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A high-angle, nighttime photograph of a city, likely Johannesburg, South Africa. The image shows a dense urban landscape with numerous buildings of varying heights and architectural styles. Many windows are illuminated from within, creating a warm glow against the dark night sky. Some buildings have external lighting, including a prominent blue vertical light strip on a tall building. The foreground shows lower-rise residential or commercial buildings with lit-up windows. The overall scene is a vibrant, illuminated city at night.

AFRICA STRATEGY 2025-2028



This report, which was approved by the Federal Council on 20 December 2024 is a geographical follow-up strategy to the Foreign Policy Strategy 2024–27 (FPS 2024–27). Adoption of the Africa Strategy 2025–28 is one of the measures included in the Federal Council’s annual objectives for 2024.

Foreword

A continent that is home to more than 1.3 billion people, Africa will play a pivotal role in global developments over the coming decades. Its population will account for more than 25% of the worldwide total by 2050.¹ In the future, African states will play an increasingly important role in multilateral bodies. A prosperous Africa is therefore of enormous interest to Switzerland and to Europe in general, not just for economic reasons, but also with regard to global security and stability. In its Africa Strategy, Switzerland recognises the need to strengthen relations with this dynamic and emerging continent in strategic areas.

Certain African economies are experiencing strong growth on the back of an expanding middle class and a young and dynamic population. Start-ups in the tech and digital sectors in particular are driving economic growth, opening up new markets for Swiss businesses, especially in countries such as Nigeria, Kenya and South Africa. By 2050 cities such as Lagos, Kinshasa and Dar es Salaam will be among the largest metropolitan urban areas in the world,² further boosting Africa's economic heft. Africa also has immense natural resources. The continent holds a large proportion of the world's raw materials, including gold, cobalt, platinum and manganese, as well as rare earths, oil and gas that are essential to current and future energy supplies. These resources offer potential for trade and investment, helping to diversify global supply chains and reduce Europe's dependencies. At the same time there are numerous challenges that demand our attention. Political volatility, fragile states and conflict, and the spread of extremist violence, as currently in the Sahel region, are jeopardising the continent's stability. These conflicts result in migration and refugee movements that have the capacity to affect Europe directly. Switzerland and Europe must develop strategies to manage this instability not only with a humanitarian approach, but also to act in a preventive capacity and thus help African states exercise independent responsibility. Furthermore, Africa and the world are facing the challenge of climate change. The African continent is hit particularly hard by the effects of global warming, leading to increasing droughts, flooding and agricultural problems. This exacerbates poverty and results in yet more migration. Close international cooperation with Africa is therefore crucial, especially in the fight against climate change.



Switzerland's Africa Strategy 2025–28 addresses both the opportunities and challenges involved. A partnership of equals that advances sustainable development and stability is key to enabling positive long-term development on both sides. Africa is not a continent in crisis. It is a continent of the future. And Switzerland aims to play an active part in shaping this future.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Cassis', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Ignazio Cassis
Federal councillor
Head of the Federal Department
of Foreign Affairs FDFA

¹ [UN World Population Prospects 2022 \(DESA\)](#)

² [Sage Journals, Population predictions for the world's largest cities in the 21st century, 2016](#)

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1 Introduction

The Africa Strategy 2025–28 is rooted in a long-term partnership between Switzerland and the states in the region. The Foreign Policy Strategy 2024–27 (FPS 24–27)³ states that foreign policy is about interests. This includes promoting Swiss values. Derived from the core mission of its foreign policy, which is to safeguard Switzerland's security, prosperity and independence, Switzerland's interests in Africa range from the economy and development to security, multilateral cooperation, peace, democracy and migration. This is because the dynamics of our neighbouring continent to the south impact directly on Europe and on Switzerland. The FPS 2024–27 describes an arc of crises wrapped around Europe that extends to Sudan and the Sahel region. A lack of economic opportunities, weak public institutions and the absence of basic services, as well as the spread of violent extremism and armed conflict, are resulting in forced displacement and migration, which, in the end, also affect Switzerland. On the other hand, some African states are displaying positive economic momentum, which it is in Switzerland's interests to encourage. Deeper multilateral cooperation with African states and regional organisations ultimately helps to lend greater weight to Switzerland's interests at multilateral level. As part of this, Switzerland positions itself as a country that builds equal relations with African states, offers its good offices, and acts as a bridge-builder. Switzerland has the advantage in Africa of hardly being associated with a colonial past.

To date, relations with Northern African states have been solely set out in the MENA Strategy 2021–24. However, in implementing the Sub-Saharan Africa Strategy 2021–24 it became clear that Sub-Saharan Africa cannot be dissociated from Northern Africa. Examples here include cooperation within the African Union and its flagship projects such as the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), economic ties, efforts towards peace and security in the Sahel region and the Sudan, or interests surrounding the Red Sea. Regional initiatives by states such as Algeria and Morocco, migration routes, and transboundary rivers are further examples. A strategy for the entire continent takes these ties into account.

This Strategy follows the African Union model by dividing the continent into five regions: Northern Africa, Western Africa, Central Africa, Eastern Africa and Southern Africa. A further section of this Strategy focuses on African multilateralism.

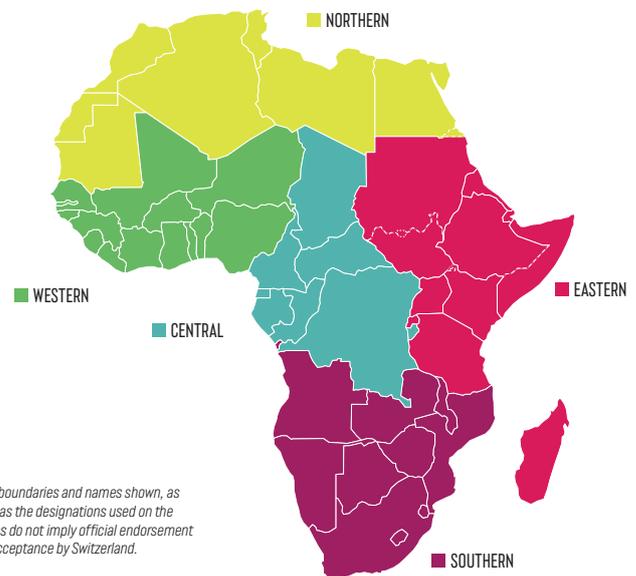


Figure 1: The five regions of the African continent according to the African Union (source: FDFA)

Embedding the Sub-Saharan Africa Strategy (2021–24) in the cascading foreign policy strategy⁴ has proven to be the right approach. This ensures that foreign policy remains consistent both in terms of content and on an interdepartmental basis. A number of actors involved in business, education, research and innovation play a significant role on the continent. This Africa Strategy encompasses the entire continent rather than specific focus regions. Its structure thus covers Swiss activities in Africa as a whole and permits Switzerland's interests to be represented more coherently.

This Strategy builds on experience gained from the first Sub-Saharan Africa Strategy 2021–24, in which Switzerland recognised Africa's potential. Its aim is to continue developing closer relations with the continent. The Africa Strategy 2025–28 is a geographical follow-up strategy to the Federal Council's Foreign Policy Strategy 2024–27 and was also drafted on an interdepartmental basis. It affects all federal government departments. This Strategy, together with the International Cooperation (IC) Strategy 2025–28, provides the basis for producing operational implementation documents (e.g. international cooperation programmes), along with targets and indicators. In terms of domestic policy, it is based

3 <https://www.eda.admin.ch/eda/en/fdfa/foreign-policy/implementing-foreign-policy/aussenpolitischestrategie.html>

4 <https://www.eda.admin.ch/eda/en/fdfa/foreign-policy/implementing-foreign-policy.html>

on the Federal Constitution, relevant [federal legislation](#),⁵ the [FPS 2024–27](#) and the IC Strategy 2025–28. Other authoritative Federal Council documents are the [Foreign Economic Policy Strategy](#), [Switzerland’s International Strategy on Education, Research and Innovation](#), and the [Swiss Health Foreign Policy 2019–24](#) (extended until 2028).

In the field, Switzerland presents a united front in which the FDFA and other government departments work together to achieve strategic objectives. Switzerland harnesses the broad expertise of its diplomatic and consular personnel, defence and migration attachés, economic and scientific staff, and international cooperation personnel in accordance with the IC strategy.

Switzerland has access to a broad range of foreign policy instruments in Africa. The Africa Strategy 2025–28 provides a framework for the various foreign policy actors to deploy these in a targeted way and to improve internal coordination. As a means of communication, the Africa Strategy 2025–28 aims to make the broader public in Switzerland and African partners more aware of the impact of Swiss foreign policy.

The Federal Council attaches particular importance to the joint implementation of specific objectives. To ensure that foreign policy instruments are as effective as possible, and to be prepared for changes in the various contexts in which Switzerland operates, anticipation is a key factor in implementing this Strategy.

5 [Federal Act on International Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid](#); [Federal Act on Measures Pertaining to Civil Peace Support and the Promotion of Human Rights](#) (both in German, French and Italian)

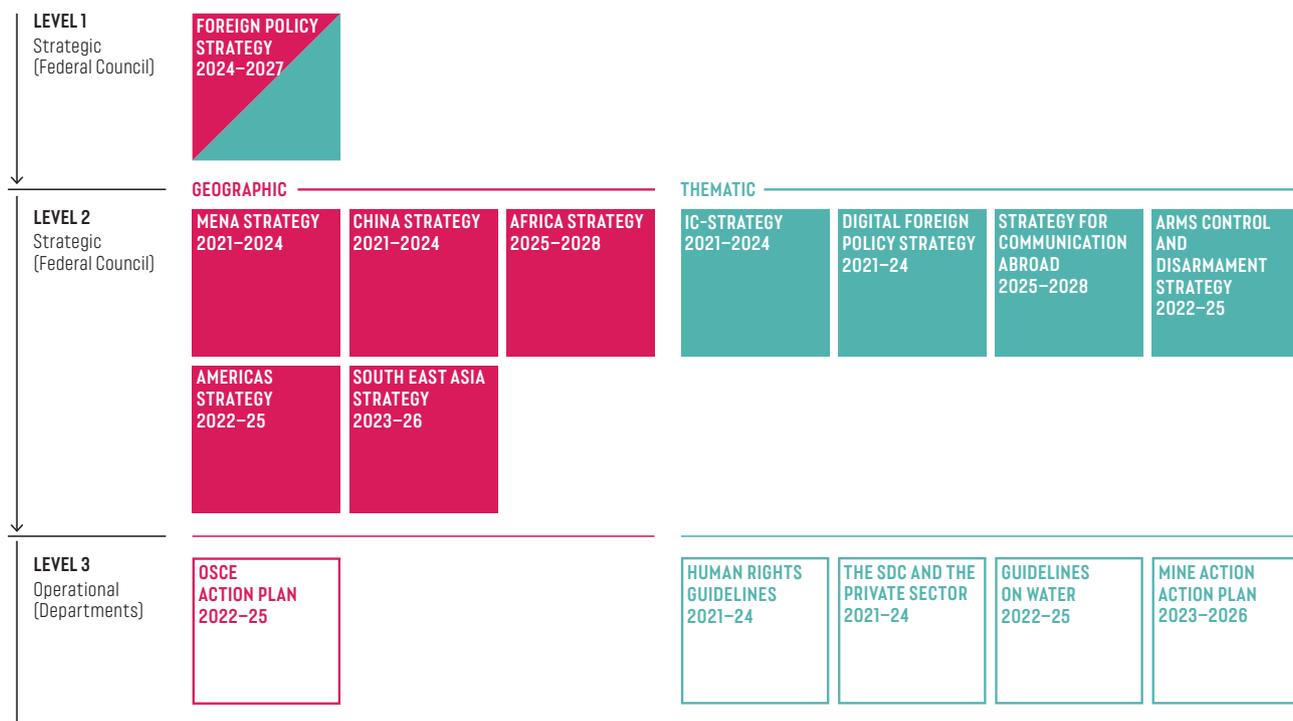


Figure 2: Cascading foreign policy strategy (source: FDFA)

