



## Why We Hosted 49 Delegations from Africa This Week

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FROM THE DESK OF

Secretary Antony J. Blinken

U.S. DEPARTMENT of STATE

*This week, I joined President Joe Biden in inviting leaders from across the African continent to Washington, DC from December 13-15, 2022 for the [U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit](#). President Biden believes U.S. collaboration with African leaders, as well as civil society, business, diaspora, women, and youth leaders, is essential to unlocking the potential of this decisive decade. Africa will shape the future — not just the future of the African people, but of the world. Read my remarks below as we wrapped up this three-day summit which served as an opportunity to listen to and collaborate with African counterparts on key areas the United States and Africa define as critical for the future of the continent and our global community.*

Earlier this year in South Africa, I had an opportunity to set out the administration's Strategy for Africa. At its core, it really can be distilled to a single word: partnership. The reality is that the United States and African nations cannot deliver on any of the fundamental aspirations of our people — we can't solve any of the big challenges that we face — if we don't work together. So our approach is about what America can do *with* African nations and people, not *for* them. And that's what the U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit has really been all about.

We took full advantage of having so many leaders from African governments and businesses to strengthen these partnerships, as was demonstrated by the robust engagement from President Biden, Vice President Harris, and a large number of our Cabinet secretaries throughout the course of the week. We're putting considerable new resources toward advancing our shared priorities — \$55 billion over the next three years alone.

Let me just take a minute to sum up and highlight a few of those key areas that have come out of the summit. The bottom line is this: We made significant, tangible progress across every one of our priorities this week, building on the momentum that we've generated over the past two years.

We committed to ensuring African countries have a prominent seat at the table wherever consequential decisions are being made, and consequential issues are being discussed— and we've delivered on that. At the United Nations General Assembly in September, President Biden expressed support for adding a permanent member from Africa to the UN Security Council. And this week the President announced support for the African Union to join the G20 as a permanent member.

In our strategy, we also committed to expanding broad-based economic opportunity in Africa in part by mobilizing the unmatched power of the American private sector. If you go back to 2021, our government has helped close more than 800 two-way trade and investment deals across 47 African countries worth \$18 billion. During the summit just this week, President Biden announced more than \$15 billion in new deals. At the [U.S.-African Business Forum](#), we brought together leaders from over 300 American and African companies with the heads of the 50 delegations, fostering new connections that will create even more opportunity.

Seizing 21st century opportunities requires digital connectivity. This is vital to the free flow of ideas, information, and investment. That's why the President announced our plan to work with Congress to invest more than \$350 million toward a new initiative on digital transformation with Africa.

Too often, international infrastructure and trade deals are opaque. They're coercive. They lead to projects that are environmentally destructive, poorly built, that import or abuse workers, that foster corruption and burden countries with unmanageable debt. We have a different approach. We offer investments that are transparent, high-quality, and sustainable for the planet. We empower local communities. We respect the rights of their people. We listen to their people, to their needs.

America will not dictate Africa's choices. Neither should anyone else. The right to make these choices belongs to Africans and Africans alone. But we will work relentlessly to expand their choices, and the agreements and investments we made this week showed that when African governments, businesses, and communities are offered the choice to partner with the United States, they will take it.

The U.S. Strategy for Africa also committed us to help our partners recover from the devastation wrought by COVID-19 and the unprecedented global food security crisis. African countries have consistently made clear that as much as emergency assistance – in fact, even more than emergency assistance – what they want is to strengthen African capabilities, institutions, technology, supply chains, and industries so that they're more resilient in the face of future shocks, and together we are building that very resilience.

On health security, we've provided 231 million doses of safe, effective COVID-19 vaccines to African countries free of charge. At the summit, President Biden committed to investing at least \$4 billion by 2025 to help African countries train and equip health care workers to meet citizens' needs. We're also expanding the capacity of African countries to manufacture vaccines, tests, and therapeutics in Africa for Africans, and indeed, for the world beyond.

On food insecurity, we've provided more than \$11 billion over the last year to address global hunger and improve nutrition. Much of this assistance has gone to African countries, which have been disproportionately impacted by the drivers of hunger – COVID, climate, and conflict, and by President Putin's war on Ukraine, which has made a serious crisis much worse. We're making unprecedented investments to help African countries fulfill their goal of not only being able to feed their own people but those around the world. Sixteen of the 20 partners in the [Feed the Future](#) program, our flagship program to reduce malnutrition and increase food security, are in Africa, where innovations like high-yield, high-nutrition crops that can endure extreme weather are putting communities on the path to greater resilience.

