



Forum International de Dakar
sur la Paix et la Sécurité en Afrique

Dakar International Forum
on Peace and Security in Africa

International Dakar Forum on Peace and Security in Africa

Concept Note

INTRODUCTION

Stability and security remain essential pillars of development, with which they form an interdependent triad in achieving sustainable well-being, to the benefit of people. The African States have resolutely committed themselves to this through Agenda 2063. Despite the steady progress made, Africa is still facing multiple challenges, exacerbated by an increasingly difficult global economic environment. Even today, in many countries, the numerous conflicts and crises that exist tend to undermine the few gains that have been made, because of their negative impact on all factors that are necessary for the harmonious development of the continent.

This renders States vulnerable to violent extremism, which insidiously contributes to socioeconomic destabilisation and the collapse of State structures. In that connection, African leaders reaffirmed, during the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the African Union in 2013, their commitment to making peace and security issues a top priority.

Echoing this African will and taking into account the interrelation between stability, security and development, a Summit on Peace and Security in Africa was held for the first time, in Paris, on 6–7 December 2014.

The event saw the launch in Senegal of a Forum on Security in Africa, in conjunction with the African Union and other international partners, to pursue further discussions on commitments made at the Paris Summit. Subsequently, under the leadership of the President of the Republic of Senegal who decided to make it an annual event, six (6) editions were held in Dakar, between 2014 and 2019. Overall, these events enabled a thorough diagnosis of the crisis situations on the continent and the identification of appropriate, effective and lasting solutions.

The seventh edition is scheduled to take place in Dakar on 6–7 December 2021, on the following theme: **«The challenges of stability and emergence facing Africa in a postCOVID-19 world».**

BACKGROUND

In April 2020, at the height of the health crisis, eighteen (18) Heads of State, Government and international institutions from Africa and Europe called on the world to mobilise the international community to work together to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic. Nearly two years after the emergence of what was a real strategic surprise, the African continent has clearly proven to be resilient, confuting the most pessimistic predictions. However, while African States are showing some health resilience, businesses and people are bearing the brunt of the harsh economic and social consequences of the sharp slowdown in growth.

Affecting all territories regardless of their level of development, this unprecedented crisis called for robust responses from States to support their economies and health systems. For their part, despite their efforts, African States still face significant structural constraints which, unlike those in the West, do not allow them to meet funding requirements needed to support recovery.

However, as a region with probably the most development potential, Africa has many assets – a young population, natural resources, cultural diversity, a skilled diaspora, a stronger political will, etc. – that must be harnessed to tackle sustainably the challenges of stability and emergence facing it. This is all the more vital as the effects of the pandemic have wiped out the gains made so far through national plans for economic and social emergence. After experiencing a contraction in growth of 1.9% in 2020, Africa is not expected to return to its previous level of activity before 2025, thus widening the already glaring and inequality-generating instability.

While in the area of health, vaccination campaigns allow Europe, Asia and North America to foresee the prospect of bringing progressively the COVID-19 pandemic under control, SubSaharan Africa seems to be paying the price of its heavy dependence on external partners. Today, despite the WHO Director-General's call to vaccinate at least 10 percent of the population of every country by September 2021 and at least 30 percent by the end of the year, only 0.4% of the 1.8 billion vaccines administered globally have been distributed in low-income countries. In addition, African countries remain exposed to other serious perils: risks of epidemics such as Ebola, the spread of the terrorist threat to all sub-regions, an upsurge in maritime piracy and illicit trafficking in the Gulf of Guinea, the acceleration of irregular migration, the intensification of misinformation campaigns about Covid-19 vaccines, the presence of foreign military forces, a resurgence of communal conflicts, as well as the negative effects of climate change on food security.

In this context, Africa needs to formulate new responses centred, in particular, around a rethink of multilateralism and security policies. This paradigm shift highlights the need to better coordinate the actions of States and other actors across the continent in order to promote civilmilitary synergies capable of supporting capacity building approaches in crisis areas. It could help consolidate governance and create a suitable framework for more efficient use of development assistance, but above all mobilise private sector investors and entrepreneurs, African and non-African alike, in support of peace, security and emergence.