2 Review of the Sub-Saharan Africa Strategy 2021–24

As part of its Sub-Saharan Africa Strategy 2021–24,⁶ Switzerland has expanded its presence in three focus regions in particular over the past four years: the Sahel, the Greater Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes. Two new ambassador-at-large posts for the Sahel and Greater Horn of Africa regions and the decision to open embassies in Bamako and Kigali illustrate this development. Switzerland is trusted in the region thanks to its long history of development work as part of development cooperation. Between 2021 and 2024, approximately CHF 525 million was allocated annually to Sub-Saharan Africa as part of the federal government's international cooperation (IC) efforts, which include contributions from the cantons and communes. Switzerland is also valued as an honest broker, serving as an impartial mediator in peace processes in the three focus regions and in other contexts on the African continent. Through a proven combination of diplomacy, development cooperation, humanitarian aid and peacebuilding,⁷ Switzerland has contributed substantially to improving the situation of people in need and to alleviating human suffering.

During the period of the Sub-Saharan Africa Strategy (2021–24), Switzerland undertook almost two dozen state and ministerial visits and engaged in numerous political consultations with African states. Switzerland's foreign and foreign economic policy work has involved a number of diplomatic visits to Africa and various bilateral and multilateral activities. Cooperation on research has been stepped up, for example, by Switzerland joining the international Square Kilometre Array Observatory (SKAO),⁸ part of which is being built in South Africa. Economic growth has been boosted by projects in various areas such as the financial sector, urban development and renewable energies. International cooperation work and the Swiss private sector have helped improve economic conditions in Africa. The conclusion of several agreements on emission reductions and carbon storage abroad under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement,⁹ as well as migration and air service agreements, have created closer bilateral ties within

certain sectors in Sub-Saharan Africa. Through multifaceted cooperation with African partners and extensive involvement in projects under European framework programmes for research, Switzerland's academic institutions have made major contributions to health, climate change, water management and sustainable farming. These partnerships have encouraged knowledge transfer, expanded local scientific capacities, and stepped up scientific and technical cooperation over the long term.

In recent years Switzerland has been an active mediator in peacebuilding efforts in the Sahel region. It has also participated in multilateral discussions, for example by serving on the UN Security Council. In addition, Switzerland has expanded its bilateral cooperation on migration by concluding three migration agreements in the region¹⁰ and conducting dialogue on migration with Nigeria. Given the fragile political situation in Mali, the decision to upgrade the cooperation office in Bamako to an embassy has not yet been followed through.

In the Greater Horn of Africa Switzerland has been able to reinforce the capacities of regional and international actors by seconding experts to support coordination mechanisms within regional organisations. On migration policy, Switzerland has held dialogues with countries of origin and achieved improvements with regard to the repatriation of asylum-seekers whose claims have been rejected. The security situation has deteriorated in recent years, however, especially in Sudan. Switzerland was able to respond swiftly to the outbreak of conflict in the country, increasing humanitarian aid and stepping up its peacebuilding efforts.

In the Great Lakes focus region, the embassy in Rwanda will soon reopen. This will bolster the FDFA's profile as a peacebuilder in the region, for example through targeted support for a variety of peace processes and legislative reforms to ensure that perpetrators of gender-based violence do not go unpunished. On the UN Security Council, Switzerland has been committed to peacebuilding in the region. It has also deployed personnel to the region on UN and EU missions and supported victims of gender-based violence through a range of projects. Furthermore, Switzerland aided the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) in adopting the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights, especially in the raw materials sector.

6 https://www.eda.admin.ch/eda/en/fdfa/fdfa/publikationen.html/content/publikationen/en/eda/schweizer-aussenpolitik/Subsahara_Afrika_Strategie_2021-2024

7 <https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/content/humanitarian-development-and-peace-nexus>

8 <https://www.sbf.admin.ch/sbfi/en/home/research-and-innovation/international-cooperation-r-and-i/international-research-organisations/skao.html>

9 <https://www.bafu.admin.ch/bafu/en/home/topics/climate/info-specialists/climate-international-affairs/staatsvertraege-umsetzung-klimauebereinkommen-von-paris-artikel6.html>

10 Gambia, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau

Alongside prioritising digitalisation, focusing on Africa's emerging lion economies has helped to concentrate efforts on business opportunities. Talks with these countries actively addressed issues relating to Swiss foreign trade, and especially the general economic framework's African partner states. That said, growth in some countries lagged behind projections.

The strategic emphasis on regional organisations has proved successful. This focus allows the parties concerned to develop a common view of cross-border issues. While Switzerland has built positive relationships with a variety of regional structures and subsidiary bodies within the African Union (AU), these could be further deepened in future. In view of the rapid expansion of multilateralism in Africa, the task here is to identify opportunities and to develop these alongside multilateral African partners.

Given the volatility affecting large sections of Africa and the overarching global crises, it comes as no surprise that not all of the objectives of the Sub-Saharan Africa Strategy could be achieved. One of the particular realisations of the past four years has been that humanitarian emergencies are generally on the rise. For Switzerland, this means that humanitarian aid will become more important than ever in Africa as an expression of its solidarity with those in need. It became equally clear that political uncertainty and unlawful power shifts, particularly in the Sahel region, were having some adverse impacts on the stability of West African coastal nations. The further spread of instability in the West Africa region must be countered. The new strategy therefore aims to help neighbouring Gulf of Guinea states more effectively to consolidate their democratic governance.

In implementing the strategy it ultimately became evident that greater account must be taken of the volatility factor. That is why anticipating unforeseen events and flexibility in the deployment of foreign policy instruments form an integral part of the Africa Strategy (see section 6).

3 Geopolitical overview

3.1 Global actors and regional integration

The world is marked by fragmentation and external powers increasingly vying for influence. Major powers such as China and Russia are stepping up their activities on the African continent. Regional powers such as Turkey and certain Gulf states also hold increasing sway. The US and EU are responding by making more frequent diplomatic visits and renewing their strategic focus on the region. This rising interest among external actors may increase African states' room for manoeuvre, meaning that Africa can be expected to gain greater geopolitical importance as the 21st century progresses. Many African countries are therefore carefully maintaining an even-handed position amid this competition between powers. Most have long-term, often complex relationships with the major players. Anti-Western sentiment is emerging in certain regions, actively fuelled in some cases by foreign-financed disinformation campaigns. At the same time, many African states still have close ties with countries in the Western hemisphere.

Global power shifts impact directly on the multilateral system. Discussions and negotiations at the UN, as the only universal international organisation, are becoming increasingly polarised. One of the upshots of this is that states are focusing on multilateral coalitions and bodies outside of the UN framework. Relevant to African states in this context are the expanded BRICS¹¹ organisation and the G20,¹² which now includes the African Union as a member. African participation in both informal groups has grown in recent years. The expansion of the formats mentioned above also shows that a greater number of African states are participating in multilateral initiatives.

African states want to reform the multilateral system to ensure appropriate representation. Some regard the universal concepts and standards as Western in nature, and are demanding to be consulted more fully on standard-setting. True to the principle of 'African solutions to African problems', the African Union and its Regional Economic Commissions

(RECs¹³) are taking on a more prominent role, including, increasingly, in military peacebuilding.

Efforts to strengthen African multilateralism go hand in hand with a broader thematic scope. Economic integration on the African continent is currently being developed under the African Union's flagship African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) project. Among its aims is to address the fact that intra-African trade is still relatively low. This huge project is being implemented in stages and has enormous medium to long-term potential. In addition, African initiatives in areas such as the free movement of persons and health policy are gaining momentum.

3.2 Regional trends

3.2.1 Peace and security

Some states have improved their situation and achieved a certain stability, albeit fragile in places. However, large sections of Africa, especially south of the Sahara, are suffering political instability, exacerbated by armed conflict and violent extremism. Combined with other factors, such as ailing state institutions and ethnic discrimination, these challenges create a vicious circle of political and regional fragility. Severe humanitarian crises are the result. Extremist groups exploit the state's structural weaknesses and systemic poverty to grow their influence. This can develop into a security threat that also affects Switzerland. Civilians often find themselves caught between the fronts and suffer the direct and indirect consequences of conflicts. Attacks on civilians, sexual violence and the forced recruitment of child soldiers are frequent occurrences in conflict zones, causing more humanitarian suffering. This undermines efforts towards reconciliation and reconstruction. Organised crime, specifically the drugs and arms trade and human trafficking, is a further challenge. It foments violence and corruption, weakens government institutions and obstructs economic and social development. At the same time, security structures in Africa are changing. The role and presence of UN peace missions are increasingly being called into question by new African and international military actors. Mounting military aid from external countries is also associated with a desire to gain influence in the region,

¹¹ BRICS: originally Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, but now includes Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran and the United Arab Emirates. Saudi Arabia was also invited but has not yet joined, and Argentina declined the invitation.

¹² G20: <https://www.g20.org/en>

¹³ 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).

not to mention access to raw materials. These shifting dynamics make it more difficult to coordinate peace efforts and necessitate continual adjustments to local and multilateral security strategies.

3.2.2 Economy

In terms of land area and population Africa is the world's second-largest continent. In 2023 it contributed 2.7% to aggregate gross domestic product (GDP) globally.¹⁴ This small share of the world's economy indicates that it has significant catching-up to do. While in 2024 some African states showed considerable GDP growth of 6% or more, African economies in general are recovering only slowly from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.¹⁵ Africa's average GDP growth of 3.5% is well behind that of East and South Asia, for example, but is higher than regional growth in South America.