We know that the climate crisis is a major driver of increased food insecurity and the spread of deadly viruses. It's exacerbating tensions that can spark and spread deadly conflict. Yet as the President often points out, it's also a once-in-a-generation's opportunity to create good paying jobs for the future. That's why we committed to foster a just energy transition that can both meet the region's need for more reliable, affordable energy and create opportunities for businesses and workers in African countries and the United States as well.

Since January of 2021, we've dedicated massive resources toward this very goal – solar energy in Angola, wind power in Kenya, hydro-solar energy in Ghana, and a new \$100 million project that the President announced to expand off-grid access to solar energy – and that's just to name a few of the initiatives and projects that we're working on. We're deepening the resilience of African communities to a changing climate through a \$150 million adaptation fund. We have a responsibility in the United States as, historically, the largest emitter in the world – and now still the number two emitter after China – to help countries adapt and to help them build resilience. We are putting the resources, the technology, and the technical know-how into doing that and sharing it with our partners. We're teaming up with governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to incentivize the protection of irreplaceable natural resources like the Congo Basin rainforest, which absorbs more carbon than is emitted by the entire continent of Africa.

Finally, we committed to work with African partners to fulfill the promise of democracy. That includes helping strengthen its core pillars – the rule of law, human rights, a free press – as well as addressing some of the root causes of insecurity, which undermines the ability of democracies to actually deliver for their people.

Yesterday, President Biden hosted a small group of leaders to discuss how we can help support free, fair, and credible elections in 2023 like the ones we saw in several places this year, including Kenya. As part of that discussion, the President pledged to work with Congress to provide over \$165 million to support elections and good governance in Africa in the coming year. These will be key themes of the second [Summit for Democracy](#) coming up in March, where Zambia will be one of our co-hosts.

Where there are crises and conflicts, we are supporting the African leaders, the regional institutions, and citizens who are stepping up to find diplomatic solutions. That's what we've demonstrated over the last year through our diplomatic engagement in places like Chad, Ethiopia, Sudan, and eastern Democratic Republic of Congo(DRC). We know African countries face real security concerns, including terrorism and transnational organized crime. The message we sent this week is that African nations can continue to count on the United States as a partner in building more effective and accountable security forces.

There are a lot of commitments there. And we know that commitments are only as good as our ability to deliver on them. That's why we asked one of our most experienced senior diplomats, Ambassador Johnnie Carson, to return to the State Department as our special representative for the U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit implementation. With nearly four decades of experience as a diplomat, and deep relationships across the region, I can think of no one better to ensure that our words are actually translated into action.

Across every single one of our priorities, civil society will play a critically important role, and in particular, youth. Today the median age in Africa is 19 years old. By 2030, two in five people on this planet will be African. And the

choices that rising generations make will shape the future not just for Africa but for the entire world. That's why we're investing more in Africa's emerging leaders, more than ever before. The Vice President announced that we plan to devote an additional \$1.1 billion over the next three years to youth programs like the Mandela Washington Fellows, a number of whom took part in this summit, and, of course, the [YALI Network](#), which provides tools, resources, and a virtual community for now more than 700,000 rising leaders across the continent.

Of course, a big part of that is investing in women and girls because we know that when they have the opportunity to reach their full potential, when they're empowered to lead in business and government and communities and families, all of society benefits.

The very first gathering that I took part in this week was a meeting of rising African innovators and entrepreneurs. The energy, the ingenuity of this group, its eagerness to turn so many of the problems that we face into opportunities, and to do so in partnership with the United States, is truly inspiring. It's impossible to feel cynical in their presence because they're so energized. They're so committed to serving their communities. They are so full of good ideas.

And that kind of sums up the way that we feel coming out of this summit. As the President said yesterday, we're all in on Africa's future because we know that the future of African nations and the United States is a shared one. And in this decade – what the President has called a decisive decade – that partnership is more vital than ever.

I appreciate those who have taken the time to write to me in the past several months. To share your thoughts, please write to me and my team at [EmailTeam@State.gov](mailto:EmailTeam@State.gov).

Sincerely,



Secretary Antony J. Blinken

#### Note to Readers

This new flagship email – “From the Secretary’s Desk” – features the Secretary’s remarks and speeches on important current events. [Sign up to receive this email regularly.](#)

This email was adapted from [Secretary Antony J. Blinken at a Press Availability in the U.S.- Africa Leaders Summit on December 15, 2022.](#)

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