



ASWAN FORUM



CONCEPT NOTE

## **The Aswan Forum II**

SHAPING AFRICA'S NEW NORMAL:  
RECOVERING STRONGER, REBUILDING BETTER

1-5 March 2021

# SHAPING AFRICA'S NEW NORMAL: RECOVERING STRONGER, REBUILDING BETTER

The far-reaching impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on societies and economies across the world highlight the limitations of the current system of global governance in dealing with ever-evolving, complex, and interconnected challenges.

In Africa, past experiences with outbreaks and epidemics has strengthened the continent's ability to respond in a proactive manner. Early on, African heads of state showed strong leadership in addressing the health impact of COVID-19. Nonetheless, pre-existing vulnerabilities, further magnified by the pandemic, have destabilized lives and livelihoods on an unprecedented scale. With weak healthcare systems, high population densities, limited access to clean water and millions living hand-to-mouth, the capacity of most African states is being severely tested as they lack the requisite resources to deal with a prolonged crisis of this magnitude. Youth, women and forcibly displaced populations continue to be disproportionately impacted.

Estimates project that Africa will face an economic downturn between -3.4% to -1.7%.<sup>1</sup> Economic slowdown, retraction of investment flows, and mounting debt are plunging millions into poverty,<sup>2</sup> undermining growth prospects and derailing progress towards achieving Agenda 2063 and the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The longer the crisis lasts, its impact will erode the hard-won gains of decades of economic and human development, increasing the fragility of African states and their vulnerability to existing and emerging security threats.

On the ground, efforts to effectively silence the guns are complicated as the frequency and scale of conflict and violence in Africa continues

unabated. UN and AU peace operations are adjusting while trying to extend a helping hand to host nations as they cope with the effects of the crisis. The implementation of peace agreements in several settings is stalling if not unraveling. Terrorist attacks are on the rise, especially in West Africa and the Sahel region. The impact of these attacks on forced displacement is equally alarming, leaving people more exposed to COVID-19, and rendering continental efforts to control the pandemic less effective.

The current peace, security and development landscape in Africa lays bare the various systemic risks and pockets of fragility that were left unaddressed for years. Siloed and reactive responses by humanitarian, development, peace and security actors continue to result in fragmented and sequenced interventions that do not adequately deal with the systemic nature of risks across the peace continuum.

The COVID-19 crisis further reinforces the need for African countries to shift away from crisis management towards prevention and to strengthen resilience as an integral part of strategies to "recover stronger" and "rebuild better", embracing a pathway for sustainable peace and development.

## THE SECOND EDITION OF THE ASWAN FORUM

Building on the inaugural Aswan Forum and its conclusions, the *Second edition of the Aswan Forum for Sustainable Peace and Development* aims to advance a positive and ambitious agenda, through decisive leadership and innovative solutions, as Africa charts on its pathway for recovery post-COVID-19.

<sup>1</sup> Africa Economic Brief - COVID-19 PANDEMIC Potential Risks for Trade and Trade Finance in Africa - Volume 11 | Issue 6, June 2020.

<sup>2</sup> World Bank. "COVID-19 to Add as Many as 150

Million Extreme Poor by 2021." Accessed October 22, 2020. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2020/10/07/covid-19-to-add-as-many-as-150-million-extreme-poor-by-2021>

This agenda is anchored in a prevention and resilience paradigm as the foundation for a stronger recovery which rebuilds better by tackling the root-causes of conflict, reinforcing inclusive governance, strengthening healthcare systems, redesigning social contracts, accelerating sustainable development, and ensuring the full integration of gender and climate change adaptation dimensions across all interventions. A vision to recover stronger and rebuild better, can capitalize on Africa’s capabilities and harness its huge potential through boosting trade, enhancing access to digital technologies, improving infrastructure, scaling-up renewable energy solutions, adopting innovative financial mechanisms and advancing stronger and more robust partnerships.

To take forward this ambitious agenda, the Forum will continue to champion African led-solutions and efforts to ensure that national, regional and continental actors are better equipped to deal with new and emerging systemic threats, challenges and risks to peace, security and development in Africa in the wake of the pandemic. It will also focus on concrete measures to advance the humanitarian-development-peace nexus both on strategic and operational levels.

Acting in its capacity as the Champion of Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development in Africa, Egypt will organize the **Second Edition of the Aswan Forum for Sustainable Peace and Development**, titled:

## **SHAPING AFRICA’S NEW NORMAL: RECOVERING STRONGER, REBUILDING BETTER**

The Forum, to be held virtually from 1st to 5th March 2021, will bring together leaders from national governments, regional and international organizations, financial institutions, private sector, and civil society, as well as visionaries,

scholars and key experts, practitioners for a context-specific, action-oriented, and forward-looking discussion of the new threats and challenges, as well as opportunities, ahead.

Grounded in “Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want” and the principle of African Solutions to African Problems, the Forum will:

- Develop context-specific and action-oriented recommendations for a strong recovery that targets the achievement of sustainable peace and development, through a shift to a prevention and resilience paradigm;
- Propose a set of suggested actions and measures to advance continental and global cooperation and partnerships to address systemic risks.

## **GOVERNANCE AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**

An International Advisory Board of African and global eminent personalities will act as the brain trust of the Forum, providing strategic direction. Under the supervision of a National Coordination Committee, headed by the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Cairo International Center for Conflict Resolution, Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding (CCCCPA), an African Union Center of Excellence in training, capacity building and research, will act as the Secretariat of the Forum. The Center will be supported by a coalition of African and international think tanks and knowledge partners.

## **PREPARATORY PROCESS**

The Forum will be preceded by a series of webinars to develop forward looking and action-oriented recommendations for the consideration of African and international leaders in government, regional and international organizations, financial institutions, the private sector and civil society during the Forum.

## EXPECTED OUTCOME

The Aswan Conclusions on Sustainable Peace and Development

## VENUE AND DATE

Online, 1-5 March 2021

## CONTACTS

**Phone:** +20 (2) 27 92 89 50

**Fax:** +20 (2) 27 92 89 40

**Email:** [secretariat@aswanforum.org](mailto:secretariat@aswanforum.org)

**Website:** [www.AswanForum.org](http://www.AswanForum.org)

**Twitter:** @Aswanforum

**Facebook:** @Aswanforum

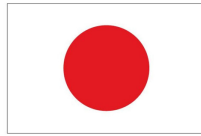
**Linkedin:** @Aswanforum

**Instagram:** @aswanforumegypt



© Sergii Kolesnyk

## STRATEGIC PARTNERS



## SUPPORTING PARTNERS



## PARTNERS



## CORPORATE SPONSORS



## KNOWLEDGE PARTNERS



## NATIONAL PARTNERS





ASWAN FORUM