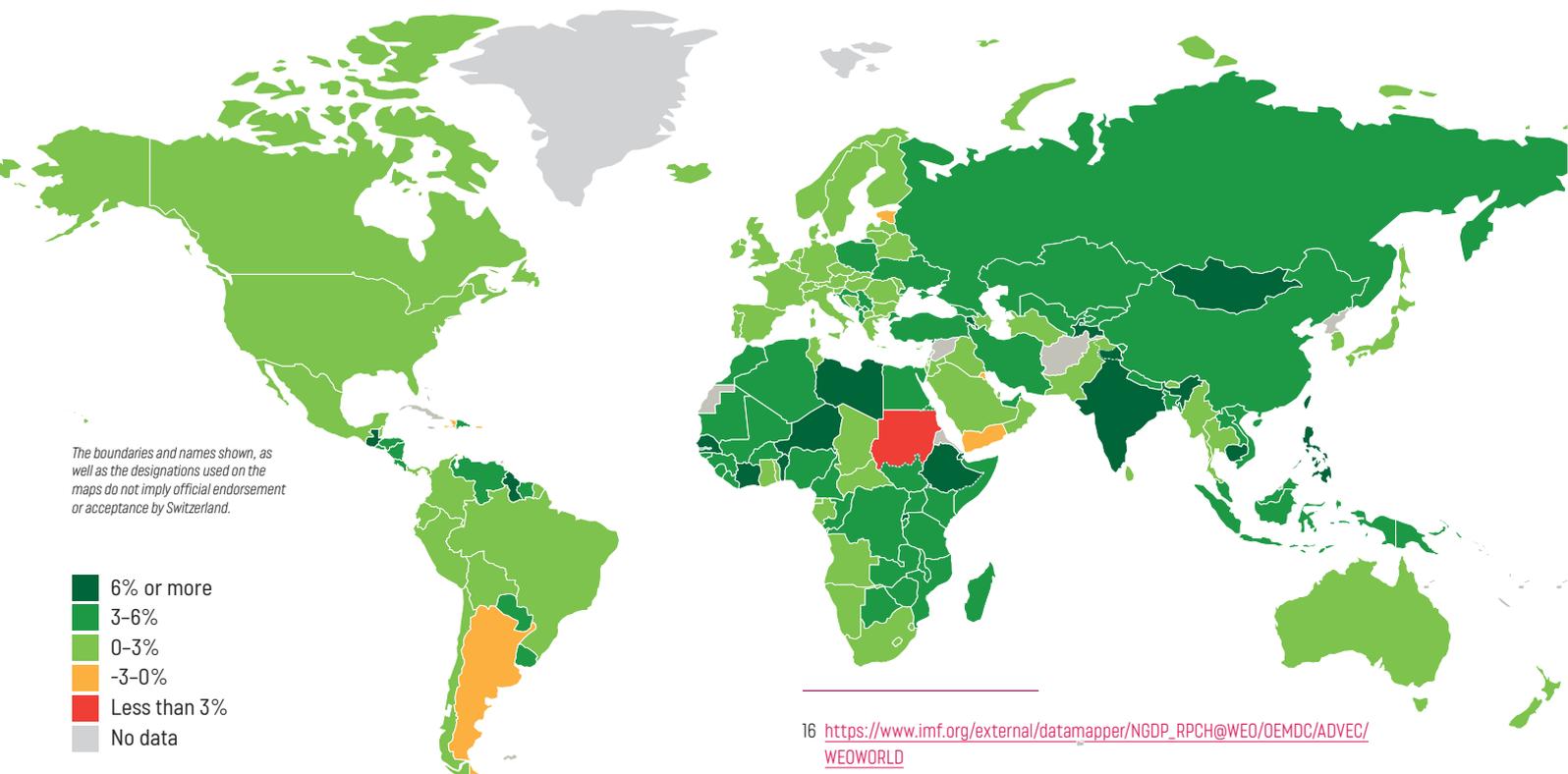
When looking at Africa's growth it is important to remember the economic differences that exist on a continent of more than 50 countries. Some African states perform comparatively well, thanks to efforts to diversify their economy, relatively healthy public finances, or political stability. Others act as regional hubs, attracting international companies because they are gateways to the continent. The continent's largest national economies, such as South Africa, Egypt, Nigeria, Algeria and Ethiopia, are facing economic and social challenges. They nonetheless remain crucial drivers of development and growth throughout Africa.

In the short term, there are plenty of signs that the macroeconomic situation is stabilising after years of successive crises. Economic growth has climbed back to an average of around 3.8%, inflation is receding gradually, and levels of debt are stabilising. According to the IMF, foreign direct investment in Africa has also risen as a result of the trend towards macroeconomic stabilisation. The step-by-step implementation of the AfCFTA has the potential to lift the continent economically and therefore offers a positive medium to long-term outlook. Ever-tougher international competition for scarce strategic raw materials is strengthening the bargaining power of resource-rich African states. What's more, severe supply bottlenecks in recent years have demonstrated the importance of resilient supply chains, making many African countries more attractive to Europe as suppliers.

¹⁴ https://www.imf.org/external/datamapper/PPPGDP@WEO/OEMDC/ADVEC/WEO_WORLD/AFQ

¹⁵ <https://www.imf.org/RegionalEconomicOutlookforSub-SaharanAfrica,October2024|ReformsamidGreatExpectations>

Figure 3: GDP growth in per cent, 2024¹⁶



¹⁶ https://www.imf.org/external/datamapper/NGDP_RPCH@WEO/OEMDC/ADVEC/WEO_WORLD

Economic growth is not leading to a sustained improvement in living conditions for much of society, however. This is illustrated by indicators of income inequality on which Sub-Saharan Africa, in particular, generally performs poorly.¹⁷ In the medium term, many African states face the challenge of finding solutions, particularly in terms of creating economic opportunities for young people as the population continues to expand. Digitalisation could play an important part in this on the African continent.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine have exacerbated structural problems in African economies, slowed down economic growth, increased debt problems, and brought to light the need for profound reforms, especially where risk mitigation is concerned. One of the major challenges for many African countries is the high level of sovereign debt, which reduces the fiscal space for vital investments in sectors such as health, education and infrastructure. Inflationary pressures and interest rate hikes in western states have also played their part in constricting flows of capital to Africa. Furthermore, Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine has worsened food security on the continent and dependencies on grain supplies from abroad are being felt more keenly. All in all, Africa remains particularly vulnerable to external shocks, and is still too reliant on income from the primary sector.

3.2.3 Climate change

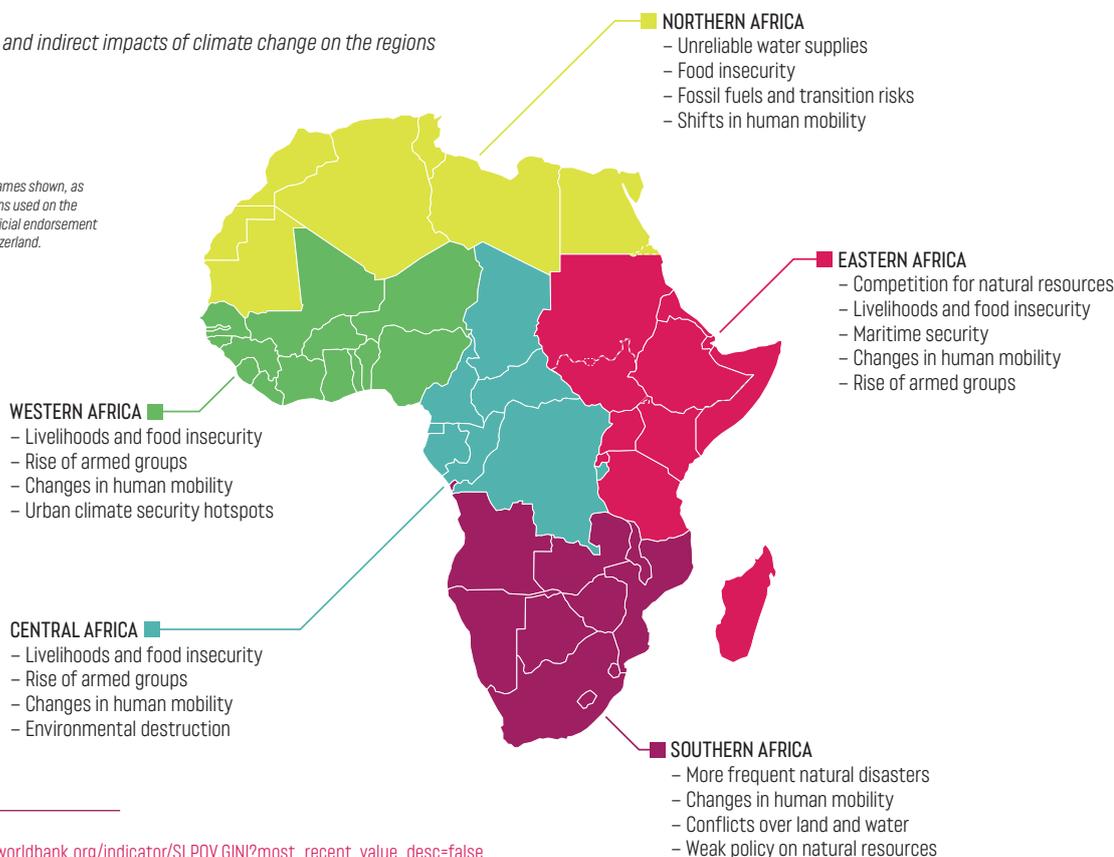
Africa is particularly hard hit by the effects of climate change. Its climate is warming faster than the global average, leading to more frequent and more intense extreme weather events such as droughts, heatwaves and flooding. Changing precipitation patterns exacerbates water scarcity and reduces agricultural productivity. This can jeopardise livelihoods and food security.

Escalating competition for natural resources in already fragile contexts is a huge challenge to stability, security, and the living conditions of local people. The increasing scarcity of resources such as water and pastureland aggravates existing tensions and sparks new conflicts, forcing people to leave their homes. In this regard, climate change acts as a risk multiplier that intensifies existing political, social, economic and ecological stress factors.

After the Amazon, the Congo Basin has the second-largest tropical rainforest in the world. Conserving it is vital to the stability of the global climate, because the forests store carbon, regulate water supply and harbour a wealth of biodiversity. Biodiversity in the Congo Basin is being threatened to a worrying degree by climate change, environmental pollution,

Figure 4: Direct and indirect impacts of climate change on the regions of Africa¹⁸

The boundaries and names shown, as well as the designations used on the maps do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by Switzerland.



¹⁷ https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.GINI?most_recent_value_desc=false

¹⁸ https://adelphi.de/system/files/document/africa_climate_security_risk_assessment_executive_summary.pdf

uncontrolled raw materials extraction and increasing land area being taken up by settlements and agriculture. Without appropriate countermeasures these challenges will only grow in the future, disproportionately affecting women and groups in particularly vulnerable situations, such as children and young people, as well as internally displaced persons and refugees.

In its African Climate Security Risk Assessment report, the African Union (AU) highlights how the climate, peace and security are interconnected on the African continent. The image below provides an overview of the principal climate security risks to each of the five regions.

3.2.4 Demographics

African societies are becoming younger, larger, more digital and more urban. Africa exhibits the fastest rate of population growth in the world. According to information from the UN, its population could double by 2050 from over one billion to 2.5 billion people.¹⁹ From the historical perspective, Africa's population is ten times what it was in 1900. Advances in medicine mean that mortality rates have fallen, while birth rates in many parts of the continent remain high. It is estimated that, by 2050, 40% of all children worldwide will have been born in Africa. In addition, as a result of rapid urbanisation it is expected that, by 2050, African cities will be home to 950 million people,²⁰ compared with 550 million today. These factors have a bearing on prosperity in Africa and present opportunities for business, but also enormous challenges.

