Africa by identifying Canadian strengths and considering how those intersect with Canadian interests.²⁰⁵

The committee’s study supported the overarching idea that the Government of Canada should be devoting more attention to its engagement with Africa, and the testimony and submissions that the committee received underlined the value of this engagement, for both Canada and Africa. Witnesses agreed that this new era should be conceived of in terms of partnerships, that it should reflect Africa’s contemporary political and economic dynamics, as well as the continent’s future potential, and that it should align with African priorities. However, the committee’s study also affirmed that it is time to move from the articulation of core policy ideas to decision-making about priority activities and their implementation.

201 Ibid.

202 The consultations were intended to “complement discussions held with trusted partners, international counterparts, and key stakeholders in the humanitarian, economic and foreign policy space” and to “gather feedback on proposed themes including building shared prosperity, reducing poverty, assisting in humanitarian crises, and supporting women and youth, collaborating on global priorities, protecting and advancing shared values and interests, and strengthening peace and security.” See Global Affairs Canada, [Launch of public consultations on Canada’s approach to partnerships in Africa](#), News release, 14 August 2024.

203 Government of Canada, [Join the discussion: consulting Canadians and stakeholders on a proposed approach to partnerships in Africa](#). Also see Geoffrey York, “Joly heads to Africa as Canada revives a long-stalled strategy,” *The Globe and Mail*, 20 August 2024.

204 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 10 April 2024, 1710 (Cheryl Urban).

205 Ibid., [1810](#).



Acting Decisively

To begin with, the committee heard that Canada’s engagement with Africa needs to reach “a much higher level.”²⁰⁶ Testimony suggested that the Government of Canada communicating its intention to engage with Africa, and acting on that basis, will not be sufficient. Witnesses urged the development of an Africa strategy that is comprehensive, clear, and coherent,²⁰⁷ guided by timelines, goals, and indicators that can be used to measure success.²⁰⁸

One witness argued that this strategy should “position Canada as a key security, development and diplomatic partner of Africa.” It would be “the springboard for Canada to punch above its weight, as it used to do on specific issues on the African continent.”²⁰⁹ Another observed that the Canadian government has set an example with its strategy for the Indo-Pacific region.²¹⁰ In the case of Africa, the need for a strategy may be even more pronounced given the likelihood that relations with Africa will not be the subject of sustained Canadian political leadership, unlike—for example—Canada’s relationship with the United States or Europe. A strategy, it was argued, could provide the kind of “overarching, coordinating function” that is needed.²¹¹ Furthermore, the tangibility of this type of document could enable a more focused and effective approach even in the absence of new budgetary resources.²¹²

Engaging Meaningfully

As it pursues a higher level of engagement, the committee was advised to remember that Canada is “playing catch-up” from the margins.²¹³ Consequently, the committee was told that “we should be modest in our expectations, consistent and consultative in our commitments, comprehensive in our thinking and careful not to make exaggerated

206 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 8 May 2024, 1725 (Andy Harrington, Executive Director, Canadian Foodgrains Bank).

207 See FAAE, [Evidence](#), 15 April 2024, 1555 (Christopher W. J. Roberts); FAAE, [Evidence](#), 15 April 2024, [1605](#) and [1610](#) (Nola Kianza, President and Chief Executive Officer, Canadian Council on Africa); and FAAE, [Evidence](#), 15 April 2024, 1635 (Edward Akuffo).

208 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 17 April 2024, 1840 (Landry Signé).

209 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 15 April 2024, 1635 (Edward Akuffo).

210 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 15 April 2024, 1555 (Christopher W. J. Roberts). Also see Government of Canada, [Canada’s Indo-Pacific Strategy](#).

211 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 15 April 2024, 1555 (Christopher W. J. Roberts).

212 *Ibid.*, [1615](#).

213 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 15 April 2024, 1535 (David Black).

claims for the importance of what we are doing.”²¹⁴ Other witnesses echoed similar principles of “mutual respect, reciprocity and non-indifference to Africa’s agency and its growing geopolitical and geo-economic space.”²¹⁵

Canada is, however, playing catch-up with some important advantages. In addition to Canada’s expertise in sectors ranging from education to agriculture, which will be discussed again below, these advantages include the soft power that derives from strong linguistic and people-to-people ties and a long track record of development cooperation with the continent. Furthermore, Canada does not have “colonial baggage” in Africa or a history of interfering in African affairs.²¹⁶ This reputation sets Canada apart in Africa and allows Canada to chart its own course. The committee heard, for example, that in West Africa, “tensions are high with the French government, which is often perceived by many as complicit in a corrupt political elite and exploiting its former colonies.”²¹⁷

It was impressed on the committee that, as these countries in West Africa seek “to break free from the colonial legacy,” it is “important that Russia or China not be the only alternative.”²¹⁸ Testimony underscored that Canada can provide another option and help these countries emerge from this period of crisis by maintaining its presence and building on the “relatively positive image” that Canada has among their populations.²¹⁹ Yet, despite the retreat of other donors from the Central Sahelian countries of West Africa, and Canada’s “long history of partnership” with countries in that region, but also francophone Africa more generally,²²⁰ the committee heard that “Canada too often lets France take the lead” with the Francophonie.²²¹

Regardless of the region or sector involved, partnership is a concept that must be implemented in practical terms. Doing so, the committee was told, will involve centering “the decisions we make, as a country and as organizations, around the interests of our counterparts and not just our own.”²²² If Canada is to engage in such a mutually

214 Ibid.

215 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 15 April 2024, 1635 (Edward Akuffo).

216 Ibid.

217 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 8 May 2024, 1650 (Philippe Dongier).

218 Ibid.

219 Ibid.

220 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 8 May 2024, 1640 (Denis Côté, Policy Analyst, Association québécoise des organismes de coopération internationale).