The Dakar International Forum on Peace and Security in Africa will provide an appropriate platform for launching a new «Dakar Appeal» anchored in the African Union's Vision 2063, of an Africa resilient enough to weather global crises and determined to achieve economic and social emergence.

The 7th Dakar Forum will be an opportunity for key decision-makers and actors in peace and security across the continent to reflect on the challenges of stability and emergence in a postpandemic world, by addressing issues relating to the strategic empowerment of African countries, the consolidation and coordination of cooperation mechanisms, the promotion of good governance practices, the fight against emerging threats, including cybercrime and misinformation. It will also provide an opportunity to take stock of lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic to enable Africa to better respond to future major public health issues.

GENERAL OBJECTIVE

To contribute to the strengthening of peace and security in Africa through improved understanding of the challenges of stability and emergence in a post-COVID-19 world, and thus encourage more effective partnerships.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

To strengthen informal frameworks for dialogue between African experts from various backgrounds and international partners on peace and security issues on the continent;

- To propose ways and means of finding a collective response to the epidemiological threat to Africa's sustainable stability and development (Workshop 1);
- To formulate solutions enabling the continent to capitalize on its demography and address more effectively the negative impacts of climate change on its security and development (Workshop 2);
- To enhance cyber resilience, efforts to counter misinformation, the sharing of experiences and exchange of best practices between the South and the North (Workshop 3);
- To propose integrated approaches to prevent and combat violent extremism (Workshop 4);
- To explore potential solutions for autonomously addressing the security challenges facing Africa, including through cooperation between African forces, identification of capacity needs and mechanisms for financing peace and security initiatives on the continent (Workshop 5);
- To contribute to a better understanding of the current issues and challenges of maritime security and governance in Africa with a view of promoting sustainable control of maritime zones by the States concerned (Workshop 6).

PARTICIPANTS

Around 400 participants from all over the world are expected in Dakar on 6–7 December 2021.

Compared to the previous six editions, the number of participants, most of whom are internationally acclaimed high-level experts, has been reduced to accommodate preventive measures relating to the current health situation.

ORGANIZATION

The 7th Dakar International Forum on Peace and Security in Africa will be organised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Senegalese Abroad (MAESE).

The Steering Committee, led by the MAESE, includes the following:

- an Organising Committee, centred around the services of MAESE and supported by a Service Provider, named AVISA PARTNERS;
- a Communication Committee;
- a Security Committee, composed of Defence and Security Forces;
- a Scientific Committee, led by the Centre for Higher Defence and Security Studies (Centre des Hautes Etudes de Défense et de Sécurité-CHEDS) of Senegal and including, by co-optation, resource persons and other members from security forces, diplomatic circles, universities, as well as study and research centres.

The scientific activities of the Forum will take place at the Abdou Diouf International Conference Centre (CICAD) in Diamniadio, which, with its extensive experience in organising high-level events, has a health protocol adapted to the requirements of the current pandemic situation.

PROGRAMME

The programme includes several scientific activities including two (02) plenary sessions and six (06) workshops organised in two parts called Session 1 and 2, comprising each a plenary and three workshops.

Session 1 focuses on «**Post COVID-19 stability issues: security challenges and new threats**». Session 2 deals with «**Consolidating peace and security in Africa to promote emergence**».

The High-Level Panel, a highlight of the 2021 Forum, will launch a new «Dakar Appeal» for a stable and sufficiently resilient Africa in the face of global crises, determined to strengthen its autonomy and pave the way for its economic and social emergence.

The Dakar 2021 Forum will also be an opportunity for the private sector, research organisations and the arts community to showcase their activities and research findings, through the organisation and running of stands, exhibitions and other side events that will take place in parallel with the Forum's scientific activities.



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