



Africa in the World

Introduction

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Africa's development potential depends on transformative domestic governance, effective institutions, enhanced security, and economic and human development progress—key areas within its domestic policy space. The website's geographic and thematic analyses explore these priorities in detail.

However, Africa's trajectory is not shaped in isolation, but it is deeply intertwined with global dynamics. This theme examines how shifts in global power and influence shape Africa's development prospects.

The analysis incorporates results from modelling the global distribution of power and influence using three indices embedded in the International Futures forecasting platform (University of Denver) that assist in understanding the likely evolution of a business-as-usual forecast (Current Path):

- [Global Power Index \(GPI\)](#)
- [Diplomacy, Military and Economy \(DiME\) Index](#)
- [Formal Bilateral Influence Capacity \(FBIC\) Index](#)

See the [About section](#) on this website for more details on IFs.

The first two indices measure power potential, a complex and challenging exercise. The third, FBIC, assesses the bilateral influence of one country over another, reflecting the intricate dynamics of global relationships.

Building on these measurements, we frame Africa's development within four alternative global scenarios: a Sustainable World, a Growth World, a Divided World, and a World at War. Each scenario explores the implications for Africa, highlighting how globalisation, sustainability and geopolitical shifts might shape the continent's future. The analysis also considers the disruptive potential of wildcards, including a great power implosion in the US, China or Russia, major regional developments in Europe or Asia, extreme impacts from climate change, and the unintended effects of rapidly advancing artificial intelligence.

The theme concludes with actionable policy recommendations to foster a stable global environment that enables Africa's growth while safeguarding its autonomy in an increasingly competitive international system.

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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, head of the African Futures and Innovation (AFI) programme at the Pretoria office of the Institute, and is an extraordinary professor at the University of Pretoria. 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.