Sub-Saharan Africa Strategy
2021–24

Foreign Policy Strategy
2020–23

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2021–24**

This report, which was approved by the Federal Council on 13. January 2021, is a geographical follow-up strategy to the Foreign Policy Strategy 2020–2023 (FPS 20–23). In accordance with objective 6.2 set out in the FPS 20–23, Switzerland has formulated a Sub-Saharan Africa Strategy. The Federal Council has also fulfilled the Gugger Postulate 19.4628 with the report.

Foreword

This is the second geographical follow-up strategy to the Foreign Policy Strategy 2020–2023. Like the MENA strategy, the Sub-Saharan Africa Strategy is also new: this is the first time that the Federal Council has formulated a strategy for this region. The document defines thematic and geographical priorities, objectives and measures for the period 2021–2024. The Federal Council aims to make its foreign policy more coherent and transparent.

The strategy adopts a whole-of-government approach and will be implemented jointly by the departments and representations abroad. It may also provide a guiding framework for many other stakeholders in Switzerland, such as the Swiss Parliament, the cantons, business, the scientific community and civil society organisations – from NGOs to political parties. The Federal Council does not, of course, wish to impose its positions on the whole of Switzerland. However, I am keen to ensure that optimal use is made of the extensive expertise available in Switzerland on sub-Saharan Africa policy as part of a whole-of-Switzerland approach.

Why a Sub-Saharan Africa Strategy? Firstly, the region is becoming increasingly important, including for Switzerland. It would be wrong to reduce Africa to its – albeit significant – challenges and to view it one-sidedly from a migration perspective. Many new opportunities are also emerging for Africa. Secondly, Switzerland has well-established ties with sub-Saharan Africa in view of its geographical proximity, cultural richness and economic potential. On visits to the region, I have discovered first hand that there is great trust in Switzerland and strong interest in cooperation. The continent has much to offer, which is why Switzerland has gradually increased its presence.

In this strategy, the Federal Council wishes to highlight and consolidate the diversity of links to the region. It aims to raise Switzerland's political profile and strengthen relations with African states. The document was drawn up as part of a broad-based consultation process. Diplomatic representations from over 30 African countries also participated in the discussions – an expression of genuine partnership.

The strategy is based on a wide variety of instruments. International cooperation continues to play a key role, in line with the International Cooperation Strategy 2021–2024. However, sub-Saharan Africa is also becoming increasingly important for other policy areas, such as foreign economic and finance policy, digital foreign policy, science diplomacy and multilateralism. The Federal Council wishes to support this development and also strengthen ties with International Geneva.

The strategy intentionally provides flexibility to enable adjustments to be made. We only need to consider, for example, the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on Africa. One thing is certain: Switzerland's Africa policy will continue to be based on partnership, solidarity and results.

I hope you enjoy reading the report.

Ignazio Cassis
Head of the Federal Department
of Foreign Affairs

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Summary

Sub-Saharan Africa is becoming increasingly important on the geopolitical stage as well as more economically relevant. The subcontinent nevertheless still faces many, often long-term challenges. However, rapid social, economic and political change is also presenting new opportunities.

The Federal Council wishes to raise the profile and status of Switzerland's sub-Saharan Africa policy and achieve greater coherence in foreign policy. Switzerland's bilateral and regional relations should be based on partnership.

The Federal Council has defined four thematic focus areas based on the geopolitical analysis of the regional context and the Foreign Policy Strategy 2020–2023 (FPS 20–23)⚭:

1. Peace, security and human rights
2. Prosperity
3. Sustainability
4. Digitalisation

Migration is an issue that cuts across all thematic areas and has therefore not been set as a separate priority. However, the implementation of the four strategic priorities should also help address the root causes of migration and alleviate migratory pressure over the medium and long-term.

To take account of the subcontinent's diversity, the Federal Council has defined five geographical priorities:

1. Sahel region
2. Greater Horn of Africa region
3. Great Lakes region
4. The lion economies
5. Regional organisations

For each of these priorities, Switzerland's three most important thematic areas as well as goals and measures have been defined.

Finally, the implementation partners are outlined. The annexes show Switzerland's network of representations abroad, contain a list of abbreviations, a glossary as well as the Gugger Postulate 19.4628.

The strategy covers a four-year period. Towards the end of that period, a review with the federal authorities involved will be conducted in order to assess the extent to which the goals defined in the strategy have been achieved.

1 Introduction

This strategy covers 49 countries located south of the Sahara. North Africa is covered by the Federal Council's MENA Strategy. The interactions between sub-Saharan Africa and the neighbouring regions of North Africa and the states of the Arabian Peninsula are however addressed.
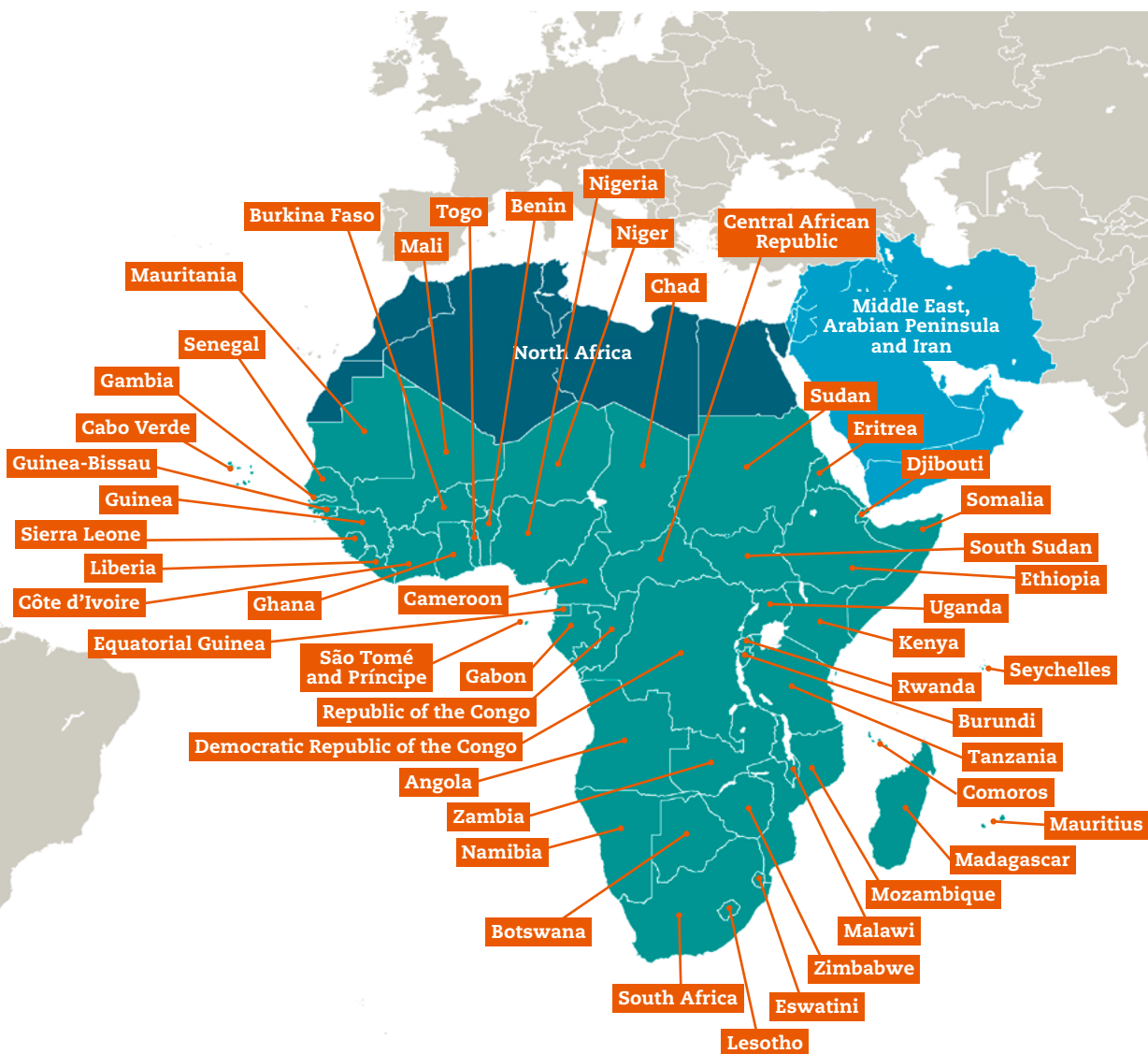

Figure 1: Sub-Saharan Africa and its neighbouring regions (source: FDFA)

1.1 Why is a Sub-Saharan Africa Strategy needed?

Africa is currently attracting a great deal of attention, not just because of the familiar challenges, but also because new opportunities are opening up for the continent. **Africa is becoming increasingly important on the world stage and more economically relevant.** Switzerland also wishes to take account of Africa's strengths more effectively and structure its relations with the continent in a forward-looking way. In doing so, Switzerland is taking into account the diversity of the regions, countries, cultures and societies of sub-Saharan Africa.

Africa is part of **Switzerland's extended regional context.** Conflicts and a lack of economic prospects in Europe's southern neighbourhood also have negative repercussions for Switzerland. Conversely, Switzerland benefits when Africa prospers and can fulfil its demographic and economic potential.

Switzerland has a **long-standing tradition of partnership** with the African continent and is therefore held in high regard. Building on its development cooperation work, relations have diversified in recent years. The time has come to set out and consolidate this extensive cooperation work in a strategy and to align this to the needs of the future. This will also achieve greater consistency between Switzerland's initiatives and activities. Conflicting objectives should be identified quickly and addressed transparently based on the present strategy.

The sub-Saharan African countries are partners and Switzerland consults with them on building **relations that are beneficial for both sides.** The needs of partner countries and Switzerland's interests are taken into account, as are the shared values. Here Switzerland represents the principles of freedom, the rule of law, equality of opportunity and sustainability, on which the FPS 20–23 is based.

Where can Switzerland use its knowledge and resources most effectively to achieve peace and sustainable development and in which areas does it have particular expertise? How can it help African countries to overcome their challenges most effectively and promote its own values? Where do its interests lie and how does it wish to pursue them? What risks exist? What opportunities must be seized to further diversify relations and to increase levels of trade? This strategy is guided by these questions.

With this strategy, the Federal Council is also responding to Postulat 19.4628⚭ of National Councillor Niklaus-Samuel Gugger, which calls for a report setting out Switzerland's strategy towards African states. The postulate, the adoption of which was proposed by the Federal Council, was submitted by the National Council on 19 June 2020 (Annex 4).

1.2 History of relations with sub-Saharan Africa

Swiss missionaries arrived in Africa at an early stage. In certain respects, they continue to influence the image of Switzerland today, for example in the school system. While colonial trade was also important to Switzerland, **it never acted as a colonial power** and is hence perceived in a differentiated manner.

When most African states obtained their independence by the 1960s, Switzerland soon established diplomatic relations. It gradually opened embassies and cooperation offices. Switzerland has since established a great deal of **credibility** through its development cooperation, humanitarian aid, peacebuilding efforts and good offices. Today it is implementing bilateral and regional **cooperation programmes** in 18 of the 49 countries. As a neutral and independent nation, Switzerland has mediated in various conflicts and developed its **peacebuilding profile,** for example in Sudan, Mozambique and Cameroon. It has also deployed these strengths for

many years at the multilateral level, for example by chairing the Burundi Configuration of the UN Peacebuilding Commission. Switzerland is also participating in various UN and EU peacebuilding missions on the continent and is supporting African institutions with the training of staff in this area.[1]

Regarding **migration policy,** Switzerland has concluded cooperation agreements with Angola, Benin and Cameroon in recent years. Negotiations with Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia and Sudan are ongoing. Switzerland has entered into a migration partnership with Nigeria. It has also concluded two readmission agreements with Ethiopia and Botswana since 2019. In its International Cooperation Strategy 2021–2024⚭ (ICS 21-24) the Federal Council defines migration as a

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1 Overview of Switzerland's civilian and military deployments. ⚭.

thematic priority and sub-Saharan Africa as a geographical priority, with the aim of reinforcing the strategic links between international cooperation and migration policy. This is to be achieved through a partnership-based approach which Switzerland pursues in its migration foreign policy.

Another key issue is the **restitution of illicit assets** (asset recovery). Switzerland has no interest in harbouring such assets in its financial centre. Over USD 1 billion has been returned to the Angolan and Nigerian people. Switzerland plays a leading role in this area and has had exemplary legislation in place since 2015.[2]

Switzerland holds regular **political consultations** with ten African states. For South Africa and Nigeria, those are complemented with separate dialogues on areas such as the economy, science, migration and human rights. When the Federal Council decided in 2005 to step up cooperation with key states outside of the EU, it defined South Africa as a **global priority country.** Relations with Africa's only G20 member have since been intensified. Switzerland also attaches great importance to high-level **diplomatic visits,** as demonstrated by the state visit of the President of Ghana in 2020.

In accordance with the requirements of the Foreign Policy Strategy 2016–2019, Switzerland has also stepped up cooperation with **regional organisations** in sub-Saharan Africa, including the African Union (AU), the Regional Economic Communities (RECs)[3] as well as other organisations, such as the African Development Bank (ADB). Switzerland is accredited to the AU and engages in formal cooperation with the AU and two RECs – the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). It also had an Executive Director at the ADB between 2017 and 2020 for Switzerland's voting group. Switzerland also contributed to the capital increases undertaken by the ADB in 2020. Switzerland is also a member of the *International Organisation of La Francophonie* (IOF), thus strengthening its links with French-speaking Africa.

To represent its interests, Switzerland has established an extensive network of representations in sub-Saharan Africa. It has fifteen embassies, two consulates general, nine cooperation offices, one Swiss Business Hub, one Trade Point and twenty honorary consulates (Annex 1).

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2   Federal Act of 18 December 2015 on the Freezing and the Restitution of Illicit Assets held by Foreign Politically Exposed Persons (FIAA⌕).

3   These include the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the East African Community (EAC), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU).