The continent has a very young population, and the dynamism of young people is a potential driver of change. Given the right conditions, their entry into the labour market could generate demographic dividends for the economy.²² However, this will only happen if the birth rate declines in the medium term, which in itself is linked to cultural shifts and adequate labour market prospects. At the same time, youth-driven social protest movements are putting existing power relations under pressure. Dissatisfaction with living conditions is also increasing migratory pressures. It is thus essential for Africa and its partners to improve local education and employment for young people.

3.2.5 Migration

Climate change, proliferating conflict and precarious economic circumstances in many African countries have led to an increase in migration flows over the past two decades. The data is not always up to date and reliable, but in 2020, there were an estimated 20.8 million intra-African migrants, representing 52% of total African migration. By comparison, an estimated 19.7 million people migrated away from the continent, with 27% of African migrants heading to Europe and 12% to Asia.²³ A large proportion of these mainly young migrants move primarily to large urban centres within Africa in search of work. Since 2010, there has been a sharp rise in intra-African migration, which in many cases is seasonal, regular and not conflict-related. African countries are often simultaneously countries of origin, transit and destination,

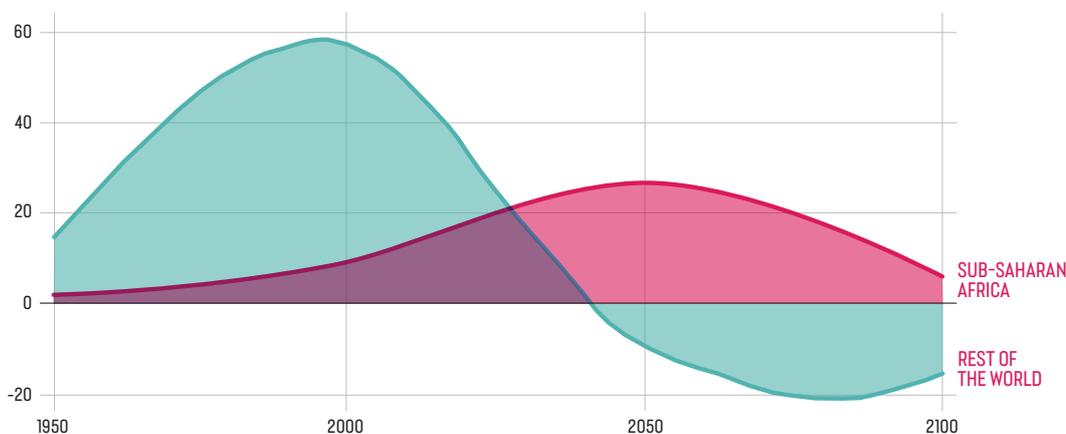


Figure 5: Annual growth of the working-age population in Sub-Saharan Africa and the rest of the world (estimated), in millions per year²¹

19 <https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/population>

20 https://www.afdb.org/sites/default/files/documents/publications/africa_urbanization_dynamics-economic_power_of_africa_cities-en.pdf

21 <https://www.unfpa.org/demographic-dividend#0>

22 UN World Population Projection and IMF staff calculations

23 <https://publications.iom.int/books/africa-migration-report-second-edition>

which poses a complex set of challenges. Regions such as Southern and Western Africa show significant circular migration, especially to South Africa, Côte d'Ivoire and Nigeria.

A significant proportion of would-be migrants wish to relocate to Europe and the Gulf states. The Maghreb also frequently serves as a destination and transit region for migrants from Sub-Saharan Africa on their way to Europe. Unmanaged consequences of climate change are making it ever-harder to earn a living, giving a further impetus to migration. Regular migration in and from Africa no doubt also has its positive side, and it is important in many respects for sustainable development in countries of both origin and destination. Positive aspects include, for example, more diversified livelihoods, more stable incomes from remittances, and access to education that is not available in the country of origin. Where there are no regular migration routes, people sometimes resort to irregular migration. This undermines sustainable development and holds considerable risks for those involved. People wanting to migrate expose themselves to a substantial risk of exploitation and violence.

3.2.6 Democracy and governance

The past four years have been marked by negative trends in democracy and the rule of law in the region. Political leadership in Africa has undergone a series of unconstitutional changes of power, frequently unfair and non-transparent election processes, and some contentious constitutional amendments allowing ruling powers to remain in office for extended periods. Autocratic trends are reasserting themselves around the world, and Africa is no exception. These processes of change have also led in many places to a deterioration in the human rights situation and to political instability.

Disappointed by the security policy pursued by elites, people have begun to support these changes of power in the hope of better living conditions. At the same time, there have also been positive developments in some countries with regard to civic engagement and moves to strengthen democratic institutions. However, any progress made is often impermanent and can quickly find itself under threat from political, social and political security-related tensions.

Corruption remains a major challenge to governance and the rule of law in Africa. It impedes economic and social development, undermines trust in public institutions and facilitates abuses of power. It is therefore critical to combat corruption in the interests of better governance.

The use of social media has transformed the information landscape in Africa, and plays a key role in mobilising citizens. That said, it can also make it easier to spread misinformation, which impacts negatively on public debate and exacerbates social and political divides.

4 Swiss interests

Swiss foreign policy and policy in relation to Africa, are based on the interests and values laid down in the Federal Constitution and stated in concrete terms in the FPS 2024–27. The growing influence of major and regional powers in Africa may also generate greater interest in cooperating with an independent Switzerland, which has a history of long-standing partnerships with the region. In addition, the FPS 2024–27 defines four thematic priorities, which also guide this strategy: peace and security, prosperity and competitiveness, the environment, and democracy and governance.

4.1 Peace and security

Promoting peace and stability on the African continent is one of Switzerland's key interests in terms of safeguarding its own security. Continuing its policy to date, Switzerland helps to prevent, manage and resolve violent conflict in its capacity as a credible intermediary. Its activities include supporting dialogue, mediation, and longer-term peacebuilding on the ground, involving both civilian and military actors.

Activities also include preventing armed conflict, memorialisation and fighting impunity. It supports programmes for disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration, as well as building local security capabilities as part of reforming the security sector. This involves local capacity development in these areas at regional peacebuilding training centres. Also key to Switzerland are preventing violent extremism and combating illicit drug, raw materials, arms and human trafficking, as well as gender-based violence. This requires strong partnerships.

In its civil peacebuilding efforts, Switzerland relies on its recognised advantages – impartiality, extensive experience, and specialist capabilities. It takes a flexible approach to its peace policy to make the most of options that align with its interests and values. As part of its 'Women, Peace and Security' agenda, Switzerland promotes women's equal participation in peace and reconstruction processes. Where military peacebuilding activities are concerned, Switzerland continues to participate in various UN missions and institutions. Meanwhile, a number of missions in Africa have been either halted or cut back. This makes prevention measures and a regional approach all the more important.

Humanitarian aid is a well-established central pillar of its activities in Africa. The Swiss Humanitarian Aid Unit (SHA) demonstrates this through the impartial assistance it provides to victims of conflicts and disasters. Furthermore, Switzerland is committed to compliance with international humanitarian law, protecting people in need, and creating sustainable

solutions for displaced persons and refugees in cooperation with the countries that initially receive them. Switzerland pursues a partnership-based approach to migration, seeking joint solutions with countries of origin and transit. It supports the building of local and regional capacities for managing migration, repatriations and successful reintegration based on human rights, as well as improvements to living conditions, and protections for refugees and migrants along migration routes. Switzerland is also involved in combating human trafficking. Cooperation at the multilateral level boosts the effectiveness of bilateral activities. With its actions, Switzerland cements its role as an influential actor, not least in the context of International Geneva.

4.2 Prosperity and competitiveness

Africa accounts for 2-3% of Switzerland's total foreign trade – a share that has remained largely consistent in recent years. With the right government action and the corresponding investment, Africa's growing population could generate significant, sustained economic growth in the medium to long term. The continent's young population represents an important market with great potential. Focusing on sustainable development and a high standard of basic services is crucial to unlocking this potential and offering the expanding population prospects for the future. As they seek greater resilience through a more diversified partner network, this outlook is driving an increasing interest in Africa from Swiss businesses. Indeed, one of Switzerland's focus areas is reinforcing and diversifying supply and value chains through access to open markets and the application of internationally agreed rules. Furthermore, economic development cooperation in selected partner countries promotes resilience and prosperity in Africa both bilaterally and multilaterally.

Certain African markets are particularly relevant to Switzerland either because many Swiss companies are already active there, or because positive economic momentum created by Swiss businesses opens up new growth opportunities. The creation of a unified marketplace creates new incentives for businesses to invest locally and profit from the future advantages of the free trade area. A positive operating environment ultimately decides how attractive a location is for business, and the level of new investment. Free trade agreements, double taxation agreements, and investment promotion and protection agreements also play an important role. Relevant Swiss actors from industry, the public sector, non-governmental organisations and research institutes are working together in sectors important to Switzerland, such as coffee and cocoa and chocolate. The members of these platforms are actively joining forces to improve living conditions for

farmers, protect natural resources, and increase biodiversity in cocoa-producing countries. Co-determination, partnership-based participation and transparency all help to build sustainable value chains.

Additionally, the African continent is rich in raw materials, which dominate bilateral trade between Switzerland and African nations. As a base for commodities companies, a financial and trading hub, and a centre of gold refining, Switzerland is committed to upholding high standards, such as due diligence with regard to raw materials from conflict-affected areas and suspected instances of child labour, and reporting obligations. Switzerland promotes the implementation of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises on responsible business conduct. It also encourages closer cooperation with the Swiss private sector.

In the financial sector, Switzerland advocates for tougher international regulation, for example with regard to improving debt transparency worldwide and – at multilateral level – curbing illicit financial flows. Switzerland strengthens the regulatory framework through international mutual assistance and asset recovery, which includes the freezing, confiscation and return of illicitly acquired assets.²⁴ It also helps to create greater legal certainty by means of free trade agreements, double taxation agreements (DTAs) and investment promotion and protection agreements. Switzerland intends to expand its matrix of DTAs with African states systematically and in the light of economic interests. In 2024, a DTA with Ethiopia came into effect, and another was signed with Angola. Further negotiations are currently under way. Beyond this, Switzerland has an active programme of economic diplomacy aimed at strengthening relations with its African partners.

Switzerland also pursues interests in science diplomacy. Scientific cooperation projects are already running with several countries in Africa. Switzerland has achieved this, for example, through the federal government's bilateral cooperation programmes, its joint membership of the inter-governmental organisation the SKAO, and other instruments. Switzerland's excellence as a hub of science and innovation, and international relations with education, research and innovation (ERI) actors, strengthen the country's position in global diplomacy overall, and help to advance its interests. Switzerland has a considerable interest in digitalisation-related topics, and especially in digital governance based on international law involving African countries. International Geneva, in particular, has a central role to play here in developing international standards.

4.3 Environment

Mitigating the negative impacts of climate change and promoting climate-sensitive practices in Africa are important interests to Switzerland. Examples here are reforestation initiatives and the sustainable management of natural resources. Switzerland's efforts also include conserving ecosystems and reducing greenhouse gas emissions with projects to protect biodiversity and encourage sustainable farming methods, as well as preventing desertification and soil degradation. Switzerland supports measures to manage the risk of natural disasters and to promote renewable energies with a view to building the resilience of local communities.

