Africa Futures Forum

Civil Society Perspectives on the Future of Multilateralism

May 2026

Regional Outcome Document

Regional partners:

COALITION FOR THE UN WE NEED

SDGs KENYA FORUM
Coalition for Sustainable Development

OXFAM

CGSID
CENTRE FOR GLOBAL SOUTH INITIATIVES IN DEVELOPMENT

Nigeria Network of NGOs

Article 109
For a renewed UN Charter

ABOUT

The Africa Futures Forum was a joint initiative by Article 109, Building Blocks for Peace, Centre for Global South Initiatives in Development, Nigeria Network for NGOs, Oxfam International and SDGs Kenya Forum in partnership with C4UN. Structured in two parts, the Forum opened with an Expert Briefing on 5 May (recording here) followed by structured consultations on the Pact for the Future, UN80 and the future of multilateralism on 26 May along with a keynote from Dr. Laxmana Kiptoo, DG Public Benefits Organizations Regulatory Authority (PBORA), Government of Kenya (recording here).

Engaging more than 400 civil society organisations from 29 African and 25 non-African countries, the 2026 edition convened experts from across the continent to assess the Pact Implementation and progress on UN80, and collected and consolidated African perspectives on the UN We Need, including over 25 written submissions, into this Regional Outcome Document. The 2026 Africa Futures Forum provided an important opportunity for civil society to take stock of and identify action plans and priorities in the lead up to the 2028 Review of the Pact and beyond, including the post-2030 development agenda.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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We also thank all speakers and facilitators (listed below) for sharing their expertise and organising consultations. We gratefully acknowledge the oral and written contributions of all participating organizations and individuals throughout the 2026 Africa Futures Forum, which have been integrated into this outcome document.

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Disclaimer:

This is a summary of the discussions, consultations and inputs received as part of the 2026 Africa Futures Forum. The views and opinions expressed represent the discussions held and do not necessarily represent an endorsement by C4UN.

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Executive Summary

The Africa Futures Forum convened an expert briefing followed by structured consultations on the 5th and 26th May 2026, respectively, which brought together diverse representatives of African and global civil society, researchers, academia, private sector, philanthropy, media, youth-led groups, indigenous organizations, and policy experts, to articulate the continent's strategic priorities regarding the implementation of the UN Pact for the Future, as well as to discuss the future trajectory of multilateralism.

The world is confronted with an unsustainable USD $4 trillion annual gap in global development financing. The Post-World War Two order is unravelling due to the recurring violation of the values, principles and provisions that underpinned the 80-year system of international law and global governance. In the context of this geopolitical rupture, the Regional Futures Forum established that Africa must pivot from being a passive recipient of global decisions to an active architect of a renewed and revived system of multilateral governance. The domestication of the provisions of UN Pact for the Future into national policy frameworks and binding national laws, should be reinforced by the establishment of implementation roadmaps with measurable indicators and benchmarks to gauge progress. This will ensure the effective monitoring and accountability in implementation of the targets by all African Member States.

Action Point 39 of the UN Pact for the Future calls for redress for Africa's historical exclusion from the design and construction of the 1945 Post-World War World system of international collective security, embodied by the UN Security Council. In order to remedy the systemic inequities and rectify the deep-seated structural paralysis and institutional inertia, African stakeholders call for a fundamental democratization of global structures. The Inter-governmental Negotiations (IGN) on the reform of the UN Security Council have become mired in procedural and substantive inertia for more than 17 years. The Africa Futures Forum, echoing the AU's Model for UNSC reform which was drawn from the Ezulwini Consensus, called for the abolishing and dismantling the UN Security Council veto provision, which has created a recurring paralysis that has undermined effective decision-making on a range of issues including peacemaking and peacekeeping interventions. As a practical pathway to achieving these fundamental reforms, the Regional Forum participants outlined a practical, legally grounded pathway to system-wide reform by mobilising support to invoke Article 109 to convene a General Conference of Member States to Review the UN Charter. An Article 109 General Conference will address more than UNSC reform, as it can also be utilised to review and transform the global financial architecture, notably the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank. A restructuring of the Brettons Woods institutions will address the asymmetry in voting rights as well as redress the exorbitant interest payments that are levied on AU Member States, also known as the "African Premium". A fundamental recalibration of

the global financial architecture will enable African countries to achieve economic sovereignty and address the skewed nature of credit ratings, expand concessional and grant-based climate finance, and utilize international debt-swap mechanisms to free up vital domestic resources heavily constrained by external debt-servicing burdens.

The Africa Futures Forum emphasized the importance of centering the voices of civil society, youth and marginalized communities in global policy platforms. The international community must entirely abandon ad hoc, tokenistic consultation processes, which routinely pay lip-service and relegate the inputs from local actors which renders these processes into performative checklist activities. The Forum argued that the UN Pact of the Future will only be implemented if there is a deliberate and determined focus on encouraging and promoting the co-leadership of civil society and safe-guarding their participation, which is a pre requisite to ensuring the institutionalization, integration, meaningful and substantive implementation of the Pact. Youth leadership must move beyond symbolic forums and be systematically embedded within actual decision-making rooms and funding appropriation committees where allocation of resources occurs. Additionally, governance frameworks must adapt to the intersectional realities that require the integration of disability-disaggregated metrics and constructing age-friendly physical and digital infrastructures designed to more effectively engage Africa's existing and expanding youth population with an impending aging bulge.

Finally, the Forum positioned AI governance, data and technological sovereignty, climate justice, and proactive human security as non-negotiable pillars for future global stability. More specifically, global technology governance must implement binding ethical frameworks for emerging Artificial Intelligence applications, in order to actively prevent predatory data harvesting and close the digital divide. Peace and security architectures must similarly transition from reactive crisis management to adequately resourced, locally grounded preventive diplomacy and community-led mediation systems. As the United Nations approaches its UN81 milestone and prepares for the selection of the next Secretary-General, Africa’s message remains unequivocal: the continent is not seeking charity and the future leadership must possess an unwavering commitment to these structural changes, ensuring that the global majority co-leads on the basis of genuine equality, dignity and a proactive commitment to protecting and upholding fundamental human rights.

Background

The Africa Futures Forum, organized as part of the regional preparatory process for the Global Futures Forum, was co-convened by Coalition for the UN We Need in partnership with Article 109 Coalition, Building Blocks for Peace, Centre for Global South Initiatives in Development, Nigeria Network for NGOs, Oxfam International, and SDGs Kenya Forum on 5 and 26 May 2026. The Forum's two sessions brought together civil society representatives, researchers, youth advocates, grassroots organizations, and policy experts from the African continent alongside participants from across the world to reflect on regional priorities related to the Pact for the Future and the broader trajectory of multilateralism.

Participants engaged in an expert briefing followed by a virtual consultative session structured round the five chapters of the Pact for the Future: Financing for Development / SDGs; International Peace and Security; Science, Technology and Innovation and Digital Cooperation along with Annex I: Global Digital Compact; Youth and Future Generations along with Annex II: Declaration on Future Generations; and Transforming Global Governance and UN80.

In addition to live discussions, participants submitted written contributions, creating an additional channel for sharing perspectives, recommendations, and regional experiences and expertise. Through the expert briefing and consultative discussions, the Forum addressed key challenges in SDG implementation, accountability mechanisms, civic participation, and institutional reform. The outcomes of these discussions are summarised in this report.

1.Pact for the Future commitments that matter most for Africa

For the African continent, the transition of the Pact for the Future from a landmark agreement to a concrete operational framework at national and grassroots levels is the most critical priority. The global multilateral system is under severe strain, and from an African perspective, change represents a state of structural rupture rather than just a mere transition. The commitments that matter most center on rectifying systemic global inequities, ensuring human security, and building resilience across interconnected crises. With the global financing gap exceeding $4 trillion annually, African nations face shrinking fiscal space exacerbated by severe debt-servicing burdens that actively crowd out vital investments in human rights and development, such as budgets for education, health, and social protection. Commitments to operationalize global mechanisms, such as the international hub on debt swaps, and to advocate for tax governance and blocking illicit financial flows are essential to free up local resources for human development. Furthermore, despite global commitments, the protection of civilians remains one of the clearest needs of assistance for the continent.

