

In an increasingly globalized world, progressive, forward-looking policies must anticipate Africa's increasing importance to United States affairs. Though governmental corruption, environmental degradation, lack of education, trade inequality, and health issues such as malaria and HIV/AIDS challenge sub-Saharan Africa today, opportunities exist for positive engagement with the United States. This paper evaluates current US foreign policies vis-à-vis Africa, their effectiveness, and recommends new policy directions.

## **Trade**

It is in our collective and international interest to incorporate Sub-Saharan Africa into the global economic framework to enfranchise market development by refocusing aid-based initiatives and using it as a catalyst to stimulate economic growth and development. Presently, the United States is operating under a construct of humanitarian assistance packages and restrictive conditions to aid and trade. We have also sought new partnerships with African states by passing the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA). AGOA has taken steps to broaden trade by ensuring greater access to global markets for African nations.

Asymmetric policies hinder the ability of Africa to enter confidently into the global market. We propose a more effective long-term approach to create self-sustaining, bottom-up development rather than the simple transfer of wealth and barriers to trade. This approach includes

- Continuing to eliminate barriers to agricultural trade in sub-Saharan Africa, as well as access of African states to global markets;
- Creating new partnerships with African Union (AU) regional economic organs to encourage economic integration;
- Continuing support of African Union initiatives to promote democratization, good governance, transparency and accountability;
- Cooperating with international financial actors to eliminate debt;
- Shifting aid to focus on promoting entrepreneurial development, such as microfinance programs and high-impact social entrepreneurs that are important to public and private sector development.

## **Security/Development**

Through the establishment of economic and political development, the US would seek to empower the people of sub-Sahara Africa to defeat the conditions that foster and perpetuate terrorism. Policies that use a top-down bureaucratic approach lend themselves to inefficiency and ineffectiveness, enabling government corruption and economic dependence. Strategic development in conflict-prone areas would provide alternatives to extremist movements, thereby increasing national and international security. For example, the Education for All Fast-Track Initiative (FTI) enables national governments to fund universal primary education—an alternative to extremist education and ideology.

Development programs such as the Education for All FTI show promise, though the success of these programs can be augmented with increased funding. Increased coordination among agencies such as the US Department of Defense, Department of State, and Department of Commerce would increase these

policies' efficiency and would allow these policies to be transplanted elsewhere. To achieve this, we recommend the following:

- Continue to identify initiatives, particularly initiatives focusing on the bottom-up approach, that have already established success within a country
- Fund local, appropriate programs and review funded programs every 5 years to ensure efficiency and effectiveness, working through governments where possible.
- Consult the AU on proposed development policies to encourage cooperation and ensure comprehensiveness
- Institute a forum for the sharing and facilitation of successful strategies and novel initiatives between parties.
  - o The possibility of implementing a cabinet-level position to address the issues of development and foreign aid was discussed. Though consensus was not reached, we feel that this possibility should be further investigated and discussed.

## **Energy**

Currently the United States has a laissez-faire economic policy with regards to African oil, resulting in negative externalities. Moreover, emergent actors are challenging US competitiveness in accessing these natural resources. The fundamental difficulty with the current US policy is that China is out-bidding the United States for this limited resource, signaling that the United States needs to formulate policies to increase competitiveness in Africa. The United States can do this by encouraging oil companies to create more comprehensive contracts with considerations for respecting human security in Africa.

Oil companies must commit to constructing infrastructure, increasing African employment, and implementing ecologically-sound operations in Africa. By providing incentives such as tax breaks for compliant oil companies, they can enhance competitiveness in the face of emergent actors.

This is not a comprehensive list of problems and solutions for sub-Saharan Africa. Rather, it includes issues that pertain to US interests. Progress requires constant re-evaluation. We must recognize the growing importance of this region for our national security interests. We offer a new symbiotic framework for engaging with Africa as a twenty-first century partner.