



U.S. African Diaspora Policy Toward Africa *Position Paper*

**Policy recommendations to strengthen African and diaspora leadership in
shaping Africa's development.**

**Melvin P. Foote
President
Constituency for Africa (CFA)**

**Jeannine B. Scott
Chair
Constituency for Africa(CFA)**

On behalf of CFA, this paper was prepared by Nassim Ashford and Macire Aribot Ashford.



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INTRODUCTION

The Constituency for Africa (CFA), founded by Melvin Foote in 1990, has long served as a catalyst for shaping U.S.-Africa policy by centering the voices and expertise of the African diaspora. Based in Washington, D.C., CFA engages African-American and African-descended professionals, scholars, diplomats, business leaders, and advocates in addressing critical geopolitical, socio-economic, and development issues impacting Africa and its global partners. Through signature events such as the annual Ronald H. Brown African Affairs Series, CFA convenes a diverse network of stakeholders to influence U.S. foreign policy and promote a more equitable and strategic relationship with the African continent.

This policy paper reflects the collective insight of African diaspora leaders and allies who are deeply invested in Africa's future. It offers targeted recommendations for enhancing U.S.-Africa policy in key sectors, including trade and investment, health, housing, education, and youth development. However, this document is not solely a roadmap for U.S. decision-makers. It is also a tool for African governments, private sector actors, civil society organizations, and global partners seeking to engage in mutually beneficial partnerships with the United States and the African diaspora.

CFA defines the African diaspora as people of African descent globally, including African Americans, Afro-Caribbeans, Afro-Latinos, recent African immigrants, and other communities with ancestral ties to the African continent. This diaspora is a powerful and underutilized force in development cooperation, investment, and diplomacy. With lived experiences and networks spanning both the U.S. and Africa, members of the diaspora hold unique insights, cultural competency, and transnational connections that can bridge and inform policy across continents. As Africa's population surges toward 2.5 billion by 2050, and its geopolitical significance continues to grow, the need for collaborative, future-oriented policies is ever more urgent.



BACKGROUND

As the United States enters a pivotal political period in 2025, with growing polarization and shifting foreign policy priorities, Africa's place in U.S. diplomacy stands at a critical crossroads. The rollback of major development programs, such as USAID, recent threats to the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), and the rise of nationalist rhetoric have sent conflicting signals to African governments and diaspora communities about America's long-term commitment to equitable partnerships. Simultaneously, African populations in the U.S. have faced intensified scrutiny through regressive immigration policies, proposed visa restrictions, and rising incidents of anti-Black and anti-African sentiment, making coordinated advocacy more urgent than ever.

These developments occur against a backdrop of strategic global competition. China, Russia, India, and Gulf states have dramatically expanded their political and economic presence across Africa, deepening investments in energy, infrastructure, and critical minerals. Meanwhile, the U.S. risks falling behind without a clear, coordinated strategy that leverages its strongest and often-overlooked asset: the African diaspora. With elections approaching and legislative debates underway over AGOA reauthorization, immigration reform, and national security, African nations and diaspora leaders must act with urgency and unity.

From trade deals in critical minerals to collaborative action on climate resilience and human rights, Africa and its global diaspora are key players in shaping the future of international cooperation. Yet without shared vision and coordinated leadership, African interests remain fragmented in U.S. policymaking. The 2025 G20 Summit under South Africa's presidency, the 2025 US-Africa Summit, and ongoing debates around global supply chains present clear opportunities for Africa and its diaspora allies to organize, advocate, and lead.

This paper presents a framework for harnessing this moment by deepening political partnerships to enhance bilateral and multilateral relations, promoting economic inclusion, and fostering sustained engagement between African governments and diaspora networks. It calls on policymakers, investors, diaspora leaders, and advocates worldwide to adopt a renewed vision of engagement, one that is innovative, inclusive, and grounded in shared prosperity.



TRADE AND INVESTMENT POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

SUMMARY

The U.S. has an opportunity to transform trade relations with Africa through strategic policies that drive sustainable economic growth and shared prosperity. With China and Russia aggressively expanding their economic and political influence in Africa, the U.S. must strengthen its leadership to ensure fair, transparent, and mutually beneficial partnerships that prioritize U.S. interests and economic growth. African countries possess a wealth of minerals and natural resources, such as gold, copper, cobalt, oil, diamonds, and oil that are necessary for continued growth and development worldwide. With the African continent expected to reach a population of 2.5 billion by 2050, there is a critical opportunity for the U.S. to develop partnerships that drive commerce, trade, and investments in energy and technology. The U.S. can establish lasting economic partnerships that advance American interests and African development objectives by implementing innovative trade and investment initiatives.