1.3 Coherence

The Sub-Saharan Africa Strategy is a geographical follow-up strategy to the FPS 20–23 adopted in January 2020. It was drawn up on an interdepartmental basis and involves all departments. Operational implementation documents (e.g. international cooperation programmes) with objectives and indicators will be created on the basis of this Sub-Saharan Africa Strategy and the ICS 21-24. The cascading strategy process ensures the coherence of the Federal Council's foreign policy.
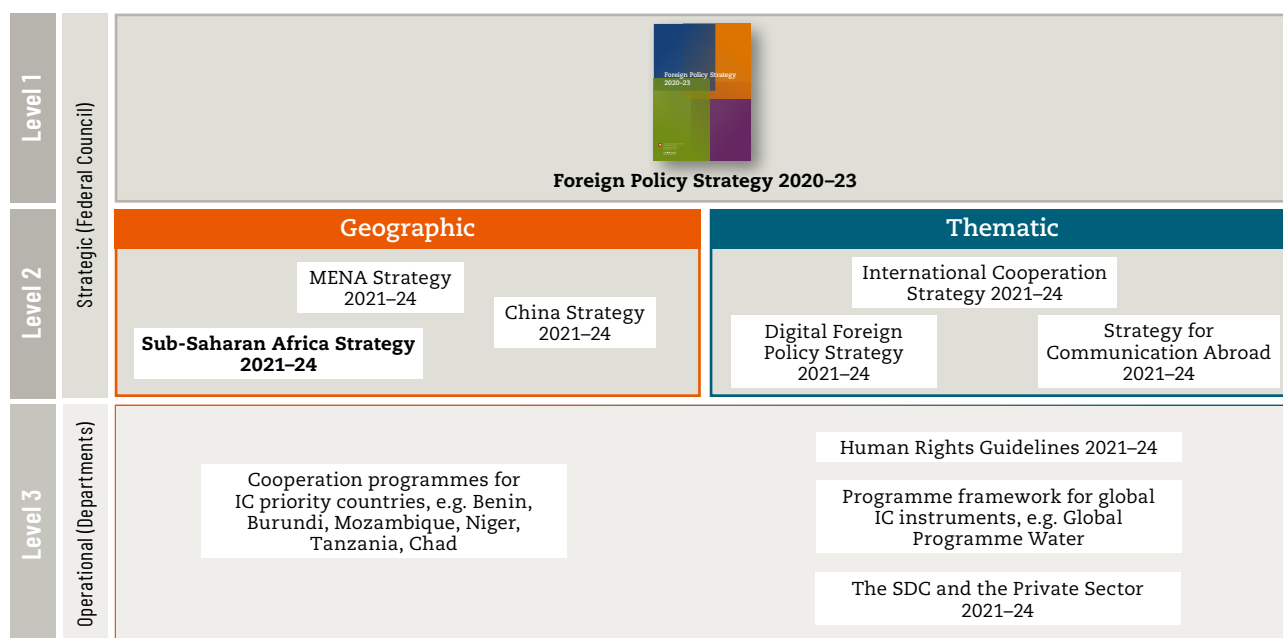

Figure 2: Cascading foreign policy strategy (source FDFA – illustrative selection of documents).

In terms of domestic policy it is based on the Federal Constitution of the Swiss Confederation, applicable federal legislation,[4] the FPS 20-23, the ICS 21-24 with sub-Saharan Africa as a priority region, the Digital Foreign Policy Strategy 2021–2024, Switzerland's International Strategy on Education, Research and Innovation, the Swiss Health Foreign Policy 2019–2024 and Measures to Strengthen the Role of Switzerland as a Host State 2020–2023. Switzerland's 2028 Foreign Policy Vision (AVIS28) is a source of inspiration for Swiss foreign policy in Africa.

The Federal Council's Action Plan on Corporate Social Responsibility 2020–2023, the National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights 2020–2023, the National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security 2018–2022, the Foreign Policy Action Plan on Preventing Violent Extremism, the Federal Council's Sustainable Finance Guidelines and the Commodity Trading Sector Guidance on Implementing the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights also provide guidance.

With regard to international policy, the UN's Agenda 2030 provides a comprehensive guiding framework. The strategy also refers to the Agenda 2063, the African Union's strategic blueprint for the socioeconomic transformation of the continent, which was adopted in 2013.

The strategy aims to strengthen **cooperation with partners within and outside of the Federal Administration.** Existing interdepartmental coordination structures such as the structure for international cooperation on migration (ICM structure) which seeks to achieve stronger strategic links between international cooperation and migration policy, will be maintained. The resources of the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) and its expertise should in the future be used more flexibly to complement the activities of other federal authorities, particularly the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). **Public-private partnerships** on international cooperation will be strengthened.

On the ground **Switzerland acts as a unit,** with representatives of the FDFA and other departments working together under one roof to jointly implement the strategy's objectives. Switzerland makes use of the wide-ranging expertise of diplomats, SDC, SECO and consular staff, defence and migration attachés, human security advisers, members of the Swiss Humanitarian Aid Unit (SHA), and Pro Helvetia employees.

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4   Federal Act on International Development Co-operation and Humanitarian Aid; Federal Act on Measures pertaining to Civil Peace Support and the Promotion of Human Rights.

2 Geopolitical overview

2.1 Regional integration and global actors

Africa's geopolitical importance is growing. Two developments are clearly evident:

Firstly, the African continent is strengthening its position through regional integration and by acting en bloc. The **multilateral dynamics** stand in stark contrast, for example, with the Middle East where internal fault lines impede regional cooperation. Africa has set up relevant multilateral formats for peacebuilding and security. The AU plays a prominent role in this respect, and is currently involved in a number of peace processes.[5] Multilateral organisations, such as the ADB, are also heavily involved in development. The AU and the UN also have an effective partnership, allowing Africa to gradually increase its contribution to the resolution of its problems.

Economically, the **African Continental Free Trade Area** (AfCFTA) aims to ensure progress on regional integration. Intra-African trade currently accounts for less than 20% of the continent's total trade. In Asia this figure stands at over 50%, and in Europe at around 70%. The African Continental Free Trade Agreement, which entered into force in 2019, seeks to create the largest free trade area in the world. Challenging negotiations on implementation nevertheless lie ahead. Over the medium and long-term, the AfCFTA has the potential to power economic growth and to foster the diversification of the African economies.[6]

Secondly, **major and regional powers** are increasingly focusing on Africa. Many states have increased their presence in Africa. Over 320 embassies and consulates were opened in Africa between 2010 and 2016 and more than a dozen states now have military bases in Africa.

China is now sub-Saharan Africa's biggest bilateral trading partner. Its presence in Africa is being increasingly shaped geopolitically, notably by the Belt and Road Initiative. Indebtedness to China is growing in many countries. **Russia** is also extending its cooperation with Africa, particularly in the areas of security, commodities and energy. It has signed military agreements with over 20 African states. **Turkey, Indonesia and India** are also expanding their regional presence. The **Arabian Peninsula** states are actively pursuing economic and security policy interests in the Horn of Africa and the Sahel region in particular. **European states** and the EU are also intensifying their relations with Africa, with issues such as migration, trade, counterterrorism and peacebuilding as a priority.

Although the **US** remains a major actor in the region, Africa has played a secondary role in US foreign policy in recent years. Strategic competition with China is also evident in Africa, but has not determined the geopolitical alignment of African states to date. In contrast to the general trend, US trade with sub-Saharan Africa has also declined over the past 15 years.
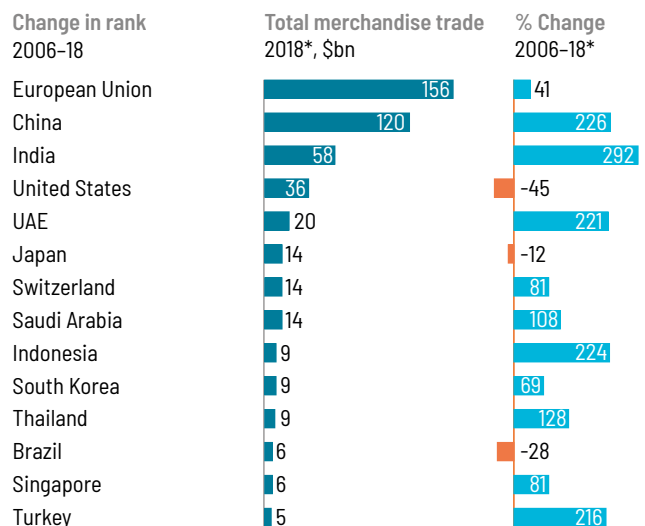
Change in rank 2006–18	Total merchandise trade 2018*, $bn	% Change 2006–18*
European Union	156	41
China	120	226
India	58	292
United States	36	-45
UAE	20	221
Japan	14	-12
Switzerland	14	81
Saudi Arabia	14	108
Indonesia	9	224
South Korea	9	69
Thailand	9	128
Brazil	6	-28
Singapore	6	81
Turkey	5	216

Figure 3: Trade in goods with sub-Saharan Africa in 2006 and 2018 (source: The Economist, Briefing, 7 March 2019).

The states of **North Africa** have close geographical and historical ties with sub-Saharan Africa. Conflicts influence each other, for example in Libya and Mali, or the conflict over the Nile waters. With regard to migration, links between the Maghreb and the Sahel region are particularly evident. There is scope to step up cooperation. Today, North Africa is predominantly showing interest in economic cooperation with its southern neighbours as well as with the AU and the RECs.

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5   African Union: Conflict Resolution, Peace & Security ✐.
6   World Bank, The African Continental Free Trade Area, 2020 ✐.

2.2 Regional trends

Various long-term trends are shaping the continent as a whole, and it is important to note that these lines of development interact with one another. It is too early to make any definitive assessment of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Africa, but this must be considered as far as possible.

Economy

Sub-Saharan Africa has some of the fastest-growing economies in the world (see section 4.4). Over the past two decades, the subcontinent as a whole has achieved some impressive annual growth rates of up to 6.5%, although average figures have been much lower in recent years due to the subdued performance of the three biggest economies of Nigeria, South Africa and Angola.[7] The World Bank estimates that the COVID-19 crisis will result in the subcontinent's first recession in 25 years.

Africa's greatest challenges include the fact that economic growth has only reduced **inequality** to a limited extent so far – in around a third of African countries.[8] Approximately one third of the population is still living in **extreme poverty** due to strong demographic growth. Seventy per cent of

the world's poor live in Africa. Progress made in combating poverty over recent years is partly being jeopardised by the consequences of the COVID-19 crisis. The pandemic has also temporarily led to a sharp decline in money transfers from the diaspora, which are essential for many people. In 2019, over USD 48 billion was transferred, which is almost equivalent to the total official development assistance provided to the continent.[9]

The **informal sector** still accounts for almost 90% of jobs in sub-Saharan Africa. Even excluding the still dominant agricultural sector, the figure is over 75%. There is a lack of jobs and prospects for young people. Only by expanding the formal sector can the tax base be broadened and the set-up of social insurance systems begin, enabling an affluent middle class to emerge.[10]

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7   World Bank: GDP growth (annual %) – Sub-Saharan Africa ✐.
8   African Development Bank, African Economic Outlook 2020 ✐.

9   World Bank, Covid-19 Crisis through a Migration Lens – Migration and Development Brief 32, April 2020 ✐; OECD, Development Aid at a Glance, Statistics by Region – 2. Africa, 2019 ✐.
10   International Labour Organization, World Employment and Social Outlook, Trends 2020 ✐.

Legend:
- 6% or more
- 3%-6%
- 0-3%
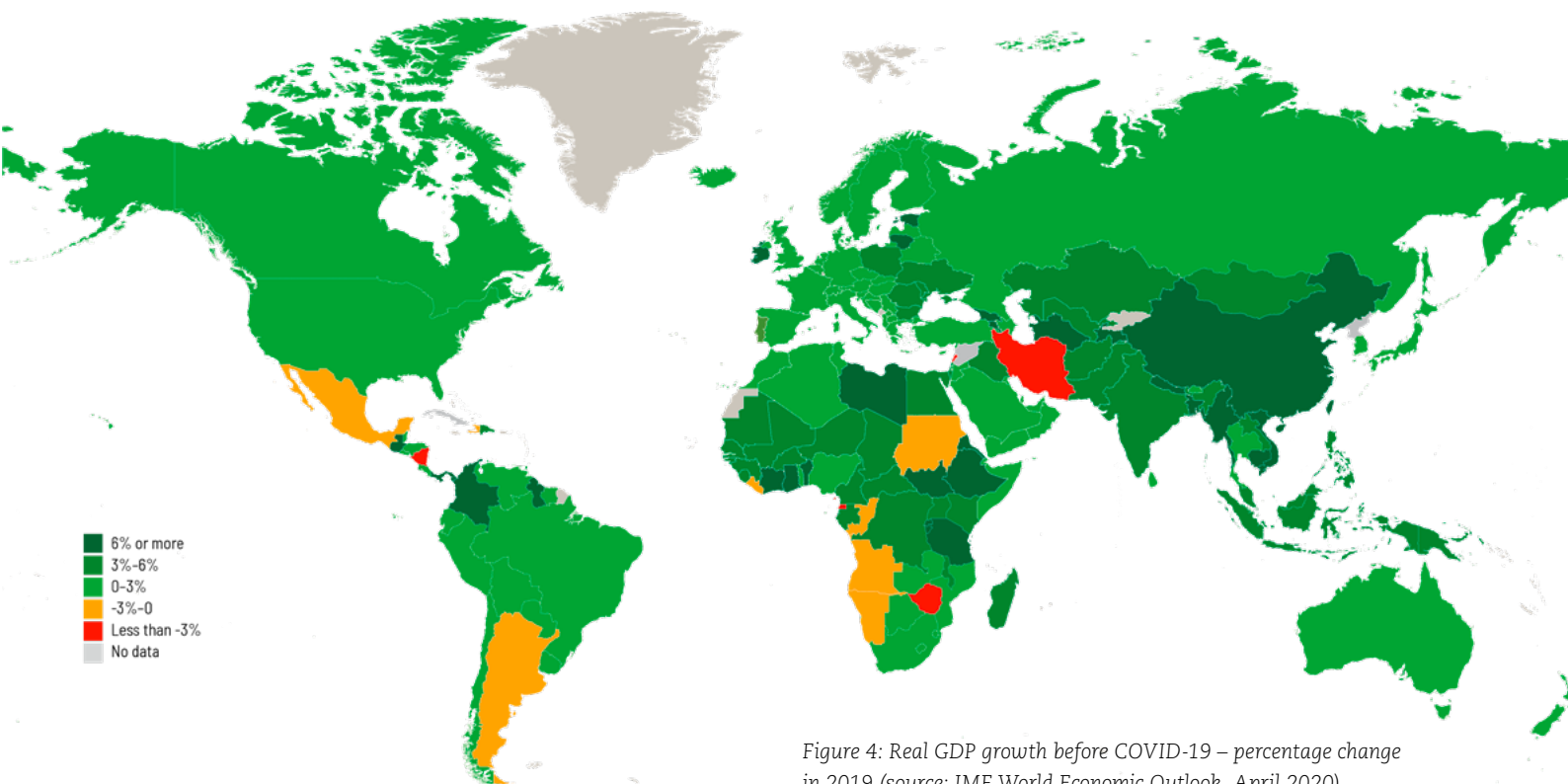- -3%-0
- Less than -3%
- No data

Figure 4: Real GDP growth before COVID-19 – percentage change in 2019 (source: IMF World Economic Outlook, April 2020).