The consequences of climate change are closely linked to security, peace and migration. Compliance with international environmental and human rights standards is a central issue for Switzerland. The country actively participates in international forums on environmental conservation and climate change, which includes supporting efforts by the international community to attain the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It is working on implementing the obligations under the Paris Agreement and has concluded bilateral agreements with several African countries to reduce harmful emissions. Implementing these agreements helps to meet global climate targets. Switzerland encourages the transition to inclusive, sustainable and resilient food systems and economic models. The sustainable management of natural resources is pivotal to environmental conservation, economic growth and social stability in Africa.

²⁴ <https://www.eda.admin.ch/eda/en/fdfa/foreign-policy/international-law/unrecht-maessig-erworbene-gelder.html>

4.4 Democracy and governance

One of the objectives of the Foreign Policy Strategy 2024–27 is to enhance Switzerland's profile in the promotion of democracy. The overarching aim here is to strengthen and protect democratic values, processes and institutions in the African states where they already exist, but are at risk. Alongside this work Switzerland can support positive democratic developments as a partner. It also uses bilateral and multi-lateral dialogue to foster mutual exchange and to explore potential avenues for cooperation. Switzerland is well placed to step up its use of democracy promotion as a diplomatic instrument in a credible and focused manner. In its work, it is guided by the principle that human rights, democracy and the rule of law are intrinsically linked and amplify each other.

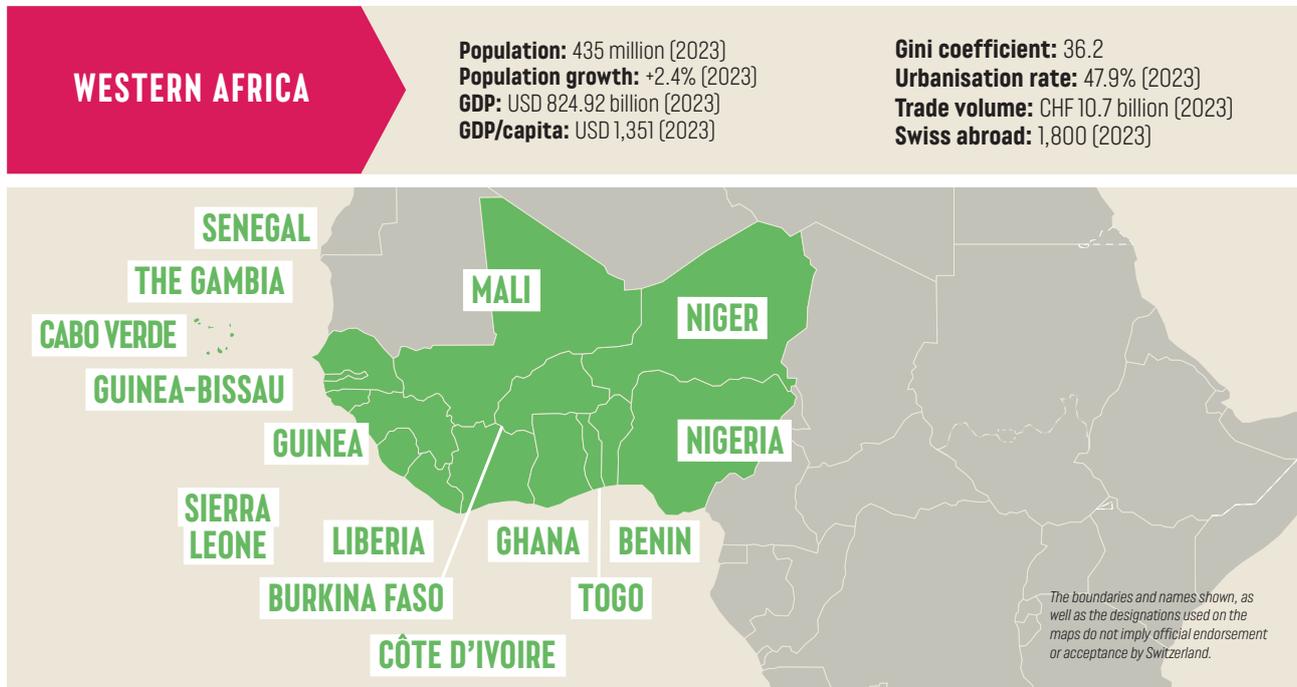
In strengthening institutional and social frameworks, Switzerland concentrates on good governance, based on the tenets of transparency, responsibility, accountability and participation. In its partner countries, Switzerland focuses on local governance, encouraging independent and objective media, the inclusion of minorities, the participation of women, and the transparent use of resources. Furthermore, Switzerland has an interest in a greater separation of powers and the rights of civil society actors.

Efforts to ensure compliance with human rights will continue, prioritising freedom of expression, abolition of the death penalty, prohibition of torture, upholding women's rights and gender equality, as well as protecting the rights of minorities and groups in need of protection, including victims of human trafficking.

Compliance with and the promotion of international law is an important element of Switzerland's foreign policy profile. Switzerland is committed to strengthening the international regulatory framework and to ensuring respect for international humanitarian law. As a state party to and the depositary of the Geneva Conventions, Switzerland is responsible for reminding parties involved in conflict of their obligations to respect international law.

5 Regions

5.1 Western Africa



Overview and regional characteristics:

Western Africa is characterised by enormous cultural, linguistic, ethnic and religious diversity. The region is rich in natural resources and the majority of its 15 states are experiencing sound economic growth. Regular labour migration is highly prevalent in the region, not least due to the free movement of persons facilitated by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Western Africa has enormous economic potential, while at the same time facing numerous challenges that put development and stability at risk. Alongside poverty and food insecurity, primary examples include armed conflict, cross-border crime, corruption, high rates of population growth, and rapid and uncontrolled urbanisation. Western African countries are also heavily impacted by climate change. A considerable part of the region is affected by (geo)political upheaval and a precarious security environment. In the Sahel and the Lake Chad region in particular, the intensified security crisis, loss of legitimacy of government institutions and the marginalisation of certain population groups have made the political situation considerably more fragile. This has humanitarian consequences, frequently including forced displacement and refugees.

A number of regional and international civilian and military initiatives have been instigated in response to the security crisis. The reorientation of political and military partnerships,

the withdrawal of the UN mission in Mali (MINUSMA²⁵) and the establishment of the Alliance of Sahel States (ASS²⁶) by Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger have fundamentally changed the region's security architecture in recent years. ECOWAS endeavours to find peaceful conflict resolution mechanisms and helps to advance the regional development of its member states. However, this union of states has recently become weaker, resulting, as many Western African countries believe, in a loss of credibility.

Switzerland in Western Africa:

Switzerland has wide-ranging interests in Western Africa which are closely linked to its geographical proximity to Europe. The precarious security situation and violent extremism in the Sahel also pose a risk to Europe. Switzerland enjoys a high degree of credibility in the region. For over 50 years, it has been committed to development, stability and security and is valued as an independent and reliable partner. The appointment of an ambassador-at-large has further deepened relations.

²⁵ United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali

²⁶ French: *Alliance des États du Sahel (AES)*

Switzerland's activities cover diplomacy, development cooperation, humanitarian aid and peacebuilding. It runs cooperation programmes in four focus countries: Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso and Benin. It combines support for sustainable development in these countries with the provision of humanitarian aid. At regional level Switzerland undertakes cooperation activities, enabling it to act more flexibly and support the coastal states of Western Africa more effectively. These programmes allow cross-border challenges to be tackled. Both local and international partnerships help foster sustainable development and regional security. Switzerland is also active on the regular and irregular migration front. In the past four years it has stepped up bilateral cooperation on migration by concluding four migration agreements that address repatriation in particular. Additionally, it is involved

at regional peacebuilding training centres in developing local capacities for disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration, and in security reforms.

Some Western African countries hold economic potential for Switzerland due to the size of their markets (Nigeria), political stability and economic policies (Côte d'Ivoire), or the existence of strong economic ties (Ghana). These factors not only favour bilateral trade, but also encourage reciprocal investment and long-term economic partnerships.

Over the past four years, Switzerland has concluded bilateral agreements with Western African states on emissions reductions and carbon storage abroad. Switzerland is a global pioneer in the implementation of such agreements.

Objectives and measures:

Peace and security

- 1. Switzerland acts as an intermediary in the prevention, management and resolution of violent conflicts.**
 - a. Encouraging, supporting or leading mediation processes.
 - b. Strengthening social cohesion and the population's resilience in the face of violent extremism.
 - c. Evaluating and supporting the building of local peacebuilding capacities by civilian and military experts.²⁷

- 2. Switzerland steps up dialogue with West African partners on migration.**
 - a. Continuing current dialogue on migration with four states.
 - b. Reinforcing cooperation with at least two further states.
 - c. Implementing programmes to protect migrants and to develop capacity in the migration field, especially with Nigeria.

Prosperity and competitiveness

- 3. Switzerland advances sustainable development in selected Western African countries.**
 - a. Improving access to and the standard of basic services, focusing on basic education and financial inclusion.
 - b. Improving access even in crisis situations.
 - c. Stabilising economic growth.
- 4. Switzerland is committed to improving operating frameworks in and with Western African countries to diversify foreign trade geographically and expand into new markets.**
 - a. Supporting Western African economies' efforts to diversify with regard to foreign trade and expansion into new markets.
 - b. Assessing the current position with regard to Switzerland's economic parameters in relation to the region's dynamic economies, with the aim of diversifying its economic partners.
 - c. Cultivating high-level contacts with economically promising partner countries in Western Africa.
- 5. Switzerland creates the optimum frameworks for scientific cooperation, in compliance with the fundamental principles of Swiss ERI policy, using existing instruments and involving the actors concerned.**

²⁷ Such as courses from the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre in Accra, or the Alioune Blondin Beye Peacekeeping School in Bamako.

Environnement

- 6. Switzerland provides targeted support to Western African states to help manage the consequences of climate change.**
 - a. Implementing bilateral arrangements under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement.
 - b. Considering and preventing climate change-related security risks.
 - c. Managing natural resources sustainably with a focus on food security and better access to water.
-

Democracy and governance

- 7. Switzerland strengthens democratic institutions and processes and fights corruption in Western Africa.**
 - a. Promoting efficient, transparent and accountable public administrations, especially at the local level.
 - b. Helping the media and civil society to go about their business freely.
 - c. Including certain countries in specific dialogue forums.

