

Africa in Focus: Shifting the Paradigm Together

Max Primorac

KEY TAKEAWAYS

The United States spends \$13 billion a year in foreign aid to Africa, yet the continent is poorer, hungrier, and more unstable.

We need a new vision of cooperation that will achieve better results, and simply providing more aid is not the answer.

We must move away from traditional aid paradigms to trade and investment. It is what Africans want, and it is what works.

Let me thank the Croatian government for inviting me to speak at this important conference to discuss building a new vision of cooperation between the West and Africa. It is sorely needed. The United States alone provides Africa with \$13 billion of foreign assistance each year, mostly in nonrepayable grants. Other donors spend billions more on aid to Africa. Yet despite large amounts of assistance, we see a continent that is poorer, hungrier, and more unstable.

Simply spending money as a strategy has failed to help the countries of Africa get onto a path of sustainable economic growth. We must do things differently.

For over two years, I have been working at the Washington, DC–based Heritage Foundation and leading a team of former senior American donor officials and experts to find a new vision of cooperation

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with the global South that will achieve better results. As part of this effort, we have issued a set of recommendations. I would like to share those with you.

Ending Harmful Climate Policies

First, the West's obsession with achieving net zero carbon emissions as soon as possible has become the greatest policy obstacle to alleviating poverty in Africa. At the global level, blocking financing and permits for new oil and gas projects has led to a spike in global energy prices—and thus in the cost of food—that has hit the poor the hardest. Farmers in Africa, for example, can no longer access affordable natural gas-based fertilizers, resulting in smaller crop yields.

African countries are blocked from developing their own oil and gas resources and denied the chance to generate income to finance domestic social services and their own economic and social development. Thus, we must end climate policies that harm Africa's poor and stunt its development. More aid is not the answer.

Using Faith-Based Organizations and Respecting African Values

Second, we must change the way donors operate in Africa. We must stop using expensive and inefficient international NGOs, United Nations agencies, and for-profit companies to implement donor programs. Instead, we should directly fund more cost-effective faith-based organizations that provide most of the critical social services in sub-Saharan Africa, especially in health and education. This is critical, as donor budgets have begun to shrink and will be cut further.

Third, we must respect Africa's conservative values and religious beliefs and stop imposing our Western culture wars on them by tying life-saving aid to their adoption of gender ideology and abortion politics that they reject. There is so much talk in development circles about the need for equal partnerships and listening to African voices, but it is not happening, especially when it comes to social issues.

Changing the Donor Paradigm

Fourth, promoting the global South's development is not only about what the West must do. African governments must take increasing financial ownership of donor-funded programs. These programs have unfortunately

become permanent international welfare programs that promote aid dependency, undercut economic and rule-of-law reforms, and slow the pace of sustainable development. Without those reforms, we won't succeed.

Fundamentally, we must change the traditional donor paradigm from aid to trade and investment. That is what Africans want, and that is what works. In the United States, that means a smaller role for the U.S. Agency for International Development and a greater one for the Millennium Challenge Corporation, the MCC, that rewards reforms, and the U.S. International Development Corporation, the DFC, that can harness hundreds of billions of dollars in private capital to finance higher-risk projects throughout the global South. But it works only if African governments create a more inviting investment environment.

Thank you again for the opportunity to share my views with you.

Max Primorac is a Senior Research Fellow in the Margaret Thatcher Center for Freedom at The Heritage Foundation and a former Acting Chief Operating Officer at the U.S. Agency for International Development. These remarks were delivered at the Dubrovnik Forum 2024 "Dire Straits and Safe Passages" Conference on June 29, 2024, in Dubrovnik, Croatia.