The U.S. should build upon instrumental trade and investment tools that worked to increase African partnerships and investment. With the end of USAID and initiatives such as Prosper Africa, the US can leverage financing institutions, including the U.S. Development Finance Corporation, the U.S. Trade and Development Agency (USTDA), and the Export-Import Bank, to increase investment flows and foster improved business partnerships. Additionally, the U.S. has a unique advantage that many of its competitors do not have: the African diaspora. The diaspora business community represents a powerful but underutilized asset in U.S.-Africa trade and investment. With established networks spanning both continents, these businesses can serve as effective bridges for U.S.-Africa trade, particularly in sectors such as agriculture, technology, renewable energy, and professional services, where cultural competency and local market knowledge are crucial for success. By creating targeted programs to support American businesses, including preferential financing, technical assistance for market entry, and dedicated trade missions, the U.S. can unlock significant economic potential.

There is already an established preferential trade agreement with African countries through the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA). Renewing and expanding AGOA will increase market access for U.S. businesses, create new supply chain opportunities, and secure access to critical minerals essential for U.S. industries, including defense, technology, and energy. The U.S. investment in the Lobito Corridor, spanning across Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Zambia, demonstrates the potential for increased investment from U.S. corporations and development finance institutions. Critical minerals such as lithium, gallium, germanium, cobalt, and nickel are essential for modern technologies and clean energy solutions, including electric vehicles, wind turbines, and solar panels. Demand for these minerals is projected to increase by 400 to 600 percent in the coming decades, with the need for minerals used in electric vehicles potentially rising by as much as 4,000 percent. By working strategically with the African diaspora, the U.S. will be able to advance its goals on the continent while building lasting partnerships with African nations.



Key Policy Recommendations

1. Enhance Public-Private Partnerships and Trade Frameworks to Strengthen Supply Chains and Market Efficiency

- Expand public-private partnerships and update trade frameworks to improve supply chain access, ensuring the U.S. is the preferred trading partner over competitors like China, Russia, India, Turkey, and the UAE.
- Support infrastructure development programs that facilitate U.S.-Africa trade, modernizing transport, logistics, and digital connectivity.
- Reorient international development assistance to strengthen Africa's private sector and enhance competitiveness, prioritizing the inclusion of African suppliers at intermediate stages of global supply chains. The U.S. agreement with Argentina to develop its mineral sector could serve as a blueprint for expanding African capacity in areas such as mineral processing and refining.
- Renew and expand the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) beyond 2025, with provisions to improve market access for African SMEs, simplify eligibility criteria, and include emerging sectors like digital services and green technology.
- Develop a Minority-Small Business Partnerships Platform between the U.S., Africa, and the global African Diaspora to enhance direct engagement and increase trade opportunities for minority-owned small businesses.

2. Expand Financing Options and Investment Incentives to Encourage U.S. Engagement in Africa

- Broaden and diversify financial support mechanisms to reduce risk perceptions and encourage U.S. companies to invest in Africa's high-potential sectors. Existing de-risking tools, such as insurance products from Eximbank and the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC), should be expanded, alongside support for fairer bond ratings for African sovereign debt.
- Expand financing options through agencies like the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC) to support investments in critical sectors such as energy, agribusiness, and healthcare. While DFC is actively investing in these industries, greater efforts are needed to increase private sector participation.
- Introduce targeted investment incentives, including tax breaks and credit guarantees, to lower barriers for U.S. businesses investing in emerging African markets.

3. Build and deepen bilateral partnerships to drive innovation, enhance economic resilience, and accelerate sustainable growth.

- Continue holding the US-Africa Leaders' Summit, held biennially and codified through the National Defense Authorization Act 2025 (NDAA), with a focus on promoting African American and African businesses working together in partnership to increase job opportunities, fuel economic development, and strengthen relationships between the two communities.
- Establish cross-border initiatives in cybersecurity, intellectual property protection, and fintech to strengthen the technological backbone of both regions.



HEALTH POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

SUMMARY

The U.S. has a direct benefit in supporting the African healthcare sector through targeted investment in workforce expansion, pharmaceutical manufacturing, and technology-driven health solutions. Countries in Africa are home to emerging markets and a youth population of which 60% are below 25 years old, a figure projected to rise by 2030. As an innovation hub, the continent is poised to drive the next wave of global economic growth. A timely and intentional engagement in the healthcare sector presents a mutually beneficial opportunity for both the U.S. and African nations.