Innovation is a key driver of growth, also in Africa. Young, dynamic entrepreneurs are investing in **start-ups** and incubator firms. With almost 50% of all active mobile cash accounts in the world, Africa is also a trailblazer in the **fintech** sector.[11] The **wealth of natural resources** can also drive growth. However, dependence on natural resources also entails risks, given the sector's susceptibility to external shocks, debt and corruption. Natural resources only make a minor contribution to the prosperity of the wider population. The wealth of natural resources is also holding back **diversification** of the economy to some extent, which is crucial to sustainable economic growth.

Africa still has tremendous economic potential. Private sector investment nevertheless requires favourable **conditions,** including macroeconomic stability. While this has improved in many cases, it is now being jeopardised by rising public debt. Multilateral organisations, such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the African Development Bank, play a major role in ensuring macroeconomic stability and sustainable debt levels and in promoting debt transparency. In addition to stability, legal certainty and improved infrastructure are needed to attract investors, but also a consistent approach to tackling corruption, which is still widespread.

Much will depend on the severity of the socioeconomic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic. Most countries only have limited means to support their populations and economies through government measures. The decline in production, consumption, investment and trade has led to rising prices in many places. However, it is also possible that the crisis could accelerate the transformation of the African economies and open up new opportunities, particularly in relation to digitalisation.

Demographics

Sub-Saharan Africa is the world's fastest growing region. According to the UN, the population could more than **double** from one to over two billion people by 2050, which is over half of predicted global population growth. No population is as **young** as that of sub-Saharan Africa. In 2019, 62% of the population was under the age of 25. This figure is expected to be around 52% by 2050.[12]
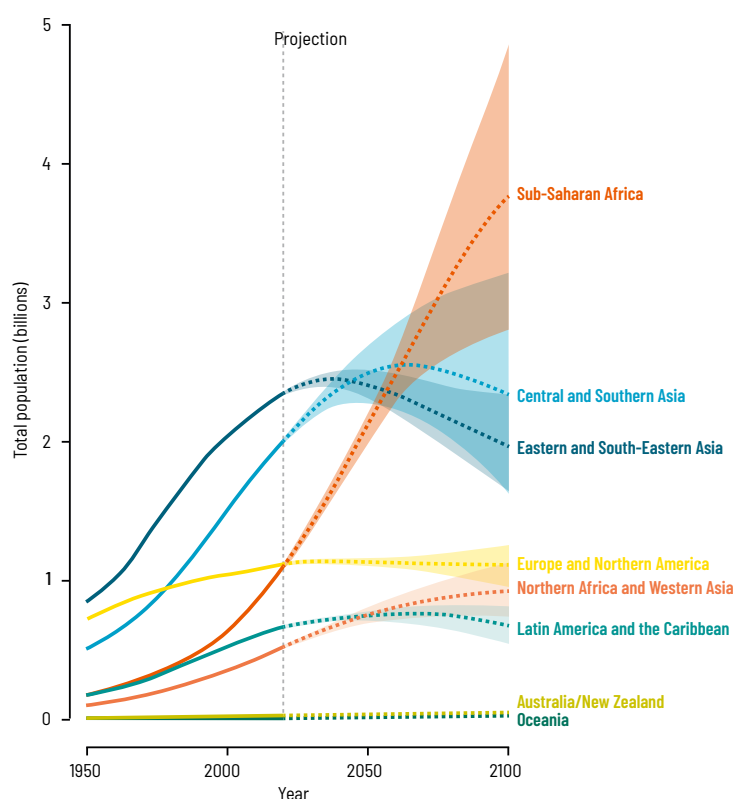

Figure 5: Predicted population growth rate by region (source: United Nations, World Population Prospects 2019).

The subcontinent's large proportion of young people represents both an opportunity and a challenge. On the one hand, the young population holds out prospects for development and growth. Many young, well-connected and energetic men and women want their countries to achieve progress and are calling for change. The transformation of African societies is also being driven by increasing connectivity, mobile telephones and social media. On the other hand, a **youth bulge** in the demographic pyramid also poses risks, especially if young people feel excluded from development opportunities and decision-making processes, and if the infrastructure and basic services are inadequate. Access to education[13] and the creation of good jobs for young people remain urgent priorities.[14]

In the medium term, the working population (people aged 25 to 64) is the fastest-growing category. Its share of the total population is set to rise from 35% in 2019 to 43% by 2050. This demographic structure potentially yields a **demographic dividend:** more labour is available to produce goods, to invest and to save. However, such a dividend requires stable economic and political conditions and a levelling-off of the growth curve.

11 European Investment Bank, Banking in Africa: Delivering on Financial Inclusion, Supporting Financial Stability, 2018 🔗; OECD and African Union, Africa's Development Dynamics 2019: Achieving Productive Transformation 🔗.
12 United Nations, World Population Prospects 2019 🔗.

13 According to UNESCO 🔗, sub-Saharan Africa has the lowest school enrolment rate in the world.
14 African Development Bank, Jobs for Youth in Africa, 2016 🔗.

Women play a major role in social and sustainable development. Strengthening women's status increases development potential and improves countries' governance. At the same time, education for girls is an effective means of curbing demographic growth.[15]

The rapid population growth in Africa is being accompanied by fast-paced urbanisation. Over 550 million people live in urban agglomerations today, with this figure set to increase to 950 million by 2050. **Urbanisation** can act as a driving force in economic development. However, urbanisation also poses major challenges in terms of spatial planning, the provision of basic services, and infrastructure.[16]

The COVID-19 pandemic has so far claimed fewer victims in Africa than predicted. Despite the lack of reliable data, this is evidenced by the fact that Africa's share of total reported deaths worldwide is below 3%. The population structure has been given as a possible reason for this – in addition to further factors such as the measures undertaken by many governments to contain the pandemic. **Disease** epidemics nevertheless remain a recurring issue, not least due to poor healthcare systems. There are also fears that COVID-19 will undermine progress made in recent years on combating polio, HIV, malaria and other diseases, not least owing to the suspension of immunisation programmes.[17]

Governance

A definite negative trend has emerged in sub-Saharan Africa in recent years in terms of good governance, respect for human rights and the number of conflicts, often giving rise to humanitarian crises.[18]

Democracy is essentially established in many parts of Africa. Significant overall progress has been made on democratisation since 1990. However, a negative trend has been observed recently. The region scores below the worldwide average in the global democracy rankings.[19]

Many states still face major challenges in relation to good governance, the **rule of law** and combating **corruption.** Whether a country develops in a positive or negative direction largely depends on these factors. Effective state institutions, which include rather than exclude, the separation of powers, respect for fundamental rights and a strong civil society provide in Switzerland's view a solid foundation for economic development, sustainability and peace.

Security

Interstate **armed conflicts** and conflicts across national borders remain a major obstacle to development in sub-Saharan Africa. Numerous warring parties are usually involved, including many non-state actors. Africa is the continent with the highest number of non-state conflicts. Most conflicts are geographically limited and do not affect the entire territory of a country. Despite a rising number of conflicts, the number of direct conflict victims has fallen in recent years.[20] There are nevertheless a high number of indirect victims, in many cases due to hunger or inadequate medical provision.

The **causes of conflict** vary, but the conflict dynamics can often be attributed to a combination of a weak statehood, corruption, inadequate basic services, competition for natural ressources, inequality and marginalisation. There is a clear relationship between fragility and armed conflicts, cross-border crime, such as arms dealing, drug dealing and people trafficking, and the illegal depletion of resources. Over 80% of the subcontinent's population live in fragile contexts.[21] Fragility also provides – despite the traditional prevalence of religious and cultural tolerance in many places – a breeding ground for interethnic conflicts and violent extremism. Jihadist groups are also involved in a growing number of conflicts. There are also increasing links between extremists and transnational organised crime in sub-Saharan Africa.[22]

In 2019, just under a third of the 61 multilateral **peacekeeping operations** worldwide were located in sub-Saharan Africa. Over two-thirds (just under 100,000 people) of the total personnel were deployed in these operations. Some of the UN's biggest blue helmet missions and various Special Political Missions are active on the subcontinent. The **EU** is also an important actor with several civilian and military peacebuilding missions.[23]

15 Daphne H. Liu, Adrian E. Raftery. How Do Education and Family Planning Accelerate Fertility Decline? Population and Development Review, 2020 ✎.
16 OECD, Africa's Urbanisation Dynamics 2020 ✎.
17 WHO, Regional Office Africa ✎.
18 Freedom House, Democratic Trends in Africa in Four Charts, 2020 ✎.
19 Economist Intelligence Unit, Democracy Index 2019 ✎.

20 PRIO, Conflict Trends in Africa 1989-2018 ✎. The number of direct victims of conflict in 2018 was at its lowest level since 2012, amounting to 6700 people, according to PRIO.
21 OECD, States of Fragility 2020 ✎.
22 SIPRI, Yearbook 2020; IISS, Armed Conflict Survey 2020 ✎.
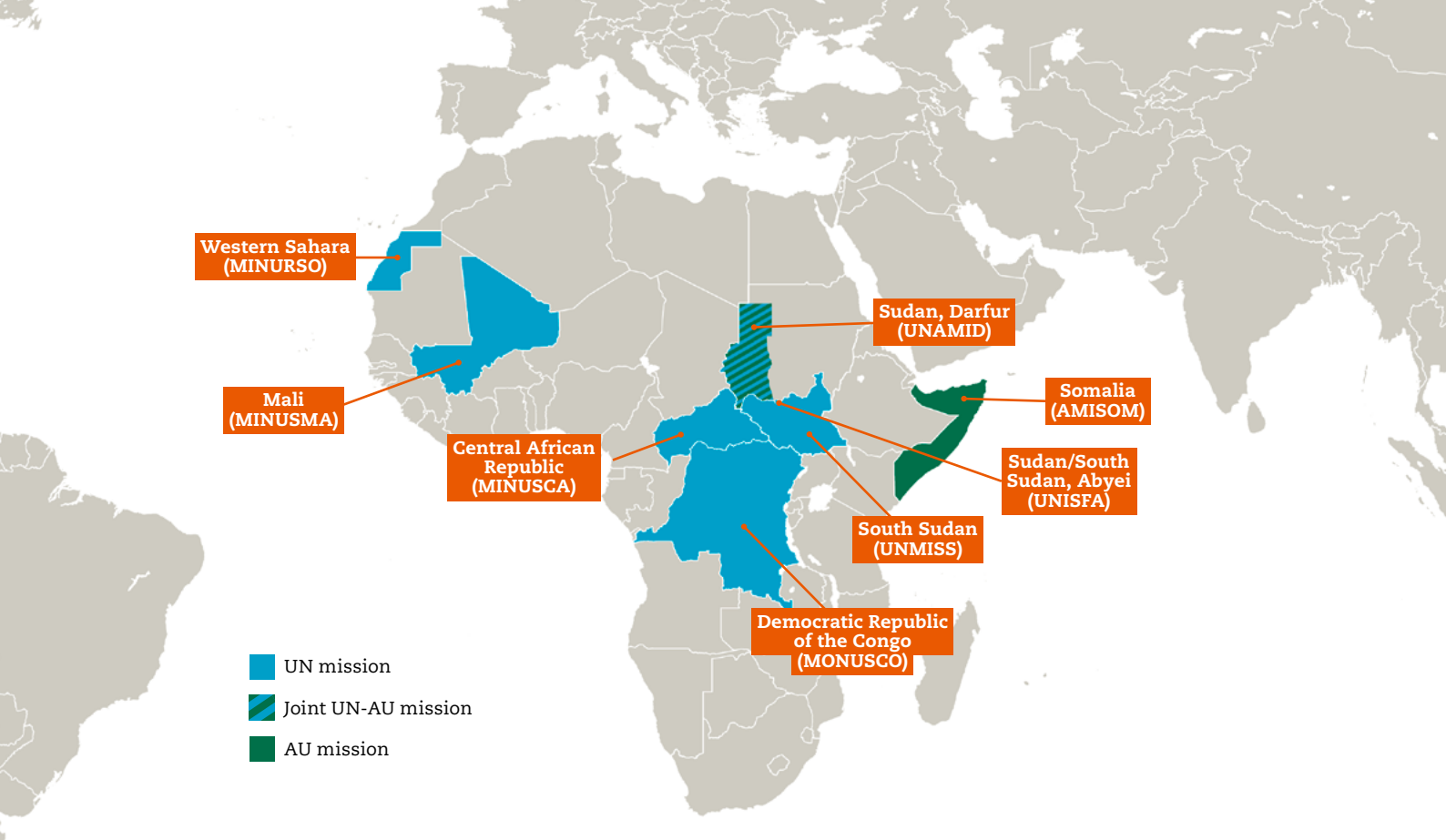23 SIPRI, Trends in Multilateral Peace Operations 2019 ✎.

Figure 6: UN and AU missions with military personnel, as of December 2020 (source: FDFA).

Africa is an important item on the UN Security Council's agenda. In 2019, over half of the meetings on countries and regions and over two-thirds of resolutions and presidential statements concerned Africa. These figures can be interpreted as an indication of continued instability – but also of the efforts being made by the international community to tackle the challenges of peace and security in Africa.

The environment

Africa's share of global climate emissions is in the low single-digit range. However, Africa is severely affected by the **consequences of climate change.** Warming on the continent is above average, according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. More frequent and intensive droughts and flooding and irregular rainfall are also anticipated in some regions. A greater shortage of water and lower productivity in pasture farming systems are also projected.[24] This may exacerbate existing economic, social, ecological and political problems – especially where there is a lack of instruments for adapting to climate change.

Africa has the largest area of tropical rainforest after the Amazon. Conserving rainforests is of vital importance to climate stability in view of their role as carbon sinks, but also because they help regulate water systems and preserve biodiversity. Although there is still significant **biodiversity,** it is increasingly under threat from various factors, including demographic change, climate change, environmental pollution, the uncontrolled depletion of raw materials, and urban expansion.[25]

Climate change and the precarious climate situation in many countries may spark or aggravate conflicts over water and pasture land, for example.

