

Session 1

Shared Goals, Shared Gains: Africa's Quest for Stability and Prosperity



Moderator

Yashn Padayachee

Speakers

Professor Arkebe Oqubay, British Academy Global Professor, Fmr. Senior Minister and Special Advisor to the Prime Minister of Ethiopia

Dr. Nkosana Moyo, Founder and Member of Advisory Board, Mandela Institute for Development Studies (MINDS)

Elif Çomoğlu Ülgen, Ambassador; General Director of Eastern and Southern Africa, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Türkiye

Discussants

Dr. Asma Nairi Özen, Researcher, Africa Foundation

Kaan Devecioğlu, Expert, ORSAM

Dr. Tunç Demirtaş, Researcher, SETA

Dr. İsmail Numan Telci, Vice President & North Africa Studies Coordinator, ORSAM; Associate Professor, Sakarya University

Abdullahi Kaka Abubakar, Program Editor Africa Matters, MoneyTalks, TRT World

Gladys Njoroge, Africa Matters Executive Producer, TRT World

Dr. Yunus Turhan, Associate Professor, Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli University

Mohamed Hussein Aideed, Co-founder and Secretary of Development and Planning of BARWAAQO Party

Key Takeaways

- Despite internal challenges, the African Union played a significant role in fostering political stability in Ethiopia, highlighting the symbiotic relationship between political continuity and economic growth. However, a biased international system often neglects conflicts in Africa.
- Türkiye's foreign policy approach, exemplified in its engagement with Somalia, serves as a compelling case study. The Turkish involvement in Somalia since 2011, marked by President Erdoğan's visit despite security concerns, goes beyond mere symbolism, it underscores a commitment to constructive engagement and improvement without imposing an external agenda.
- Türkiye's strategic positioning within the African continent encompasses active contributions to the continent's economic development. This multifaceted influence is evidenced in Türkiye's focus on manufacturing, infrastructure development, and the maintenance of an independent foreign policy.

- Africa's historical struggle with a "master-slave" mentality underscores the need for a paradigm shift. Türkiye's unique engagement, free from colonial baggage, signifies a departure from historical inequalities. The partnership model emphasises the establishment of a nation-state paradigm, prioritising mutually beneficial deals. The mutual learning between Türkiye and Africa extends beyond security matters, encompassing humanitarian diplomacy.
- Africa's responsibility in negotiating deals with global players, such as China, becomes crucial for its sustainable development. Acknowledging and learning from Türkiye's commitment to a "win-win" foreign policy and tailored bilateral engagements can serve as a guiding principle for African nations.

Summary

In the expert roundtable on "Shared Goals, Shared Gains: Africa's Quest for Stability and Prosperity," experts delved into crucial topics surrounding Africa's development and stability. The session emphasised realism and the importance of acknowledging factors within control, focusing on peace, security, prosperity, integrability, and cultural identity. Prioritising achievable goals, especially in economic strength and diversity, emerged as a central theme.

Türkiye's strategic significance in Africa took the spotlight due to its extensive diplomatic presence and diverse identity. The experts explored Türkiye's response to the Ukraine-Russia war, highlighting its commitment to global peace and security. The complex nature of Africa was emphasised, rejecting the notion of treating it as a single entity. Specific attention was given to Somalia, with discussions on Ottoman-Somalia relations and Türkiye's involvement in education, military, and business in the region.

The meeting addressed economic growth in Türkiye, the role of Chinese investment, and diverse models followed by African countries. Key challenges identified included security, development, education, healthcare, accountability, corruption, and stability issues. Türkiye's limited resources were acknowledged, emphasising the importance of economic cooperation and sharing experiences between Türkiye and Africa, particularly in addressing terrorism.

The discussions underscored the significance of visible successes like hospitals and roads and the imperative for Africa to combat challenges for sustained progress. Women's participation in political affairs, Somalia and Ethiopia's international cooperation strategies, and potential collaborations between Turkish and African nations for advancing women's rights were also discussed. The overarching theme of the meeting was the pursuit of shared growth, stability, prosperity, and unity across the diverse African landscape.