221 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 29 April 2024, 1640 (Mamoudou Gazibo)

222 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 22 May 2024, 1815 (Nicolas Moyer).



beneficial way, it must assess “how Africa’s future is defined” and see “how we can contribute to the goals Africans have set for themselves.”²²³ In this regard, Agenda 2063’s importance was reiterated to the committee. It “opens up the window for anyone who really wants to engage with the African continent, because it’s seen as Africa’s strategic document.”²²⁴ As another witness said, Agenda 2063 reflects the expectations Africans have set for their own continent and the choices they have made.²²⁵

Thinking Holistically

When addressing the scope of Canada’s approach to Africa, some testimony emphasized the importance of economic cooperation,²²⁶ which one witness suggested “must be an integral part of a comprehensive and coherent Africa strategy.”²²⁷ At the same time, testimony underlined that development activities support prosperity and, thus, the commercial partnerships that Canada seeks.²²⁸ Furthermore, as one witness said, “We can’t ignore the growing humanitarian and development needs on the continent, given the significant number of persons who are acutely food insecure in sub-Saharan Africa and the Sahel.”²²⁹ Yet, real partnership also means rejecting the narratives that have portrayed Africa as “a continent that always has its hand out for assistance at all levels” and moving beyond past approaches that have overlooked the “expertise and wishes of African populations.”²³⁰ Real partnership must be based on communication. Currently, the committee was told, Africans “are asking for partnerships in economic development.”²³¹

On balance, and given the range of opportunities and challenges that witnesses highlighted, it does not seem that any one aspect of Canadian policy should be elevated at the expense of any others. Diplomacy, security, development and humanitarian assistance, and economic cooperation are not silos that exist on their own. They “underpin each other.”²³² Investment, for example, takes place within a political

223 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 8 May 2024, 1645 (Andy Harrington).

224 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 17 April 2024, 1710 (Thomas Kwasi Tiekou).

225 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 17 April 2024, 1745 (Issiaka Mandé).

226 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 15 April 2024, 1610 (Nola Kianza).

227 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 15 April 2024, 1635 (Edward Akuffo).

228 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 8 May 2024, 1725 (Denis Côté).

229 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 8 May 2024, 1645 (Andy Harrington).

230 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 17 April 2024, 1745 (Issiaka Mandé).

231 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 15 April 2024, 1615 (Nola Kianza).

232 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 8 May 2024, 1740 (Andy Harrington).

context—it is affected by the stability and security of the country in which it is being made.²³³ Private sector activity can also influence how Canada is perceived. After observing that Canada's relationships with certain countries can end up being dominated by the presence of one or two infrastructure or mining companies, it was underscored to the committee that Canada's "national interest or overall foreign policy objectives are broader than the pecuniary interests of a company trying to win a public infrastructure contract or a mining license."²³⁴ Context always matters, and the reality is that "some companies flying a Canadian flag generate few Canadian benefits and use that veneer for their benefit while the risk of reputational hits for Canada loom large."²³⁵ These policy intersections need to be met with policy cohesion.²³⁶

To be truly holistic, testimony suggested that Canada's approach to Africa needs to have even broader parameters than the traditional "3Ds and T" —diplomacy, defence, development, and trade. People-to-people ties were emphasized in this regard. Canada's African diaspora, for example, was highlighted as "a vital asset." These individuals "possess deep cultural, economic, and political insights, as well as strong connections to their countries of origin."²³⁷ It was argued that members of the diaspora can, among other things, "help Canadian companies navigate local business environments," promote cultural and educational exchanges, and provide the type of on-the-ground insights that can help to ensure that development projects are "culturally sensitive and community-driven."²³⁸ To harness this potential, it was suggested that the government could establish a Canadian Advisory Council on African Diaspora Engagement, something that has already been done in the United States.²³⁹

Shared language is among the other ties that have long connected Canada with the African continent. As was noted at the beginning of this report, Africa has the most youthful population in the world, and that population is growing quickly. Many are French speaking. Reports estimate that just over 47% of the people in the world who speak French daily are in Sub-Saharan Africa and the Indian Ocean region, and almost

233 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 15 April 2024, 1700 (Edward Akuffo).

234 Christopher W. J. Roberts, [written brief](#), 16 April 2024, p. 4.

235 Ibid.

236 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 8 May 2024, 1740 (Andy Harrington).

237 ONE, [written brief](#), 26 August 2024.

238 Ibid.

239 Ibid.



15% are in North Africa and the Middle East.²⁴⁰ While the percentage of daily French speakers increased by approximately 8% globally between 2008 and 2022, it increased by almost 15% in Sub-Saharan Africa and the Indian Ocean region.²⁴¹ There are almost 49 million francophones in the DRC alone.²⁴²

Canada's bilingualism and its membership in La Francophonie are, therefore, important assets in Canada's continental engagement.²⁴³ One witness specifically argued that Canada has "a special role to play" in francophone Africa and recommended—based on these advantages—that Canada focus on these countries and West Africa in particular.²⁴⁴

Nevertheless, it would appear that Canada's history of partnerships and people-to-people ties should not be taken for granted in light of the possible trajectories that African countries could follow. The former Secretary General of the Agence intergouvernementale de la francophonie applied caution when speaking to the committee about projections suggesting that there could be at least 500 million French speakers in the world by the middle of the century as a result of Africa's population growth. He told the committee that "Africa will drive significant growth in the number of French speakers, but only if the continent provides schools that teach in French." For such schools to exist, "they must be created and funded."²⁴⁵ Francophone countries with resources like Canada, he said, "must look at how they are and aren't supporting education in French-speaking Africa." From his perspective, "the current efforts are completely inadequate."²⁴⁶

It was therefore clear to the committee that Canada will need to actively participate in the strengthening and development of French education in francophone Africa. Doing so will help to increase literacy and employment opportunities, and reduce social and economic inequality, as well as political instability and conflict, while mitigating against extremism, and reinforcing peacebuilding missions.

240 Organisation internationale de la Francophonie, *La Langue Française dans Le Monde : 2019–2022*, 2022, p. 23.

241 Ibid., p. 24.

242 Organisation internationale de la Francophonie, "[Qui parle français dans le monde?](#)," *Langue Française et Diversité Linguistique*, accessed 9 October 2024.