Expanding U.S. investment in Africa's healthcare sector will strengthen supply chains, open new markets for U.S. pharmaceutical and medical companies, and reduce global health risks that could impact U.S. security. By 2030, the continent will account for 20% of the global population, increasing pressure on already strained infrastructure, supply chains, and medical personnel. Persistent challenges, such as internal conflict, shortages in trained healthcare workers, and gaps in health infrastructure, cause millions of people across multiple countries to lack access to essential healthcare services, which exacerbates disease outbreaks, malnutrition, and maternal and child health risks. These healthcare challenges are complex but solvable through strategic prioritization of investment in healthcare infrastructure. Investing in Africa's health infrastructure is vital to addressing the continent's growing population and will strengthen healthcare systems and improve emergency response capabilities.

Access remains the most significant barrier to healthcare delivery in Africa, necessitating innovative solutions to bridge gaps in inadequate health resources and infrastructure. With only 3% of the global health workforce, the continent faces worsening disparities in care delivery and struggles to realize its full workforce potential. Africa's rapidly growing youth population presents a strategic opportunity to address these critical workforce gaps. Expanding workforce training in areas like health informatics and telehealth, public health, emergency medical services, and pharmaceutical sciences will address shortages and create new employment pathways.

Since 2016, \$4.2 billion has been allocated to pharmaceutical and technical initiatives; however, additional financing and regulatory support are necessary to improve access to care. African countries, through *Africa's Agenda 2063*, have committed to enhancing and expanding their healthcare infrastructure, increasing the number of medical personnel, and developing affordable pharmaceutical products and drug production on the Continent to achieve the health and well-being of its citizens. A two-way trade and investment paradigm between the U.S. and African countries will assist African countries in developing the overall health of their citizens while advancing the health and economic interests of the U.S. Better healthcare infrastructure, quality medical care services, and vaccine manufacturing will help African countries better support themselves and be more of a global commercial partner.



Key Policy Recommendations

- 1. Strengthen Health Systems in Africa by building long-term investment partnerships in medical infrastructure, workforce development, and digital health solutions.**
 - Strengthen the healthcare workforce by investing in training programs for community health workers, emergency responders, and specialists in high-need areas
 - Expand programs to connect U.S. healthcare institutions with African institutions to foster innovation, knowledge exchange, and leadership development.
 - Strengthen training for health surveillance, diagnostics, and emergency medical response to create new employment pathways and meet healthcare workforce needs.
- 2. Expand global health security to prevent pandemics, mitigate humanitarian crises, and ensure stable health systems during emergencies.**
 - Support pharmaceutical production by scaling U.S. private sector investments in African-based drug manufacturing.
 - Strengthen humanitarian health interventions by integrating emergency medical response systems into Africa's healthcare infrastructure.
 - Expand U.S.-Africa collaboration on disaster and conflict-related health challenges, including support for internally displaced populations and supply chain resilience for essential medicines and services in crisis-affected areas.
- 3. Empower innovative solutions in healthcare access and coverage.**
 - Leverage digital health technologies to improve access to care through telemedicine, AI-driven diagnostics, and interoperable health information systems.
 - Expand partnerships between African health systems and the African diaspora to leverage expertise, funding, and technology exchange.
 - Engage religious groups and civil society organizations in expanding community-based health delivery initiatives.

A strong U.S.-Africa health partnership is essential for economic growth, innovation, and health security. By prioritizing investment in local production, workforce development, and digital health solutions, the U.S. can strengthen Africa's health systems while expanding economic opportunities for both regions.



HOUSING AND HUMAN SETTLEMENTS POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

SUMMARY

The U.S. must adopt a forward-thinking approach to support housing and human settlements in Africa, which are crucial for economic growth, social stability, and security. Given the challenges of refugee crises and urban housing shortages, policies should align with Africa's Agenda 2063 and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The housing deficit in Sub-Saharan Africa is substantial, with 51 million units needed, resulting in the creation of informal settlements. Addressing this backlog presents an opportunity to stimulate the global economy by \$20 trillion. The dismantling of USAID opens the door for innovative financing and public-private partnerships to create long-term economic benefits. The 2025 South African G20 presidency is a key moment for Africa to push for increased investment in housing and infrastructure, with the U.S. playing an active role in aligning policies and fostering multilateral support for sustainable development.

