



Current Path

Introduction: Explaining the Current Path

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Introduction: Explaining the Current Path

The Current Path on this website represents the default forecast for African countries' development, using the [International Futures \(IFs\)](#) forecasting platform hosted and developed by the Frederick S Pardee Institute for International Futures at the University of Denver, United States. For details about IFs, visit the [About](#) page.

The Current Path is based on recent conditions and policy trends and assumes that no major transformative shifts or disruptions would occur. It uses historical data from a large number of global data providers to project future outcomes in areas like demographics, education, the economy and human development under a “business-as-usual” scenario. The forecasts are based on the integrated relationships between parameters such as urbanisation and growth taken from peer-reviewed academic literature.

In the Current Path, African countries would develop in line with historical trends, meaning that the continent would experience the same number of droughts, years of bountiful agricultural potential and demand for its commodity exports that it has experienced in recent years, but within a global context including the effects of climate change and slower economic growth following the rise in global tensions compared to before the 2007/8 global financial crisis. Ongoing data imports into updated versions of the IFs software steadily capture these trends.

The Current Path is not a linear forecast, but a dynamic representation of the future that benefits from the integrated nature of the IFs forecasting platform and the interrelated effect of national level forecasts for 193 countries globally.

Whereas the various thematic pages on this website take a sectoral or issue-specific approach to Africa (such as [health](#) or [work/employment](#)), the geographic pages present the future of a particular country or group (such as [Nigeria](#) or the [Southern African Development Community](#)).

Setting out the Current Path is important since it allows us to measure the impact of improvements in particular sectors on a business-as-usual future for each country, such as in agriculture, and the effect that these have on challenges and opportunities. It serves as a baseline for comparing the impact of the modelling done in each of the sectors for each country which we refer to further below, such as in demographics and health, as well as the impact of particular policies such as the advancement of more [gender equity](#).

By recognising the varied political, economic, social, technological, and governance landscapes across Africa, the Current Path - and the comparison to our sectoral scenarios - provides insights on the comparative impact of interventions in different sectors, although there is inevitably a requirement for a comprehensive approach to development. It empowers policymakers to envision a “business-as-usual” future compared to transformative pathways in different sectors, offering opportunities to shape sustainable growth and human development across Africa’s complex and dynamic environment.

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About the authors

Dr Jakkie Cilliers is the ISS's founder and former executive director. He currently serves as chair of the ISS Board of Trustees and head of the African Futures and Innovation (AFI) programme at the Pretoria office of the Institute. His 2017 best-seller *Fate of the Nation* addresses South Africa's futures from political, economic and social perspectives. His three most recent books, *Africa First! Igniting a Growth Revolution* (March 2020), *The Future of Africa: Challenges and Opportunities* (April 2021), and *Africa Tomorrow: Pathways to Prosperity* (June 2022) take a rigorous look at the continent as a whole.

About African Futures & Innovation

Scenarios and forecasting can help Africa identify and respond to opportunities and threats. The work of the African Futures & Innovation (AFI) program at the Institute for Security Studies aims to understand and address a widening gap between indices of wellbeing in Africa and elsewhere in the world. The AFI helps stakeholders understand likely future developments. Research findings and their policy implications are widely disseminated, often in collaboration with in-country partners. Forecasting tools inspire debate and provide insights into possible trajectories that inform planning, prioritisation and effective resource allocation. Africa's future depends on today's choices and actions by governments and their non-governmental and international partners. The AFI provides empirical data that informs short- and medium-term decisions with long-term implications. The AFI enhances Africa's capacity to prepare for and respond to future challenges. The program is headed by Dr Jakkie Cilliers.