Migration

Africa is **recording an increase in migratory movements.** Over 21 million Africans currently live in a different African country – 8 million more than in 1990. A further 19 million people live outside the continent, compared with just 7 million three decades ago. Emigration to Europe grew the strongest during this period. Around one million asylum applications have been made in the EU, Norway and Switzerland since 2010. It is anticipated that this trend will continue, albeit to varying degrees. The Arabian Peninsula countries are also an

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24 <u>The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change 2018</u> ✂.

25 <u>The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services 2018</u> ✂.

increasingly important destination.[26] In relation to population growth, African migration remains relatively stable. In terms of **migration** from sub-Saharan Africa **to Europe,** the rate of irregular migration has increased in recent years.

North Africa has become an important transit region. For many migrants, North Africa is also the final destination as the route to Europe is blocked. Both on the routes through the Sahara and in North Africa, migrants and refugees sometimes live in very precarious situations. Protection against exploitation and human trafficking is urgently needed.

Intra-African migration also remains significant. In East, West and Central Africa, 80% of migrants come from the same region.[27] South Africa and Côte d'Ivoire, for example, are important destination countries. The trend that notably the African lion economies are becoming destination countries for economic migrants across the continent will increase over the coming years. Existing (e.g. West Africa) or planned (e.g. Horn of Africa) areas of free movement of persons will further underpin this trend.

The over six million refugees and just under 18 million internally displaced persons in Africa are a cause for concern. The **root causes** of irregular migration and displacement are complex. Armed conflicts can trigger migratory movements as well as humanitarian crises and natural disasters. In 2019, six of the ten countries of origin with the highest number of displaced persons were in sub-Saharan Africa: South Sudan, Somalia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sudan, the Central African Republic, and Eritrea.[28] Other factors, such as the failure of the rule of law, serious human rights violations and fiercer competition for natural resources, can also trigger irregular migration and forced displacement. The medium and long-term consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic may cause a further rise in irregular migration.

26 International Organization for Migration, World Migration Report 2020 ⊘.
27 UNCTAD, Economic Development in Africa – Migration for Structural Transformation ⊘.

28 UNHCR, Global Trends 2019 ⊘. The ten biggest host countries for refugees include Uganda, Sudan and Ethiopia.

3 Thematic priorities

Switzerland's thematic focus areas are derived from the regional context analysis as outlined in section 2 and the FPS 20–23. They also take account of the ICS 21–24.

Switzerland essentially wishes to contribute to greater **peace** and **prosperity** in sub-Saharan Africa. **Sustainable development** should provide better prospects for the local population – especially young people. Promoting **digitalisation** in Africa may act as a major catalyst in this respect.

Migration is an issue that cuts across all thematic areas and has therefore not been set as a separate priority. However, the implementation of the four thematic priorities should also help address the **root causes of migration.**

Switzerland will intensify and diversify its relations with sub-Saharan Africa where it can deploy its expertise more effectively in areas such as trade, finance and science. It intends to build on the **positive features of the 'Switzerland brand'** and its inherent soft power. Whether as an independent and solidary actor, as a bridge builder and advocate of international humanitarian law and human rights or on account of the reputation of its highly competitive and innovative companies and universities – Switzerland's credibility is a major asset. Switzerland's negative image as a harbour for illicit money has been rectified in recent years, not least thanks to its proactive asset recovery policy.

The Federal Council's thematic focus areas for the period 2021–2024 are outlined below:

3.1 Peace, security and human rights

It is in Switzerland's interests to contribute to greater peace and stability in the regions to the south of the Mediterranean. Switzerland's work in sub-Saharan Africa includes offering its good offices such as dialogue promotion, mediation, and **civilian and military peacebuilding.**[29] This further includes the prevention of armed conflicts and violent extremism, dealing with the past and the fight against impunity. It seconds civilian and military personnel to UN peacekeeping operations and supports national and regional training centres in Ghana, Mali and Kenya. It also fosters regional integration and the African Peace and Security Architecture.

In sub-Saharan Africa, Switzerland advocates respect for **human rights** and compliance **with international humanitarian law,** supports human rights defenders, and participates actively in the UN Human Rights Council. As part of the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda⬈ Switzerland encourages the equal participation of women and young people in peace and reconstruction processes and seeks to prevent sexual violence. In light of their direct impact on peace and tolerance, Switzerland also promotes art and culture, which contributes to dealing with the past and social cohesion.

Switzerland is committed to **democratisation** and the **rule of law** in sub-Saharan Africa and supports state and civil society initiatives in these areas. It strengthens judicial cooperation between Switzerland and the African states, helps to reinforce local judicial systems and law enforcement authorities in combating crime, and provides complementary assistance to the International Criminal Court in relation to crimes under international law.

Providing impartial **humanitarian aid** is a key identifier of Switzerland. The most visible demonstration of this is the Swiss Humanitarian Aid Unit (SHA). Providing humanitarian aid for victims of conflicts and disasters is particularly important in sub-Saharan Africa. Forty per cent of humanitarian needs worldwide concern sub-Saharan Africa.[30] Switzerland works to ensure adherence to humanitarian principles, access to persons in need, protection on the ground, and sustainable solutions for countries of first refuge. It has an interest in ensuring that displaced persons and refugees are granted protection as close to their place of origin as possible and that they can be integrated into their host countries in the event of protracted crises. It also supports the development of local capacities.

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29 In line with its report⬈ dated 25 November 2020, the Federal Council tasked the Federal Department of Defence, Civil Protection and Sport (DDPS) with developing military peacebuilding support and placing a stronger emphasis on Africa.

30 United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Global Humanitarian Overview 2020 ⬈.

Switzerland strengthens cooperation with African states through **migration agreements and partnerships** as well as multilateral processes. Pursuing its partnership-based approach towards migration, it works with countries of origin and transit countries to find appropriate solutions. Switzerland helps its African partners build capacities in the areas of migration, return assistance and reintegration, and the fight against human trafficking.

Switzerland's long-standing commitment at multi-lateral level increases the effectiveness of its bilateral activities and underlines its profile as a competent and trustworthy partner for peace and security. Switzerland is also undertaking these efforts as part of its candidacy to join the UN Security Council in 2023/24. Combining bilateral and multilateral levels also strengthens the position of International Geneva. As a host state of the UN and other important international actors in Geneva, Switzerland can play a positive role in areas of importance to Africa.

3.2 Prosperity

Switzerland works to ensure sustainable economic growth and moderate public debt levels in sub-Saharan Africa. As part of its international cooperation activities, it is developing innovative approaches to **basic education and vocational training** and increasing cooperation with the private sector. Jobs are vital in terms of providing prospects locally for the young and growing population. Switzerland advocates agile entrepreneurship and sustainable local business ecosystems and supports local SMEs, with women and young people playing a particularly important role. **Supporting the provision of basic services** in healthcare and education and equal access for women, minorities and young people to the labour market increases countries' economic potential, which in turn also benefits Switzerland.

Swiss business is showing increasing interest in the African market. The economic opportunities are clear to see, even though challenges remain. The market holds potential for high-quality Swiss products and investment, for example in the pharmaceutical sector, where Swiss companies have launched various programmes in Africa. However, potential does not just exist for large companies, but also for Swiss SMEs, which can play a key role in promoting local entrepreneurship and thus drive development.

By helping to **improve the general economic conditions** locally, Switzerland is increasing economic opportunities, benefiting both the local economy and Swiss companies. In a stable economic environment, which also includes the rule of law and protection of human rights, the economy can diversify and create decent jobs. Switzerland supports its private sector with various instruments, such as **trade diplomacy,** strengthening bilateral sectoral agreements, and providing advice locally through its representations abroad. This also opens up market access for its own companies.

As a major financial and commodities trading centre, Switzerland has an interest in transparent rules. A specific focus is set on **combating transnational organised crime,** particularly corruption, and stopping illicit financial flows. Particular attention is paid to capacity-building in the countries of origin. Switzerland also supports the development and effective implementation of global standards to prevent and combat illicit financial flows. To this end it is also stepping up judicial cooperation with Africa. In relation to asset recovery, it continues to seek development-related solutions that also benefit the people of the country concerned. As part of multilateral efforts, Switzerland is also working to achieve greater **debt transparency.**

Switzerland is positioning itself as a leading centre for sustainable financial services. It creates appropriate conditions to improve the competitiveness of the Swiss financial centre and enable the financial sector to make an effective contribution to sustainability.

At multilateral level, Switzerland is participating in the replenishment and strategic alignment of the [African Development Fund](). Switzerland also supports the initiative to temporarily suspend bilateral public debt servicing for the poorest countries due to the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. This initiative was launched by the World Bank and the IMF and is supported by the G20 and the Paris Club.

Switzerland is creating the necessary conditions to enable actors engaged in education, research and innovation to intensify cooperation with sub-Saharan Africa. In consultation with the Swiss research community, it maintains existing scientific relations with Africa, supports young African talent, and encourages partnerships with Swiss universities.

3.3 Sustainability

As part of the **2030 Agenda,** Switzerland aims to ensure the sustainable development of sub-Saharan Africa in the three dimensions of the environment, economy and society. Through its multidimensional approach, it supports the **combating of climate change** and its consequences. Switzerland is a donor (USD 150 million for 2020-2023) to the Green Climate Fund which places special emphasis on Africa. It promotes effective healthcare systems and, in particular, the sustainable management of and access to clean water and sanitation. Through initiatives aimed at intergovernmental cooperation on water management, it makes a contribution to the stability, peace and prosperity of the African continent (Blue Peace approach).

In the context of rapid **urbanisation,** Switzerland is stepping up efforts in relation to energy supply and the provision of other basic services, urban planning and tackling climate risks. Forced displacement and migration due to natural disasters and the consequences of climate change are to be better anticipated and managed. In humanitarian crises, Switzerland is committed to ensuring the sustainable management of resources that are essential to refugees and local communities.

Switzerland will continue its efforts in relation to the **economy and human rights,** engaging in dialogue with all partners. It also pursues a nuanced approach which not only aims to prevent human rights violations ('do no harm'), but also fosters entrepreneurship as a positive force in promoting human rights. The extraction of natural resources, in which also Swiss companies are involved, remains a major issue. In the acquisition, processing and trading of commodities, Switzerland promotes compliance with high social and environmental standards and respect for human rights. Encouraging responsible corporate management helps ensure fair competition from which Swiss companies benefit.

3.4 Digitalisation

The Federal Council has taken into account the growing significance of digitalisation, placing greater emphasis on the issue in its legislative programme for 2019–23⌕. It defined digitalisation as a thematic focus area for the first time in the FPS 20–23⌕. In its Digital Foreign Policy Strategy 2021–2024⌕ it specifies the relevant foreign policy action areas.

Digitalisation has the potential to bring about fundamental economic and social changes also in sub-Saharan Africa. Digital technology is relevant to development in at least two respects:

Firstly, it involves the **use of digital tools** in international cooperation projects and programmes to achieve development goals more effectively and quickly. Digital applications drive development-related and humanitarian innovations worldwide. Switzerland's commitment to harnessing the full potential of new technologies in combating poverty is summarised under the term *Tech4Good.*

Secondly, it involves **digital governance.** This also includes the digital transformation of partner countries in sub-Saharan Africa, in order to enable them to utilise digitalisation in the economy, society and administration for the benefit of the population. This presents a number of challenges: digitalisation and the resulting technological advances can cause disruption, potentially exacerbating inequality and dependency, for example in relation to jobs or the use of data. This is why digital self-determination should be paramount in the application of technology. Inclusive access to the internet is also necessary to ensure as many people as possible benefit from new technologies. Otherwise there is a risk of a digital divide, with social and economic disparities in and between countries continuing to widen. In light of these developments, Switzerland is constantly seeking to minimise cyber risks, particularly with regard to data management, cybercrime, cyberattacks and cyber espionage, the financing of terrorism, surveillance as well as disinformation.

Switzerland helps companies to create innovative and inclusive **financial services** for African societies and contributes to fair competition through its multilateral engagement. This includes ensuring that innovative financial models are accessible to women, young people and vulnerable population groups.

With a view to strengthening the position of **International Geneva as a global centre for digital governance** and other issues of the future, the Federal Council seeks to encourage the participation of business, the scientific community and other non-governmental actors in relevant international forums. African stakeholders in particular should increasingly be able to participate in discussions on digital governance. There is potential in intensified exchanges between emerging African tech-hubs and International Geneva. Capacity-building is an important means of providing support. Collaboration with multilateral organisations such as the AU and the IOF presents opportunities for comprehensive approaches. The potential of the Geneva Internet Platform (GIP)[31] set up by Switzerland in 2014, should also be harnessed.

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31 The GIP is a neutral information and discussion platform for all aspects of digital governance and organises briefings and courses on capacity-building. Please see also the Digital Foreign Policy Strategy 2021–24⌕.

4 Geographical priorities

The regions and countries of sub-Saharan Africa are extremely diverse. Consequently, also Switzerland's interests are diverse and wide-ranging. The strategy sets out **five geographical priorities** of particular interest to Switzerland, covering around half of the states of sub-Saharan Africa as well as the multilateral organisations. Some of these geographical priorities focus on different thematic areas:

In the three regions of **the Sahel, the Greater Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes,** the emphasis is placed on peacebuilding, humanitarian actions and development cooperation. These issues are also to be addressed more effectively at political level.

The **lion economies,** i.e. states of sub-Saharan Africa with strong economies and dynamic growth, represent another priority. In these countries Switzerland is primarily pursuing economic and financial interests.

The **regional organisations** priority reflects the growing importance of multilateral organisations on the African continent.

The states of southern Africa also remain important to Switzerland. On the one hand, this is the most economically important region on the subcontinent, where the lion economies constitute a particular area of focus. On the other hand, Switzerland is also present in **Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Madagascar,** where it deploys a range of instruments.

In all cases, **transregional and continental dynamics** are also taken into account. This is covered in sections 2 and 3 which look at the subcontinent from different perspectives and set out the broad lines of Swiss foreign policy in sub-Saharan Africa.

Importance is attached to digitalisation in all five geographical priorities. In addition to Tech4Good, digital transformation is a priority for the lion economies.

Objectives and measures are also defined below for each geographical priority. To assess the extent to which the objectives have been achieved, a review will be carried out at the end of this strategy period with the federal authorities involved.

