

**WHY GLOBAL GOVERNANCE MATTERS FOR AFRICA: CRISES, LESSONS AND
SETTING THE POLITICAL AGENDA FOR POST-WESTERN ORDER**

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KÜRESEL YÖNETİŞİM AFRİKA İÇİN NEDEN ÖNEMLİDİR? KRİZLER, DER- SLER VE BATI SONRASI DÜZEN İÇİN SİYASİ GÜNDEMİN BELİRLENMESİ ÖZET

Afrika'nın 2008 Küresel Finans Krizi ve COVID-19 salgını sırasındaki deneyimlerinin ele alındığı bu çalışma, Afrika'nın küresel yönetimdeki çevresel konumunun kıtayı orantısız bir şekilde küresel krizlerin etkilerine nasıl maruz bıraktığını araştırmanın yanı sıra Afrika'nın küresel yönetişimde artan bir rolü olduğunu savunmaktadır. Çalışma, Afrika Birliği'ne dayanan ortak bir Afrika yaklaşımının, Afrika'nın çok taraflı platformlardaki birleşik konumunu benimseyerek kıtaya dair küresel meseleleri şekillendirmek için yeterli itici gücü sağlayabileceğini ileri sürmektedir. Bu çalışma, BM Güvenlik Konseyi'ndeki reformlar, uluslararası yardım rejimi, iklim değişikliği, borç yönetimi, küresel ticaret ve küresel ekonomik yönetim gibi konulara küresel yanıtları şekillendirebilecek genişletilmiş bir rol geliştirirken kıtanın ortak bir pozisyon benimsemesi ve gücünü artırması gerektiğini yinelemektedir. AfCFTA ve AfDB gibi kıtanın özgün yapıları, Afrika'nın küresel ilişkilerinde çağdaş siyasi etkinin dayandığı temel ekonomik kapasitesini ortaya çıkarmaktadır. **Anahtar Kelimeler:** Afrika, Küresel Yönetişim, Krizler, AfCFTA, AfDB, CAP

WHY GLOBAL GOVERNANCE MATTERS FOR AFRICA: CRISES, LESSONS AND SETTING THE POLITICAL AGENDA FOR POST-WESTERN ORDER

Abstract

Using Africa's experience during the 2008 global financial crisis and COVID-19 pandemic, this study explores how the peripheral positions of Africa in global governance has disproportionately exposed the continent to inordinate impacts of global crises and argues for an increased role for Africa in global governance. A common Africa position premised on the AU is advanced as capable of providing the continent with adequate impetus to shape global affairs by espousing unified position of Africa in multilateral platforms. This study reiterates that developing such an expanded role that can shape global responses to issues such as reforms in the UNSC, international aid regime, climate change, debt management, global trade, and global economic governance, the continent should adopt common position and leverage its continental frameworks such as AfCFTA and the AfDB to unlock its economic capacity which is the foundation upon which contemporary political influence in global affairs is premised.

Key words: Africa, Global Governance, Crises, AfCFTA, AfDB, CAP

Introduction

Growing interdependence between states and changes in balance of power reflected by the rise of emerging powers (Gök and Karadeniz, 2020; Gilley and O'Neil, 2014) offers an opportunity for Africa to deepen its role in global governance. Although as a concept global governance is relatively modern, it underlies antique issues of cooperation between sovereigns in resolving shared challenges. In the past, these challenges were premised on classical understanding of security, but this has since expanded to include domains such as public health, climate, nuclear proliferation, trade, economic crises, terrorism, transnational crimes, and migration. States operationalise cooperation on these issues through multilateral platforms, some that are formal such as United Nations (UN), European Union (EU), World Trade Organization (WTO), African Union (AU), World Health Organisation (WHO), and others that are informal such as G8-G20 frameworks and intergovernmental conferences.

After the Second World War, the postmodern framework of global governance was established by victorious powers of the war, specifically, the Western bloc. Henceforth, international system has undergone deep transformation (Dominguez, 2010) and although global institutional structures have continued to mirror economic and geopolitical realities of late twentieth century, the dynamics of global power have shifted albeit without significant global institutional reforms. In the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) for instance, although powers such as China and Russia have permanent seats, several great powers of the twenty-first century such as Germany, Japan, India, and Brazil do not. Additionally, no country in Africa, Latin America, or a state representing the Muslim world occupies the status of a permanent member of the Council. Yet, in spite of these unresolved concerns, states are increasingly confronted by numerous threats to global stability. Consequently, the role of global governance has risen to be of utmost importance. Some studies (Regilme Jr, 2019; Vachon et al., 2016) have made bold claims that these emerging global problems are symbols of a decaying order and that the lack of consensus amongst great powers on global problems, exacerbates existing weaknesses of global governance.