Commitments to adequately resource preventive diplomacy, resolve the peacekeeping liquidity crises, and operationalize UN Security Council Resolution 2719 to predictably fund African Union-led peace operations are of paramount importance for the continent.

Concurrently, as the rapid rollout of new technologies and Artificial Intelligence risk deepening existing digital divides, Africa must prioritize robust, binding and ethical governance frameworks. Technological governance must be intentionally steered away from predatory data harvesting and toward community-led peacebuilding, inclusive development, human security, and data sovereignty for the global majority.

Additionally, there is a need for a profound transformation in how future generations are engaged; youth leadership must move entirely beyond tokenistic, symbolic consultation. Young people must be systematically placed within actual decision-making rooms and committees where funding is located, permanently embedding them to act as structural co-constructors, auditors and long term beneficiaries of these systems. Finally, while capitalizing on Africa's expanding youth population and national agendas, it is essential that development discourses account for the dual demographic reality in the continent: an impending aging bulge. There is a need to urgently construct physical, moral, and digital infrastructures that are explicitly age-friendly and integrated with real social protection systems.

2. Accountability Gaps and Implementation Challenges

The implementation of the Pact is far off track because global governance is fracturing and not evolving. The persistence of fragmentation is compelling institutions to work in isolated silos despite highly interconnected crises facing the world such as climate change, economic instability, digital disruption, and inequality. Meanwhile weak enforcement and inadequate implementation turn political commitments into symbolic gestures, contributing to the decline in trust in multilateralism and global institutions. The power imbalances, unequal representation, and lack of accountability drive institutional inertia. The UN Security Council's veto bottleneck exemplifies this paralysis, which, for example, leaves regional peace efforts underfunded and ineffective. The failure to uphold international legal rulings, for example those relating to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and International Criminal Court (ICC) judicial orders on a number of ongoing conflicts, reveals the selective application of international law. This has the effect of shrinking institutional authority and the erosion of public trust in multilateralism.

Financial constraints compound these failures: annual financing shortfalls for the SDGs exceed $4 trillion, ODA has stagnated, and domestic tax pressures are crowding out essential public services. Expanding fiscal space, through accountable tax governance, curbing illicit financial flows, and debt-swap mechanisms, is urgent to shift economic incentives from extraction toward sustainable public investment.

Exclusionary decision-making is another challenge: civil society, youth, and grassroots actors are routinely sidelined or tokenized. Furthermore, technology governance lags badly behind innovation.

Unregulated AI deployment risks further deepening digital inequality and predatory data practices, while demographic shifts (including an aging population) are largely ignored.In the absence of rapid, systemic reforms that integrate SDG financing and implementation, inclusive governance, and technology oversight, the international community will continue to fail human security, data sovereignty, and future generations.

3. Meaningfully Involving Civil Society in Pact Follow-Up

Meaningful civil society engagement requires moving from talking to decisive action, striking a critical balance between constructive system confrontation and strategic collaboration. Institutionalized participation mechanisms must completely replace ad hoc, tokenistic consultations and informal dialogues that frequently result in civil society contributions disappearing into a black hole devoid of continuous deliberation, readability, or progressive build-up. Specifically,

- **Embed Civic Monitoring Frameworks:** Civic involvement must be formally embedded within review, monitoring, and accountability frameworks as a structural mandate rather than a courtesy. Civil society organizations must actively retool and scale up to systematically monitor and track the implementation of the Pact for the Future initiatives and national financing commitments.
- **Strengthen Vertical and Domestic Linkages:** The UN system and African governance architectures must build stronger vertical linkages between local communities, national governments, regional economic blocs, and global governance spaces. African civil society must intentionally focus its efforts at the domestic level, directly engaging ministries responsible for development, finance, and foreign affairs to ensure that global instruments are domesticated and that governments are legally bound by harmonized national laws.
- **Bridge the Knowledge-Policy Divide:** Horizontal and vertical cooperation must bridge the structural gap between independent academic research, live field data, and policy implementation frameworks, allowing grassroots networks and marginalized groups to act as structural co-constructors of policy.
- **Protect Civic Space and Secure Freedoms:** Protecting civic space and securing democratic freedoms remain non-negotiable preconditions for any meaningful engagement strategy. True inclusion requires a unified code of conduct that rejects predatory structures and ensures that civil society can safely engage both in person and online without fear of restriction or shrinking independent space.

- **Establish Cross-Sectoral Partnerships:** Global and regional institutions must move away from formal processes that default to symbolic gestures, and instead establish standard partnerships between governments, academia, civil society, youth networks, and the private sector, transforming civic society engagement into an influential driver of structural sovereignty and human security.
- **Fund and formalize civil society monitoring hubs**: Move beyond fragmented, short-term, donor-driven models by establishing permanently-funded regional and national CSO platforms. These hubs should be mandated to systematically track the implementation of the Pact's Actions, produce independent shadow reports, and strengthen local monitoring capacity through continuous skills development and knowledge sharing.
- **Simplify access to data and financing:** Strengthen accountability by promoting open, user-friendly budget portals and enforcing the mandatory disclosure of all Pact-related financial flows to African countries. In parallel, create dedicated fast-track funding mechanisms that provide timely and accessible resources to independent civil society actors, enabling them to carry out robust and sustained monitoring efforts.

4. Interlinkages between UN80 and the Pact

The UN80 reform process serves as an indispensable vehicle to operationalize inclusive system-wide accountability for the pact. Conversely, the Pact follow-up processes can systematically inform UN80 by elevating civil society-led accountability. For example, current global mandates lack disability-disaggregated metrics. UN80's workstream on realigned programs offers a specific pathway to require Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs) to be consulted during mandate design, alongside mandate-specific reporting on inclusion outcomes. On the other hand, when OPDs and grassroots coalitions submit shadow reports on Pact for the Future progress, UN80 mechanisms can leverage this raw data to identify where UN programs systematically exclude persons with disabilities and realign institutional structures accordingly. This two-way feedback loop ensures that UN80 reforms are not merely administrative adjustments but substantive, rights-based structural changes.

Transforming the global multilateral system is entirely a matter of fundamental human rights and the affirmation of our common humanity, and not a matter of charity. The UN80 institutional reform processes must therefore not be used to preserve outdated power imbalances or settle for incremental adjustments. African civil society therefore call for the UN80 and Pact implementation to,

Prioritize concrete realignment of the international financial architecture, ensuring that global financial bodies like the World Bank and International Monetary Fund integrate structural recommendations that expand fiscal space, eliminate illicit financial flows, and protect domestic resources for education, healthcare, and social safety nets.

Additionally, there is a need to strengthen development financing, debt reform, and improve coordination between the UN system and international financial institutions to ensure resources reach implementation contexts more efficiently.

- Deliver a system that rejects predatory structures and embraces future-oriented, inclusive decision-making rooms. **Youth and future generations must be permanently embedded** within the actual committees where funding is located to act as active co-constructors and structural auditors of global systems, rather than being invited as token participants.
- Bridge the deep structural gap between independent academic research, scientific innovation, and UN policy implementation frameworks to achieve true institutional effectiveness. **Policy cannot be effective if it remains isolated from live field data, scholarly evaluation, and the localized evidence generated directly by civil society organizations** working on the ground. Integrating real-time data systems, joint knowledge platforms, and shared monitoring tools are critical to track progress on Pact commitments more effectively.
- **Prioritise localization**, calling for stronger UN country teams, decentralized decision-making, and shifting resources closer to communities where implementation takes place. This includes strengthening partnerships with regional institutions such as the African Union and enhancing coordination at sub-national levels. Pilot implementation platforms in select African regions can be established to test integrated delivery models combining financing, governance, civil society monitoring, and digital traceability. Efficiency gains from UN80 must translate into direct support for last-mile delivery.
- **Systematically protect and expand civil society participation**, including by utilizing digital tools to ensure organizations can seamlessly participate online in meetings organized by the UN and its agencies without disappearing into a consultative black hole. There is a strong emphasis on institutionalizing civil society engagement, creating structured feedback loops, and ensuring that community-led monitoring and shadow reporting directly inform UN reform priorities.
- Amend the new mandate review resolution to require that all mandate implementation plans **include a dedicated disability inclusion marker** and a formalized civil society verification mechanisms.

