



AFRICA CENTER FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES

2025 COMMUNITY CHAPTER LEADERS' FORUM

INFORMATION NOTE

WHAT: The Africa Center for Strategic Studies (ACSS) will conduct a two-day virtual touchpoint for alumni chapter leaders and U.S. embassy personnel responsible for security cooperation programs. Africa Center alumni interested in launching or strengthening dormant chapters will also be invited. The aim of this forum is to impart practical skills and encourage relationships among chapters, between chapters and U.S. embassies, and between all parties and the Africa Center. The 2025 forum will set the stage for an in-person Community Chapter Leaders engagement in FY'26.

WHERE: Online, via Zoom for Government

WHEN: Tuesday and Wednesday, March 25-26, 2025

WHO: The target audience will be from each alumni chapter, DOD/SCO personnel from countries with active chapters, and select spots for alumni aiming to develop a chapter within their country. Additional alumni will be invited to contribute and enhance discussions.

WHY: The Africa Center has over 8,000 alumni across the continent. Alumni chapters are a powerful resource, as these chapters are accessible avenues for senior-leader engagement and a valuable source of information on African perspectives on security issues.

Following the 2023 forum, CAPE followed up with participants to gauge the program's impacts, and all respondents said they had made progress toward the goals set during the program. Since the program, chapters referenced creating a database of new members, developing a communications plan, developing a strategic plan, pursuing new funding opportunities, starting a collaboration platform for chapter members to stay in contact, or holding an event. CAPE plans to highlight one or two events during the program to share lessons learned and build on the momentum.

The Africa Center will also encourage U.S. embassies to play a more prominent role for the chapters' sustainment and development.

HOW: The forum will begin with a keynote address discussing chapters' role in civil-military relations, followed by an open discussion. Chapters that have recently

held a successful program will be invited to speak through their procedure. Africa Center staff will moderate to encourage vital aspects of program execution and best practices. The program will conclude with an opportunity for chapters to share their takeaways from the program and next steps.

All discussions and activities will be conducted under a policy of strict non-attribution and no sessions will be videotaped. The program will be conducted in English, French, and Portuguese. Participants must have professional (near-native) knowledge of one of these languages.

THEORY OF CHANGE:

If Africa Center chapter members routinely meet with the Africa Center and U.S. Embassy officials, then they will be more likely to develop deeper relationships with all stakeholders, share information with Africa Center staff, feel supported by the Africa Center, undertake chapter activities that promote peace and security in Africa, and feel a connection to the Africa Center community.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES:

1. Provide a platform for Chapters to discuss their role in improving civil-military relations in the face of emerging security threats.
2. Provide organizational development support that will empower alumni chapter leaders to mature the alumni chapters (or create new chapters where none exist) and enable them to undertake chapter activities that positively contribute to peace, security, and stability in their countries and regions.
3. Provide chapter leaders and U.S. embassy staff with an opportunity to network, develop bilateral and regional relationships, and share best practices.
4. Provide an opportunity for the Africa Center to assess which chapters are the most promising candidates for Africa Center bilateral engagements in FY'25 and FY'26.