243 See, for example, FAAE, *Evidence*, 8 May 2024, 1820 (Maxime Allard, Director, Volunteer Cooperation Program, Fondation Paul Gérin-Lajoie); and FAAE, *Evidence*, 8 May 2024, 1725 (Philippe Dongier).

244 FAAE, *Evidence*, 8 May 2024, 1725 (Philippe Dongier).

245 FAAE, *Evidence*, 29 April 2024, 1730 (Jean-Louis Roy).

246 Ibid.

In its concern about this situation, the committee is also mindful that the use and promotion of language in Africa is connected to political and historical considerations. The committee learned that, owing to “their fraught history with the French presence” in the country during the colonial period, Algerians are “deliberating making a move away from” the French language.²⁴⁷ The second official language being taught in Algerian schools is now English.

Visas and study permits are other mechanisms that can foster people-to-people ties. Nevertheless, they are currently a source of “frustration.”²⁴⁸ One witness simply said that the Canadian government must “fix a broken visa system for Africans.”²⁴⁹ This comment applied to “African students accepted to come to Canadian universities” as well as “scholars wanting to come for conferences or business-people travelling for sales meetings or trade shows.”²⁵⁰ The goal is to see reasonable processing times for visas, which could be achieved through “a formal mechanism to facilitate larger delegations coming to legitimate events in Canada.”²⁵¹

The committee was also reminded that people-to-people ties should flow both ways to enhance mutual learning and to build mutual trust. There are “very few structured exchange programs offering Canadian university students the opportunity to travel to Africa.”²⁵² The current one-way emphasis is problematic because it “reinforces the erroneous impression that Canada has nothing to learn from Africa but everything to teach it.”²⁵³

When conceived of in the broadest terms, a holistic strategy would also go beyond specific activities, whether that be a development or exchange program, or a service designed to facilitate a private sector investment. Fundamental change, the committee was told, can only result from the dismantling of “the structures that perpetuate poverty, inequalities, and injustice and that feed the vicious cycles of crises the continent is battling against.”²⁵⁴ Approaching engagement in these more systemic terms would, for example, compel support for “meaningful and equitable reforms in

247 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 27 May 2024, 1640 (Ambassador Michael Callan).

248 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 17 April 2024, 1835 (Issiaka Mandé).

249 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 15 April 2024, 1545 (Christopher W. J. Roberts).

250 Christopher W. J. Roberts, [written brief](#), 16 April 2024, p. 4.

251 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 15 April 2024, 1645 (Garreth Bloor).

252 Association de Soutien à l'Autopromotion Sanitaire Urbaine, [written brief](#), 9 July 2024.

253 Ibid.

254 Cooperation Canada, [written brief](#), 26 August 2024.



multilateral and development finance institutions, centering the debt restructuring imperative for African countries and least developed countries in Africa.”²⁵⁵ From Africa’s perspective, these reforms must also include the composition of the UN Security Council.

Identifying Priorities

Testimony urged Canada to transition from a “firefighting, risk-averse and follow-the-crowd diplomatic posture to a more systematic, proactive and strategic approach to Africa.”²⁵⁶ Assuming this new approach, the committee heard, will require a non-partisan “policy framework that leverages Canada’s strengths and aligns Canadian interests with Africa’s priorities.”²⁵⁷

Testimony suggested that Canada does not have the ability—on par with the European Union, United States or China—to be among the key players in every sector. Consequently, Canada “must determine where it wants to make its mark on the continent.”²⁵⁸ Doing so would manifest in signature initiatives that can endure.²⁵⁹ As another witness put it, being strategic “entails identifying the policy areas where Canada can make meaningful impact on the ground.”²⁶⁰ The committee was told that there is a “clear emphasis” on educational partnerships in Agenda 2063, and that Canada can match this priority with “some of the best educational institutions in the world.”²⁶¹

Witnesses also presented the underlying rationale for prioritizing education. The sector was framed as “the most powerful lever for development and stability through its transformative power over individuals and societies.”²⁶² Existing projects provide evidence in this regard. One organization described how the G7’s 2018 Charlevoix Declaration on Quality Education for Girls, Adolescent Girls and Women in Developing Countries led to the funding of an educational and vocational training project in the

255 Ibid.

256 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 17 April 2024, 1645 (Thomas Kwasi Tieku).

257 Ibid.

258 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 29 April 2024, 1725 (Jean-Louis Roy).

259 Ibid.

260 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 17 April 2024, 1645 (Thomas Kwasi Tieku).

261 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 17 April 2024, 1710 (Thomas Kwasi Tieku). As part of the aspiration to realize a “prosperous Africa, based on inclusive growth and sustainable development,” one of the [goals](#) of Agenda 2063 is to have well-educated citizens and a skills revolution underpinned by science, technology and innovation.

262 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 8 May 2024, 1800 (Marie-Pierre Nogarède).

Great Lakes region of Central Africa. Through this project, “thousands of out-of-school girls and adolescent girls, including refugees, have entered the school system and the labour market.”²⁶³ They are “studying in schools that are better adapted and safer, where education is of better quality and is delivered in a gender-sensitive and conflict-sensitive way.”²⁶⁴

High-quality education, training, and skills development are particularly relevant for Africa given the continent’s socio-demographic composition—i.e., its youthful population. As one witness remarked, in the years to come, more than “600 million children will be entering the African school systems.”²⁶⁵ At the same time, the committee was informed that Sub-Saharan Africa “has the highest rates of exclusion from education,”²⁶⁶ including “the highest rate of children with disabilities excluded from education.”²⁶⁷

It was argued that Canada could maximize the transformative impact of education by spending 0.7% of its gross national income on ODA overall—an international target that Canada has never met²⁶⁸—and by continuing to devote at least 10% of this funding to education.²⁶⁹ If Canada were to place education at the “forefront” of its Africa strategy, there would be a clear link to Africa’s economic potential. In the absence of targeted investments, “literacy rates will remain low and the skills needed to access well-paid jobs will be scarce.”²⁷⁰

As was discussed earlier, the committee’s study also indicated that francophone education is a sector of strategic significance for Canada. Canada is a member of La Francophonie and has two official languages, including French. Furthermore, the testimony gathered by the committee—and summarized above—highlighted that Canadian civil society organizations are actively working in the education sector.