Investor interest in affordable housing has grown significantly in the past decade, driven by a rapidly urbanizing, young, and expanding middle class. While other sectors have seen declines, affordable housing presents a high-growth investment opportunity for U.S. real estate developers, construction firms, and financial institutions. Expanding U.S. involvement in Africa's housing market will generate new revenue streams and strengthen U.S. trade relations with key African economies. Initially, conventional investors explored residential property, but impact investors have increasingly focused on affordable housing supported by development finance institutions.

Affordable housing has traditionally been viewed as a social issue, underscoring the need for it within global agreements like the SDGs. However, it is increasingly seen as an economic necessity, with the public sector recognizing that good housing can drive economic growth and reduce poverty, while poor housing can hinder these goals. As a result, housing discussions are expanding to central banks, finance ministries, and other governmental bodies. Despite this, housing backlogs persist, and cities continue to rely on informal, household-level efforts to meet housing needs.

While investment activity is rising, it remains a small fraction of the broader investment landscape, with sectors such as food, healthcare, and green energy attracting more attention. In East, West, and Southern Africa, real estate and construction are still low priorities for the private equity sector. To catalyze the growth of affordable housing at the scale needed, the investment argument must be built, which will ultimately shape the sector's potential. Over the past decade, several metrics in national and local housing sectors have improved, including lower cement prices, more efficient administrative processes, and better land tenure systems. The private sector, despite challenges, has begun to identify niche opportunities within the housing value chain, pushing for more affordable housing solutions.



Key Policy Recommendations

1. Increase U.S. Investment in Housing Infrastructure

- Establish a U.S.-Africa Housing Investment Fund to directly finance large-scale affordable housing projects.
- Expand U.S. investment in resilient roads, water infrastructure, and digital connectivity to support housing developments.
- Provide loan guarantees and financial incentives for U.S. construction firms to build affordable, energy-efficient homes in urban centers across Africa.
- Scale up waste-to-energy and renewable energy projects to power housing developments.

2. Strengthen Financing Mechanisms and Public-Private Partnerships

- Expand microfinance and mortgage access through U.S.-backed financial institutions for low-income and informal sector workers.
- Support diaspora-led housing investment funds that allow remittances to be leveraged for homeownership and development projects.
- Develop U.S.-Africa joint venture partnerships between real estate developers, banks, and multilateral organizations to finance large-scale housing construction.
- Facilitate tax incentives and trade agreements to promote U.S. exports of modular housing, 3D printing, and sustainable building materials.

3. Build Local Capacity and Workforce for Housing Development

- Expand technical training programs for African urban planners, architects, engineers, and construction workers through U.S.-funded vocational centers.
- Provide direct technical assistance for land use planning, zoning reform, and digitization of land registries to streamline property ownership.
- Establish U.S.-Africa university research collaborations on resilient housing, energy-efficient materials, and smart urban planning.
- Support local manufacturing of construction materials through U.S. investment in African cement, steel, and insulation production facilities.
- Support joint ventures between US and African construction firms and other contractors.

4. Scale Housing Solutions for Displaced Populations and Ensure Accountability

- Partner with private U.S. construction and security firms to develop housing solutions for displaced communities, reducing instability and mitigating security risks that impact U.S. national interests.
- Establish regional housing hubs near high-displacement zones with access to essential services such as healthcare, education, and employment centers.
- Fund the expansion of mobile construction units to rapidly build housing for refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs).
- Implement data-driven monitoring systems to track the progress and effectiveness of U.S. investments in housing, ensuring transparency and community engagement.

The U.S. can play a transformative role in Africa's housing and urbanization efforts by leveraging strategic investments, innovative financing, and sustainable development models. This approach fosters



economic growth, strengthens U.S.-Africa relations, and enhances global stability, ensuring that the U.S. remains a key partner in Africa's development for generations to come.

EDUCATION POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

SUMMARY

Education is a key driver of economic growth, workforce development, and international commercial expansion, particularly in fostering stronger U.S.-Africa trade relations. Strengthening Africa's education systems will help create new markets for U.S. businesses and skilled labor forces that drive global economic stability. However, access to education and training programs in Africa remains challenging for many young people and adults. A more integrated approach to education may enhance exchanges in the U.S. and Africa, leading to greater understanding, producing a viable workforce, and increasing global markets to strengthen business worldwide.