For Africa, the last few decades have been awash with narratives. Many have touched on the continent's need for development, while others focused on narratives of an emerging economic giant or a region grappling with structural socio-political and economic problems. Regardless of perspective, one underlying reality is that the continent has transformed and ought to be actively shaping its own agenda in global affairs. However, discourses about priorities, global engagement, or strategies on how the continent can strengthen its position in global governance has been lacking, notwithstanding, that the post-Cold War international system can only be characterised as rapacious and predatory— one that has undermined Africa's engagement in global governance. Indeed, the integration of Africa into global system occurred in

the context of ‘a third-class citizen’, in which Africa’s interests have been stifled and its development agenda epitomised by production and reproduction of conflict and structural underdevelopment. Cognisant of this, we argue that Africa must overcome these challenges through active participation in global governance. The lessons from the 2008 global financial crisis (GFC) and coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) deeply exposed the limitations of Africa’s position in the periphery of global governance. Thus, Africa should reassess its role, position, and reshape the nature of engagement with itself and external actors. Indeed, if better opportunities are to exist for the continent, then Africa must create them.

The authors recognizes that talking about an “African position” in global governance can be daunting. Indeed, Africa is a diverse continent in economic outlook, culture, political systems, and religious beliefs, and this makes conventional attempts to identify a distinct African position on global governance difficult. However, to avoid formulating generalisations and homogenisations of the different perspectives that exist, this article adopts the position of the AU as the basis of African position in global affairs. As the premier continental organization, AU provides a platform through which African states pursue common position on global issues. The common position not only sustains intra-African relations, but also relations with international platforms involved in global governance. In other words, AU is the closest representative organisation that reflects the collective position of the continent; thus, it is possible to talk about an African position that is methodologically sound, and perhaps the most effective approach to defining, evaluating, and understanding Africa’s position in world politics.

This study is relevant in advancing the debate on Africa and global governance. Higher interdependence between states, and contagious impacts of global challenges emphasizes why global governance matters for Africa. Often, despite not contributing much to pertinent global problems, outcomes of global crises tend to have great repercussions on the continent (Bargain and Aminjonov, 2021). The outcome of such crises directly impact on the development and security of the continent, and, in an international system where rules are shaped by powerful states or coalitions, without greater role to play in formulating these rules, the interests of Africa will continue to be undermined.

Africa and the 2008 global financial crisis

Since the Great Depression, the outbreak of the GFC in 2008 was considered as the worst economic crisis to hit global economy (Crotty, 2009). The emergence of problems in the US financial markets after sub-prime loans were issued culminated in a market panic characterised by withdrawal of deposits from banks and market funds, freezing of credit, emergency sale of assets, and collapse of cross-border trade (Kao et al., 2018). The collapse of Lehman Brothers (Vidal & Marshall, 2019)— a U.S. investment bank, and the nationalization of Fannie Mae and Freddie

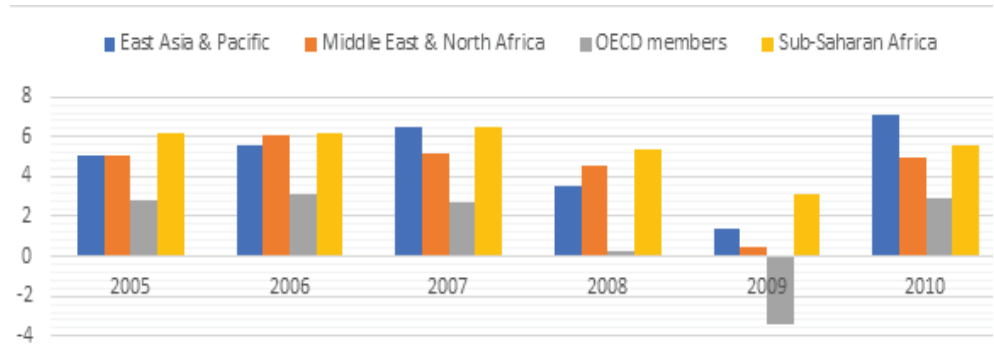
Mac (Engle, 2018)— two U.S. federal mortgage agencies that had assets worth USD 5 trillion under their management, sent shockwaves across US and Europe. Additionally, nationalization of the largest global insurance company—the American International Group, created further uncertainties about the nature and scope of government intervention, thus, destabilising financial markets. But the impacts were not only quarantined within financial institutions. Other sectors such as businesses and households were also affected.

The impacts of GFC were greatly felt in Africa where several economies are dependent on trade of primary commodities. The crisis led to decline in global trade causing price shocks of raw materials, food and fuel, increased inflation, and unemployment. A study by Fosu and Naude (2009), observes that before the crisis, prices of African exports such as energy, food, and metal had increased by 329%, 102%, and 230% respectively between 2003 and July 2008. In post-crisis, these prices decreased by 64%, 30%, and 46% respectively. Caballero et al., (2008) established that commodity prices on average had decreased by 53%. Sub-Sahara Africa (SSA) was significantly impacted by reduced inflows of FDIs. In 2007, SSA had recorded FDI inflows estimated at USD 69.2 billion, and as the impact of the crisis spread, FDI declined by 67% in 2009 (Anyanwu, 2011). The fiscal response needed to mitigate the crisis meant that contributions to official development assistance (ODA) which was key to the budgetary needs of several African states decreased. The Economic Commission for Africa (2010) indicated that ODA contributed more than 10% of gross national income (GNI) of 23 states in SSA in 2008 and more than 20% in ten other SSA countries. Although the link between foreign aid and development has been contested (Moyo, 2009; Ferguson & Moyo, 2019), the impact of the crisis on ODA reflected in the decline in implementation of social welfare programmes.