263 Ibid.

264 Ibid.

265 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 29 April 2024, 1715 (Jean-Louis Roy).

266 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 8 May 2024, 1800 (Marie-Pierre Nogarède).

267 Humanity and Inclusion Canada, [written brief](#), 30 April 2024, p. 3. The committee’s Subcommittee on International Human Rights [presented](#) a detailed report on disability-inclusive education in April 2024.

268 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 8 May 2024, 1640 (Denis Côté).

269 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 8 May 2024, 1800 (Marie-Pierre Nogarède).

270 Ibid., [1820](#).



In addition to education, testimony identified other areas in which Canada could make a mark. Canada could harness its “experience in conducting peaceful political transitions and multiculturalism to help African countries manage elections and diversity better.”²⁷¹ Canada can also capitalize on its “agricultural expertise and technological advancements and Africa’s vast arable lands and young workforce to enhance food security and fight climate change.”²⁷² Doing so would respond to the known links between food security, political unrest, and conflict. By shifting more of its international climate finance from loans to grants, Canada could help African countries with climate change adaptation, without adding to their debt burdens.²⁷³ Furthermore, Canada could enhance knowledge that is specifically relevant for adaptation efforts in Africa, responding to the fact that “from 1990 to 2020, only 3.8% of global climate-related research funding was allocated to Africa.”²⁷⁴

The committee also learned that 30% of the critical minerals that “will power our modern world and help drive our economies” can be found in Africa.²⁷⁵ One witness believes that Canada “can use its position as a mining power to promote best practices for inclusive, transparent and environmentally responsible critical mineral supply chains within African Union member states, thereby offering an attractive alternative to China’s influence across the continent.”²⁷⁶ Another witness insisted that setting standards—and standing out—for responsible business practices will require stronger legislation governing corporate human rights practices and environmental due diligence. The Office of the Canadian Ombudsperson for Responsible Enterprise²⁷⁷ would also need “real

271 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 17 April 2024, 1645 (Thomas Kwasi Tiekou). One of the [aspirations](#) of Agenda 2063 is to realize an “Africa of good governance, democracy, respect for human rights, justice and the rule of law.” The associated goals encompass democratic values and capable institutions.

272 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 17 April 2024, 1645 (Thomas Kwasi Tiekou). Agenda 2063 [includes](#) the goals of having well-nourished citizens and adopting modern agriculture for increased productivity and production.

273 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 29 April 2024, 1710 (Amali Tower). Agenda 2063 [aims](#) to build climate-resilient economies and communities. When FAAE studied the 2022 extreme flooding in Pakistan, it [recommended](#) that the Canadian government further increase the proportion of its International Climate Finance envelope that is delivered in the form of grants.

274 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 22 May 2024, 1705 (Benjamin Sultan).

275 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 17 April 2024, 1655 (Cameron Hudson).

276 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 29 April 2024, 1650 (J. Andrew Grant, Associate Professor of Political Studies, Queen’s University).

277 The Canadian Ombudsperson for Responsible Enterprise (CORE) was established in 2019. The ombudsperson’s office [was able](#) to receive complaints in 2021. It [reviews](#) complaints about possible human rights abuses by Canadian companies when those companies work outside Canada in the garment, mining, and oil and gas sectors.

investigative powers to compel companies facing allegations of human rights abuses to testify and produce documents.”²⁷⁸

More general comments touched on other sectors that the committee was not able to explore in detail. In addition to the natural resource sector in Africa, where Canada is “already very strong,” and the agriculture and education sectors, which were discussed above, testimony noted that energy, infrastructure, and engineering and technology are sectors in which Canada could be expanding its involvement.²⁷⁹ The committee was told that Canada has “a lot of things to offer when it comes to our know-how and technologies, and, most importantly, our values and our way of doing business.” While Canada cannot compete with much larger countries like China in terms of overall spending, “people want to work with Canadians because of how we do things and what we are like.”²⁸⁰

Those remarks pertained to commercial activity, but Canada also has strengths that it can build on in development cooperation. One such sector is health, which has long been a priority for Canadian investments,²⁸¹ as was detailed in the “baseline” section of this report. This sector is also an example of convergence with a significant area of need in Africa. The committee was told that “Canada has an opportunity to cement its legacy as a leader and trusted partner in advancing gender equality, feminist approaches and health equity.”²⁸² In addition to supporting quality, affordable, and accessible health services and service delivery across Africa, there is a need to expand and reinforce the capacity of health systems and health workforces. As just one example illustrative of this point, the committee was informed that the COVID-19 pandemic stalled progress in child immunization campaigns in Africa “as it disrupted essential service delivery, scarred health systems, burned out health workers and reduced the uptake of available health services.”²⁸³ In fact, between 2020 and 2023, “12.7 million children missed one or more vaccination and 8.7 million did not receive a single vaccination.”²⁸⁴

278 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 8 May 2024, 1640 (Denis Côté).

279 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 15 April 2024, 1600 (Nola Kianza).

280 Ibid.

281 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 10 April 2024, 1800 (Cheryl Urban).

282 Results Canada, [written brief](#), 9 July 2024.

283 Ibid.

284 Ibid.



Investing in Capacity

The committee heard that, if Canada wants to position itself to be proactive in Africa, it will need stronger diplomatic capacity. There is a need to close the “capability-expectations gap” in Canada’s approach. This gap “refers to the fact that Canada’s resources, instruments, procedures and values often aren’t strong or adapted enough to give Canada the opportunity to implement ambitious policies on the African continent.”²⁸⁵

According to testimony, Canada’s diplomatic network is “woefully understaffed and spread too thin in Africa.”²⁸⁶ Even though Canada has established a dedicated mission for the AU, for example, it is apparently being staffed by one foreign service officer, plus the ambassador. These “two individuals are supposed to engage with over 1,700 AU staff and nearly 120 embassies in Addis Ababa.”²⁸⁷

The committee was told that African countries “are once again outpacing the projected global average in economic terms.”²⁸⁸ Furthermore, testimony indicated that Canadian companies “are very keen to go to Africa” and that there are countries that “pair up very well with our Canadian strengths.”²⁸⁹ But these companies require enough support to explore the market possibilities.²⁹⁰

Yet, witnesses informed the committee that Canada’s trade offices and trade commissioner services in Africa are “under-resourced big time” relative to the size of the continent and the growing importance of the market.²⁹¹ Another witness expressed the view that “companies need to know that the government has an awareness of African markets and that indeed it’s serious toward the African continent as part of our trade diversification strategy.”²⁹² This could be demonstrated through “a team Canada mandate similar to what we’ve seen in the Indo-Pacific.”²⁹³ In the Indo-Pacific region, Team Canada

285 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 29 April 2024, 1600 (Mamoudou Gazibo).