	Peace, security and human rights	Prosperity	Sustainability	Digitalisation
Sahel region	■	■	■	
Great Lakes region	■	■	■	
Greater Horn of Africa region	■	■	■	
Lion economies		■	■	■
Regional organisations	■	■	▨	

The more strongly coloured a thematic area is, the more pronounced it is in the respective countries.

Figure 7: Geographical priorities of the Sub-Saharan Africa Strategy (source: FDFA).
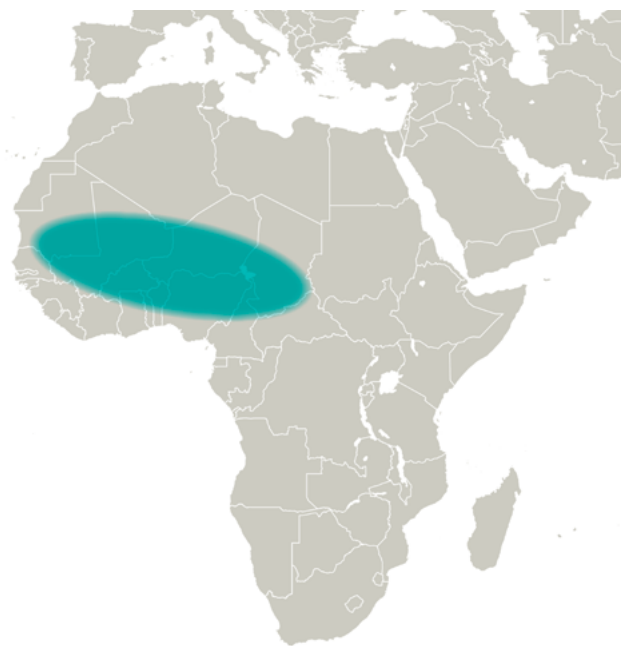
4.1 Sahel region

Figure 8: Geographical priority 1 – the Sahel region (source: FDFA).

The Sahel region is characterised by its cultural, linguistic, ethnic and religious diversity. Various states in the region have achieved successes in terms of democratisation, economic development and civil society participation over the past decade.

This progress is being jeopardised, in particular, by **political fragility** and the **increase in armed conflicts** in the Sahel and the Lake Chad region. The presence of armed groups, some with links to international terrorism, also presents a threat to the coastal states in West Africa. The strength of these groups is closely linked to the fragility of the states, cross-border criminal activity – such as arms dealing, drug dealing and human trafficking – and the illegal depletion of resources. Kidnapping with ransom demands is also a phenomenon affecting both local communities and foreign nationals. Violations of international humanitarian law by all parties involved in conflicts have serious consequences for civilian populations, especially women, children and young people.

Various regional and international initiatives, both civilian and military, have been launched in response to the upsurge in violence. With MINUSMA in Mali and MINUSCA in the Central African Republic, the UN has two blue helmet missions in the region. The EU has two civilian missions – EUCAP Sahel Mali and Niger – and one military mission with EUTM Mali.

Many states in the region are faced with **poverty, social inequality and high population growth** as well as **impunity, corruption and human rights violations.** The region is disproportionately affected by **climate change** which increases the vulnerability of the population – especially in relation to farming, which is dependent on rainfall – and exacerbates existing tensions. This **fragility** has serious humanitarian consequences, leading to **forced displacements** and irregular migration. The migration mainly occurs in the states themselves as well as within the continent in the direction of North Africa, the coastal states and urban centres. There is still potential for migration to Europe, although the number of migrants arriving in Europe has declined in recent years.

Economic development in the region is based heavily on the use of natural resources. The countries concerned have generally experienced strong growth in recent years, but this only benefits a small proportion of the population and can barely keep pace with demographic trends. The economies are in need of diversification and require improved economic conditions. Public debt levels have also risen sharply over recent years. Intraregional trade is still at a very low level despite the existing ECOWAS customs union.

The regional organisation **ECOWAS,** to which most states in the region belong, plays a positive role in the peaceful resolution of conflicts as well as in regional integration and economic development. The West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU), to which the eight franco-phone states of West Africa belong, is also of importance. The UN also has a local presence through its regional offices (UNOWAS/UNOCA) whose mandates are defined by the UN Security Council. In addition to its peacekeeping missions, the EU also has a strong presence as a provider of international aid.

Thematic areas

Switzerland focuses on the following three areas in the Sahel region:

1. Peace, Security and Human Rights

→ Switzerland contributes to the resolution of conflicts through its civilian and military peacebuilding activities. It promotes political dialogue with all actors and seeks to prevent terrorism, violent extremism and cross-border crime. It further supports the peacekeeping training centres in Ghana and Mali and participates in peacekeeping operations of the UN and EU.

→ Switzerland advocates the protection of individual fundamental rights, compliance with **international humanitarian law,** including humanitarian access, and freedom of action for civil society.

→ Through its **humanitarian efforts** Switzerland provides emergency aid and protects migrants and displaced persons in the region.

→ Switzerland tackles the root causes of **irregular migration** and human trafficking through regional coordinated approaches, dialogue with partner states and migration agreements and partnerships.

2. Prosperity

→ Switzerland is investing in **the provision of basic services,** such as education and healthcare, strengthens local governance and supports rural development.

→ It encourages greater **participation of women** in decision-making processes.

3. Sustainability

→ Switzerland aims to ensure sustainable management of and inclusive access to **natural resources,** such as **drinking water.**

→ It seeks to foster the sustainable development of agriculture.

→ It contributes towards **disaster risk reduction** and to building resilience in dealing with the consequences of climate change.

Goals and measures

A) Switzerland is strengthening its political profile in relation to peacebuilding.

- Establishment of a special envoy for the Sahel region.
- Assessment of upgrading the cooperation office in Bamako to an embassy.
- Stepping up of diplomatic visits and exchanges between capitals.
- Strengthening of broad-based approaches in multilateral discussions on the Sahel region, including as part of its candidacy for a seat on the UN Security Council and at the International Organisation of La Francophonie.
- Deployment of personnel to UN and EU peacekeeping operations and to other organisations and institutions.

B) Switzerland is committed to alleviating the causes of migration and reducing migratory pressure.

- Expansion of bilateral cooperation on migration.
- Improvement of basic services (education, healthcare) as part of the ICS 21–24.

C) In deploying its international cooperation instruments, Switzerland focuses on prosperity and sustainability and uses a nexus approach.

- Priorities in the new cooperation programmes: improving local governance, strengthening basic education and vocational training, supporting rural development, promoting markets and value chains and the sustainable management of resources.

Further measures:

- Expanding crisis management capacities on the ground.
- Stepping up exchanges between the Swiss representations in the region and North Africa.

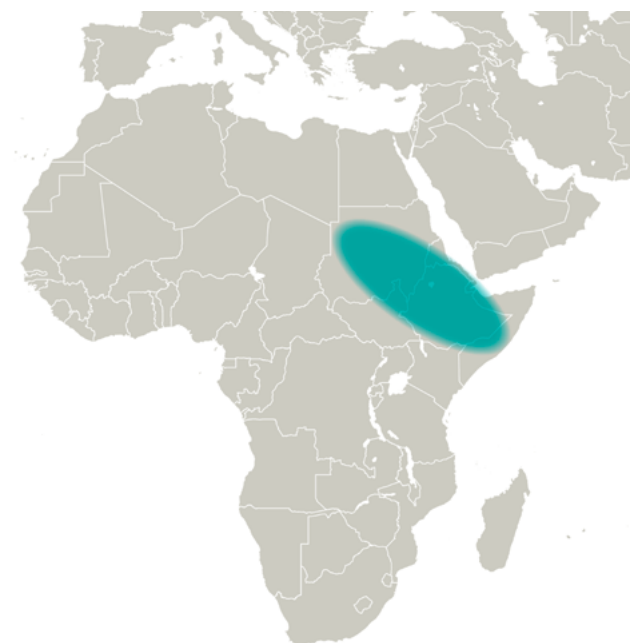# 4.2 Greater Horn of Africa region

Figure 9: Geographical priority 2 – the Greater Horn of Africa region (source: FDFA).

The Greater Horn of Africa is one of the most dynamic regions in the world, but is also one of the most fragile and severely affected by conflict. Its geographical, historical, political, cultural and religious diversity represents tremendous richness, but also makes the region susceptible to **conflicts within and between states.** International terrorism and violent extremism are particularly prevalent in Somalia which is still undergoing a state-building process. In recent times, the region has nevertheless also undergone positive changes, such as the **peace between Ethiopia and Eritrea** and the **political transition in Sudan.** These developments open up prospects for greater stability and economic development throughout the entire region, but are still fragile. The dynamics in the individual states have a mutual impact on one another both positively and negatively.

The Greater Horn of Africa is particularly affected by **climate change** and the region is frequently hit by natural disasters. It also faces humanitarian, economic and social challenges. **Good governance,** the rule of law, compliance with international humanitarian law and respect for human rights, particularly women's rights, are under great pressure. South Sudan, Sudan, Ethiopia and Somalia are affected by **severe humanitarian crises.**

Regular and irregular **migration** play an important role in the Greater Horn of Africa. Migration predominantly takes place within the region where the situation of migrants is often precarious and the host states face major challenges. There are three routes for international migration: to South Africa, to the Arabian states and to Europe via Libya, where the route to the east is the most important. There is also significant internal migration and internal displacement. Internally displaced persons often receive inadequate support due to a lack of recognition.

The states in the Greater Horn of Africa have experienced strong economic **growth** over recent years. There is still potential in the exploitation of natural resources. However, these positive developments have done little to eliminate the major social disparities. Significant differences also exist between states. The two relevant **economic powers in the region, Kenya and Ethiopia,** have become continental and global multilateral hubs in view of the AU's presence in Addis Ababa and the United Nations Office at Nairobi.

The Greater Horn of Africa is also an important **region geostrategically.** It acts as a link between the Middle East and Africa, and is an important transit point for world trade. This is reflected by the military presence of third states, particularly in Djibouti, and by the strategic occupation of port facilities along the coast. The influence of China, Russia and the states of the Arabian Peninsula has increased markedly. The region also has close relations with neighbouring North Africa. The conflict over the Nile waters has put a strain on relations between Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan.

The international community has a presence in the region through the peacekeeping operations of the UN and the AU in Sudan, South Sudan and in Somalia. The EU is an important actor in terms of development cooperation, humanitarian aid and as part of peacekeeping operations. The region's states have come together to form a regional organisation, the Inter-governmental Authority on Development (IGAD), to promote development and stability. IGAD in particular played a role in Sudan and South Sudan, acting as a mediator and guarantor of the peace processes.

Thematic areas

Switzerland focuses on the following three areas in the Greater Horn of Africa:

1. Peace, security and human rights

→ Switzerland contributes to the **implementation of peace initiatives** and is working to prevent violence and to ensure inclusive conflict resolution in the two Sudanese contexts. It participates in the UN's peacekeeping missions through military peacebuilding activities.

→ It provides **humanitarian aid** and seeks to ensure the protection **of refugees** and internally displaced persons.

→ It is working to tackle the causes of **irregular migration** through regionally coordinated approaches and migration agreements and partnerships.

→ It supports **political transitions** and opening-up processes and promotes good governance and decentralisation.

→ It aims to help protect individual **fundamental rights,** ensure compliance with international humanitarian law and increase civil society participation.

2. Prosperity

→ Switzerland supports sustainable socio-economic development through improved and inclusive access to good **basic services and food security.**

→ It seeks to improve **general economic conditions.**

3. Sustainability

→ Switzerland contributes to mitigating the impacts of **climate change** and natural disasters.

Goals and measures

D) Switzerland is strengthening its political profile in relation to peacebuilding.

- Establishment of a special envoy for the Greater Horn of Africa region.
- Supporting the peacebuilding process in South Sudan and the transition processes in Ethiopia and Sudan.
- Deployment of personnel to UN and EU missions as well as to other organisations and participation in demining activities.
- Strengthening the capacity to act of regional and international actors, such as the AU, IGAD and the UN.
- Strengthening broad-based approaches in the multilateral discussions on the region, including as part of its candidacy for a seat on the UN Security Council.

E) Switzerland is committed to alleviating the causes of migration and reducing migratory pressure.

- Reinforcing synergies between the FDFA and FDJP, in particular by consolidating durable solutions for internally displaced persons.
- Continuing the technical dialogue with Eritrea on migration and human rights and the vocational development programme.
- Supporting the regional coordination mechanisms of IGAD and the AU in the field of migration and the Khartoum Process.
- Increasing cooperation with the Arabian Peninsula countries on the protection of migrants.

F) In deploying its international cooperation instruments, Switzerland focuses on prosperity and sustainability and uses a nexus approach.

- Priorities in the new cooperation programme: strengthening resilience and sustainable socio-economic development (including basic education and vocational training), promoting value chains and ensuring the provision of basic services and food security.

Further measures:

- Stepping up exchanges between Swiss representations in the region and the states of the Arabian Peninsula.

4.3 Great Lakes region

Figure 10: Geographical priority 3 – the Great Lakes region (source: FDFA).

The Great Lakes region has experienced internal and cross-border **conflicts and tensions** for decades caused by economic, ethnic, historical and (socio) political factors and access to resources. The conflicts have resulted in major migratory movements and displacement, involving protracted **humanitarian crises** and increasing humanitarian needs. The region is also severely affected by transmittable diseases and neglected tropical diseases.

Challenges exist in the areas of **democracy, governance and combating corruption.** Human rights and international humanitarian law are under great pressure. **Sexual and gender-specific violence** is widespread. The impact of civil society is limited and its protection often not guaranteed.

The region suffers from **climate events** such as irregular precipitation, severe flooding and sharply rising temperatures, which pose a threat to people's livelihoods and impede economic development. The extensive forests and bodies of water in the region play a crucial role in biodiversity and climate stability.

Poverty and social inequality are widespread in the region and economic development is being held back by poor infrastructure, weak institutions, the absence of the rule of law, and inadequate basic services. Changing demographics are threatening to undermine progress made on growth which is why spending on basic education and vocational training as well as on (reproductive) health are needed, especially for mothers and children. Apart from Tanzania, all states in the region are low-income countries, yet with significant differences. While Rwanda and Tanzania consistently achieve high economic growth rates, those of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi are extremely low.

Economic development is still primarily based on the exploitation of **raw materials** with the region being amongst the richest in the world in terms of strategic resources, such as cobalt, coltan and rare earth elements. It also possesses tremendous potential in terms of agriculture and hydropower. However, the general conditions make economic diversification challenging.