Rebuilding public trust requires moving beyond symbolic, political declarations toward an overhaul of global architectures to ensure genuine transparency, accountability, and representation. Africa Futures Forum participants highlighted the need for stronger accountability frameworks, including measurable indicators, mandate review systems and improved monitoring of the implementation of the provisions of the UN Pact of the Future. Specifically, participants stressed on institutional preparedness by building age-friendly, community-led, and ecologically sound physical and digital infrastructures that safeguard the long-term human security and data sovereignty of the global majority.

5. Key Messages to the UN System and Member States

- **Dismantling the Veto Bottleneck:** Global governance cannot claim legitimacy in present times while bound to outdated structures, even with the established need and importance of multilateral cooperation. Genuine multilateral reform and the fair inclusion of the global majority require the immediate dismantling of the Security Council veto, an entrenched barrier that has repeatedly obstructed decisive action and constrained Africa's sustainable progress. Removing this bottleneck is not optional; it is essential to building a credible, representative, and effective multilateral system.
- **International Financial Architecture Reform:** Approximately 57% of the African continent's population—751 million people, including nearly 288 million living in extreme poverty—reside in countries that spend more on servicing external debt than on education or healthcare. An urgent, profound, concrete restructuring of the international financial architecture must be executed to increase the voice and representation of the Global Majority within bodies like the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, ensuring global policies actively yexpand domestic fiscal space rather than restricting it, with a focus on expanding concessional finance, addressing unsustainable debt burdens, scaling climate finance, strengthening domestic resource mobilization, and tackling illicit financial flows and tax abuse and financing systems that prioritize long-term development outcomes over fragmented, short-term project cycles.
- **Financing the Pact for the Future implementation:** We call on MS, UN system and partners to,

    - Align efforts behind country-led, integrated financing pathways for the implementation of the Pact for the Future grounded in national priorities and macro-fiscal realities; and encourage greater interoperability and coherence across financing instruments and actors at the country level to reduce fragmentation, strengthen impact, and reinforce long-term fiscal sustainability.
    - Develop capacities of national governments to devise sustainable financing strategies to unlock long-term funding for Pact for the Future service delivery and implementation, including a mix of innovative financing instruments, supplementing domestic resource mobilization efforts for results-based financing.
    - Improve the governance of financing the Pact for the Future implementation by ensuring transparent and evidence-based allocation and effective utilization of resources based on clear standards for financial management, monitoring and reporting.
    - Improve data systems to track the Pact's outcomes and expenses, and streamline procurement and administrative processes.
    - Promote equity-based financing policies targeting marginalized and disadvantaged communities.

- **Institutionalized Civic Co-Construction:** Civil society participation must move entirely away from a consultative black hole and instead feature institutionalized, permanent pathways for active co-construction rather than symbolic, periodic dialogues. Multilateral institutions must guarantee seamless online and in-person participation for civil society and grant formal consultations real, structural influence over final policy decisions. This requires embedding civil society monitoring within national and global reporting processes, supporting independent shadow reporting, and ensuring that civil society inputs are systematically integrated into decision-making and accountability frameworks.
- **Inclusive Multilateralism and Representation:** Reforms must ensure meaningful inclusion of marginalized groups, inter alia persons with disabilities, women, girls, and local community actors. This includes removing accessibility barriers, ensuring disability-inclusive policies, and establishing dedicated funding and institutional mechanisms to support their full and effective participation in governance and development processes.
- **Data, Technology, and Accountability Systems:** The UN system must invest in integrated data systems, disaggregated data (including disability-disaggregated metrics), and results-based monitoring frameworks. Joint knowledge platforms and digital tools should enhance coordination and transparency. At the same time, emerging technologies, including AI, must be governed through ethical frameworks that ensure transparency, accountability, human oversight, and societal stability.
- **Peacebuilding and Community Resilience:** Global commitments on peace and security must translate into sustained, locally funded action. This includes strengthening community-led peacebuilding, early warning systems, and conflict prevention mechanisms, particularly in fragile and marginalized regions. Youth must be actively engaged as partners in peacebuilding and governance processes to address drivers of instability and exclusion.
- **Climate Justice and Just Transition:** Africa's disproportionate exposure to climate impacts requires urgent action, including increased grant-based climate finance, investment in adaptation and resilience, operationalization of loss and damage mechanisms, and support for community-led climate solutions. Climate action must be rooted in equity, justice, and human rights.
- **Strengthening Africa's Voice in Global Governance:** Africa must shift from being a passive recipient of global decisions to an active architect of global governance, effectively moving from rule-taker to rule-maker in global governance. This demands accelerated institutional reform, full and fair African representation, and direct influence in international decision-making. Anything less entrenches inequality and erodes the legitimacy of global systems.

6. The Next Secretary-General

The next Secretary-General must pivot the United Nations from a culture of incremental adjustments to one of profound structural overhaul grounded in human rights, engaging the Global majority as equal, active architects of the future. This leadership requires a genuine commitment to supporting Member States in invoking Article 109 to fundamentally reform the UN Charter, actively challenging the paralyzing Security Council veto while restructuring the IMF and World Bank to alleviate crushing national debt and tax burdens. Furthermore, the Executive Office must replace tokenistic, ad-hoc practices with permanent, structured pathways that allow grassroots civil society data and live field evidence to directly shape policy. Finally, the ongoing selection process itself must be merit-based, open to youth and civil society engagement, and should uphold gender equality, equitable regional representation, and transparency, ensuring that the leadership of the United Nations reflects the diversity of the international community. Specifically, African civil society expect the next Secretary General to,

Reform:

- Deliver real reform that makes the UN faster, less wasteful, and accountable for results
- Present clear, costed implementation plans for the Pact and UN80, including commitments related to decentralization, civil society engagement, and financing reform
- Cut bureaucracy and be a bridge, not just the manager.
- Shift from rhetoric to making concrete change by delivering direct financing and decision-making power to African local actors within the first 18 months. The SG must break the current funding bottleneck by - 1) Redirecting at least 25% of UN-administered ODA and climate finance as direct grants for African NGOs, youth, and women-led groups; 2) Giving UN country teams in Africa authority to approve these grants without HQ bottlenecks; and 3) Publishing quarterly public data on who gets funded, so civil society can hold the system accountable.

Leadership:

- Champion a truly people-centred and accountable multilateral system that prioritises localisation, climate justice, peacebuilding, and meaningful inclusion of youth, civil society and marginalised communities, particularly from Africa, in global decision-making.
- Strong and inclusive leadership that prioritises human rights, equality, climate justice, trust-building, accountability, equitable global representation, and meaningful investment in youth, education, and locally led development—especially in Africa.
- Champion proactive, future-oriented governance by driving binding ethical AI architectures to protect data sovereignty, prioritizing heavily resourced preventive diplomacy over reactive crisis management, and building physical and digital infrastructures that adapt to the intersecting demographic realities of a rising youth population and an impending aging bulge.

Operationalising Inclusion:

- Must ensure global decisions are shaped not only by governments, but also by communities most affected by inequality and exclusion.
- Move the UN from disability-inclusive rhetoric to disability-financed reality— not by asking, but by issuing within the first 100 days in office a binding administrative instruction requiring every UN agency, fund, and program—at headquarters and in every country office— to allocate no less than 7% of all programmatic budgets to disability-inclusive activities, with mandatory public reporting and civil society verification, including by OPD.
- Establish a permanent youth accountability system within the UN structure that permanently shifts young Africans from an observation function to active, well-funded participation, thereby functioning as structural auditors of global resource distribution.