Some studies (Wagle & Devkota, 2018; Huay & Bani, 2018) link remittances to reduction of poverty, yet contraction of global economy led to sharp decline in remittance inflows. Data from World Bank indicated that remittances steadily increased from USD 11.2 billion to USD 40.8 billion between 2000 and 2008 (Economic Commission for Africa, 2010). In 2007, remittance accounted for 3.9% and 2% of GDP in North Africa and SSA, respectively. In 2008, the dependency on remittances accounted for an average 5% of GDP with significant variations across Lesotho, where dependency was as high as 27.3% of the GDP while Togo, Senegal, and Cape Verde recorded 10.1%, 9.8%, and 7.7% respectively. However, in 2009, remittances declined by an average of 9% thereby directly impacting the welfare of households. An empirical study of 30 SSA countries by Friedman and Schady (2013), estimated an excess of 28000-50000 infant deaths in 2009 as a result of the crisis. The crisis also reversed progress achieved by African states in improving economic growth rates. The African Development Bank (AfDB) estimated that the real GDP growth rates declined from 6.5% in 2007 to 5.3% and 3.1% in 2008 and

2009, respectively. In oil producing African states, the impact was greater (Brealey, 2009). For instance, Angola’s economic growth declined from 11.2% in 2008 to 0.8% in 2009 while in East Africa, regional growth declined from an average of 8.4% in 2007 to 6% in 2009.

Figure 1: Comparative regional GDP growth rates (2005-10)



The experience of Africa during the GFC emphasizes why Africa needs greater influence in global governance. Despite commitment to development assistance by developed countries, the minimum ODA of 0.7% of GDP remains unfulfilled. This is a sharp contrast considering that Western countries mobilised over USD 4 trillion to bail out and nationalise banks as well as rescue ‘big businesses’ in order to prevent job losses and cushion populations from the crisis. This amount represented more than 45 times the value that Europe and United States committed to give in ODA (Institute of Policy Studies, 2008).

More importantly, the neoliberal policies previously restricted in African countries on the basis of market fundamentalism that were reversed and implemented by the Global North during the GFC, raises fundamental questions. Indeed, instead of advocating for implementation of structural adjustment programmes like it had been in the case for Africa, what the World Bank and IMF advocated for in Europe, USA, and Asia were stimulus support programmes characterised by expansion of fiscal policies. Does this mean that what is good and applicable to Western economies cannot be the same for African countries? Could this have demonstrated that perhaps, the neoliberal policies advocated by the Bretton Woods institutions could have very little to do with science of development but more of ideology meant to not only promote, but also protect the interests of the developed North in global capitalism?

Africa and COVID-19 pandemic

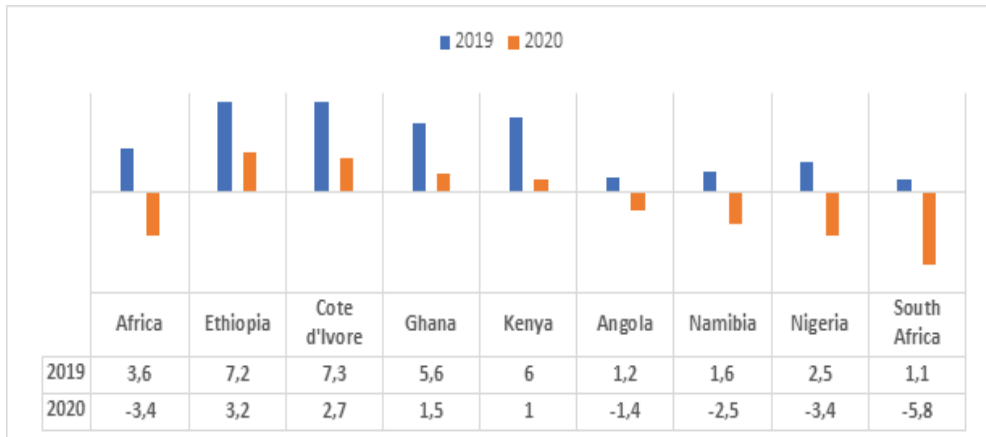
In over a century, the world had not been faced with a multidimensional crisis measured to the similar scale of COVID-19 which was a simultaneous and indiscriminate crisis cutting across the global socio-economic, and political spheres. The emergence of COVID-19 and its subsequent spread to all the other continents, was largely unprecedented. In fact, during the early phase of the pandemic, Chinese government response through implementation of total lockdown measures in Wuhan was criticised by states and international organizations such as Human Rights Watch who issued statements urging China to respect human rights protected under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Human Rights Watch, 30 January, 2020). For many, China's response was another manifestation of its authoritarian overreach.