286 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 17 April 2024, 1645 (Thomas Kwasi Tiekou).

287 Ibid.

288 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 15 April 2024, 1645 (Garreth Bloor).

289 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 15 April 2024, 1710 (Paula Caldwell St-Onge, Chair of the Board, the Canada-Africa Chamber of Business).

290 Ibid.

291 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 15 April 2024, 1620 (Nola Kianza). Also see FAAE, [Evidence](#), 15 April 2024, 1620 (Christopher W. J. Roberts).

292 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 15 April 2024, 1645 (Garreth Bloor).

293 Ibid.

Trade Missions have been led by ministers and open to what the government calls “export-ready Canadian companies of all sizes,” according to eligibility criteria, as well as provinces, territories, municipalities, trade associations and chambers of commerce that are looking to expand their reach in designated sectors and markets.²⁹⁴ Furthermore, the government’s Indo-Pacific strategy has not only led to the appointment of Canada’s first-ever Indo-Pacific Trade Representative, but a Special Envoy for the Indo-Pacific.²⁹⁵

In addition to the overall view that Canada should expand its network of embassies in Africa,²⁹⁶ it was suggested that Canada could establish permanent missions to Africa’s Regional Economic Communities (RECs).²⁹⁷ The AU recognizes eight such communities, including ECOWAS and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), all of which it characterizes as “pillars of the AU.”²⁹⁸ Establishing missions to these subcontinental bodies, one witness argued, would allow Canada to have “a three-level diplomatic engagement with the African continent: with African states, with regional economic communities, and with the African Union.”²⁹⁹ The committee heard that the regional communities are “demonstrating a greater ability to organize themselves and a greater ability to impact their own region and to police their own region.”³⁰⁰ Other testimony, however, suggested that, while there are issues on which Canada can work with these organizations, “and perhaps guide them to pinpointing and finding positive solutions,” it would have to do so recognizing that these are “generally not terribly strong organizations.”³⁰¹

Some submissions addressed Canada’s governmental machinery in Ottawa. It was impressed on the committee that an effective engagement strategy must be based on “a well-resourced, factual understanding of the history and effects of Canadian policy and engagement with African countries, international organizations, and other actors.”³⁰² This capacity does not appear to be in place at the present time. Rather, the committee was informed of “frequent and cyclical changes” in personnel who are working on

294 See, for example, Government of Canada, [Team Canada Trade Mission to Malaysia and Vietnam](#).

295 Global Affairs Canada, [Canada’s Indo-Pacific Strategy – 2022 to 2023 Implementation Update](#).

296 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 15 April 2024, 1635 (Edward Akuffo).

297 Ibid; and FAAE, [Evidence](#), 17 April 2024, 1710 (Thomas Kwasi Tiekou).

298 African Union, [Regional Economic Communities](#).

299 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 15 April 2024, 1715 (Edward Akuffo).

300 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 17 April 2024, 1705 (Cameron Hudson).

301 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 27 May 2024, 1615 (High Commissioner Christopher Thornley).

302 Christopher W. J. Roberts, [written brief](#), 16 April 2024, p. 3.



Africa.³⁰³ The committee also recognizes that Canadian missions in Africa need the capacity to engage with African interlocutors and provide trade and consular services to Canadians in both of Canada’s official languages.³⁰⁴

Expertise on Africa also needs to be cultivated beyond Global Affairs Canada. The committee is aware that the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), which was established by an Act of Parliament, has a mandate “to spur research and innovation in low- and middle-income countries.” The IDRC “dedicates more than half of its budget to Africa.”³⁰⁵

Nevertheless, the committee was also informed that, while some Canadian universities have programs or institutes dedicated to African studies, “there is no significant funding or organizational focal point for the study of Canada-Africa relations across all dimensions.”³⁰⁶ The committee learned of the need for “more policy-oriented research and funding for Canadian universities, think tanks, and NGOs, particularly as officials often rotate out of African-related responsibilities and do not come back, limiting expertise and institutional memory within government.”³⁰⁷ It was further suggested that Canada could provide “long-term funding support” to African-based research institutions and networks.³⁰⁸ Another proposal would see the creation of a “special fund to foster educational partnerships between Canadian and African universities with a goal of producing policy-relevant research to sustain [Canada’s Africa] strategy into the future.”³⁰⁹

While most comments addressed Canada’s knowledge deficits about Africa in a general sense, some suggested the need for specialized expertise to address persistent challenges with human security. One organization would like to see “a clearer proposal for Canadian diplomacy and engagement in fragile and conflict-affected states, including in African countries.”³¹⁰ Fragile states “have the highest concentration of poverty, especially extreme poverty,” and they are the states in which “extreme poverty is also likely to grow in the coming decades.”³¹¹ Furthermore, they tend to be places that

303 SOCODEVI, [written brief](#), 27 May 2024, p. 7.

304 For a general discussion of this issue, see FAAE, [Evidence](#), 27 May 2024, 1640 (Ambassador Michael Callan).

305 International Development Research Centre, [written brief](#), 13 September 2024.

306 Christopher W. J. Roberts, [written brief](#), 16 April 2024, p. 3.

307 Ibid.

308 Ibid.

309 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 15 April 2024, 1635 (Edward Akuffo).

310 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 8 May 2024, 1755 (Dr. Jason Nickerson).