Programmatic:

- Must ensure that global commitments translate into implementation and measurable improvements in people's lives, particularly for those furthest behind. By connecting commitments with financial resources, strengthening transparency, data and monitoring, supporting locally led solutions, protecting civic space, and advancing equitable partnerships between the UN system, governments, and civil society, the SG should make implementation architecture as a central priority.
- Prioritise national development through integrated approaches combining education, digital governance, infrastructure modernisation, local economic strengthening, institutional capacity building, and long-term societal stabilisation.
- Pay special attention to youth, family stability, and adaptation to rapid technological transformation.

7. Actionable Recommendations

- **Mandate the Domestication of Global Instruments:** National governments must transition immediately from dialogue to action by domesticating the Pact for the Future and regional frameworks into national policies. This requires individual Member States to take full responsibility for implementing the 2030 Agenda, aligning domestic policies and laws so that state administrations are legally bound to achieve these commitments.This must include clear implementation roadmaps, measurable targets, time-bound indicators, and publicly accessible reporting systems, supported by national accountability dashboards to track real progress.
- **Institutionalize Civil Society Track-and-Monitor Frameworks:** Replace tokenistic consultation with permanent pathways for active co-construction with African civil society. The UN system must utilize the field evidence, community knowledge, and

localized data generated directly by African civil society organizations to evaluate national financing commitments and SDG initiatives. This should include formalized civil society shadow reporting, mandatory inclusion of CSO inputs in national and global reporting (e.g., HLPF), and ring-fenced funding for citizen-led data systems and monitoring platforms. Implementation, monitoring, and evaluation processes should be designed in direct partnership with affected communities and target groups to ensure that policies and investments respond to lived realities and local priorities.

- **Establish Youth as co-leaders:** Secure a permanent shift in governance by systematically placing youth in all their diversity and intersectional identities within the actual decision-making rooms and committees where funding is located. Traditional "youth forums" are often top-heavy, elitist, and tokenistic, leaving the grassroots youth majority completely locked out. True democratization means establishing direct, protected digital and physical pipelines that bypass bureaucratic filtering. Youth engagement initiatives must ensure that their participation is institutionalized, integrated, and meaningful, with substantive and safe participation spaces. Steps taken must include direct financing for youth-led organizations, structured youth representation in governance and accountability platforms, adopting co-creational and co-ownership methods of work, and investment in education, skills, digital literacy, and employment pathways. Youth must also be embedded in peacebuilding, early warning, and governance systems as active partners.
- **Resolve the Peacekeeping Liquidity Crisis and Prioritize Preventive Diplomacy:** Address the severe financial shortfalls facing regional peace operations by resolving the institutional deadlock in the UN Security Council. The international community must adequately resource preventive diplomacy and integrate conflict prevention with environmental sustainability and social justice. This must include sustained funding for locally led peacebuilding, strengthening early warning systems, and linking community-level conflict monitoring to national and regional response systems.
- **Construct Age-Friendly Physical and Digital Infrastructures:** Address the critical, unaddressed demographic intersection of a massive youth population and an impending aging bulge. The multilateral system and global and regional development frameworks must move away from predatory or neglectful structures and invest heavily in age-friendly physical, moral, and digital infrastructures, including social protection systems, civic education, and digital literacy. Multilateral institutions must adopt binding age and disability inclusion markers and make architectural changes, including accessible General Assembly processes, and a unified UN ageing strategy for Africa.
- **Promote Inclusive and Disability-Responsive Governance:** Ensure disability inclusion is embedded across all policy and implementation frameworks by integrating disability-disaggregated data, accessibility standards, and dedicated financing. Mandate disability inclusion markers across all UN and national programs and establish civil society verification mechanisms to ensure accountability, including through OPD co-authorship of ECOSOC reviews.

- **Advance Climate Justice and Sustainable Transitions:** Prioritize inclusive, flexible, adequate and equitable grant-based climate finance, adaptation and resilience investments, operationalization of loss and damage mechanisms, and support for community-led climate solutions. Climate action must be directly linked to livelihoods, food security, and social protection systems. Climate and sustainable development strategies should also prioritize the creation of decent green jobs for young people, support technology transfer, and strengthen local innovation ecosystems to accelerate a just and inclusive transition.
- **Reform UN80 for Delivery, Not Process:** Ensure UN80 reforms actively reduce duplication, consolidate mandates, and redirect resources toward Pact priorities. Accelerate Joint Knowledge Hubs in Africa on youth, health, and climate, among others, and establish public dashboards tracking which mandates are aligned, merged, or removed.
- **Guarantee Direct Financing to Local Actors:** Co-create flexible, accessible, language inclusive and simplified, low-bureaucracy funding windows that allocate a significant share of Pact-linked financing directly to African civil society organizations, women-led groups, and community actors, centering those addressing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination and marginalization, ensure last-mile delivery.
- **Anchor Implementation in Integrated National Frameworks:** Align the Pact for the Future with regional frameworks such as the African Union's Agenda 2063 into a single national implementation matrix to reduce fragmentation, duplication, and reporting fatigue.
- **Set Measurable, Context-Specific Targets:** Translate global Pact commitments into 3-5 country-specific, measurable targets per priority area, reviewed every two years to ensure progress is tangible and context-driven.
- **Strengthen Education as an essential Systemic Foundation:** Recognize education as a core stabilization pillar by investing in schools, universities, technical education, and leadership systems that build long-term human capital, societal resilience, self-reliance, and participation in development processes.
- **Strengthen implementation integrity and accountability:** Establish multi-stakeholder oversight platforms composed of credible civil society actors, community representatives, and independent experts to monitor Pact implementation, prevent capture by politically connected or non-representative organizations, and ensure that resources reach intended beneficiaries. Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms should be continuous, transparent, and publicly accessible.

8. Proposals for the post-2030 development agenda:

In addition to the existing SDGs and its targets, civil society from across Africa propose to include the following goals and targets in the post-2030 development agenda. Only the information gathered through consultations as part of the Africa Futures Forum have been

summarised here, hence there are some goals/targets which have more information and/or specification than others.

A. Localisation:

Goal: Ensure inclusive, locally-led, and climate-resilient development systems that empower communities, strengthen social cohesion, and guarantee equitable participation in governance and decision-making.

Targets:

1. Increase direct financing to local and grassroots organizations.
2. Strengthen community-led peacebuilding and conflict prevention systems.
3. Strengthen local accountability, transparency (including through digitally traceable systems), and citizen participation mechanisms.

Goal: By 2040, ensure that 40% of all official development assistance and climate finance reaches locally-led organisations in low and lower-middle income countries, with transparent tracking and public accountability.

Description: This goal seeks to address the gap between global commitments and impact at the community-level. Implementation of the SDGs and Pact stall because funds stop at UN agencies, INGOs, and central governments while grassroots NGOs delivering maternal health, youth skills, and food security in Africa rarely see direct funding.

Targets:

1. 40% of ODA and climate finance committed through direct grants/contracts to local NGOs, community organisations, and youth/women-led groups by 2040 and 25% by 2035.
2. Reduce average time from funding approval to disbursement to local actors to less than 90 days, with simplified reporting aligned to results, not process.
3. All funders publish disaggregated data on financing flows to local vs. international actors via an open platform that is updated every quarter.
4. 80% of local actors receiving direct funding have access to organisational strengthening support within 12 months of first grant.
5. Establish independent local monitoring mechanisms in 50 countries to track whether funds reach intended beneficiaries and outcomes.

Measurement: Existing OECD DAC CRS codes can be used along with a new “local actor” marker. In addition, DESA can produce an annual public report with shadow reports coming from civil society.

B. Digital space:

Goal: Universal Digital Inclusion, Sovereignty and Cognitive Literacy.