The UN makes a major contribution to stability, for example through the MONUSCO blue helmet mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the work of the Special Envoy to the region and the Peacebuilding Commission. Regional organisations, such as the AU, EAC, SADC, ECCAS and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region play a role in various contexts.

Thematic areas

Switzerland focuses on the following three areas in the Great Lakes region:

1. Peace, security and human rights

→ Switzerland contributes to **peacebuilding** and conflict prevention. It supports inclusive political dialogue at bilateral and multilateral levels.

→ It is committed to the protection of individual **fundamental rights,** compliance with **international humanitarian law** and the **rule of law.**

→ Switzerland plays an active role in the fields of **disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration** as well as humanitarian **demining.**

2. Prosperity

→ Switzerland works to promote good **governance** and adequate **provision of basic services.**

→ It fosters the creation of **jobs,** in particular through market development, the establishment of value chains, and good **basic education and vocational training.**

→ It is increasing **economic** cooperation with individual countries, focusing on niche areas where it has particular expertise (sections 4.4).

3. Sustainability

→ Switzerland works to ensure economic activities comply with international law and respect human rights, particularly in the **commodities sector.**

Goals and measures

G) Switzerland is strengthening its political profile in relation to peacebuilding.

- Assessment of upgrading the cooperation office in Kigali to an embassy.
- Combining bilateral activities with multilateral peacebuilding instruments (such as Switzerland chairing the Burundi Configuration of the UN Peacebuilding Commission).
- Deployment of personnel to UN and EU missions as well as to other organisations and institutions.
- Strengthening broad-based approaches in multilateral discussions on the region, including as part of its candidacy for a seat on the UN Security Council and at the IOF.

H) Switzerland is strengthening the protection of human rights and vulnerable persons.

- Reinforcement of efforts to prevent gender-specific violence and impunity.
- Building cooperation with women and young people.

I) In deploying its international cooperation instruments, Switzerland focuses on prosperity and sustainability and uses a nexus approach.

- Priorities in the new cooperation programmes: improvement of good governance and basic services (basic education and vocational training and healthcare provision).
- Supporting the Democratic Republic of the Congo in its accession to the *Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights* and increasing cooperation with the Swiss private sector on compliance with these standards.

4.4 The lion economies

Figure 11: Geographical priority 4 – the lion economies (source: FDFA)

The **economic potential** of sub-Saharan Africa was outlined in section 2.2. Many countries have achieved high growth rates over recent years. According to the IMF⚲ 20 countries achieved growth rates of over 4% in 2019. In the same vein as the Asian tiger economies, African countries with high economic growth can be called lion economies. There is no rigid definition as to which countries fall under this category. It includes Kenya, Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire and Ethiopia in view of their strong growth and economic policies supporting the development of the private sector. The smaller but rapidly growing economies of Senegal and Rwanda are also of interest. In contrast, the major economies and traditional heavyweights of South Africa, Nigeria and Angola have posted relatively weak growth rates in recent years.

The economic performance of the lion economies can spill over into neighbouring states. The regional drivers of economic growth also attract a large number of usually young migrants in search of income. However, the COVID-19 pandemic may have the effect of curbing these trends.

The high growth rates sometimes obscure the fact that the growth is in many cases heavily dependent on the **commodities sector** and that value creation is only established locally and benefits the wider population only to a limited extent. **Economic diversification** can be significantly improved in many countries. **Intra-African trade** is also weak. There is also potential here which may be realised to a greater extent through the newly created African Continental Free Trade Area.

Particular efforts are required to create jobs for young people and to improve access to the job market for women. To attract investment, reforms are needed to improve the **investment climate.** These concern **the rule of law, the protection of human rights, combating corruption, tax reforms and the dismantling of protectionism.** Developing infrastructure is also vitally important in order to meet growing energy demand. In many cases, the high risks involved deter investors. The financial sector also remains fraught with risk.

Technological advances and the ongoing **digitalisation** of the global economy represent both a challenge and an opportunity for many African states. The challenges include the fact that value creation in the digital economy takes place elsewhere. The growing concentration of data in the hands of a few countries and companies also creates new political and economic dependencies. An example of the opportunities presented is leap-frogging to fintech services which do not require a well-developed local financial market. This fosters the inclusion of larger sections of the population in the financial system and can help to reduce the informal sector. The Square Kilometre Array Observatory (SKAO⚲)[32] located in South Africa will help accelerate digitalisation in the region and open up opportunities for scientific cooperation.

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32 The SKAO is a new global international initiative in the field of radio astronomy, involving a radio telescope to be built in South Africa and Australia.

Thematic areas

Switzerland focuses on the following three areas in the lion economies:

1. Prosperity

→ Switzerland is strengthening its **economic** relations with the countries. **South Africa,** as a G20 and BRICS member, is also a **global priority country.** Of interest to Switzerland are Nigeria, with its huge market, and Kenya, the third-largest economy in sub-Saharan Africa. Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Angola and Ethiopia may become increasingly important and are regional hubs. The potential of smaller markets, such as Senegal and Rwanda, is also growing. Depending on political and economic developments in the region, other countries may also fulfil their potential.

→ Through international cooperation instruments, such as vocational education and training and promoting good governance, Switzerland is strengthening the general economic conditions for **new trade and investment opportunities.** This enables Swiss and local companies to create decent jobs locally, providing prospects for young people and reducing the incentives for irregular migration.

→ Switzerland supports **Swiss companies** interested in these countries.

2. Sustainability

→ Special emphasis is placed on **corporate responsibility** in the lion economies. The economy contributes to the protection of human rights.

→ Switzerland works to ensure the **sustainable use** and trading of **natural resources** through its international cooperation.

→ It is stepping up cooperation with partner countries amongst the lion economies to **combat corruption** and promote **sustainable financial services.**

→ Switzerland is working on the **conclusion of climate protection agreements** with certain lion economies under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement.

3. Digitalisation

→ Switzerland is helping the lion economies to take advantage of the opportunities presented by **digital transformation** and to overcome the challenges.

→ To help create innovative digital applications, it attaches great importance to African tech hubs. **Digital solutions** based on local expertise should help drive regional development.

→ Switzerland fosters the **potential of a new generation** of university graduates who have been educated abroad and represent a significant brain gain for the tech hubs.

Goals and measures

J) Switzerland is enhancing its economic relations with the aim of boosting trade with and investment in the lion economies and is developing the potential of the financial markets in these states.

- Assessing further joint declarations on economic cooperation and sectoral agreements in the areas of investment protection, air transport, double taxation and free trade.
- Stepping up cooperation in the field of finance with selected countries, including in the fintech sector, in the form of financial dialogue or bilateral contacts as part of international meetings and mixed economic committees.
- Supporting the implementation of global standards on combating tax evasion, money laundering and corruption.
- Continuing asset recovery activities.
- Supporting Swiss companies through diplomatic and consular services, such as trade diplomacy, export promotion and advisory services.

K) Switzerland contributes to the improvement of the general economic conditions and job creation.

- Continuing economic cooperation with South Africa and Ghana as part of cooperation programmes.
- Supporting technical capacity-building in the areas of finance and tax, focusing on monetary and finance policy expertise, taxation, debt management and trade.
- Supporting the application of international standards in the areas of transparency and sustainable debt management at multilateral level.
- Strengthening the private sector through innovative partnerships to enable agile entrepreneurship, local SMEs and sustainable local business ecosystems.
- Promoting corporate responsibility and the *Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative* (EITI) for greater transparency in the commodities sector.

L) Switzerland supports Swiss companies in line with their needs.

- Providing platforms for the exchange of information between Swiss companies and representatives of the public and private sectors in the host country.
- Strengthening expertise in trade facilitation at certain representations in East and West Africa and, in particular, the capacities of the trade point in Lagos.

M) Switzerland is extending its cooperation with the lion economies in the fields of digitalisation and science diplomacy.

- Stepping up exchanges between African tech hubs and International Geneva, especially on the involvement of African actors (governments, private sector, the scientific community, civil society) in the field of international digital governance.
- Promoting the application of digital technologies that put the emphasis on people and the related regulatory experience and efforts.
- Systematically including the topics digitalisation/new technologies in bilateral and multilateral political dialogue.
- Making better use of the framework conditions for science diplomacy in line with the fundamental principles of the Swiss policy on the promotion of education, research and innovation (ERI) and the involvement of the leading house (Swiss TPH in cooperation with the University of Basel) and the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF).
- Taking advantage of the opportunities for scientific and technical cooperation with South Africa and neighbouring countries on the set-up and operation of the SKAO through the guarantee credit approved by Parliament.

4.5 Regional organisations

Figure 12: Geographical priority 5 – regional organisations (source: Shutterstock).

In view of their importance, the regional organisations (section 2.1) constitute a separate priority in the Sub-Saharan Africa Strategy. This is in line with the status of multilateralism in the FPS 20–23.

The **African Union** (AU), which emerged from the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in 2002, has 55 members and aims to establish an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa. With the ambitiously formulated Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want ⬚, it has agreed on a strategic implementing framework. Its main bodies are the Executive Council, the Peace and Security Council (PSC) and the AU Commission.[33]

The AU represents the interests of its member states on the global stage. It is playing an increasingly important role in the continent's security architecture and works to achieve peace and security. The **African Continental Free Trade Area** (AfCFTA), which took effect in 2019, marked a major milestone towards the economic integration of Africa.

The AU is the UN's most important partner in Africa, particularly on peace and security issues. It has a continental decision-making body in the PSC. With the AMISOM mission in Somalia, it is conducting an independent peacebuilding mission, mandated by the UN Security Council. The UN also cooperates closely with the AU at economic level, for example via the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA).

The AU considers the eight **Regional Economic Communities** (RECs) – ECOWAS, IGAD, SADC, EAC, AMU, COMESA, CEN-SAD and ECCAS – as the pillars of the AU under a subsidiarity principle. Regional integration should ultimately result in continental integration. The RECs partially overlap geographically, as membership in several RECs is permitted. They also differ in terms of their thematic focus and how they operate.

The main goal of the **African Development Bank,** with its 54 members, is to promote sustainable economic development and social progress in its member states, thus helping to reduce poverty. In the ADB's current strategy 2013–2022, the priorities are food security, regional integration, energy and electrification, industrialisation and improvement of the population's living conditions.

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Thematic areas

With regard to regional organisations, Switzerland is focusing on the following three areas, taking account of the Agenda 2063 and the AU's AfCFTA:

1. Peace, security and human rights

→ Switzerland recognises the AU's strategic importance and sees it as a valuable partner organisation for the **resolution of existing conflicts** and conflict prevention.

→ It supports regional integration and cooperation between the UN, AU and RECs, providing a solid foundation for **peace,** stability and economic development and strengthening **multilateralism** in Africa.

→ Switzerland attaches particular importance to the thematic areas of **women and peace,** the prevention of violence and migration.

2. Prosperity

→ Switzerland recognises the potential of the **African Development Bank** for the people's prosperity and helps ensure the bank functions effectively and efficiently.

→ In relation to the **African Development Bank,** Switzerland focuses on the issues of climate change, cooperation with the private sector, equal opportunities and the resilience of populations in fragile contexts.

→ Switzerland attaches great importance to the **African Continental Free Trade Area** for regional market integration and bilateral economic relations.

→ In the field of health, Switzerland is working with the AU's development agency **NEPAD** as well as other regional development communities.

3. Sustainability

→ Switzerland works with the RECs to tackle cross-border challenges, such as **climate change.**

Goals and measures

N) Switzerland is strengthening its foreign policy profile as a credible and capable partner with the AU and the regional organisations.

- Extending cooperation on peace and security in line with the existing agreements with the AU, ECOWAS and IGAD.
- Stepping up political dialogue with the AU and RECs in New York and Geneva and in the REC host states.
- Supporting the establishment of REC representations in International Geneva.

O) Switzerland promotes regional cooperation based on clear priorities.

- Supporting projects, particularly in the areas of the environment, water, climate change, migration, health and disaster risk reduction.

P) Switzerland strengthens the capacity to act of regional organisations.

- Deploying experts in priority areas to assist the AU and RECs.
- Financial and substantive participation in the African Development Bank to support its objectives.
- Political support of African multilateralism with know-how transfer, including as part of its candidacy for a seat on the UN Security Council.

5 Implementation partners

Switzerland is pursuing a partnership-based approach in Africa in line with the UN's SDG 17. In protecting its interests and promoting its values, it works with various actors. It also forms partnerships and networks with governments, companies, the scientific community and civil society organisations. In Switzerland, the Federal Council places particular emphasis on synergies with the ICRC, the scientific community and the Geneva centres (GCSP, DCAF, GICHD).

The host state

The host state is the central partner in foreign policy cooperation and has the primary responsibility for reforms and social change. Switzerland has signed memoranda of understanding regarding regular political dialogue with ten states in sub-Saharan Africa. It is also looking to step up political dialogue with other states through diplomatic visits and its network of representations locally. The African representations in Bern and Geneva also play a key role. Switzerland aims to persuade all 49 states in sub-Saharan Africa of the benefits of a permanent presence in Switzerland. Forty-three states in sub-Saharan Africa are currently represented in Switzerland.

International and regional organisations

In implementing its programmes, Switzerland draws on the expertise and resources of international organisations, including the UN (UN Resident Coordinators, WFP, FAO, ILO, WHO, UNDP, UNOAU, UNOCA and UNOWAS), the World Bank and the ICRC. As well as supporting these organisations financially, Switzerland also makes experts available for peacekeeping missions, for example. Switzerland attaches importance to these organisations having clear objectives and scope for action, as this allows their effectiveness and efficiency to be reviewed and improved where necessary. In relation to the long-standing conflict in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Switzerland supports, for example, the UN Special Envoy in his mission to strengthen regional cooperation.

Regional organisations, such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the East African Community (EAC), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) are further partners of Switzerland. It engages in formalised cooperation with these organisations. At the African Union, Switzerland has held observer status since 2006 and is expanding its cooperation on matters of peace, security and migration.

EU and European partner states

Switzerland works with the EU and member states, such as Germany and France, in various countries, such as in the Sahel. Here it focuses on humanitarian aid and development cooperation as well as civilian peacebuilding. To strengthen cooperation, Switzerland engages in political dialogue on Africa with the EU and several EU member states, with the aim of harnessing the potential of joint initiatives and activities even more systematically in future. The planned joint EU-AU Africa strategy presents opportunities to develop cooperation in areas such as climate change and digitalisation. Switzerland also promotes regional dialogue forums on migration, such as the Khartoum and Rabat Processes. In relation to visas, Switzerland is working closely with other Schengen states to extend visa services and to simplify the process for submitting visa applications. Representation agreements currently exist with seven Schengen states in 25 countries.