311 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 17 April 2024, 1835 (Landry Signé).

require recurrent interventions from the humanitarian community, and the crises they generate can become protracted in nature.³¹²

What is referred to as the “triple nexus” approach could be used “to address the complex needs of communities in fragile and conflict-affected areas.”³¹³ This approach “strives to harmonize humanitarian aid, development, and peacebuilding initiatives, recognizing their interdependence and the need to address them concurrently.”³¹⁴ It emphasizes resilience and sustainability in support of solutions that are community-driven. The goal is to build communities that “can weather crises and maintain long-term development gains.”³¹⁵

Testimony explained that resilience is about more than risks and immediate needs. It is built on absorptive capacity, adaptive capacity, and transformative capacity, all of which need to be strengthened.³¹⁶ Organizing efforts according to the realization of resilience is supported by numerous studies which “have found that resilience is central to achieving long-term growth, sustainable poverty escapes and conflict prevention.”³¹⁷

The “triple nexus” approach depends on coordinated action, but it may also require more flexibility in funding mechanisms that have traditionally been separated according to humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding work.³¹⁸ At the same time, the committee is aware that principled humanitarian action is protected under international law. Humanitarian organizations “are able to operate in very difficult situations because of a real and also perceived application of humanitarian principles of independence, impartiality and neutrality.”³¹⁹ These organizations are not involved in peacemaking or state-building activities. Consequently, there is a concern that the nexus approach could potentially compromise “the safety and security of humanitarian organizations if not

312 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 8 May 2024, 1720 (Andy Harrington).

313 Islamic Relief Canada, [written brief](#), 19 June 2024, p. 1.

314 Ibid.

315 Ibid.

316 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 22 May 2024, 1810 (Jonathan Papoulidis, Vice-President, Food for the Hungry).

317 Food for the Hungry, [written brief](#), 24 May 2024.

318 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 8 May 2024, 1805 (Catriona Addleton, Director of International Programs, Islamic Relief Canada).

319 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 8 May 2024, 1830 (Dr. Jason Nickerson).



employed properly.”³²⁰ A related concern is that belligerents could use any perceived loss of independence to justify their impediments to humanitarian access.³²¹

Implementing Locally

In 2023, Canada was the 7th highest donor of ODA by volume, but 14th in proportional terms, as it allocated 0.38% of its gross national income to ODA globally.³²² As a foundational point, it was argued that the Government of Canada’s International Assistance Envelope “must continue to increase year over year, and must do so at an accelerated pace.” The justification provided to the committee is that “[s]teady, sustained, and transparent increases will assure recipient implementing organizations and countries that Canada’s commitment to a world without extreme poverty is not temporary.”³²³

As was noted earlier in this report, the bulk of Canada’s ODA to Africa—64%—is being delivered multilaterally,³²⁴ with very little reaching African civil society organizations. Testimony suggested that Canada needs to “move away from top-down approaches to international assistance to one in which community-led organizations ... have access to flexible long-term core funding.”³²⁵

Channelling Canada’s ODA to local actors can “often bring more value for money” because local actors “have contextual knowledge, legitimacy in many cases, and accountability.”³²⁶ The committee heard that localization “has the potential to reinforce community resilience and increase the long-term benefits of interventions.”³²⁷ It can enable self-sufficiency.³²⁸ One organization therefore believes that Canada’s Africa strategy and associated development programming must “be made in consultation with local communities and civil society—not merely governments.” Guidelines for this type

320 Ibid.

321 Doctors Without Borders, [written brief](#), 31 May 2024, p. 10.

322 Based on preliminary figures available as of 16 April 2024. See OECD, [Official Development Assistance \(ODA\) in 2023, by members of the Development Assistance Committee \(preliminary data\)](#).

323 Results Canada, [written brief](#), 9 July 2024.

324 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 10 April 2024, 1805 (Susan Steffen).

325 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 15 April 2024, 1640 (Meg French).

326 Results Canada, [written brief](#), 9 July 2024.

327 Ibid.

328 SOCODEVI, [written brief](#), 27 May 2024, p. 2.

of consultations have been put together by the Development Assistance Committee of the OECD.³²⁹

At present, African civil society organizations are “still subject to economic, technical and administrative restrictions.”³³⁰ Current practice “requires Canadian organizations to decide what needs to happen in a community, and then they hire community groups to implement the projects that the Canadian organizations have designed.”³³¹ While acknowledging that this practice is “just starting to shift,” testimony still underlined its problematic nature. What it produces “are not African solutions to African problems; they’re the solutions of people sitting in Toronto or Ottawa who come up with these solutions or use experiences from other countries.”³³² The model advocated to the committee would instead see Canadian organizations supporting grassroots, community-led work in Africa, “in true partnership.”³³³

There are reasons that the Canadian government uses a variety of delivery channels for its aid. Directing funding to multilateral organizations and initiatives is comparatively quick and easy, and the accountability reporting is built into their structures.³³⁴ Working through these organizations can also allow Canadian dollars to reach “very tough places,” including conflict zones.³³⁵ Furthermore, Canada can leverage the funding provided by other donors. The same is true of Canada’s investments as a shareholder in international financial institutions that “take the funds that we provide, put them on the market and make more money from them,” thus enabling more development activities.³³⁶

Even so, witnesses observed that local civil society organizations can “stimulate change,” as has been seen from the results of the Canadian government’s Women’s Voice and Leadership Program.³³⁷ Furthermore, Canadian civil society organizations can provide the visibility—or “Canadian identity”—that pooled multilateral contributions cannot.³³⁸

329 Results Canada, [written brief](#), 9 July 2024.

330 Association de Soutien à l’Autopromotion Sanitaire Urbaine, [written brief](#), 9 July 2024.

331 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 15 April 2024, 1720 (Meg French).

332 Ibid.

333 Ibid.

334 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 22 May 2024, 1825 (Nicolas Moyer).

335 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 10 April 2024, 1755 (Cheryl Urban).

336 Ibid.

337 Ibid. For further information on the support provided to local women’s rights organizations, see Government of Canada, [Women’s Voice and Leadership Program](#).

338 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 8 May 2024, 1650 (Philippe Dongier).