Africa is a continent with an abundance of rich resources, and its potential is limitless. As a result, the education of Africa's youth and adults is a key driver of their socio-economic growth and mobility, poverty alleviation, digital literacy, and trade, investment, and commerce. Education is a primary tool needed to support and encourage individuals' social, emotional, and academic development and national growth in African countries and worldwide. In addition, education is an essential tool for individuals to navigate a rapidly changing world, which requires critical thinking, problem-solving, flexibility, and collaborative skills to succeed within the local, national, and global workforce. Despite the political and civil unrest in some African countries, Africans are no different regarding their education needs. African countries consider education critical to their future socio-economic growth and geo-political development within their borders and on the world stage. The United States can help forge an alliance and partnership with individual African countries as it seeks to improve the following: higher education; workforce development training; self-governance and civil society; technology capacities; and economic, trade, and investment opportunities through bilateral and multilateral commercial exchanges now and in the future.

The U.S. has a strategic opportunity to strengthen its economic leadership and trade & investment ties in Africa through education in much-needed areas for both economies. As global competitors expand their presence in Africa, the U.S. must reinforce its role as the preferred partner for trade, investment, and development. Africa has an estimated 65% of the world's arable land and a third of its mineral reserves. In many African countries, innovation drives economic relevancy and solutions, sustainability, and commercial growth. With more educational know-how and technology on using these natural resources and improving trade and commerce, Africa will become a growing global commercial and investment entity.

The population of Africa is home to the youngest and fastest-growing population in the world. Nearly 2.5 billion people will reside in Africa by 2050, mostly under 30. Africans will total over 40% of the world's young people in the next five years. We can expect that nearly a quarter of the working-age population in the world will call Africa home by the mid-century. African students are equal to others and can excel in schools with the appropriate education. As a result, strategic planning around education is essential to ensure that African youth and adult populations have the tools to develop as emerging nations, businesses, and commercial centers within the U.S. and other countries around the globe. The African Diaspora can assist in developing and leveraging education, economics, and investments required to expand the economic footprint of the U.S. for future alliances with selective African countries.



Key Policy Recommendations

- 1. Develop and improve cost-effective educational systems for primary, secondary, and post-secondary**
 - Expand and improve teacher training and increase school construction;
 - Promote and expand science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) programs;
 - Increase school educational access for students in conflict zones;
 - Expand educational availability to female students at all educational levels;
- 2. Develop educational partnerships with U.S. colleges and universities for college-level African students.**
 - Include contract partnerships between U.S. Historical Black Colleges & Universities (HBCUs) and African-based colleges and universities;
 - Expand Artificial Intelligence (AI), Online and Tele-educational programs.
- 3. Develop and increase employment-related vocational and trade-specific schools and education.**
 - Strengthen Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programs to equip young Africans with practical, job-ready skills.
 - Include occupational training areas such as construction, electricians, plumbing, carpentry, and other vocational fields.
 - Expand public-private partnerships to improve the quality and accessibility of TVET programs across African nations.



NEXT-GENERATION POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

SUMMARY

The U.S. has the opportunity to benefit from a stable, prosperous, and innovative Africa, one that serves as a strong economic partner, a hub for technological advancement, and a driver of global growth. Africa is home to the youngest and fastest-growing population in the world, with over 60% of its 1.4 billion people under the age of 25. By 2050, Africa's population is expected to reach 2.5 billion, with young people comprising the majority of the workforce. This demographic shift presents an unparalleled opportunity for economic expansion, technological progress, and deeper U.S.-Africa trade and investment ties. However, without strategic investments, Africa's youth risk being trapped in cycles of poverty, unemployment, and political instability. These are challenges that could impact global security, migration patterns, and economic resilience.

Currently, youth unemployment in Africa stands at nearly 14%, with underemployment affecting millions more. Many young Africans lack access to quality education, technical training, and employment opportunities, limiting their ability to contribute to and benefit from economic development. For the U.S., investing in Africa's next generation is not only a moral imperative but a strategic necessity that can foster new markets, strengthen diplomatic partnerships, and ensure long-term stability on the continent.