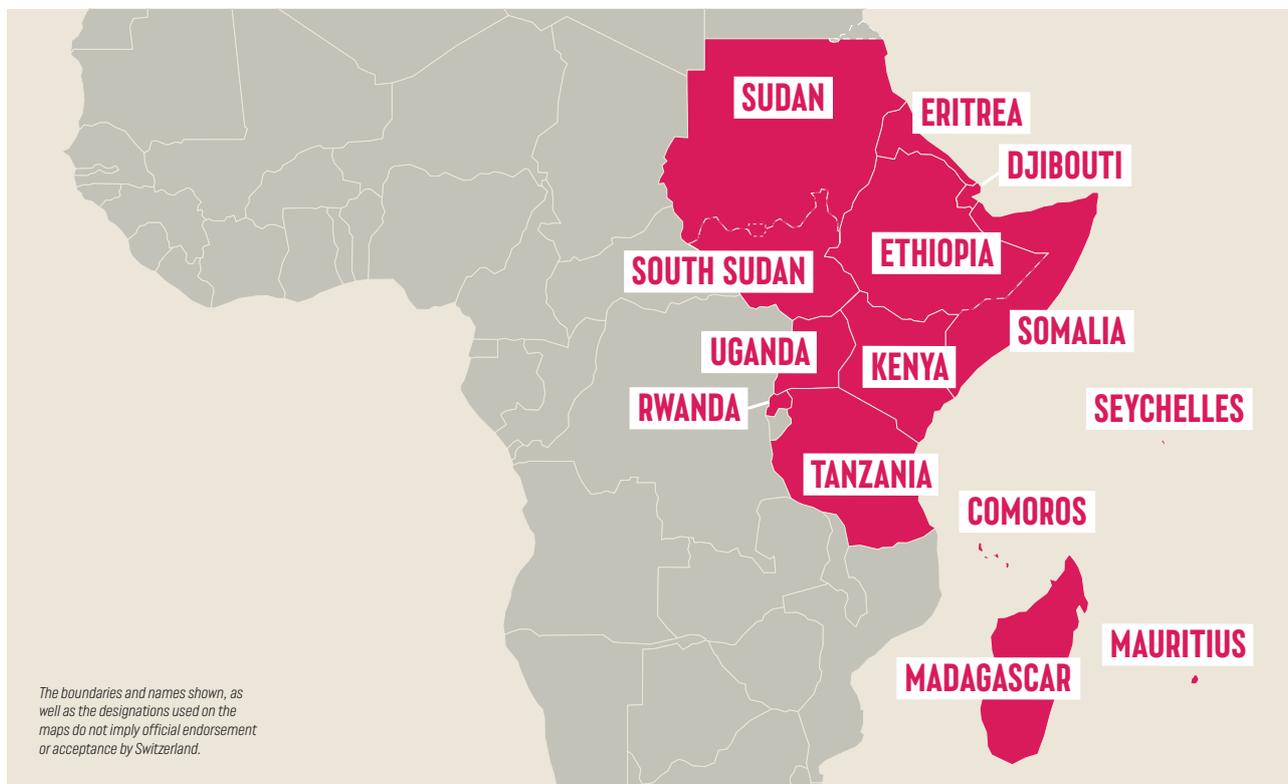
 - 8. Switzerland advances good governance and the rule of law.**
 - a. Conducting dialogue on human rights with Nigeria that also covers human trafficking.
 - b. Seconding civilian experts and police officers to international and regional organisations engaging with the rule of law.
 - c. Supporting women's rights organisations.
-

5.2 Eastern Africa

EASTERN AFRICA

Population: 427 million (2023)
Population growth: +1.9%
GDP: USD 444.5 billion (2023)
GDP/capita: USD 2,992 (2023)

Gini coefficient: 39.8
Urbanisation rate: 38.1% (2023)
Trade volume: CHF 877 million (2023)
Swiss abroad: 1,833 (2023)



Overview and regional characteristics:

Conflicts mean that many countries in the region are in a state of ongoing crisis. High rates of population growth are an additional issue. Conflicts in the Horn of Africa tend to persist, causing enormous internal and regional displacement and great humanitarian need. A large number of Eastern African countries are undergoing a process of political and economic transition. This holds out the prospect of a better long-term future for the people of these countries, but can also further heighten existing tensions and competition for resources. Before the benefits of the region's diversity can be harnessed, the rule of law must be strengthened, corruption must be fought, and deeply rooted ethnic conflicts must be addressed appropriately. The region is in a geostrategically important location, especially where the Red Sea is concerned. This means that supra-regional actors and influential neighbouring states hold considerable sway.

The region has fertile land masses and is rich in natural resources. However, droughts and flooding are frequent events that have a huge impact in terms of agricultural yields and result in food scarcity. In some parts of the region, growing competition for limited resources, such as water and fertile land, is increasing the likelihood of conflict. At the same time, other states are

better prepared for changes in the climate because they take a more sustainable approach to the environment.

Switzerland in Eastern Africa:

Switzerland has manifold strategic interests in Eastern Africa. Migration from and through the region, in particular, directly affects Switzerland. East Africa also presents opportunities for Switzerland in terms of geographical economic diversification and expansion into new markets. Switzerland has an established profile in Eastern Africa with a dense network of representations and a dedicated ambassador-at-large for the Horn of Africa. It offers its services as a bridge-builder and is committed to compliance with international humanitarian law and the rule of law. It lays the foundations for addressing the causes of irregular migration in a constructive way. Switzerland alleviates these causes in particular through its work to mitigate the impact of climate change in the region.

It continues to ensure a flexible peace policy framework that enables it to make the most of opportunities. The deployment of an ambassador-at-large gives Switzerland a better regional perspective. In its development cooperation activities, it is committed to securing basic healthcare needs and

vocational education and training for the population. It also aims to expand economic relations and it supports Swiss companies operating in the region.

Objectives and measures:

Peace and security

- 1. In Eastern Africa, Switzerland remains a valued intermediary in cases of violent conflict, with a focus on Sudan and flexible peace policy.**
 - a. Supporting the peace process in Sudan.
 - b. Promoting local capacities for peace work through civilian and military expertise and training.²⁸
 - c. Using the political profile of the new embassy in Kigali to support peace work, in particular with respect to Central Africa.
 - 2. Switzerland seeks migration-related partnerships with Eastern African states and plays an active role in regional dialogue.**
 - a. Supporting local and regional authorities in managing migration, including labour migration.
 - b. Promoting access to economic prospects and employment opportunities for migrants and forcibly displaced persons.
-

Prosperity and competitiveness

- 3. Switzerland makes targeted improvements to operating conditions for the local private sector in selected countries.**
 - a. Supporting the diversification of foreign trade and expansion into new markets.
 - b. Improving access to high-quality basic services.
 - 4. Switzerland strengthens the operating conditions for cooperation with Eastern African countries in order to diversify foreign trade geographically and expand into new markets.**
 - a. Assessing the economic parameters within the region's dynamic economies.
 - b. Diversifying economic partners and cultivating high-level contacts with promising partner countries.
 - 5. Switzerland creates the optimum frameworks for scientific cooperation, in compliance with the fundamental principles of Swiss ERI policy, using existing instruments and involving the actors concerned.**
-

Environment

- 6. Switzerland provides targeted support to Eastern African states to help them manage the impacts of climate change.**
 - a. Implementing bilateral arrangements under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement.
 - b. Preventing climate change-related security risks.
 - c. Using natural resources sustainably, with a focus on food security and improved access to clean water.
-

Democracy and governance

- 7. Switzerland strengthens democracy and the rule of law.**
 - a. Encouraging the development of local authority capacity to ensure the provision of basic services.
 - b. Stabilising fragile contexts by reinforcing democratic mechanisms for accountability at central and local level.

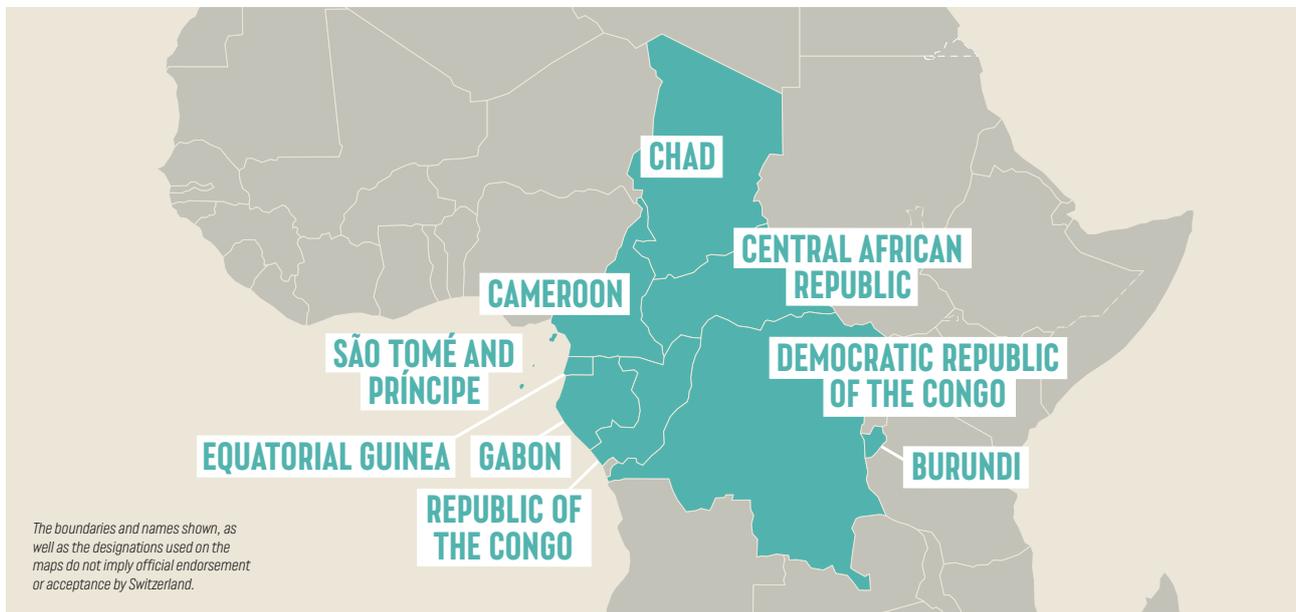
²⁸ For example: the International Peace Support Training Centre in Nairobi, or evaluating options for supporting local capacity development by experts, such as the Rwanda Peace Academy in Kigali.

5.3 Central Africa

CENTRAL AFRICA

Population: 179 million [2023]
Population growth: +2.6%
GDP: USD 151.5 billion [2023]
GDP/capita: USD 2,051 [2023]

Gini coefficient: 41.8
Urbanisation rate: 55.4% [2023]
Trade volume: CHF 98.2 million [2023]
Swiss abroad: 537 [2023]



Overview and regional characteristics:

Central Africa is a region marked by ongoing internal and cross-border conflict that hinders its economic and social development. The battle for natural resources and poor governance in some countries produces a climate of insecurity. The crisis situation in eastern Congo in particular remains tense, with the conflict already claiming many lives.

While the region has, remarkably, recorded average economic growth in recent years, the upward GDP trend remains fragile and depends primarily on movements in commodity prices. Eastern Africa is one of the richest areas in the world in terms of strategic resources such as rare earths and cobalt. Growth is being felt to only a limited extent by the population, however. Numerous inequalities persist and the region's infrastructure is still underdeveloped, while high levels of corruption further impede sustainable development.

In addition, Central African states are vulnerable to the impacts of climate change such as uneven rainfall patterns, large-scale flooding and a sharp rise in temperatures. Extreme weather events only make food crises and forced displacements worse. With its huge forests and bodies of water, the Congo Basin is important to biodiversity and the stability of the global climate, and has a buffering effect on the region. Although Central Africa has the potential for green economic growth, this has barely been used to date owing to a lack of funding and innovation.