While recognizing the essential roles that multilateral organizations play, testimony suggested the need for “a more balanced approach to these different funding channels.”³³⁹ At the same time, it was also suggested that Canada will not be able to lessen its reliance on multilateral channels unless it simplifies the “slow and cumbersome processes” that govern the funding of Canadian organizations.³⁴⁰

CONCLUSION

After considering the testimony and submissions it received, it is clear to the committee that Africa is strategically significant for both Canada and the world. It is equally clear that Canada must act with purpose to enhance its diplomatic presence in Africa and to expand and diversify its commercial relationships with the continent. To accomplish these goals, it is imperative that we focus on specific deliverables based on priorities that become evident in the convergence of Canada’s skills and assets with African priorities, identified from Agenda 2063. To realize their full potential, these efforts must be guided by the momentum and tangibility that only a published strategy can provide and underpinned by meaningful dialogue and strong people-to-people ties.

The committee also believes that Canada should adopt a forward-looking approach. Increasingly, the emphasis will be on employment generation, economic integration, peace and security, mobility, and sustainability. Africa’s political structures have adapted to and driven this change, as they seek to promote a continental vision and to ensure that relations with international actors are put on an equal footing. Canada’s future prosperity and security are linked to an effective partnership with Africa, which can be strengthened by leveraging Canada’s bilingualism and diaspora communities.

To ensure it is not left behind by the economic and political shifts that are underway, Canada will need to bring structural coherence to its Africa policy and enable its long-term success through investment in the means of implementation. The committee is aware that other states have already taken these steps, and that Canada is seeking to redefine the terms of its engagement in a highly competitive environment. Nevertheless, the committee is convinced that Canada has comparative advantages that match the priorities and respect the expectations that Africans have set for their continent’s future. It is on this basis that a new and mutually beneficial era of partnerships can be built.

339 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 8 May 2024, 1715 (Denis Côté).

340 FAAE, [Evidence](#), 8 May 2024, 1650 (Philippe Dongier).

Recommendation 1

That the Government of Canada publish a comprehensive strategy for Africa that achieves policy cohesion in relation to diplomacy, trade and investment, development, humanitarian action, human rights, women and girls, security assistance, and people-to-people ties.

Recommendation 2

That the Government of Canada base its Africa strategy on the principles of partnership, mutual interests, and shared priorities, focused on the convergence of Canada's skills and assets with African priorities, as identified in Agenda 2063.

Recommendation 3

That the Government of Canada include strategic objectives as well as short- and long-term benchmarks for success in its Africa strategy.

Recommendation 4

That the Government of Canada identify priority sectors in its Africa strategy that reflect an assessment of areas in which the strengths of Canada's public institutions, non-governmental organizations, and private sector actors overlap with the priorities established by Canada's African partners.

Recommendation 5

That, in its Africa strategy, the Government of Canada address the specific challenges being experienced in fragile and conflict-affected states with the goals of advancing human security and community resilience.

Recommendation 6

That the Government of Canada continue to support and garner more international partners for the Elsie Initiative and other initiatives that promote a stronger role for women in the peace and security of African partners.

Recommendation 7

That, as part of the finalization of its Africa strategy, the Government of Canada continue to consult widely with African governments, regional and continental institutions, youth, women and girls, Indigenous peoples, and civil society, as well as with African diaspora



communities and organizations in Canada, and, as part of its implementation of the strategy, continue ongoing engagement with these groups and consider hosting a Canada-Africa summit at the level of Heads of Government.

Recommendation 8

That the Government of Canada make the necessary investments to ensure that the departments and agencies responsible for its Africa strategy have personnel with in-depth knowledge about African countries, regions, and institutions, as well as specialized expertise in the strategy's priority sectors.

Recommendation 9

That the Government of Canada explore funding mechanisms that could support policy-oriented research—in Canada and Africa—on sectors and issues that are relevant to Canada's Africa strategy, Canada's relationships with African countries and institutions, and the perspectives and needs of African people.

Recommendation 10

That the Government of Canada collaborate with African partners to assess healthcare structures and equity gaps in primary care diagnostics, strengthen pandemic preparedness through increased research and development and knowledge-sharing, and address the impact of climate change on healthcare crises.

Recommendation 11

That the Government of Canada continue to expand its support for the enhancement of food security in Africa by leveraging Canadian agricultural and technological expertise alongside Africa's expertise, vast arable land, and young workforce, and by focusing on the advancement of agricultural productivity, sustainable farming practices, and climate-resilient agricultural systems.

Recommendation 12

That, to the extent possible, the Government of Canada enhance its diplomatic capacity in Africa by increasing the number and size of its missions, where appropriate, and by creating and staffing additional Canadian foreign service and trade commissioner positions in African countries.

Recommendation 13

That the Government of Canada ensure that all its missions in Africa have the capacity to engage diplomatically and deliver services in French and English.

Recommendation 14

That the Government of Canada ensure that French is the language primarily used in Canadian diplomacy with countries that have French as an official language.

Recommendation 15

That the Government of Canada acknowledge and provide resources for the support and advancement of the French language in Africa through the work of both the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie and bilateral partnerships with Francophone member states in the education, research, and governance sectors and in other areas of mutual interest.

Recommendation 16

That the Government of Canada continue its robust engagement with African members of the Commonwealth and the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie as key channels for understanding and furthering the mutual goals of Canada and African member states.

Recommendation 17

That the Government of Canada make francophone Africa a pillar of its Africa strategy.

Recommendation 18

That the Government of Canada organize robust multisector and inclusive trade missions to African countries according to priority sectors and markets.

Recommendation 19

That the Government of Canada continue to provide technical support for the development of the African Continental Free Trade Area and work for the development of free trade agreements in Africa.



Recommendation 20

That the Government of Canada review the systems responsible for processing study permits and visitor visa applications to ensure timely processing for students from African countries and for African delegations seeking to participate in major events held in Canada and that it publish service standards.

Recommendation 21

That the Government of Canada address the institutional and situational issues that make it challenging for students from francophone Africa to come to Canada.