Description: The current SDG Target 9.c measures connectivity (whether a wire reaches a village) rather than empowerment (whether a child, for example, can use that connection to transform their life). This new goal should focus not only on internet access, but also on digital literacy, online safety, ethical use of artificial intelligence, data sovereignty, protection from misinformation, and equal opportunities in the digital economy. Additionally, participation in decision-making processes through digital platforms, especially for youth and civil society, should be promoted.

Target:

1. Every young person, regardless of geography, gender, or income level, has access to digital education, financial literacy and future-ready skills training.
2. Mandate a "Safety, Accessibility, and Local-Language Audit" for all automated governance and public AI systems deployed in development contexts.

Description: This target must legally protect local community data from exploitative extraction, safeguard young leaders from AI-generated disinformation and deepfakes, and guarantee that the digital infrastructure used for civic engagement is safe, affordable, and fully usable for a youth leader in his/her local language.

C. Energy:

Target:

1. Energy costs stay below 5% of income for the poorest 40% in every country.
2. 80% of global electricity comes from renewables like solar, wind, and storage systems.
3. Create 50 million clean energy jobs in developing countries with fair pay and training.

D. Disability

Target: By 2040, ensure that no less than 10% of all publicly financed deconomic development programs are designed, implemented, and audited by organisations led by persons with disabilities, with dedicated budget lines for reasonable accommodation and accessibility.

9. Priority Actions to Transform Global Institutions

Transforming global governance to make them more representative and responsive to the people in Africa requires more than institutional reform; it requires a redistribution of voices, power, resources, and accountability. The future of multilateralism and global governance is a system that is more inclusive, equitable, transparent, and people-centered — where all countries, especially those from Africa and the Global Majority have equal voice and meaningful participation in global decision-making. African civil society call on UN member states to make global governance institutions more inclusive and representative, including in leadership positions, and enhance transparency, efficiency and responsiveness to African priorities and local communities. A renewed multilateral system should move beyond power imbalances and become a platform built on solidarity, human dignity, shared responsibility, and sustainable peace. The UN system should evolve to genuinely reflect the voices, priorities, and aspirations of people everywhere, particularly vulnerable communities in Africa and the Global South.

Global governance must ensure equitable access to finance, climate resilience and justice, stronger accountability mechanisms, and recognition of the continent's growing demographic, economic, and geopolitical importance. Success should not be measured by whether institutions change (or not) their structures, but whether they become more capable of delivering justice, sustainable development, peace, and opportunity for the people of Africa and future generations.

- **Democratize Global Governance and Bypass Institutional Inertia:** Move beyond symbolic adjustments by utilizing the inbuilt legal tools of the UN Charter, specifically by invoking Article 109, to mandate a General Conference of Member States to fundamentally reform global governance. Africa must demand absolute equality as an active participant to alter and fundamentally reform the design of the multilateral system. The mobilization and invocation of Article 109 is a practical pathway to pursuing and establishing equitable African representation within a renewed system of global governance and multilateral decision-making.
- **Reform the UN Security Council:** The Pact's call to redress the historical injustice and under-representation of Africa in the Security Council must be a priority. Democratization of global governance will remain paralyzed as long as the veto power holders can obstruct systemic change and block the equitable integration of the African continent and the global majority. Two permanent seats with full veto power and additional non-permanent seats for African states is not negotiable. Until this is achieved, reforming the use of veto on issues affecting the continent is essential as the majority of Council mandates are deployed in Africa. Integrating African perspectives and voices as equal partners rather than as spectators is essential to ensure that Security Council decisions reflect local realities rather than be consumed by geopolitical rivalries.

- **Shift power, resources and decision-making closer to communities**: Local ownership of global commitments must be strengthened in addition to stronger operational coordination between global strategies and local implementation environments. By structurally including civil society, strengthening local capacity, partnering with local private sector, and engaging with sub-national, regional and local governments, global institutions can shift from top-down to a locally-led development approach. Partnerships should move beyond aid dependency toward equitable cooperation and long-term investment in human development, peace, and climate resilience across Africa. Along side reforming access to finance to ensure direct support for local CSOs and community-led initiatives, African implementation realities must be given a stronger role in system design. Global institutions must actively utilize localized data, community knowledge, and evidence generated directly by African civil society working on the ground to shape development priorities.
- **Reform and democratize the Global Financial Architecture:** Africa must lead the reform of international financial institutions to enable sustainable borrowing, SDG financing and equitable voting power. African nations often pay interest rates up to eight times higher than wealthy Western countries due to unfair international credit ratings and biased lending systems. This creates a viciouscycle where scarce funds are stripped from development imperatives to service foreign debt. Therefore, African CSOs call to:

    - Restructure quota systems at the IMF and World Bank to ensure African countries have real voice on debt and development finance
    - Deploy the SDG Stimulus
    - Review sovereign debt architecture so that African countries can borrow sustainably and have access to fairer debt restructuring mechanisms
    - Strengthen the global financial safety net for systemic shocks
    - Align global financial rules with development needs (not just market priorities)

- **Recalibrate global economic systems:** Rebuild public trust by demonstrating robust implementation capacities that address structural economic challenges. Global institutions must execute a systemic financial realignment that blocks illicit financial flows, enforces strict tax governance, and utilizes international mechanisms like hubs on debt swaps to safeguard domestic resources for education, health, and social safety nets. Measuring progress beyond GDP will make African priorities more visible in global decision-making. Current metrics miss informal economies, care work, and climate vulnerability; therefore new measures capturing wellbeing and sustainability are needed. Global institutions should also promote fair and equitable access to financing, debt relief, technology, knowledge, and productive resources, ensuring that African countries and communities can fully participate in sustainable development, innovation, and digital transformation. Other priorities include scaling concessional finance, linking debt relief directly to Pact priorities, improving MDB coordination, and ensuring financing systems support long-term, integrated development outcomes rather than fragmented projects.

- **Steer Technology Governance Toward Human Security:** Replace predatory structures and data harvesting with robust, binding ethical governance frameworks for emerging technologies like Artificial Intelligence. Global digital governance must be intentionally redirected to protect human rights, prevent widening of digital divides, and secure structural data sovereignty for the global majority. Promoting digital inclusion, technology access and opportunities for African and all youth should be an explicit goal of global digital governance. At the same time, committing to end the gender digital divide in Africa, accelerating investments in inclusive digital public infrastructure, national data systems, and real-time monitoring platforms are important.
- **Resource Preventive Diplomacy and Prioritize Transnational Crime:** Shift global security architectures from reactive crisis management to prevention-oriented governance by adequately resourcing preventive diplomacy. Strengthening conflict prevention, peacebuilding, and locally led mediation systems, including by directly working with the AU, are key priorities for Africa. Furthermore, global actions against transnational organized crime must be made a center piece for institutional course-correction. This must include mechanisms specifically designed to protect and build resilience within the most marginalized and vulnerable communities across the continent.

10. Vision for the future of Multilateralism and Global Governance

The ongoing recalibration, reform and transformation of multilateralism must be utilised as an opportunity to reset global trust. Multilateralism can no longer be defined by inequality and exclusion, but by shared responsibility, equitable representation, transparent accountability, and measurable impact, ensuring that every person, especially in Africa and the Global South, has a fair chance to live with dignity, opportunity, and security. Civil society across Africa envision the future of multilateralism to be one that is,

- Accountable, with real-time, public tracking of global commitments; independent monitoring by civil society; and stronger links to review platforms such as the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.
- Inclusive of women, youth, indigenous peoples, civil society, and marginalised communities, and removes economic barriers to their participation.
- Distributed and networked, where power, data, and funding flow to the level where problems are solved. Stronger cooperation between the UN, national and sub-national governments, civil society and communities is needed to address shared global challenges. Global institutions should provide legitimacy, financing, data, convening, and coordination, while regional and local systems lead the design and delivery.
- Locally connected, genuinely reflecting the voices, priorities, and aspirations of people everywhere, particularly vulnerable communities in Africa and the Global South.
- Representative, where the Security Council, IMF, and World Bank reflect the contemporary demographic and economic reality, and not of 1945.