Other countries

Switzerland also works in Africa with non-European states, such as the US and Canada. Switzerland engages in regular political dialogue on Africa with both countries. Switzerland holds discussions on sub-Saharan Africa and works on areas of common interest with other countries, such as China, India, Japan, South Korea, Brazil, Russia, North African countries and the Arabian Peninsula countries. It has signed a memorandum of understanding with China on economic and financial cooperation in third countries based on the Belt and Road Initiative.

Private organisations

Cooperation between countries alone is not sufficient to tackle the many different challenges facing sub-Saharan Africa. The private sector, the scientific community and NGOs also play a decisive role in promoting political stability and reforms.

The private sector

For private companies a stable international and national environment is crucial to achieving their objectives. This means that there are common areas of interest with the private sector: peace and security, the rule of law (including the protection of human rights), good and stable governance, high-performance infrastructure (land and air infrastructure, energy supply, water and food, telecommunications, education, health, a well-educated workforce, etc.) are essential conditions for sustainable economic development and the creation of prosperity.

Numerous Swiss companies are currently operating in sub-Saharan Africa and creating many high-quality jobs. By contributing to local prosperity, they are improving the prospects for people locally. In practising corporate responsibility, many companies are making a major contribution to sustainable development and the protection of human rights. The private sector is also a key partner in development cooperation. Switzerland is working with the private sector in Mozambique and Kenya, for example. Together with various Swiss companies, it also supports the Swiss Capacity Building Facility project which carries out its activities in various regions of Africa. Collaboration with the private sector will be stepped up in the coming years.
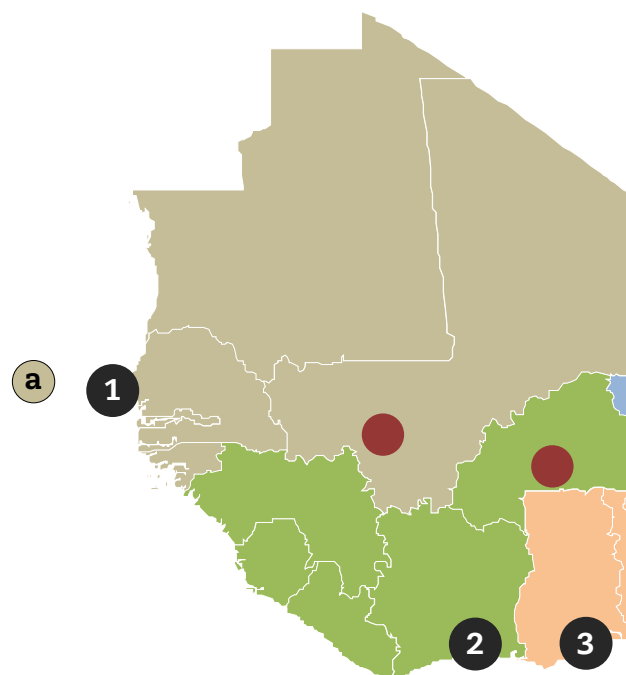
Scientific community

With its internationally recognised universities, Switzerland is at the cutting edge in terms of innovation, new technologies, management instruments and services. It has a particularly strong reputation in Africa in the areas of tourism and management. In terms of international cooperation on research and innovation, the Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute (Swiss TPH) – in cooperation with the University of Basel – acts as the leading house for scientific and technological cooperation with sub-Saharan Africa. The Swiss TPH and other private and public sector actors from the Swiss research community (e.g. Centre Hospitalier Universitaire Vaudois, University of Zurich, University of Geneva, Novartis) are also participating in projects of the European & Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership (EDCTP). EDCTP promotes clinical research on diseases which severely affect the sub-Saharan Africa region.

The agreement signed in 2020 between the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) and its South African counterpart marks a milestone in scientific cooperation with South Africa. As part of its science diplomacy, and based on Switzerland's International Strategy on Education, Research and Innovation, Switzerland intends to maintain existing activities while supporting new, bottom-up initiatives.

NGOs

Switzerland works in various contexts with local, Swiss and international non-governmental organisations (NGOs). NGOs primarily provide services in crisis-hit regions to meet basic needs, such as food, health and housing. In other regions they work on issues such as promoting dialogue, human rights, security, basic education and vocational training, and water management. In Chad, for example, Switzerland is supporting a Caritas project aimed at improving local agriculture as well as a basic education project called *Enfants du Monde*. In Rwanda and Tanzania it works with Swisscontact, amongst other organisations, in the field of vocational training. The selection of organisations plays a key part in ensuring the quality of services. Switzerland evaluates the use of resources and the attainment of objectives using internal and external control mechanisms. This evaluation is carried out on an ongoing basis.

Annex 1: Network of representations

Swiss embassies
and country
of accreditation

1. Dakar (+ SDC, ILO)
 – **Senegal**
 – Mali
 – Mauritania
 – Guinea-Bissau
 – Gambia
 – Cabo Verde (a)

2. Abidjan
 – **Côte d'Ivoire**
 – Burkina Faso
 – Guinea
 – Liberia
 – Sierra Leone

3. Accra (+ SECO)
 – **Ghana**
 – Benin
 – Togo

4. Abuja (+ SDC, HSA, ILO)
 – **Nigeria**
 – Chad
 – Niger

5. Yaoundé (+ SDC, HSA)
 – **Cameroon**
 – Central African Rep.
 – Equatorial Guinea

6. Kinshasa (+ HSA)
 – **Democratic Republic
 of the Congo DRC**
 – Republic of the Congo
 – Gabon

7. Luanda
 – **Angola**
 – Sao Tomé and P. (b)

8. Khartoum (+ SDC, ILO)
 – **Sudan**
 – Eritrea

9. Addis Ababa (+ SDC, ILO)
 – **Ethiopia**
 – Djibouti
 – South Sudan

10. Nairobi (+ SDC)
 – **Kenya**
 – Somalia
 – Uganda
 – Rwanda
 – Burundi

11. Dar es Salaam (+ SDC)
 – **Tanzania**

12. Harare (+ SDC, HSA)
 – **Zimbabwe**
 – Zambia
 – Malawi

13. Pretoria (+ SECO)
 – **South Africa**
 – Namibia
 – Botswana
 – Lesotho
 – Eswatini
 – Mauritius (c)

14. Maputo (+ SDC)
 – **Mozambique**

15. Antananarivo
 – **Madagascar**
 – Seychelles (d)
 – Comoros (e)

Cooperation offices

Mali: Bamako (+ HSA)
Burkina Faso: Ouagadougou
Niger: Niamey
Benin: Cotonou
Chad: N'Djamena (+ HSA)
South Sudan: Juba (+ HSA)
DRC: Bukavu
Rwanda: Kigali
Burundi: Bujumbura (+ HSA)
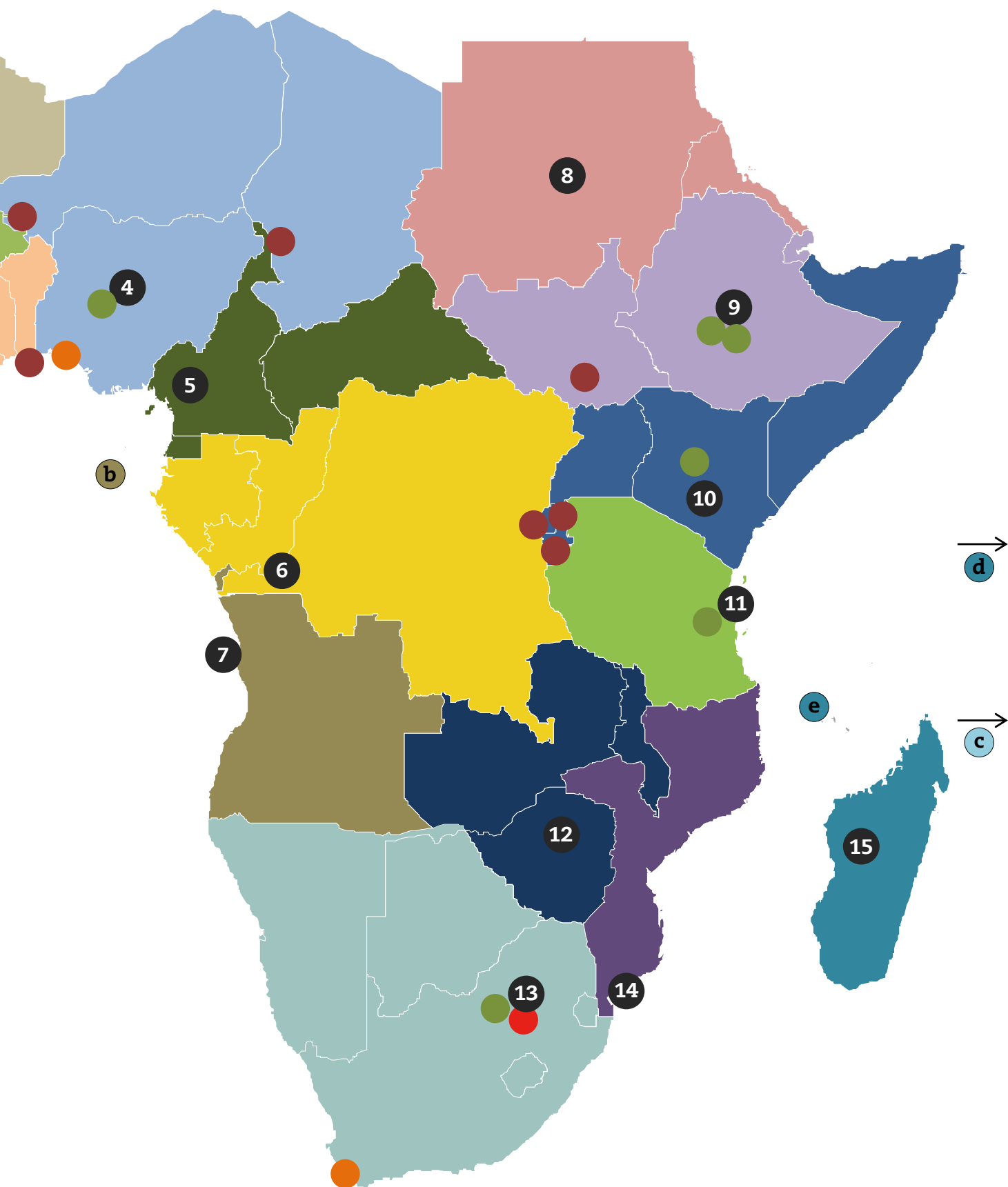
Consulates general

Nigeria: Lagos
South Africa: Cape Town

Swiss Business Hub

South Africa: Pretoria

Multilateral

African Union (Ethiopia)
UNON (Kenya)
ECOWAS (Nigeria)
IGAD (Ethiopia)
EAC (Tanzania)
SADC (South Africa)

Annex 2: List of abbreviations

AAEOI	Automatic exchange of information on tax matters
AfCFTA	African Continental Free Trade Area
ADB	African Development Bank
AMISOM	African Union Mission in Somalia
AMU	Arab Maghreb Union
AU	African Union
AVIS28	Switzerland's 2028 Foreign Policy Vision
BEPS	Base erosion and profit shifting (OECD project)
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa
CEN-SAD	Community of Sahel-Saharan States
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease 2019
DCAF	Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance
EAC	East African Community
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EITI	Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative
EU	European Union
EUCAP	EU Capacity Building Mission
EUTM	European Union Training Mission
FATF	Financial Action Task Force of G7
FDFA	Federal Department of Foreign Affairs
FDJP	Federal Department of Justice and Police
FPS	Foreign policy strategy
G20	Group of Twenty
GCSP	Geneva Centre for Security Policy
GDP	Gross domestic product
GICHD	Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining
HSA	Human Security Advisor
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
IC	International cooperation

ICGLR	International Conference on the Great Lakes Region
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
ILO	Immigration Liaison Officer
IMC	International migration cooperation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IOF	International Organisation of La Francophonie
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MINUSCA	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic
MINUSMA	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali
MONUSCO	United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
MoU	Memorandum of understanding
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OFCOM	Federal Office of Communications
PSC	Peace and Security Council
REC	Regional Economic Communities
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation within the FDFA
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SECO	State Secretariat for Economic Affairs
SEM	State Secretariat for Migration
SERI	State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation
SHA	Swiss Humanitarian Aid Unit
SKAO	Square Kilometre Array Observatory
SME	Small and medium-sized enterprises
SNSF	Swiss National Science Foundation
UN	United Nations

UNAMID	African Union/United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNOCA	United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa
UNON	United Nations Office at Nairobi
UNOWAS	United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel
US	United States
USD	United States dollar
WAEMU	West African Economic and Monetary Union
WHO	World Health Organization

Annex 3: Glossary ⚯→

2030 Agenda: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, along with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals, provides a global frame of reference for the three inextricably-linked dimensions of the economy, the environment and society. Switzerland recognises the 2030 Agenda as an important guiding framework. Although it is not a legally binding, it provides a mechanism for setting domestic and foreign policy objectives and forming opinions. It also serves as a frame of reference for digital foreign policy (see 'Digital foreign policy').

African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA): In 2019, 54 African Union member states signed the African Continental Free Trade Agreement which provides for the creation of an African Continental Free Trade Area. Practical implementation is set to take place in 2021. The aim is to create an African single market, and thus promote trade in Africa, greater regional and continental integration and the development of the African economy. The single market will contain 1.3 billion people.

Agenda 2063: The African Union's strategic blueprint adopted in 2013 for the socioeconomic transformation of the continent.

Asset recovery: Restitution of illicitly acquired assets.

Automatic exchange of information (AEOI): From the global standard adopted by the OECD in 2014 in a drive to achieve greater tax transparency between countries.

Belt and Road Initiative (BRI): The main aspect of the BRI lies in the creation of infrastructure (transport, energy, communication) in third countries which is predominantly financed and built by China. The BRI is China's first, globally-oriented development model, which seeks to affirm China's growing economic – but above all geopolitical – presence on the international stage. The Federal Council's policy involves making the most of the opportunities of the BRI for Swiss interests and the economy, while also calling for compliance with universal values and rules to ensure that the BRI can be implemented in an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable manner for the benefit of target countries.

Bilateralism: The practice of discussing or negotiating foreign policy issues between two parties. If there are more than two parties involved, it is multilateralism (see 'Multilateralism').