Recommendation 22

That the Government of Canada work with Canada's provincial and territorial governments and educational and vocational institutions as well as their counterparts in African countries to support two-way exchange programs.

Recommendation 23

That the Government of Canada continue to engage members of the African diaspora community informally in the implementation of its Africa strategy and explore mechanisms for their formal participation in furthering the strategy's goals.

Recommendation 24

That the Government of Canada engage meaningfully with African countries throughout its 2025 presidency of the G7 and raise issues of concern to the African continent on the G7's agenda.

Recommendation 25

That the Government of Canada adjust the channels it uses to deliver international assistance to Africa to ensure that a greater share is being provided to African civil society organizations and through Canadian civil society organizations that are supporting community- and youth-led projects in Africa.

Recommendation 26

That the Government of Canada simplify the procedures it uses to invite and approve project proposals from Canadian and African civil society organizations with the view to lessening administrative burdens and improving the transparency of available funding

envelopes and the timeliness of decision-making, and that it complete this work in a timely manner in keeping with the Grants and Contributions Transformation Initiative.

Recommendation 27

That the Government of Canada continue increasing its International Assistance Envelope every year until 2030, and that it work towards the United Nations target of allocating 0.7% of gross national income for official development assistance and set a timetable for doing so.

APPENDIX A: LIST OF WITNESSES

The following table lists the witnesses who appeared before the committee at its meetings related to this report. Transcripts of all public meetings related to this report are available on the committee’s [webpage for this study](#).

Organizations and Individuals	Date	Meeting
<p>Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development</p> <p>Caroline Delany, Director General, Southern and Eastern Africa Bureau</p> <p>Apeksha Kumar, Director, Maghreb and Egypt</p> <p>Marcel Lebleu, Director General, West and Central African Bureau</p> <p>Susan Steffen, Director General, Pan-Africa Bureau</p> <p>Cheryl Urban, Assistant Deputy Minister, Sub-Saharan Africa Branch</p>	2024/04/10	101
<p>Department of National Defence</p> <p>MGen Gregory Smith, Director General, International Security Policy</p>	2024/04/10	101
<p>As an individual</p> <p>Edward Akuffo, Associate Professor and Head, Department of Political Science, University of the Fraser Valley</p> <p>David Black, Full Professor, Dalhousie University</p> <p>Christopher W. J. Roberts, Fellow, Canadian Global Affairs Institute</p>	2024/04/15	102
<p>Canada-Africa Chamber of Business</p> <p>Garreth Bloor, President</p> <p>Paula Caldwell St-Onge, Chair of the Board</p>	2024/04/15	102

Organizations and Individuals	Date	Meeting
Canadian Council on Africa Nola Kianza, President and Chief Executive Officer	2024/04/15	102
Stephen Lewis Foundation Meg French, Executive Director	2024/04/15	102
As an individual Issiaka Mandé, Professor, Université du Québec à Montréal Landry Signé, Senior Fellow, The Brookings Institution Thomas Kwasi Tieku, Professor, Politics and International Relations, King's University College, Western University Canada Thierry Vircoulon, Research Fellow of the French Institute for International Affairs	2024/04/17	103
Center for Strategic and International Studies Cameron Hudson, Senior Fellow	2024/04/17	103
As an individual Alessandro Arduino, Affiliate Lecturer, Lau China Institute, King's College London Walter Dorn, Full Professor, Royal Military College of Canada, Department of Defence Studies Mamoudou Gazibo, Full Professor of Political Science, Université de Montréal J. Andrew Grant, Associate Professor of Political Studies, Queen's University	2024/04/29	104
Climate Refugees Amali Tower, Founder and Executive Director	2024/04/29	104
Partenariat International Jean-Louis Roy, President	2024/04/29	104
Association québécoise des organismes de coopération internationale Denis Côté, Policy Analyst	2024/05/08	107
Canadian Foodgrains Bank Andy Harrington, Executive Director	2024/05/08	107

Organizations and Individuals	Date	Meeting
Centre for International Studies and Cooperation Philippe Dongier, Executive Director	2024/05/08	107
Doctors Without Borders Jason Nickerson, Humanitarian Representative to Canada	2024/05/08	107
Fondation Paul Gérin-Lajoie Maxime Allard, Director, Volunteer Cooperation Program Marie-Pierre Nogarède, Deputy Executive Director	2024/05/08	107
Islamic Relief Canada Catriona Addleton, Director of International Programs	2024/05/08	107
As an individual Abdirahman Ahmed	2024/05/22	108
Cuso International Nicolas Moyer, Chief Executive Officer	2024/05/22	108
Food for the Hungry Jonathan Papoulidis, Vice-President	2024/05/22	108
French National Research Institute for Sustainable Development Benjamin Sultan, Director of Research	2024/05/22	108
International Rescue Committee Modou Diaw, Regional Vice-President for West Africa	2024/05/22	108
United Nations World Food Programme Edith Heines, Director of Programme, Policy and Guidance	2024/05/22	108
Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Michael Callan, Ambassador of Canada in Algeria Ben Marc Diendéré, Permanent observer to the African Union and United Nations Economic Commission for Africa Christopher Thornley, High Commissioner for Canada in the Republic of Kenya	2024/05/27	109

APPENDIX B: LIST OF BRIEFS

The following is an alphabetical list of organizations and individuals who submitted briefs to the committee related to this report. For more information, please consult the committee's [webpage for this study](#).

Association de Soutien à l'Autopromotion Sanitaire Urbaine

Blood Gold Report

Canadian Audit and Accountability Foundation

Canadian Red Cross

Cooperation Canada

Doctors Without Borders

FIND

Food for the Hungry

Humanity and Inclusion Canada

International Development Research Centre

International Rescue Committee

Islamic Relief Canada

MEDA

ONE

Results Canada

Roberts, Christopher W. J.

SOCODEVI

The Canadian Network for Neglected Tropical Diseases

REQUEST FOR GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this report.

A copy of the relevant *Minutes of Proceedings* ([Meetings Nos. 101 to 104, 107 to 110 and 119 to 122](#)) is tabled.

Respectfully submitted,

Ali Ehsassi
Chair