- Transparent, with real-time data/information on financing, decisions, mandates, and results publicly available thereby helping to rebuild trust by allowing citizens and CSOs to track whether commitments turn into impact.
- Adaptive, with flexible, learning-oriented institutions that continuously reform and innovate based on evidence and feedback

The future of global governance cannot be a slightly reformed version of the past, it must be a fundamental reordering of who holds power, who sets priorities, and who is counted when success is measured. It must move beyond managing power imbalances and become a platform built on solidarity, human dignity, shared responsibility, and sustainable peace. Civil society call for the future of global governance to include or be one where,

Representation:

- Youth have a formal role in decision-making and the Declaration on Future Generations is operational rather than symbolic.
- All countries, especially those from Africa and the Global South, have fair representation and meaningful participation in global institutions and decision-making.
- A UN Security Council where Africas sits as a permanent equal, not as a perpetual petitioner.

Results and Accountability:

- Capable of delivering real results, where global commitments are funded and translate into real improvements for people's lives, particularly on poverty, education, climate, and opportunity.
- No longer aspirational but architectural, where global governance is not a forum for declarations but a system for accountability.
- Delivers meaningful impact in the lives of people, including in conflict-affected communities, where peace is not an abstract policy goal, but a daily necessity.

Institutional Transformations:

- Shifts from state-dominated decision-making to a people-centred multilateralism connecting people, resources, and solutions across borders. Legitimacy will come not just from governments, but from citizens' trust.
- Shifts from a 1945 power structure to a 21st-century democratic partnership, especially in global decision-making bodies and financial systems
- Shifts from top-down decision-making to collaborative action prioritising localisation and community leadership in co-designing, implementing, and monitoring development, climate action, and peacebuilding programmes.
- Institutions listen, act fast to solve problems that cross borders and deliver tangible results.

- Debt relief and SDG financing are rights, not favours owed by the powerful. The global financial system must be reformed to enable development, address debt crises and fund climate adaptation.

Programmatic:

- Governance of AI, data and digital infrastructure is inclusive, equitable and leaves no one behind; technology must be used to democratise access rather than centralise power.
- The leaving no one behind slogan is actually implemented including every gender and generation.
- Climate justice, financing equity, and fair economic systems are prioritised.
- Global agreements and UN reform efforts strengthen disability mainstreaming and their rights through language on binding, verifiable, and financed mandates for disability inclusion; by promoting the collection and use of disaggregated data; fostering meaningful participation; and building strategic partnerships.
- Prevention of conflicts, climate shocks, humanitarian crises, and economic crises are prioritised, including by addressing their root causes such as inequality, exclusion and weak institutions

Role of the UN:

- A more unified UN system with strong, empowered country-level coordination able to deliver integrated programming across development, peace and climate pillars.
- The UN helps countries build governable systems, not only negotiate declarations, while preserving the legitimacy and cooperative spirit of multilateralism.
- Regional actors like the African Union have a stronger role.
- International cooperation is able to integrate financing, implementation, technology, monitoring, education, and societal adaptation into a single operational framework

11. Conclusion

The consultations of the Africa Futures Forum underscore deep concerns around structural issues and affirm a strong commitment to the future of multilateral governance. Geopolitical fragmentation, unsustainable debt and tax burdens, shrinking civic space, and persistent failures to protect civilians reflect systemic breakdowns that have pushed the continent into structural rupture, not a simple transition.

At the same time, the case for a fundamental overhaul of global governance is unequivocal. Existing architectures are outdated, and the invocation of Article 109 of the UN Charter to drive comprehensive reform is both legally grounded and urgently required. Only through such reform can the global majority participate as equal partners rather than passive observers.

The challenges facing sustainable development, regional peace operations, ethical technological governance, and intergenerational inclusion are deeply interconnected and intersectional in their manifestations, They can therefore not be addressed through isolated policy silos or tokenistic consultation processes. Moving forward, the effectiveness of multilateral governance will depend on dismantling the veto bottleneck in the Security Council, realigning the international financial architecture, and shifting from reactive crisis management to prevention-oriented systems that utilize, among others, localized civil society evidence. True legitimacy will only be achieved when global institutions demonstrate real implementation capacity, secure data sovereignty, and build age-friendly infrastructures that protect both the expanding youth population and the impending aging bulge. The structural demands articulated through this forum represent a definitive blue print for a reformed, equitable multilateral system grounded in common humanity and human rights.

Breakout Room 1 - Financing for Development / SDGs

Facilitated by Oyebisi B. Oluseyi, Executive Director, Nigeria Network of NGOs

Consolidated Rapporteur's Statement

The breakout group concluded that achieving sustainable development in Africa requires a transition from external dependency to domestically driven development financing, supported by accountable governance, meaningful citizen participation, stronger civil society engagement, innovative financing mechanisms, and inclusive policies that leave no one behind. The group further emphasized the need for debt reform, financial system transformation, and stronger recognition of governance and mental health priorities in the post-2030 development framework.

Key Outcomes

Outcome 1: Africa Must Prioritize Domestic Resource Mobilization

The strongest theme throughout the session was the recognition that Africa cannot continue to rely heavily on external aid and concessional financing to achieve development goals.

Emerging consensus:

- African countries need to generate and retain more domestic resources.
- Governments should strengthen tax systems and revenue collection.
- Development financing strategies should be driven by African priorities rather than donor agendas.
- The recent reduction in international funding was viewed as a warning that Africa must become more financially self-reliant.

Moderator's synthesis: Financing Africa's development requires a shift from aid dependency toward sustainable domestic financing mechanisms.

Outcome 2: Debt and Borrowing Are Major Barriers to SDG Achievement Participants repeatedly returned to concerns about rising debt burdens. Emerging consensus:

- Excessive borrowing is limiting development spending.
- Debt servicing is diverting resources away from social and economic investments.
- Existing global lending structures often disadvantage African countries.
- Alternative financing mechanisms and debt reforms are needed.

Moderator's synthesis: Debt sustainability must become a central pillar of financing-for-development discussions.

Outcome 3: Governance and Accountability Are Financing Issues

The discussion moved beyond finance as a technical issue and framed it as a governance challenge.

Emerging consensus:

- Corruption and mis management significantly undermine development financing.
- Citizens need stronger mechanisms to hold governments accountable.
- Better leadership and public accountability are necessary for effective use of development resources.

Moderator's synthesis: Increasing financing alone is insufficient; governance reforms are equally important.

Outcome 4: Civil Society Must Be Recognized as a Development Partner

Participants consistently emphasized the role of civil society organizations (CSOs) in development financing and accountability.

Emerging consensus:

- CSOs should participate in planning, budgeting, implementation, and monitoring processes.
- Governments should institutionalize citizen and civil society engagement.
- Civic space should be protected.
- CSOs require sustainable funding to remain effective.

Moderator's synthesis: Civil society should move from being consulted occasionally to becoming a permanent stakeholder in development governance.

Outcome 5: Inclusion Must Be Central to Financing Decisions

A recurring message was that development financing should intentionally target groups often left behind.

Emerging consensus:

Financing systems should prioritize:

- Women
- Youth
- Persons with disabilities

- Marginalized communities
- Grassroots populations

Moderator's synthesis: Financing for development should be measured not only by the amount of money mobilized but also by who benefits from it.

Outcome 6: Financial Systems Need Structural Reform

Participants agreed that existing financing structures are not adequately supporting SDG implementation.

Key recommendations emerging from the discussion:

- Expand public-private partnerships.
- Promote blended finance mechanisms.
- Develop green bonds and diaspora bonds.
- Strengthen national development banks.
- Improve financial inclusion.
- Increase public investment in SDG-related sectors.

Moderator's synthesis: Financing reform should focus on mobilizing new capital sources while improving accessibility and accountability.