As the pandemic increased in intensity and new research provided more insights about the extent of threat (Le et al., 2020; Watkins, 2020) fear emerged amongst public health experts about the potential impact of the virus in developing regions, particularly Africa. Early statistical models on Africa in studies such as Achoki et al., (2020) estimated that by June 2020, infections would have risen to over 49 million cases and over 120 thousand deaths. These estimations were arrived at in consideration of factors such as high population density, large informational settlements, lack of basic amenities such as clean water and sanitation, weak health systems, and the burden of other infectious diseases facing the continent. However, the human cost of the pandemic were significantly lower to the statistical models predicted earlier. By May 2021, Africa recorded approximately 4.7 million infections and slightly above 128 thousand deaths. Pioneer studies (Evans et al., 2020; Nyadera et al., 2021) that attempted to look into this phenomenon attributed it to several factors such as the young population of the continent, favourable weather, quick response by African governments, public support for lockdown measures, and existence of good community health systems.

While it can be said that the impact of the pandemic on public health was comparatively lesser, the social and economic consequences were greater. The constant message across the globe was that the public health priority was to “flatten the curve” in order to enable health systems to cope with potential surge in infections. This message was widely welcomed by governments with the exception of few countries such as Brazil that criticised containment measures and dismissed the threat of the virus, and Mexico and Tanzania that were too slow to adopt containment measures. Although the economic impact from the containment measures varied across states, contraction in the average economic growth of the continent captured the extent of the impact of COVID-19 on Africa. In 2019, the continent experienced growth of 3.9% and this declined to -3.4% in 2020. According to Ozili (2020), the contraction experienced was as a result of the impact of the pandemic on sectors such as the aviation industry, tourism, financial markets, and the decline of commodity

prices. Moreover, the continent’s huge informal sector could not continue engaging in any meaningful activities of production.

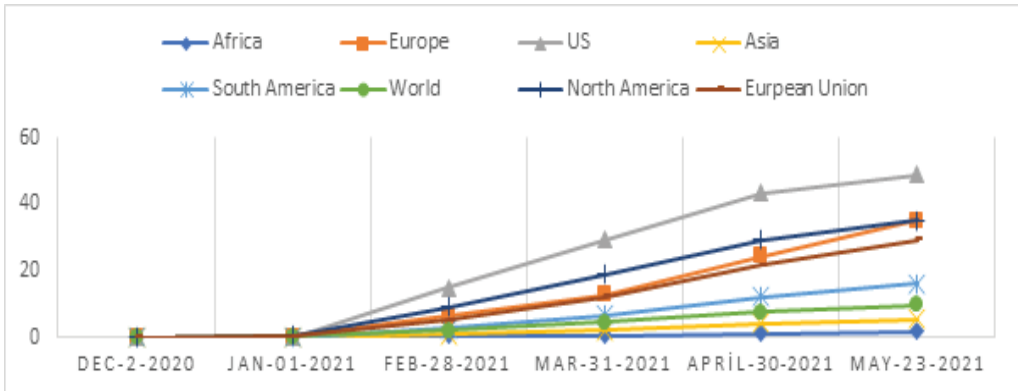
Figure 2: Comparative economic growth in Africa



Source: Authors’ analysis of World Bank dataset

So how does the experience of Africa with COVID-19 relate to global governance? The essence of global governance is to stimulate cooperation amongst states especially during periods of global crises. Yet, COVID-19 demonstrated just how alienated the world is from an effective and unified global governance and the crisis of confidence facing international institutions such as the WHO. Indeed, it was expected that following the ground-breaking progress in the manufacture of vaccines, there could have been equitable and fair access to vaccines. It cannot be emphasized any further that equity in issues pertaining to global health welfare, ought to be the guiding principle in any global effort to mitigate health crises (Plamondon & Bisung, 2019). In contrast, what characterised the global response to COVID-19 was largely a generalised approach modelled from the perspectives and needs of high-income countries without much consideration to whether such approaches could offer feasible alternatives to low-income countries. Perhaps of greater implication was the issue of vaccine nationalism and protectionism in the access of critical medical equipment needed for the treatment and the management of the pandemic. According to vaccination data by 23rd May 2021, Africa had the least number of vaccinated persons, and by a great margin.

Figure 3: Share of total population (%) that received at least one dose of COVID-19 vaccine



Source: Author analysis of data from John Hopkins University COVID-19 dataset

The Africa Centre for Disease Control (ACDC) linked the experience of Africa in accessing COVID-19 vaccines to the “collapse of global cooperation and failure of international solidarity” that pushed Africa to the outermost periphery of the diagnostic market (Nkengasong, 2020). The experiences of COVID-19 reasserted why global governance matters for Africa in developing deeper partnerships to not only prevent but also resolve other global threats. As Africa, continues to develop its internal capacity, it is only through global collaboration that it can be able to meet some of its pertinent developmental needs- thus, the need for the continent to play a greater role in global governance.