Blue helmet missions: Colloquial term for the United Nations peacekeeping forces, which include military units provided by UN member states for peacebuilding and peacekeeping operations and are under the authority of the UN.

Blue Peace: The Blue Peace initiative supports water cooperation across borders, sectors and generations with the aim of fostering peace, stability and sustainable development. This can take the form of shared institutions and legal frameworks, bringing countries together in a commitment to resolve differences peacefully – and to use their shared water as a basis for wider economic and diplomatic cooperation. Blue Peace transforms competition for limited freshwater resources into cooperation fostering more peaceful, coherent and sustainable societies.

Brain gain: Brain gain – in contrast to brain drain – refers to the economic gain for a country due to the immigration of highly educated or talented people.

Bretton Woods institutions: The finance ministers of the Allied nations met at a conference in Bretton Woods (United States) in 1944 to agree on a new set of rules for international reconstruction and monetary policy in the post-war period. This led to the creation of the World Bank, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the International Monetary Fund. These institutions – with new remits – are also key players in development cooperation and funding today.

Burundi Configuration of the UN Peacebuilding Commission: The UN Peacebuilding Commission coordinates international efforts after the end of armed conflicts in individual countries. Switzerland has chaired the Commission's Burundi Configuration since 2009.

Civil society: This comprises the parts of society that are relatively separate from the government and private sector. It is made up of groups who have common interests, goals or values. These include NGOs, associations and foundations, citizen groups, religious organisations, political parties, professional associations, unions, social movements and interest groups.

Coherence: This term denotes the greatest possible consistency and coordination between a country's different policy areas.

Digital divide: Social and economic disparities within and between states that are widening due to the differing pace of digitalisation.

Digitalisation: Digitalisation involves the integration of digital technologies in society, government and business. It covers a wide range of digital applications, including new communication technologies, robotics, cloud computing, big data analytics, artificial intelligence and the internet of things. It pervades many areas of everyday life, fundamentally changing people's lives in some cases.

Durable solutions (in the field of migration): Switzerland's activities to support internally displaced persons aim to ensure they can achieve self-reliance over the long-term. Switzerland adopts a sustainable approach to meeting migrants' specific need for protection and the needs of host communities.

Equal opportunities: An equal opportunity society ensures that all its members have unimpeded, equal access to educational, career and other opportunities, especially at the beginning of their lives, and are able to reach their full potential. No person may be discriminated against, in particular on grounds of origin, race, gender, age, language, social position, way of life, religious, ideological, or political convictions, or because of a physical, mental or psychological disability (Art. 8 para. 2 of the Federal Constitution of the Swiss Confederation).

Facilitation and mediation: A third party who mediates between parties to a conflict is known as a facilitator or mediator. A facilitator is a third party who supports, facilitates and promotes contact between parties to a conflict without substantively contributing to the negotiations. As in mediation, a facilitator is freely chosen by the parties to a conflict and allows them to meet at a suitable location, discuss possible ways of resolving the conflict, conduct negotiations and sign an agreement. A mediator is a third party who also substantively supports the negotiating parties in finding solutions, without, however, imposing them. Facilitation and mediation are part of Switzerland's good offices.

Fintech: Fintech is a term derived from 'financial technology' and relates to innovations in the financial services sector that result in new financial instruments, services or business models, e.g. blockchain.

Foreign policy: Foreign policy shapes the relations of a state with other states and international organisations, and safeguards the state's interests abroad. It comprises various policy areas, including trade, the environment, security, development and culture. In Switzerland, the Federal Council is responsible for foreign policy. The Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) is responsible for coordinating foreign policy and ensuring coherence with other departments (see 'Coherence').

G20: The Group of Twenty is an informal alliance of 19 states and the EU, which represents the main industrialised and emerging economies. It addresses financial and economic cooperation and can set international standards.

Good governance: Democratic, efficient and effective management of a country's affairs for the benefit of all citizens. This includes political decision-making in transparent, participative processes; clear division of responsibilities; effective public services; an accessible, professional, independent legal system based on the rule of law and political control exercised by a critical general public.

Good offices: This is an umbrella term to describe the efforts of a third party to peacefully settle a conflict between two or more states. Switzerland's good offices consist of three areas: protecting power mandates, Switzerland as host state for peace negotiations, and Switzerland as mediator and facilitator and as supporter of mediation and negotiation processes (see 'Facilitation and mediation'). Good offices range from technical and organisational support (e.g. providing a conference venue) to mediation services and participation in international peace processes.

Host state: This term describes a country that hosts foreign representations (embassies, missions, consulates) or international organisations. Switzerland – and Geneva in particular (see 'International Geneva') – host a multitude of international organisations.

Human rights: Human rights are inherent and inalienable rights that all people enjoy, without distinction, by virtue of their being human. They are crucial to the protection of human dignity, physical and psychological integrity and are an important foundation for the development of every individual. They are guarantors of a society based on the obligation to respect the rights of the individual. They apply in both international relations and national politics. Human rights are universal, indivisible and interrelated. Every state is obliged to respect, protect and implement human rights.

Humanitarian principles: Humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence are key values and principles of humanitarian action. They were laid down in the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief, and by the UN General Assembly.

Informal sector: The part of an economy whose economic activities are not recorded in the official statistics.

Interdepartmental structure for international cooperation on migration (ICM): In the area of migration, the ICM structure is intended to strengthen cooperation between actors in the Federal Administration and ensure coherence in Switzerland's foreign migration policy. This coordination is aimed at achieving a stronger strategic link between international cooperation (IC) and migration policy so as to alleviate the causes of irregular and forced migration. The flexibly deployable IC funds provide additional support here.

International cooperation (IC): All instruments of humanitarian aid, development cooperation, peacebuilding and human security deployed by the FDFA and EAER.

International Geneva: Geneva forms the heart of the multilateral system and is the location of the UN's European headquarters. Thirty-eight international organisations, programmes and funds, as well as 179 states and 750 NGOs are represented there. International Geneva provides some 45,000 jobs and contributes more than 11% to the GDP of the canton (1% of Swiss GDP). Around 3,300 international conferences are held in Geneva every year, the main themes of which are: 1) peace, security, disarmament; 2) humanitarian aid and international humanitarian law, human rights, migration; 3) employment, the economy, trade, science, telecommunications; 4) health; 5) the environment and sustainable development.

International humanitarian law: International humanitarian law governs the conduct of hostilities and protects the victims of armed conflicts. It applies in all international and non-international armed conflicts, regardless of the legitimacy or cause of the use of force.

International law: International law is the result of interactions between states and governs how they coexist. It underpins peace and security and aims to ensure the protection and well-being of persons. International law comprises different areas, such as the prohibition of the use of force, human rights, protection of individuals during wars and conflicts (see 'International humanitarian law'), prevention and prosecution of war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide, transnational organised crime and terrorism. It also governs other areas, such as the environment, trade, development, telecommunications and transport. On account of the sovereignty of states, international law only applies for each state insofar as it has agreed to adopt certain international obligations. This excludes mandatory international law, which comprises basic standards that no state may override, such as the prohibition of genocide. International law also applies in the digital space.

International organisation: International organisations are long-term alliances formed by at least two countries. They are entrusted with the independent performance of their own tasks and therefore have at least one body through which they act. They are generally based on a multilateral founding treaty (also called statutes or charter) which sets out the organisation's mandates and bodies.

Irregular migration: Movement of persons that takes place outside the laws, regulations, or international agreements governing the entry into a transit or destination country or exit from this country.

Khartoum Process: The Khartoum Process aims to promote dialogue and cooperation on migration between states of origin, transit states and destination states along the migration route from the Horn of Africa to Europe. The initiative was launched in 2014 by the European Union and African Union.

Leading house: Leading houses help foster international cooperation on research and innovation with regions that have great development potential in terms of science and technology. The Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute, with support from the University of Basel, is the leading house for bilateral science cooperation with partner institutions in sub-Saharan Africa.

Migration partnership: Agreement by states to cooperate extensively on migration. It establishes a general framework for their cooperation and enables the interests of all parties concerned to be taken into account.

Mixed migration: Population groups where the causes of migration differ or groups with different reasons for migration (refugees, internal displacement, labour migration) using various migration routes.

Multilateralism: Multilateralism is where issues of public interest are discussed and negotiated between more than two states (see bilateralism). International organisations and bodies such as the UN, the OSCE and the Council of Europe are platforms for such discussions. Multilateralism allows Switzerland to achieve leverage through alliances and thereby increase its influence.

Neutrality: Switzerland's rights and obligations as a neutral state are derived from international law (see 'International law'). The core of these obligations involves Switzerland not being allowed to offer military support in the event of a conflict between states. At national level, neutrality is mentioned in the Federal Constitution as an instrument to safeguard Switzerland's independence. Switzerland's policy of neutrality thereby safeguards the effectiveness and credibility of its neutrality.

Nexus: Structural combination of various international cooperation instruments (humanitarian aid, development cooperation, peacebuilding and human security) as part of a project, especially during protracted crises.

Non-governmental organisation: Any private, non-profit organisation that operates at local, national or international level to pursue common goals and ideals with no significant state-controlled participation or representation. NGOs are part of civil society (see 'Civil society').

Peacebuilding: Civilian peacebuilding includes contributions to the prevention, mitigation and resolution of violent conflicts, in particular through confidence-building, mediation and the promotion of international humanitarian law and human rights (see 'Facilitation and mediation', 'International humanitarian law' and 'Human rights'). Peacebuilding activities after the end of violent conflicts comprise a range of activities, including dealing with the past, contributions to promoting democratic processes and elections, and also to strengthening human rights. Peacebuilding creates and reinforces the conditions needed for sustainable development. It comprises both civilian and military measures.

Preventing violent extremism (PVE): Comprehensive approach to tackling the direct and structural causes leading to violent extremism and terrorism.

Private sector: The private sector comprises entities in which the government or state does not hold a majority stake and operate on a for-profit basis. In the context of this strategy, the term also includes social enterprises, impact investors and certain foundations (in particular those of multinational companies).

Protectionism: Foreign trade policy that aims to protect the domestic economy by imposing tariffs or import restrictions.

Rabat Process: Euro-African dialogue on migration and development launched in 2006. It aims to establish a framework for dialogue and consultation for managing the challenges related to the East African migration route. It brings together more than 50 European countries and countries from North, West and Central Africa as well as the European Commission and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

Readmission agreements: They aim to ensure the quick and safe repatriation of persons with irregular residence status to their country of origin. They govern the implementing arrangements, procedure and expulsion deadlines between Switzerland and the country of origin.

Science diplomacy: This terms refers to, for example, the use of scientific collaboration between states to address common problems and to develop international partnerships. At the interface between science, technology and foreign policy, articulating issues and objectives from a scientific perspective can support confidence-building and stimulate both bilateral and multilateral discussions. Science diplomacy is also an important approach in digital foreign policy, especially at the multilateral level.

Sustainability: Switzerland promotes sustainable development on the basis of the Federal Constitution. It uses the definition formulated by the Brundtland Commission in 1987 as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." The principle was substantiated in the 17 goals of the 2030 Agenda in 2015 (see '2030 Agenda').

Tech4Good: Digital technologies and technical innovations offer many opportunities to improve living conditions worldwide. Switzerland promotes their use in international cooperation in order to deliver on the sustainable development goals more quickly or in a more broad-based and cost-effective manner. For example, new technologies can help alleviate need and poverty, tackle global challenges such as climate change, and contribute to better governance. New technologies also involve risks, which is why Switzerland combines its innovation transfer with training measures, for example.

Terrorism: Terrorism denotes violent criminal acts that seek to intimidate the public or a state, or to coerce an international organisation. International agreements and UN resolutions outline various universal measures designed to support countries in the prevention and prosecution of terrorist acts. It is recognised that such counterterrorism measures must respect international law, in particular human rights, international humanitarian law and the international law on refugees.

UN Special Political Missions: UN civilian field operations in the areas of conflict prevention, peacebuilding and peace consolidation or which support political processes through good offices. The roles and characteristics of the special missions – there are over 40 at present – vary significantly. The special missions include, for example, country and regional offices, special envoys of the UN Secretary-General and teams of experts or monitoring teams for sanctions. Their mandate is generally based on resolutions of the UN General Assembly and/or the UN Security Council.

Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights: Global standards for private security companies which were laid down in 2000 by companies, NGOs and governments to promote and protect human rights.

Youth bulge: Disproportionately young population shaping a country's demographics, where 15 to 24-year-olds make up at least 20% or 0 to 15-year-olds at least 30% of society as a whole.

Annex 4: Gugger Postulate 19.4628

National Council

19.4628
Gugger Postulate

Switzerland needs a strategy on Africa

Wording of the postulate dated 20.12.2019
(English translation)

The Federal Council is requested to produce a report setting out Switzerland's strategy on African countries over the next ten years. This should set out a whole-of-government approach that goes beyond foreign policy and development cooperation and addresses issues such as tax, migration and labour market policy, environmental and climate policy and economic policy.

Reasons

The 2018 Foreign Policy Report indicates that Africa faces major challenges and that a prosperous neighbouring continent is in Switzerland's interests. In the 2028 Foreign Policy Vision, relations with the African countries are given second priority after Europe. The opportunities and risks presented by demographic development and climate change are clearly outlined. Similarly, the new Dispatch on International Cooperation 2021–24 also focuses on African countries. These statements underline the awareness that developments in African countries are also important for Switzerland. The view of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs is reflected in all existing reports. However, none of the reports explain how, for example, the Federal Department of Finance (FDF) defines tax policy vis-à-vis African countries, how the Federal Department of the Environment, Transport, Energy and Communications (DETEC) would contribute to ensuring that the African continent is no longer used as a rubbish dump for our consumer goods, and how the Federal Department of Justice and Police (FDJP) and the Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research (EAER) intend to structure access to the Swiss employment market for young people from Africa given the demographic trends and the lack of specialists. These questions must be addressed by the Federal Council as a matter of urgency in a comprehensive Africa strategy that meets the current requirements of a whole-of-government approach.

Federal Council statement of 19 February 2020

Based on the new Foreign Policy Strategy 2020–23, various regional strategies are planned, including an Africa strategy, the duration of which will be aligned with the Foreign Policy Strategy (four-year cycle). Work on this Africa strategy will begin in 2020 with contributions from all stakeholders to ensure a whole-of-government approach within the existing legal mandate.

Federal Council proposal of 19 February 2020

The Federal Council proposes the adoption of the postulate.