Historically, U.S. foreign policy toward Africa has prioritized security assistance, humanitarian aid, and trade agreements. While these remain important, a youth-centered approach is essential to advancing economic stability, innovation, and diplomatic engagement. Strategic investment in Africa's youth workforce directly strengthens U.S. national security by reducing the drivers of illegal migration, countering extremist recruitment, and enhancing regional stability, all of which impact U.S. economic and security interests. Programs such as the Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) and the Mandela Washington Fellowship have successfully supported African youth leadership, but their impact remains limited without expanded funding and integration into broader economic development strategies. Strengthening U.S.-Africa university partnerships, increasing investment in workforce development, and expanding cross-cultural exchange programs will be critical in equipping young Africans with the skills and opportunities needed to contribute to a globally competitive economy.

To effectively support Africa's next generation of leaders, entrepreneurs, and innovators, the U.S. must adopt a comprehensive youth policy framework that includes digital skills development, workforce readiness, mentorship, university partnerships, and entrepreneurship support. The U.S. must also prioritize key sectors that drive job creation and economic empowerment, such as agriculture and agribusiness, the creative economy, and renewable energy. The digital economy presents a significant opportunity, yet less than 40% of Africa's population has reliable internet access, exacerbating the digital divide. Emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), blockchain, and cybersecurity are reshaping the global workforce, but many African youth remain excluded due to limited training and job opportunities. Entrepreneurship is a major driver of job creation, with 22% of Africa's working-age



population engaged in early-stage entrepreneurial activity. However, young entrepreneurs struggle to access capital, mentorship, and market linkages to scale their businesses.

This paper outlines key recommendations for how the U.S. can leverage Africa's growing youth population to drive inclusive economic growth, strengthen U.S.-Africa relations, and position itself as a preferred strategic partner in Africa's development.

Key Policy Recommendations

1. Expand Bilateral Trade & Investment Training for Young African Entrepreneurs

- Encourage joint U.S.-Africa business ventures where young African entrepreneurs partner with American businesses and receive direct funding from U.S. investors.
 - i. Expand U.S. corporate investment incentives toward African-led businesses operating in key sectors, energy, infrastructure, agribusiness, and digital services to strengthen U.S.-Africa economic ties and improve the ease of doing business.
- Establish U.S.-Africa trade hubs in key African cities, connecting young entrepreneurs with American businesses seeking supply chain diversification and investment opportunities in Africa.
- Leverage the U.S. Development Finance Corporation (DFC) to provide low-interest loans for small and medium-sized businesses investing in Africa.

2. Expand YALI & Create a Mentorship and Employment Pipeline

- YALI and the Mandela Washington Fellowship should be expanded to include career mentorship, job placement, including remote internships, student exchanges, and technical training in key industries on the continent.
- Integrate digital skills development, AI training, and emerging technology mentorship programs within YALI to prepare African youth for future workforce demands.

3. Strengthen U.S.-Africa University & Cross-Cultural Exchange Programs

- Increase U.S.-Africa university and existing community college partnerships to provide STEM scholarships, joint research programs, and virtual global classrooms to connect African and U.S. students.
- Increase student exchange programs, prioritizing youth from rural areas to ensure equitable access to educational opportunities.
- Expand language, entrepreneurship, and leadership training to build cross-cultural competencies in international business and strengthen long-term diplomatic ties.
- Support AU-led cooperation hub initiatives by integrating AI-focused training, digital skills development, and tech-based entrepreneurial programs into U.S.-Africa university partnerships.



Contributing Authors

Melvin Foote

President, Constituency for Africa

Jeannine B. Scott

Chair, Constituency for Africa

Macire Aribot-Ashford, MIA

NoirUnited International

Nassim Ashford, MPH

NoirUnited International

Dr. James Calvin

Johns Hopkins University

Dr. Gloria Ekpo

Health Kiosk For All, Inc.

Dr. Susan Edionwe

Nigerian Physician Advocacy Group

Elizabeth S. Glenn

US-Africa Collaborative

Sheba Hakiza

Hippo Technologies, Inc.

Darnley Howard

Advansa International

Alvin Newman

Constituency for Africa

Wil Ngwa

John Hopkins Medicine

Dr. Uchenna Nwaneri

University of Maryland Medical System

Mooya Nyuandi

Open Society Foundation

Dr. Byron Price

Pan African Chamber of Commerce

Vivienne Sequeira

The Africa Society

Thembaletu Shangase

International Youth Federation

Stan Straughter

*Constituency for Africa & African and
Caribbean Business Council of Greater
Philadelphia*

Mama Traore

*African and Caribbean Business Council of
Philadelphia*

Stephen Wanjala

*University of Kansas School of
Medicine-Wichita*

DeAndre B. Wells

AGX, LLC.