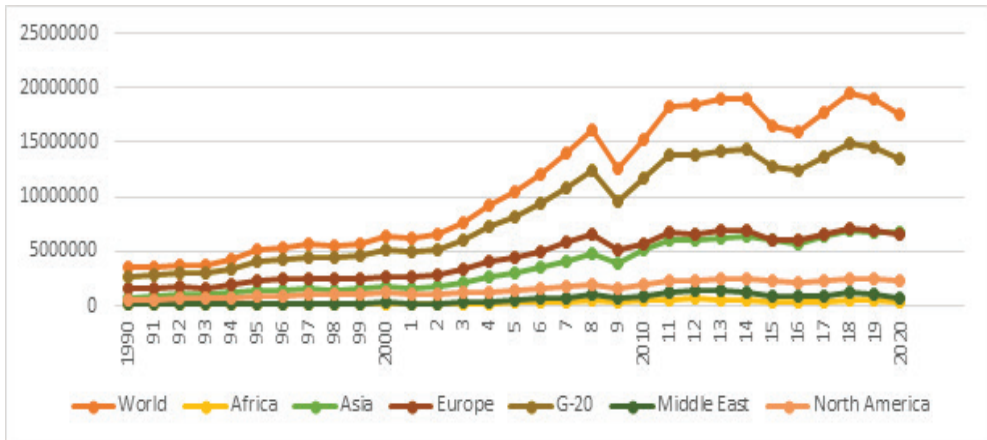
Framing an African agenda in global governance

The challenges of capacity in Africa have often meant that the continent experiences disproportionate impacts of global crises. Increasingly, African heads of state and government, regional economic organizations, and civil society groups have become vocal about the longstanding socio-political and economic grievances of the continent in global affairs. In addition, rapid changes in Africa’s demographic dynamics, reiterate the essence of dealing with existing and emerging challenges to guarantee peace and stability. Creating new employment opportunities, pursuing inclusive growth, improving fiscal capabilities of African states, and maintaining peace and security calls for agenda setting for Africa in global governance. According to a study by Kingdom and Stano (1984), it is only through agenda setting whereby problems, policies, and politics converge, that can an issue or a given problem appear on a policy agenda. In this article we identify six critical agendas that will determine the trajectory of the continent in the next decades.

Global trade

Indeed, it is well documented that immense deposits of natural resources such as minerals and high-demand agricultural cash crops like tea, cocoa, and coffee that are dominantly produced in Africa. Yet, Africa's share in global trade and with itself is dismal. According to WTO, Africa's in global trade is the least and no significant efforts have been made to improve the value of merchandise exports since the 1990s. In this article, we argue that this is not unusual partly because the global system of trade is so much skewed to keep producers of primary commodities within peripheries of global trade and WTO has failed to establish a fair global trade regime that can protect vulnerable actors in the global trade system. According to a study by Verter (2017), practices of tax escalation, that is, the imposition of higher tariffs on processed commodities than raw materials have systematically constricted Africa to remain a supplier of primary products in global trade.

Figure 4: Total annual merchandise product exports (USD millions)



Source: Authors' analysis

The collapse of The Doha Round in 2007 over disagreements about opening up of industrial and agricultural markets and the demand by developing countries to high-income states to remove extensive subsidies to farmers highlighted the skewed nature of global trade (Schwab, 2011). An initiative that was previously hailed as a potential catalyst for a new era of equitable global trade turned out to be a neo-mercantilist struggle between developed and underdeveloped countries over access to markets. Thus, given that Africa constitutes approximately one quarter of the membership of the WTO, moving forward, it must seek to pursue deeper engagements within it to reform the rules of global trade.

Global economic governance

Global economic governance constitutes another fundamental agenda for Africa and although narratives of ‘Africa rising’ are rife, available data points to a cold reality. The 2008 GFC and the COVID-19 sparked sharp decline in commodity prices, loss of savings, and high rates of unemployment, thereby, deterring development. According to OECD (2020), approximately 520 million Africans were exposed to poverty representing about 40% of the total African population and 70% of global poverty. Yet despite these glaring challenges, global economic governance has barely been a reliable force in positively shaping the economic fortunes of the continent and the inequitable representation within key institutions such as World Bank, IMF, and WTO have only marginalised Africa’s contribution to global economic governance. For instance, in the IMF, 47 African states collectively shared equal voting powers with Russia at 2.59% and far much lower to US at 16.51% (IMF, 2021). The Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative instituted by World Bank in 1996, subjected the eligible 33 African states to meet benchmarks for debt relief even though those countries were already undergoing high levels of debt distress. At the time, these targets which included achieving export-to-GDP ratios of 40% minimum and a fiscal revenue of 20% minimum to the GDP ratio raised important questions regarding their feasibilities given that most were either emerging from civil wars such as Rwanda, or were experiencing violence such as Sudan, Somalia, and Democratic Republic of Congo.