Switzerland in Central Africa:

Promoting peace is one of Switzerland's priorities in Central Africa, especially in the Great Lakes region. Given its impartiality and expertise in mediation, it can play a key role in resolving conflicts. By actively supporting dialogue initiatives, Switzerland aims to shore up the resilience of local communities and to prevent conflict. Upgrading the cooperation office in Kigali,²⁹ Rwanda, is intended in part to raise Switzerland's political profile in peacebuilding in the Great Lakes region.

Development cooperation and humanitarian aid are established pillars of Swiss action in Central Africa. In the face of repeated crisis, Switzerland works to meet people's needs by implementing projects relating to health, nutrition, the protection of civilians, and civic engagement.

It supports the responsible use of natural resources, which is particularly crucial in fighting climate change. Many raw materials that are essential to the energy transition originate from Central Africa, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo specifically. Working alongside businesses and civil society, Switzerland is committed to ensuring that raw materials are extracted responsibly and contribute to people's prosperity.

²⁹ In this strategy, Rwanda falls within the Eastern Africa region, but plays an important part with regard to the conflicts in the Great Lakes region.

In doing so it supports the implementation of the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights.³⁰

Close coordination between peacebuilding, development cooperation and humanitarian aid facilitates a flexible and adaptable response to the region's complex and ever-changing needs. Switzerland's programmes reinforce democratic institutions, improve access to basic social services, and promote food security and integrated market systems.

³⁰ [United Nations Global Compact](#)

Objectives and measures:

Peace and security

- 1. Switzerland systematically uses its peace policy instruments to prevent, manage and resolve violent conflict.**
 - a. Initiating and supporting at least one regional mediation process.
 - b. Supporting at least one national or interregional peace process.
 - c. Seconding civilian experts and police officers to organisations that engage with the rule of law and peacebuilding.
-

Prosperity and competitiveness

- 2. Switzerland supports particularly vulnerable population groups.**
 - a. Creating new, better quality jobs and making it easier to access services and financial products.
 - b. Improving access to sanitary facilities.
 - c. Promoting the implementation of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises on responsible business conduct. Encouraging closer cooperation with the Swiss private sector.
-

Democracy and governance

- 3. Switzerland increases authorities' participation and efficiency in the provision of public services.**
 - a. Strengthening democratic mechanisms for accountability at central and local level.
 - b. Developing local authority capacity to provide basic services.
 - 4. Switzerland prioritises human rights work and equality issues by implementing programmes to counter gender-based violence and impunity.**
-

5.4 Southern Africa

SOUTHERN AFRICA

Population: 198 million (2023)
Population growth: +1.9%
GDP: USD 568.15 billion (2023)
GDP/capita: USD 2,857 (2023)

Gini coefficient: 51.7
Urbanisation rate: 45.7% (2023)
Trade volume: CHF 4.54 million (2023)
Swiss abroad: 4,876 (2023)



The boundaries and names shown, as well as the designations used on the maps do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by Switzerland.

Overview and regional characteristics:

The Southern Africa region appears to be relatively stable. That said, many states are facing major social, economic and ecological challenges. Supra-regional security policy networks are also being created, particularly with respect to Central Africa.

There are also enormous economic disparities, not only between states, but also within societies. Large sections of the region are suffering from ongoing energy crises, inadequate infrastructure, weak institutions, weak rule of law and, in some cases, fragile basic services. Abundant natural resources hold economic potential, but also pose risks to the environment and society. South Africa is the region's principal driver of economic growth and innovation. The country has well-developed infrastructure which supports industry and the technology sector and has attracted foreign investment in the past. Furthermore, with its strategic geographical location it is an important trading hub for the whole continent.

Progress on democratisation also differs widely within Southern Africa, where stable democracies border states with considerable democratic deficits. Many countries in the region are battling widespread corruption.

Climate change is having a significant impact on Southern Africa. It is threatening human security and has the potential to undermine earlier successes in the fight against poverty.

Switzerland in Southern Africa:

Switzerland's engagement in Southern Africa is as diverse as the region itself. In South Africa, the main areas of focus are economic cooperation and foreign economic policy. Switzerland is represented by a Swiss Business Hub and is also active in economic development cooperation. It is also a strong advocate of the rule of law to encourage economic progress in Southern Africa. Important work has been carried out with regard to international mutual assistance and asset recovery.³¹ Work in Zambia, Zimbabwe and Mozambique principally involves improving basic services, creating jobs and encouraging civil society participation in political decision-making processes.

Switzerland is working towards stability in the region. In addition to improving basic services, its longstanding ties to the region enable Switzerland to develop approaches to diversifying its international trade. It attaches great importance to sustainable activities that are compliant with both international law and human rights, including by companies operating in the raw materials sector in particular. Given Southern Africa's potential in terms of natural resources for renewable energies, the region offers opportunities for new forms of cooperation. To build these partnerships on solid ground, Switzerland has an interest in functioning governance and the systematic prevention and combating of corruption. Where peace policy is concerned, it is in Switzerland's interests to harness the successes of the past and, where possible, to build on them.

³¹ Locating and returning assets in the context of criminal investigations and mutual assistance proceedings.

Objectives and measures:

Peace and security

1. Switzerland supports peace initiatives by engaging in dialogue and establishing peace-brokering capabilities.
-

Prosperity and competitiveness

2. Switzerland seeks to improve economic conditions in South Africa and in Southern Africa generally.
 - a. Assessing the economic situation with the aim of diversifying economic partners.
 - b. Improving conditions for the local private sector.
 - c. Facilitating access to regional and international markets.
 3. Switzerland fosters human development and universal service provision: assistance in emergency situations, job creation and access to services and financial products.
 4. Switzerland creates the optimum frameworks for scientific cooperation in line with ERI policy, using existing instruments and involving the actors concerned, for example to support scientific implementation by the SKAO as a member state.
-

Environment

5. Switzerland supports national and local disaster risk reduction measures in the context of climate change, e.g. bilateral arrangements to tackle climate change under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement.
-

Démocratie et gouvernance

6. Switzerland strengthens democracy and promotes human rights.
 - a. Including certain countries in the region in dialogue forums on democracy.
 - b. Conducting bilateral human rights dialogue with South Africa and accompanying projects.
 - c. Seconding civilian experts to international and regional organisations to promote the rule of law.
 - d. Supporting programmes to reduce violence and protect vulnerable persons.

5.5 Northern Africa

NORTHERN AFRICA

Population: 220 million [2023]
Population growth: +1.4%
GDP: USD 940 billion [2023]
GDP/capita: USD 4,610 [2023]

Gini coefficient: 32.9
Urbanisation rate: 65.7% [2023]
Trade volume: CHF 4 million [2023]
Swiss abroad: 4,908 [2023]



Northern and Sub-Saharan Africa have close historical, cultural and economic ties. However, Northern Africa is also firmly connected, both culturally and politically, with the MENA region, which is why the Federal Council's MENA Strategy 2021–24 and its follow-up strategy set out the objectives and measures for this region in detail. Relations between Northern and Sub-Saharan Africa are described below.

Overview and regional characteristics:

Historically, trans-Saharan trade routes played a key role in connecting Mediterranean coasts with the civilisations of Western Africa, and facilitated the exchange of goods, ideas and culture. This legacy has left a lasting mark, leading to close ties between the Sahel region and areas of Northern Africa in particular.

From an economic perspective, Northern African states act as a bridge for Sub-Saharan Africa to Europe and the Middle East. Cross-border initiatives such as the African Union and the African Continental Free Trade Area promote economic cooperation and intra-African trade. Northern African countries emphasise their potential as a gateway to Africa for European markets, as well as their strategic importance to economic growth throughout the African continent. Common challenges also transcend regional borders in other areas such as the fight against terrorism, human trafficking and migration. Extremist groups operate in the Sahel region and pose a threat to Northern and Sub-Saharan Africa alike. Countries like Algeria, Egypt and Morocco also have a bearing on regional dynamics in Africa.

Ecological challenges such as desertification, droughts and the associated food insecurity in the Sahel region require coordinated measures to improve resilience and drive sustainable development. Climate change further exacerbates Northern Africa's vulnerabilities, and leads to water stress that puts further pressure on communities.

Switzerland in Northern Africa:

Switzerland's interests and added value in the Northern Africa region, as in others, centre around peace and security, especially in connection with the neighbouring Sahel region. Switzerland contributes to peacebuilding and conflict prevention, the protection of basic rights, compliance with international humanitarian law, and upholding the rule of law. Northern African states' geographical location south of the Mediterranean makes them priority partners in Switzerland's foreign policy on migration. That is why it cultivates close relationships and undertakes extensive work in this area, including measures to protect migrants.

Switzerland's humanitarian engagement in Libya and Egypt, in particular, does much towards the stability of the region. It also has substantial interests where prosperity and competitiveness are concerned, and is continually developing economic partnerships with selected states.

Many Swiss companies wishing to expand into the subcontinent are present in Northern Africa. Given the size of their domestic markets, their political stability and their degree of economic diversification, Morocco and Egypt offer valuable opportunities for Swiss businesses. There are also solid bilateral economic frameworks with Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia, which provide incentives to expand economic relations.

General objectives for the Northern Africa region are set out below. They are measured and reviewed precisely at country level in the context of the MENA Strategy.

Objectives and measures:

Peace and security

1. Switzerland promotes peace initiatives and dialogue between regional actors to advance political solutions to conflict.
2. Switzerland supports multilateral peace processes, and those of the UN in particular.

Protection of persons in need

3. Switzerland promotes ordered migration governance and protection for migrants, especially children and young people.
4. Switzerland boosts the opportunities opened up by regular (and circular) migration.
5. Switzerland maintains its humanitarian support in the relevant contexts.

Prosperity and competitiveness

6. Switzerland promotes inclusive, sustainable economic growth in Northern Africa and supports reforms to advance sound macroeconomic governance.
7. Switzerland strengthens economic ties with Northern Africa.
8. Switzerland provides support to governments and companies in Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia in relation to corporate responsibility.
9. Switzerland creates frameworks for scientific cooperation in line with ERI policy.

Environment, climate and energy

10. Switzerland supports all efforts to reduce the impact of climate change (town planning, green funds, water management and waste management).
11. Switzerland encourages the implementation of existing bilateral agreements on climate protection.

Governance, human rights and combating corruption

12. Switzerland promotes political participation and strengthens the basis for inclusive economic and social development.

5.6 Multilateralism

Overview and characteristics:

In the future, African institutions will become more important to the continent's development. Chief among these are the African Union (AU) and its specialist agencies, as well as continental financial institutions. International organisations such as the various UN agencies, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) will nonetheless continue to play a key role in Africa in the years to come.

According to its Agenda 2063, the African Union aims to create an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa.³² In recent years the AU has launched new initiatives towards closer cooperation in areas such as health, the economy, the climate and humanitarian affairs. Focusing on preventing, managing and resolving conflicts and on post-conflict reconstruction, the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) is one of the mainstays of the AU. In tandem with the African governance architecture, the APSA leads the way on the continent's development. Recent years have seen an ever-more regional approach to handling conflicts. The softening and lifting of UN sanctions regimes and the end of various long-term UN peace missions bear witness to this. This regionalisation is a major factor in the increasingly important position that the AU's Peace and Security Council (PSC) will occupy. Close coordination with the UN Security Council (UNSC) will remain just as critical, as will coordination with African UNSC members as a means of representing common African positions.