Outcome 7: Stronger Citizen Participation Is Essential

The discussion linked social protection and equity directly to citizen engagement.

Emerging consensus:

- Citizens should participate in budgeting and monitoring public expenditure.
- Freedom of information should be strengthened.
- Digital tools should be used to expand civic engagement.
- Citizen oversight mechanisms should be formalized.

Moderator's synthesis: Social protection outcomes improve when citizens are involved in decision-making and oversight.

Outcome 8: South-South Cooperation Should Be Expanded

Several participants argued that Africa should strengthen partnerships with other regions of the Global South.

Emerging consensus:

- African countries should collaborate more closely with Asia and Latin America.
- Alternative development financing models should be explored.
- Knowledge-sharing among Global South countries should be expanded.

Moderator's synthesis: Future financing frameworks should not rely exclusively on traditional North-South development relationships.

Outcome 9: Post-2030 Development Agenda Should Address Governance and Mental Health More Explicitly

In the final discussion, participants identified issues that deserve greater prominence after the SDGs.

Proposed priorities:

- Good governance, accountability, and democratic participation.
- Mental health and emotional well-being.

Moderator's synthesis: Future development agendas should place greater emphasis on human well-being and governance quality along side economic development.

French Breakouts - Written Summary (translated to English)

Facilitated by Eddy YAV, member of ISOKO Partners for Peace and Gender Equality and Advisor at the Office of the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Jeanette, member of ISOKO Partners for Peace and Gender Equality

Chapter 1

What are the main challenges to ensuring adequate financing for achieving the SDGs in Africa?

- Lack of youth representation and voice in decision-making processes.
- Insufficient international funding and a limited number of potential financial partners.
- Lack of capacity-building and training for grassroots actors.
- Slow pace of implementation and acceleration of processes.
- The proliferation and politicization of civil society networks, which hinder funding opportunities for organizations.
- Absence of a one-stop platform or coordination mechanism for organizations working on the SDGs.

Chapter 2

How can resilience be strengthened in conflict-affected areas in Africa?

- Strengthen interregional social dialogue.
- Encourage South-South cooperation.
- Build the capacities of local actors in early warning systems.

How can advocacy efforts influence the adoption and implementation of National Action Plans on Youth, Peace and Security in Africa and globally?

- To improve the implementation of National Action Plans, political stakeholders must be sensitized and encouraged to become actively involved.
- Encourage young people around the world to diversify and strengthen their strategies, especially since they are responsible for building their own future.

Chapter 4

What are the main obstacles to meaningful youth participation in decision-making processes in Africa, and how can they be addressed?

- The trivialization of youth-related issues.
- Exclusion of young people from decision-making bodies and other important processes.
- Lack of clear and sustainable laws and legal frameworks protecting youth.

- Existence of intergenerational conflicts.
- Lack of awareness.

What are the main concrete recommendations for:

Member States

- Strengthen global governance.
- Take advantage of the presence of the President of the Republic of Burundi, Champion of the African Union Youth, Peace and Security Agenda and current Chair person of the African Union, to ensure that concrete proposals on youth participation in decision-making processes are included during the reform of the African Charter.

The United Nations System

- Ensure greater transparency in the allocation of resources to organizations.
- Provide financial and logistical support to youth organizations.
- Strengthen professionalism in field work conducted with organizations.

Civil Society

- Continue advocacy efforts aimed at decision-makers to improve youth representation in decision-making bodies.
- Ensure access to and dissemination of accurate and relevant information.

How can we ensure that young people play a leading role in implementing the Pact for the Future in Africa?

Young people should be provided with accurate and relevant information that enables them to grow, progress, and contribute effectively to the development of the continent.

Chapter 5

What priority actions should be undertaken to transform global institutions so that they become more representative of and responsive to the realities of African populations?

- Strengthen global governance.
- Review the mandate of the United Nations.
- Promote the removal of visa requirements between countries in different regions in order to foster integration, social interaction, and economic mobility.

Chapter 3: Science, Technology and Innovation and the Global Digital Compact

Facilitated by Naomi Kilungu, Founder, AI for Peace Africa

Synthesis: Key Messages

The following three messages summarize the Chapter 3 / GDC breakout discussions.

- **Connectivity and accountability together.** Prioritize meaningful connectivity and platform accountability in tandem, with data sovereignty as their structural condition.
- **Produce, not only consume.** Re-orient STI toward African-defined priorities and toward community capacity to produce technology, using free and open-source software and developer ecosystems.
- **Enforceability through participation.** Make the Compact enforceable through sustained civil society participation, a financed transition architecture and dedicated integrity and monitoring units, so that inclusion becomes institutional rather than symbolic.

Background

The discussion assessed the Global Digital Compact as a framework whose relevance to Africa rests on how its commitments are prioritized, sequenced and enforced. One thread ran through all three guiding questions, namely that digital transformation will advance the Sustainable Development Goals in Africa only where it is oriented toward locally defined priorities, grounded in community capacity and supported by credible accountability. The contributions below follow the three questions deliberated in the session.

Guiding Question 1

Which commitments of the Global Digital Compact should be prioritized in Africa to accelerate progress toward the SDGs, with respect to digital inclusion, affordable and meaningful connectivity, equitable access to digital public infrastructure, and inclusive science, technology and innovation?

Participants identified affordable and meaningful connectivity, together with the infrastructure that supports it, as the foundational priority, since roughly seventy per cent of the population remains beyond meaningful reach and headline commitments have not yet produced substantive coverage. Connectivity alone is insufficient, because the environments into which people are brought online must themselves be safe and accountable. Contributions therefore emphasized platform accountability and the prevention of digital gender-based violence, observing that unregulated digital harms feed wider patterns of state fragility and marginalization.

Data sovereignty was identified as the structural condition that ties these priorities together, since equitable access to digital public infrastructure carries meaning only where states and communities can govern their own data. On inclusive science, technology and innovation, participants proposed a single test for prioritization, asking whether a given commitment reduces inequality in practice rather than whether it adds to the volume of formal pledges.

Priorities:

- **Affordable and meaningful connectivity** as the foundation, with infrastructure judged by coverage rather than by nominal access.
- **Safe and accountable platforms,** including measures against digital gender-based violence.
- **Data sovereignty** as the condition for any commitment on digital public infrastructure.
- **Inclusive STI** judged by whether each prioritized commitment reduces inequality.

Guiding Question 2

How can science, technology and innovation, combined with strengthened digital cooperation, be better mobilized in Africa to reduce inequalities, expand opportunities, and ensure that digital transformation supports sustainable development?

Contributions opened with a critique of the prevailing orientation of science, technology and innovation, which has largely served externally defined agendas rather than the problems African societies actually face. Re-orienting it toward locally grounded priorities is therefore a precondition for the Compact's legitimacy in the region.

Beyond orientation, participants stressed productive capacity, arguing that communities should be equipped to produce technology and not only to consume it. This requires developer capacity at community level, free and open-source software treated as a digital public good, and skills such as coding understood as politically consequential rather than neutral. Such capacity does not arise spontaneously from access, so it must be built through deliberate institutional design that also accounts for enabling dependencies such as energy and data.

Priorities:

- **Re-orient STI toward African-defined priorities** so that data and science serve regional problems.
- **Build capacity to produce technology** through community developer ecosystems and free and open-source software.
- **Treat skills and coding as politically consequential**, supported by attention to energy and data.

Guiding Question 3

How can civil society, community-based organizations, youth, researchers and marginalized communities be meaningfully engaged in GDC follow-up, monitoring and digital governance, while making global digital governance institutions more representative, responsive and relevant to the realities of people in Africa?

Participants drew a firm distinction between symbolic engagement and sustained participation, holding that civil society, community-based organizations, youth, researchers and marginalized communities are meaningfully included only where they shape design and implementation over time as opposed to endorsing decisions already taken. On this view, representation means substantive participation, and institutions become responsive when they work with communities rather than for them.