Climate Change

Climate change represents a threat and an opportunity for Africa. As a threat, in countries such as Zimbabwe, Mozambique, and Malawi, over three million people were affected by a cyclone in 2018 (Global Commission on the Economy and Climate, 2018). Moreover, the World Economic Forum (2018), projected that climate change will expose Africa to USD 1.4 trillion loss in 2023 (almost half of the continent’s GDP) down from USD 895 billion recorded in 2018. If the global community fails to achieve the Paris Agreement, then Africa will continue to experience the challenges of low agricultural and labour productivity. Kompas et al., (2018) argued that in the absence of any major changes in global trends such as technology, economic, or social dynamics, an increase in global temperatures by 3 degrees will result in annual economic contraction of African GDP by 8.9%, and if the Paris Agreement target of 1.5 degrees is achieved, then this contraction would reduce to an annual 3.6% after the year 2100. However, such changes in technological, social, and economic trends could also create opportunity for Africa. A study by New Climate Economy projected that climate action would produce at a minimum, USD 26 trillion in global economic output between 2018 and 2030. Precisely, over 65 million jobs would be generated in the low-carbon sector and more than 700 thousand premature deaths from pollution prevented.

In considering the drivers of climate change, Africa has played a very minimal role in greenhouse gases emissions. Yet, climate change has posed severe political, economic, and social predicaments that have hampered efforts towards achieving sustainable development. Cognisant of this, it is vital that Africa plays a greater role in climate change negotiation processes so that countries that contribute more to climate change can take transformative actions on emissions reductions. Tackling climate change problems cannot be achieved in the absence of global cooperation, therefore, Africa must engage other actors to access the necessary investments needed for the realisation of climate agreements regardless of whether the North is driven by a sense of social justice or by economic opportunism presented by climate change. The AU which delegates various African Groups to participate in climate change negotiations should seek to expand its climate governance role by ensuring that the interest of Africa are accounted for and that states or international institutions that govern climate actions meet their obligations through effective implementation of agreements. In other words, Africa should seek to play a lead role in how the climate crisis is framed, and for its sake, pursue an understanding of the climate crisis as one that goes beyond the realm of climate action, to include sustainable development.

Debt management

Beginning with the establishment of SAPs in the 1980s, the question of debt management has been among the top agendas for the continent. Often, IMF, World Bank, and international credit ranking institutions raised concerns about sustainability of African debt- much of which is issued through foreign currency dominated Eurobonds (Oxford Analytica, 2018). Underlying the debt trumpets by these institutions is that African governments incur more debt without taking into account the exchange risks and costs of repayment. However, we argue that perhaps, the concern is not as much about debt incurred, rather, the interest rates levied on Africa by. The assessment of debt burden is often premised on two factors;- the ratio of debt to GDP, and interest rates (Akhmadeev et al., 2018).

African governments have been portrayed to have higher debt risks even though on average, debt is far below the 100% debt to GDP ratio. This perception has produced an outcome of Africa being subjected to higher interest rates than other countries in Europe and America. A report by World Bank (3 February, 2020) indicated that with exemption of Djibouti, Mozambique, Cape Verde, and Congo, the average debt to GDP of all other African countries was 59% in 2020- which is just about the threshold of 60% designated by the African Monetary Cooperation Program and IMF for judicious debt levels. Nonetheless, international financial markets have subjected African states to pay on average between 5% to 16% interest rates on 10-year government bonds (The Conversation, 20 February, 2020). This is a huge contrast to Europe and America whose debt interests are capped at near zero percent or negative rates. As a consequence, repayment of interest rates have become the highest allocation

and fastest growth expenditure in fiscal budgets of African governments.

The poor credit ratings of several African states have drawn criticisms amongst African scholars (Mutize and Nkhalamba, 2020) who have argued that despite the strong correlation between economic growth and risk assessment, Africa's 3.6% average growth for more than a decade has not translated into positive credit ratings. In other words, the dismal credit ratings of African states mean that many of countries are far worse than before, and that progress achieved in human development, governance, and economic growth are overlooked. For example, Ethiopia which has experienced economic growth of 8% to 11% for more than a decade, did not achieve any upgrade in its credit rating for over a decade. Therefore, it is important that Africa rethinks how to address the issue of interest rates and the perception of its higher debt risks. These concerns necessitate the input of Africa in debt management by advocating for international guidelines of accountability of credit rating agencies.

UNSC reforms

The UNSC is very important for Africa because it is mandated with sanctioning peacekeeping missions- majority of which are located in the continent, and because permanent membership provides greater influence in international affairs. As a region with 54 member states in the UN, reform of the UNSC thus constitutes an important agenda. Former Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere voiced the frustration of the continent with regard to the UNSC that: "The big question is always: Is this country pro East or pro West? (these kinds of discourses he argued)...are based on a very fundamental mistake that Africa has no ideas of its own and no interests of its own" (Nyerere, 1974:43). For decades, Africa has been calling for reforms in the Council. On 5th March 2020, Neville Grette, the Namibian Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the UN, issued a statement to the UN General Assembly (UNGA) that:

"Here, I would once again like to take the opportunity to reiterate the Common African Position as espoused in the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration, adopted by the African Union, which calls for not less than two permanent seats with all the prerogatives and privileges of permanent membership including the right of veto; five non-permanent seats. In that regard, even though Africa is opposed in principle to the veto, it is of the view that so long as it exists, and as a matter of common justice, it should be made available to all permanent members of the Security Council. Co-chairs, I request that this precise reflection of Africa's position on the reform of the Security Council in the two categories of membership be reflected verbatim in your record of this year's IGN session" (Permanent Mission of the Republic of Namibia to the UN, 2020).

