



AFRICA CENTER  
FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES

Session 1:  
Security Implications of African Megatrends  
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# Objectives

- Understand the dynamics of major megatrends in Africa such as urbanization, demographic and social change, the rising middle class, climate change, enabling technology, and pandemics.
- Discuss how these megatrends affect the web of multifaceted and ever-changing security threats facing Africa.
- Understand the security implications of these megatrends for the leadership in the security sector in Africa.

# First things first

- Understand your strategic environment to favorably influence it.
- Not an easy task. The strategic environment is extremely difficult to fully understand because of it is shaped by countless entangled parts
- Focusing on trends allows us to be proactive and anticipatory, have a holistic outlook, and focus on the “what” and “why”
- Key trends
  - Demographics
  - Urbanization
  - Socioeconomic
  - Climate change
  - Technologies

# Demographic Change

**Africa's total population today is ~ 1.4 billion**

- This is more than a tenfold increase over within a century
- Population is set to rise further in the coming decades
- Africa will likely reach 2.2 billion to 2.5 billion inhabitants by 2050.
- By midcentury, the continent will account for about 25% of the global population (more than 3x its share in 1914)
- By midcentury, Africans will constitute the largest population of people of prime working age in the world

## **Median age**

- Japan: 48
- China: 38
- India: 28
- Nigeria: 18

## **Total fertility rate (replacement level = 2.1 children per woman)**

- OECD – below replacement level
- Asia and Latin America – at replacement level
- Middle East and North Africa – ~2.1 TFR
- Sub-Saharan Africa – some countries as high as 7 TFR

- High birth rates and the population pressures they create may exacerbate scarcity of economic resources. This, in turn, can lead to violent conflicts over the distribution of resources
- African countries with high levels of population growth display a heightened risk of violence
- Among the 20 countries with the highest population growth rates in 2019 worldwide, at least half are experiencing intrastate violent conflicts or instability
- A male youth bulge represents a recruitment pool for violent and other extremist groups

# Urbanization

- Urbanization refers to the increase in the number of people who live in cities and major towns
- Africa is experiencing rapid urbanization:
  - economic opportunities
  - increase the productive capacity of Africa mega-cities
  - higher-than-average proportion of the nation's output of goods and services
  - epicenters for innovation, while offering (economic) opportunities to individuals and businesses alike
  - Example: Lagos is considered the biggest metropolitan area in Africa and generates ~10% of Nigeria's total GDP.

## Significant challenges:

- Endemic poverty and social degradation
  - Rapid expansion of slums and informal settlements (72% of urban population in SSA are slum dwellers)
  - Precarious human security (basic needs and infrastructure)
- Stark divide between rich and poor
  - Violence
  - Crime



# Rising Middle Class

- The African Development Bank (AfDB) defines the African middle class as those spending between US\$2 and US\$20 a day
- Middle class is defined in relation to the average income and that average is lower in Africa than in other places, e.g., U.S. US\$1 goes farther in many African places than in the U.S.

## Steady rise

- 1980: 111 million
- 1990: 151 million
- 2000: 196 million
- 2010: 313 million

## Characteristics:

- Urban dwellers
- Live in bigger and more permanent dwellings equipped with modern amenities
- Higher levels of tertiary education
- Hold salaried jobs
- Are small business owners
- Favor private education and health services
- May receive remittances from relatives living in the Diaspora
- Culturally self-confidence

- Two thirds of Africa's growth is being primarily driven by the consumption of goods and services (retail, financial services, and telecommunications) – not mining and commodities
- Internet use is growing rapidly

# Climate Change

- The United Nations Climate Change Conference in 2018 affirmed that extreme weather events across the globe such as flash floods, hurricanes, droughts, desertification, famine, and other natural disasters will occur more frequently as a result of climate change.
- Africa, the least responsible for greenhouse gas emission was the most vulnerable to the negative effects of climate change.

- Climate change outcomes can halt or reverse development. Also, it can trigger conflicts because of livelihoods been threatened by climate change conditions.
- Drought, flooding, desertification, deforestation, and rising sea levels leads food insecurity and competition for resources.
- Desertification and rising sea levels leads to less arable land and limited supply of water, which is 'a recipe' for violence.

## **Pressing climate change issues in Africa:**

- Desertification
- Deforestation (Congo Basin)
- Shrinking of Lake Chad
- Erosion of crop land and deforestation

## **Already at the core of some conflicts.**

- Decades old clash between herders and farmers due to competition for land as a result of desertification
- Increased scarcity of food and water due to drought and desertification leads to fewer jobs. Unemployed youth then become targets for recruitment as fighters in VEOs.



# Emerging technologies

- Social media: impact on elections in Africa
- Disinformation and misinformation
- Deep-fake
- Biometrics and symbolic violence

Thank You