Making global digital governance more representative and relevant to African realities therefore depends less on additional commitments than on the machinery that follows them. Participants pointed to a fragmented implementation environment and a persistent gap between commitment and delivery, which financing shortfalls deepen most acutely in low-income settings. Closing that gap calls for a sequenced and financed transition architecture, situated within wider reform of global governance, together with dedicated integrity, monitoring and control units through which follow-up can be tracked and enforced. Without such mechanisms, follow-up and monitoring remain procedural and the participation of civil society loses its hold on outcomes.

Priorities:

- **Move from symbolic engagement to sustained participation** that shapes design and implementation over time.
- **Treat representation as substantive participation** by working with communities throughout the process.
- **Resource a sequenced transition architecture** for follow-up and monitoring, embedded in wider governance reform.
- **Establish integrity, monitoring and control units** so that follow-up can be tracked and enforced.

Breakout on Ch. 4: Youth and Future Generations; Annex II: Declaration on Future Generations

Facilitated by Mama Sampy, Youth Advocate, and Daverose Mary Tholley, Vice Chairperson, The African Women's Development and Communication Network

Q. What are the key Pact for the Future commitments (Action No 1 to 56) identified as most relevant for advancing the SDGs in Africa?

The most critical commitments for the continent are Actions 3 through 7 (Eradicating poverty and closing the SDG financing gap), Actions 28 and 29 (Digital cooperation and technology transfer), and Actions 36 and 37 (Youth and future generations).

For the 70% of Africans under the age of 30, technology is not a separate tool; it is the fundamental infrastructure required to access education, income, and civic rights. These actions must be prioritized together to ensure that digital transformation acts as an accelerator for poverty eradication rather than a driver of greater inequality.

Q. What are the main accountability gaps or implementation challenges to the Pact highlighted in Africa?

We are seeing extreme consultation fatigue. High-level frameworks talk about youth and women, but they rarely speak to them. Implementation sits in elite board rooms while 90% of African women operate in the informal economy, struggling for basic economic survival. Right now, the immediate material gap is stark: many young women are forced to choose between buying mobile data to participate in civic spaces or buying a meal.

Q. What are the priority strategies in Africa to strengthen civil society engagement in Pact follow-up? From an accountability and/or monitoring perspective, and other relevant areas if applicable

- **Permanent Oversight & Auditing Seats:** We must move youth and civil society from passive observers to formal auditors. Youth representatives, with an intentional focus on young women, must have mandated, permanent seats on national committees tracking exactly how implementation funds are budgeted and spent down to the "last mile."
- **Lowering Compliance Barriers:** Governments and funders must actively reduce compliance and administrative costs for youth organizations to register, access funding, and engage in policy advocacy.
- **Digital Defense Financing:** Establish targeted funding mechanisms to shield youth-led grassroots organizations and young leaders from coordinated online harassment, algorithmic silencing, and AI-powered disinformation designed to derail their civic monitoring efforts.

Q. Key reflections on UN80: how can UN80 reforms contribute to Pact implementation, and how can the Pact's follow-up processes inform UN80 reform priorities?

UN80 reforms must structurally address the "high-tech barrier to entry" that currently limits authentic youth engagement. When multilateral follow-up relies on hyper-complex, "smart" platforms, it imposes a technical tax that sidelines effective grassroots organizers in favor of those who simply possess advanced digital literacy. As stated in our breakout room, "we need to expand youth leadership, we need to provide youth mentorship to foster participation". The Pact's follow-up processes should inform UN80 that real inclusion requires pairing structural spaces with targeted training, digital skills development, and youth mentorship. UN80 reforms must ensure that lived community experience and active youth leadership across Africa are prioritized over software fluency.

Q. What are your key messages to the UN system / Member States? This may include Pact for the Future implementation, discussion on the UN80 initiative, examining the comparative advantages and weaknesses of the UN system in Africa, and the upcoming Secretary-General selection in 2026.

Stop treating youth and women as a compliance checkbox on a UN form. High-level consultation processes are plagued by tokenism and performative engagement; we are tired of being invited to tables where the decisions have already been made.

Furthermore, we must actively confront the rise of digital colonialism and predatory data extraction. Turning local youth organizations into unpaid data-entry clerks, where community records are harvested to train models that offer no return to the continent, deepens inequalities. We do not want to be mere observers or data sources for the future; we want to be the architects of the systems that run our lives.

Q. What are your top actionable recommendations on the Pact for the Future implementation, UN80 initiative, and the upcoming Secretary-General selection?

- **Enforce Structural Inclusion:** Transition from ad-hoc consultations to guaranteed, permanent seats for youth and women within decision-making bodies, backed by non-negotiable voting power and real budget allocations. As our session participants noted: "We must not invite them for inclusion; they must be guaranteed seats."
- **Direct Technical Lines:** As recommended in our session, "we need to use technology to get direct access to the youth to get them involved," bypassing institutional gatekeepers to keep grassroots youth informed.
- **Implement "Safety-by-Design" and Language Audits:** Mandate that any public or UN-sponsored digital tool or platform undergo strict gender-impact, safety, and local-language tests before rollout to ensure it doesn't exclude or endanger grassroots youth.

- **Direct Funding Flow:** Stop hiding behind vague promises. As one participant argued: "We need to budget for the youth, it shouldn't be a discussion." Financial backing must be guaranteed and structural.
- **Lower Access and Compliance Costs:** Systematically reduce the structural and financial compliance costs that prevent local youth organizations and coalitions from partnering directly with UN agencies and accessing development funds.
- **Select a Co-Designing Secretary-General:** The next SG must be explicitly committed to decolonizing digital infrastructure, protecting civic space from AI-powered disinformation, and embedding youth directly into global budget and auditing tracks.

Q. Chapter 5 of the Pact for the Future calls for "Transforming Global Governance" (Actions 38-56). What priority actions must be taken to transform global institutions to make them "more representative and responsive" to the people in Africa?

To be responsive to Africa, global institutions must actively address systemic exclusions like age discrimination, gender discrimination, and algorithmic silencing. Current global platforms often favor viral, high-budget content, shadow banning or suppressing the vital, nuanced activism of rural African youth and women's movements. Transforming governance requires de-escalating compliance costs, breaking down these hidden digital barriers, and ensuring that youth coalitions have sovereign control over their data, their platforms, and their narratives.

Q. What is one NEW goal or target which must be included in the post-2030 development agenda? Please be as specific and detailed as possible

We need a explicit target that mandates a "Safety, Accessibility, and Local-Language Audit" for all automated governance and public AI systems deployed in development contexts. This target must legally protect local community data from exploitative extraction, safeguard young leaders from AI-generated disinformation and deepfakes, and guarantee that the digital infrastructure used for civic engagement is safe, affordable, and fully usable for a youth leader in a rural village. If technology does not align with our economic realities and local languages, it doesn't advance us, it erases us.

Q. What is your top expectation or ask (just one) from the next SG?

The next Secretary-General must establish a permanent youth accountability system within the UN structure that shifts young Africans permanently from observation to active, well-funded participation. This fulfills our group's core demand to "move youth from observation to participation."

Q. What is your vision for the future of multilateralism and global governance?

Our visionis an intersectional, decentralized multilateralism where high economic survival barriers are removed, and technology is used to democratize access rather than centralize power. True multilateralism means breaking down the harsh realities raised by our participants, who reminded us that a "high unemployment rate means there is high economic survival instead of participating in civic matters." We must dismantle those economic barriers so that the youth and community leaders living these realities on the ground are the exact same people designing, funding, and checking policies in international boardrooms.

COALITION FOR THE UN WE NEED

Regional partners:

SDGs KENYA FORUM Coalition for Sustainable Development

OXFAM

CGSID CENTRE FOR GLOBAL SOUTH INITIATIVES IN DEVELOPMENT

Empowering Communities for Peace

Nigeria Network of NGOs

Article 109 For a renewed UN Charter