Indeed, there have been growing calls for equitable representation in the Council or the expansion of veto power to other members. Increasingly, the Council is considered as an unfair, undemocratic, and outdated institution that continues to reflect the end of World War II balance of power. In policy discourses, Africa is considered a bystander rather than an actor contributing to the formulation of global policies. Yet in an era where global crises have been elevated to the realm of security, Africa's inability to act on equal footing with the other regions, renders the continent a subject rather than an agent of global governance. Without permanent representation and veto right, it is doubtful that the asymmetry in global challenges will be repudiated, neither can Africa be assured that policies will meet its needs. **Leveraging African frameworks for global governance role**

From the Concert of Europe to neoliberal order, the global governance architecture has been premised on one important principle: economic capacity of states. As such, influence in global affairs has been determined by economic amplitude, and given that this is an old principle, countries in Europe and North America have naturally been favoured. Since the establishment of UN and its affiliate institutions, global governance has gradually transitioned towards elite multilateralism whereby important deliberations on global issues are conducted in or shaped by groups of 'small clubs' constituted of states that represent the largest global economies.

As previously mentioned in our earlier discourses herein, there have been significant changes in global dynamics. Emerging powers have demonstrated the will to challenge the existing order and developing regions have voiced their support for radical reforms in the global governance architecture, which is criticised for being unrepresentative, undemocratic, and outdated. This shifting environment provides an opportunity for Africa to integrate itself in global governance in a manner that can enhance its capacity to safeguard its interests in international organizations. It is essential that Africa consolidates its common position and the benefits of continental frameworks like Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and African Development Bank to build its political and economic capacity. Africa has taken key steps to craft, advocate, and defend collective goals in global negotiations through integration, pooled sovereignty, and establishment of common positions. Agenda 2063 established in 2013 buttressed AU's Constitutive Act that enshrines Africa's commitment to:

“...continue the global struggle against all forms of racism and discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance; advance international cooperation that promotes and defends Africa's interests, is mutually beneficial and aligned to our Pan-Africanist vision; continue to speak with one voice and act collectively to promote our common interests and position in the international arena.”¹

1 See, Agenda 2063, https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/33126-doc-01_background_note.pdf

Agenda 2063 is a reflection of the continent’s grand strategy for pursuing greater role in global governance through global diplomacy at a time when multilateralism has come under threat from rising populism, nationalism, and protectionism. In this context, AU has been utilising ‘position papers’ created from Common Africa Position processes to advance the strategic priorities of the continent in global platforms. The CAP policies are developed through diplomatic practices shaped by the Union’s resolutions, declarations, and General Assembly decisions on specific themes that cover continental interests and are issued as joint statements, declarations, or consensus papers to inform Africa’s engagement in global processes. Some of the key CAP policies are outlined below:

Year	CAP Policy	Focus Area	Target Global Platform
2000	OAU Bamako Declaration on CAP on the Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons	Illicit proliferation, circulation and trafficking of small arms and light weapons	International community, African governments, regional community blocks and the UN
2005	Ezulwini Consensus and Sirte Declaration	Reform of UNSC	UNSC- ongoing
2009	Africa Mining Vision	Natural resource management	African states and investment community- ongoing
2011	African Consensus and Position on Development Effectiveness	South-South Cooperation (financing and capacity building)	OECD, G7, G20, UN, and Aid Effectiveness Forum,
2014	The CAP on the Post-2015 Development Agenda	UN Agenda 2030 for SDGs	UN and its affiliates
2015	CAP on Climate Change Negotiations	Climate change	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
2015	CAP on the UN review of Peace Operations	Peace operations	UNSC
2016	CAP on UNGA Special Session (UNGASS) on the World Drug Problem	Transboundary organised crime	UN and its affiliates
2016	Master Roadmap on implementation of Silencing the Guns	Peace and Security	International community and non-state actors
2017	CAP on Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration	Migration	UN and its affiliates
2020	Common African Position on Asset Recovery	Curbing illicit financial flows	International community including the UN system (UN Office on Drug and Crime)

Source: Author compilation

Although negotiations of CAP policies can be complex and time-consuming, the processes enhance greater participation of African states to AU organs such as AU Commission, AU Development Agency, and New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD), as well as other actors such as technical committees, epistemic community, and civil society groups across the continent. The framework established by the processes of developing CAP policies therefore provide the continent with a strong foundation through which it can expand its influence on global issues. Already, common positions have in the past played a critical role in expanding the influence of the continent in global governance as was witnessed during the Rio Conference negotiations in which Africa influenced the establishment of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). This ability to voice common stand and produce positive impacts, represents the hallmark of the strength that Africa can have in global governance.

AfCFTA can also provide leverage for Africa to expand its role on issues pertaining to international trade. Operationalised on 1 January 2021 to become the largest free trade area since the establishment of the WTO in 1994, several studies (Sibanda Sr, 2021; Nwankwo & Ajibo, 2020) have alluded that AfCFTA provides transformative economic opportunities for the region. A report by World Bank (27 July 2020), noted that over 30 million Africans will be uplifted from poverty; income will increase by over USD 245 billion; exports will grow by over USD 560 billion; and the income wage for women and men will increase by 10.5% and 9.9%, respectively by 2035. The incentive provided by AfCFTA for cooperation and building of trust amongst African governments contributes to the enhancement of unified position and can enable the continent to negotiate better trade agreements and defend economic and political interests. It is probable that with stronger position in global affairs backed by an expanded economic capacity, the influence of Western powers, China, and Russia, which are often inconsistent with the interests of the continent, could decline.

Negotiation of important provisions of the Agreement such as the Common External Tariffs guarantees Africa a position of advantage during trade negotiations with other regions. Moreover, deeper economic integration with itself could be critical to mitigation of global economic crises by developing resilient continental market safe from abrupt shocks in global trade occasioned by volatility or contraction in demand of goods. A report released by the IMF titled “*A competitive Africa: economic integration could make the continent a global player*” in 2018, argued that the defragmentation of Africa by AfCFTA is an integral step to integrate the continent into the global economy. As such, it is important that AU ensures that the Agreement is implemented in order to reverse the peripheral position of the continent in the global economic system.

Africa can also leverage the AfDB to enhance its position in global affairs. Established in 1964, the AfDB is constituted of the African Development Bank (ADB), African Development Fund (ADF), and the Nigerian Trust Fund (NTF) and operates as the premier multilateral institution for development across all the 55 African countries in sectors such as education, infrastructure, and natural resource governance by providing financial and technical support. Through initiatives such as *Integrate Africa*, the Bank rehabilitated 312 kilometres of transnational roads and approved road projects worth USD 1.1 billion- 79% of which was allocated to multinational transport projects in 2018. Additionally, 1.2 million people benefited from private sector investments (*Industrialise Africa project*); 19 million people accessed improved agricultural technologies (*Feed Africa project*); 4.4 million people accessed electricity (*Light Africa project*); and USD 3.3 billion was invested on projects in water and sanitation that provided 8.2 million people access to clean water (*Improve Quality of Life project*), in 2018.

For decades, external actors like EU, USA, and recently, China, have acquired significant influence in the continent largely because of their role in providing development assistance. China for instance, has emerged as the largest source of bilateral loans in sub-Sahara Africa, but the conditions under which these loans are issued have been criticised for plunging African countries into debt traps and failure to support good governance (Sanny and Selormy, 2020). Western donors have also been criticised for imposing strict restrictions on bilateral funding and supporting development that often do not reflect African priorities. In this context, the AfDB can play a mediator role by acting as a platform through which development assistance can be channelled and use its competitive advantage as a trusted, legitimate, experienced, flexible, and local presence to channel development assistance and advocate for good governance.

Conclusion

In this article, we have strived to demonstrate that Africa is disproportionately exposed to global crises, and that despite having minimal role in the emergence of past global crises, the continent often emerged the most impacted. By drawing from the 2008 GFC and COVID-19 pandemic, we have argued that to minimise such disruptive and far-reaching impacts, Africa should strive to play a greater role in global governance so that it can influence how international rules are shaped and ensure that African interests are taken into account. Many of the developmental challenges affecting states across the continent are structural in nature and to develop any sort of sustainable solutions will require Africa to strengthen its inter-institutional partnerships in order to bolster its collective engagement within multilateral bodies involved in global governance. In this regard, African states should demonstrate strong political will and commitment towards supporting common African positions

in global affairs and use the existing continental frameworks to unlock the political, cultural, and economic strengths of the continent.

As a collective responsibility, governance is already embedded both formally and informally in the norms and rules of Pan-Africanism and indeed, in numerous summits on global affairs, heads of states from the continent as well as policymakers highlight the uniqueness and primacy of African traditions, culture, values as providing the basis for intra-continental solidarity on global affairs. This type of discourse on collective governance, thus, provides a claim to enhanced agency of the continent in global issues. The various institutional framework developed under the patronage of the AU supports the advancement of conversations of a ‘rising Africa’—an Africa that is increasingly perceived as a legitimate authority and knowledge producer at the local, regional, and global levels. In other words, Africa is not only self-organising its economic, cultural and political interactions, but also its continental image within the global sphere. On the long-term basis, the impacts of Africa’s efforts to integrate further and develop common positions advanced by the AU will serve to promote the continent’s contribution to global affairs in a manner that protects both African and global interests.

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