African states are becoming more and more vocal in calling for reforms to the UN system, targeted specifically at greater inclusivity and transparency. At the same time, they are joining forces in calling for an expansion of UNSC membership. African states are also calling for better representation in relation to international financial institutions. In parallel, Africa is building its influence in alternative multilateral groups of states: the BRICS grouping has recently been expanded to include Egypt and Ethiopia, and the AU has joined the G20. States playing an increasingly prominent role in global developments highlight Africa's aspiration to be consulted more fully. Furthermore, many African states are coordinating more closely within bodies such as the International Organisation of La Francophonie (IOF) and the Arab League.

Multilateral development banks and UN organisations are making significant contributions to tackling global and regional challenges in Africa, such as climate change and fragility. African countries play an active part in shaping these institutions. The African Development Bank (AfDB) enjoys a high degree of political legitimacy on the continent and contributes to regional development and integration by promoting sustainable investment. In addition, the European Bank for

Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) has been active in Northern Africa for almost 25 years, and is now planning a gradual expansion into selected countries in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Switzerland and African multilateralism:

Switzerland is accredited as an AU observer in Addis Ababa. The growing importance of African multilateralism is also reflected in its geographical expansion and widening network. For example, AU initiatives also have a bearing on various Swiss foreign policy priorities. In addition, African initiatives are increasingly setting up offices and regional centres throughout the continent. This offers Switzerland the opportunity to mobilise its broad network of representations abroad and to sustain relationships on the ground in a coordinated fashion. Special attention is to be given to International Geneva in this context, as the place where international standards that are relevant to African states are discussed and determined. It is therefore the natural choice to build closer ties between Geneva and multilateral Africa, for example with the African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank), which could also open up new business opportunities for Swiss exporters.

Switzerland supports African states' efforts to take on more responsibility within the APSA framework. From a strategic perspective it makes sense for Switzerland to help support promising multilateral initiatives. It also has a particular interest in continuing to pursue cooperation opportunities with the AfCFTA. It is therefore clear that Switzerland should seek to collaborate more with African states in existing multilateral frameworks such as the UN, for example on environmental issues. Africa accounts for more than a quarter of UN member states. These states more or less align with Switzerland in their positions on certain issues. One area in which both sides overlap specifically is their belief in a stronger role for the universal multilateral system.

As a member of the AfDB, the World Bank and the EBRD, Switzerland uses the opportunities presented by dialogue to advance economic conditions, governance and private sector development, and to reduce the high debt levels of many African member states. At the same time, it works to ensure that African states are actively involved in multilateral bodies addressing international financial and tax issues.

³² Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, <https://au.int/en/agenda2063/overview>

Objectives and measures:

Peace and security

- 1. Switzerland supports the African Union and regional organisations with their peacebuilding efforts, and makes its own experts available where needed.**
 - a. Regional organisations benefit in selected policy areas from Switzerland's peacebuilding support and expertise.
 - b. Strengthening relations between African states, the AU and regional organisations with International Geneva.
-

Prosperity and competitiveness

- 2. Switzerland supports the AfCFTA and seeks access for its companies.**
 - a. Reviewing the inclusion of technical support measures in the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area.
 - b. Encouraging contact between the Swiss private sector and the AfCFTA Secretariat.
 - c. Reviewing the conduct of trade dialogue with the AfCFTA Secretariat.
- 3. Switzerland strengthens its strategic partnership with Afreximbank. Switzerland proposes Geneva as the location for an Afreximbank European office.**
- 4. Switzerland advocates for a coordinated, consensus-based international tax architecture and also the development of relevant capacities, in particular through increased mobilisation of national resources, as part of international cooperation work, to support the implementation of the OECD/G20 Inclusive Framework on BEPS.**
- 5. Switzerland conducts dialogue with African countries with regard to their needs in relation to an impact-driven post-2030 follow-up agenda.**
 - a. Using the annual High Level Political Forum in New York as a platform for dialogue.
 - b. Anticipating future technologies, specifically with a view to achieving the SDGs, with the involvement of the Geneva Science and Diplomacy Anticipator (GESDA) foundation.
- 6. Through its representation in governing bodies, Switzerland influences the strategic, institutional and operational direction of multilateral development banks.**
 - a. Focusing on global challenges such as climate change and poverty reduction.
 - b. Reinforcing coordination between development banks to achieve a greater systemic impact.

6 Agility and flexibility of the Africa Strategy 2025–28

6.1 Anticipation

Anticipation is integral to implementing the Africa Strategy 2025–28, allowing the volatile context to be taken into account and ensuring that foreign policy instruments have optimum impact. For some considerable time, the Federal Administration has been using methods to anticipate future developments, for example in planning and implementing development cooperation programmes. For example, ‘monitoring development-related variables’; delivers continuous data on contexts in various African countries. However, other anticipation methods will also be used systematically and comprehensively under this Strategy.

Head office and the external network jointly undertake a horizon scanning process, which increases openness to future developments. Important signals are promptly passed on to head office and changes in circumstances are systematically tracked.

To date, the standard approach to planning new country and regional programmes has been to develop a variety of scenarios describing a range of possible future developments. These define measures and indicators to identify shifts towards a given scenario early on, so that an appropriate response can be mounted. The quality of these scenarios has been optimised for the purposes of the Africa Strategy 2025–28.

The need for contingency planning is determined continually on the basis of the horizon scanning process and scenario analyses. Decisions regarding the implementation of plans are based on set criteria. This approach identifies inconsistencies with the current situation that are relevant to Switzerland and that require measures to be prepared and existing instruments adapted. Switzerland’s detailed planning and preparation of measures in response to specific developments in Africa, such as unconstitutional changes of government and escalating tensions, ensure that it can respond more swiftly and without time pressure, and improve coherence in Swiss foreign policy.

Anticipation strengthens specific preparations and plans both in terms of potentially negative developments and future opportunities. The Strategy is therefore implemented flexibly.

6.2 Foreign policy toolbox

The instruments comprising the foreign policy toolbox are described in the Foreign Policy Strategy 2024–27. Anticipation work also serves to align foreign policy instruments more closely to the context to achieve the best possible impact and to deploy resources in a more targeted fashion.

Safeguarding Switzerland’s fundamental interests and achieving the objectives defined in the Strategy as fully as possible remain key. Foreign policy instruments must always be applied flexibly, both negative and positive developments must be allowed to shape Swiss foreign policy, adjustments must be made and the strategic orientation of foreign policy must evolve. Any adjustments to the Strategy may be decided as part of the midterm review scheduled to be held after two years.

7 Implementation partners

Switzerland will implement this Strategy in a spirit of partnership, representing its interests and promoting its values by working both with African governments and a range of actors. To this end, it encourages the establishment of partnerships and networks with governments, trade associations, chambers of commerce, businesses, academia, civil society organisations and development banks. In Switzerland, the Federal Council places a particular emphasis on synergies with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the three Geneva centres (the GCSP, DCAF and GICHD).³³

Switzerland as a host state

As an important partner in foreign policy cooperation, the host state bears primary responsibility for reforms and social change. Given the important role played by African representations in Bern and Geneva, Switzerland seeks to convince all African UN member states of the advantages of having a permanent presence in Switzerland. At present, 51 out of 54 African UN member states are represented in Switzerland. It also works to strengthen political dialogue with other states through diplomatic visits and by using its network of local representations.

International and regional organisations

When implementing cooperation programmes, Switzerland taps into the expertise of international organisations such as the UN, the World Bank and the ICRC. In addition to funding, Switzerland provides its own experts to these organisations, for example for the purposes of peace missions. It is crucial to Switzerland that these organisations have clear objectives and defined margins for manoeuvre so that their effectiveness and efficiency can be reviewed and improved. Switzerland therefore supports, for example, the UN special envoy's work in strengthening regional cooperation in relation to the protracted conflict in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Further partners include 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).

European Union and other European partners

Switzerland works with the EU and its member states in several African countries. This collaboration is focused on humanitarian aid, development cooperation and the promotion of civil peace. To reinforce action in these areas, Switzerland conducts political dialogue on Africa with the EU and several of its member states. The potential of joint initiatives and action should be harnessed more systematically in future. For example, the joint strategy for Africa planned by the EU and AU will support the development of cooperation on areas such as climate change and digitalisation. Switzerland also supports regional dialogue forums such as the Khartoum Process and Rabat Process on migration. Where visas are concerned, Switzerland works closely with the Schengen states to expand the range of available services and simplify applications through representation agreements in 25 countries.

Companies

A stable and predictable business climate is vitally important to companies. Switzerland engages in ongoing dialogue with trade associations, chambers of commerce and businesses. Interests shared with the private sector include peace and security, the rule of law, stable governance and an effective infrastructure. Many Swiss businesses already operate in Africa, creating high-quality jobs and improving local prospects. By practising responsible business conduct, companies can contribute enormously to sustainable development and the protection of human rights. The private sector is also a key partner in development cooperation.

Scientific cooperation partners

With its globally renowned institutes of higher education, Switzerland is a leading light in innovation and new technologies. Under its bilateral cooperation programmes, the federal government appoints Swiss higher education institutions to act as 'leading houses' in research and innovation for the purpose of developing cooperation instruments. Switzerland's scientific institutions contribute significantly to the projects of the European & Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership (EDCTP), which promotes clinical research into illnesses that are prevalent in Sub-Saharan Africa. In addition, they cooperate with African partners in the context of other EU funding programmes, contributing substantially to scientific cooperation between Switzerland and the countries of Africa. These partnerships promote knowledge-sharing in various fields of research and support

³³ Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP), Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance (DCAF) and the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD).

sustainable solutions to common challenges. The Swiss National Science Foundation works closely with a range of partner agencies on the African continent. A number of other scientific actors from Switzerland also engage in various forms of cooperation with African partners.

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs)

Switzerland works with local, Swiss and international NGOs in a variety of contexts. These NGOs provide vital services, such as food, healthcare and accommodation, in crisis-hit areas. In other regions they are involved in issues such as human rights, security, education and water. NGOs have a crucial role to play in ensuring that good quality services are provided. Switzerland ensures, through internal and external audits, that funds are used properly and targets met.

Overview of objectives

Regional objectives – Western Africa

Peace and security

- 1. Switzerland acts as an intermediary in the prevention, management and resolution of violent conflicts.**
 - a. Encouraging, supporting or leading mediation processes.
 - b. Strengthening social cohesion and the population's resilience in the face of violent extremism.
 - c. Evaluating and supporting the building of local peacebuilding capacities by civilian and military experts.³⁴
- 2. Switzerland steps up dialogue with West African partners on migration.**
 - a. Continuing current dialogue on migration with four states.
 - b. Reinforcing cooperation with at least two further states.
 - c. Implementing programmes to protect migrants and to develop capacity in the migration field, especially with Nigeria.

Prosperity and competitiveness

- 3. Switzerland advances sustainable development in selected Western African countries.**
 - a. Improving access to and the standard of basic services, focusing on basic education and financial inclusion.
 - b. Improving access even in crisis situations.
 - c. Stabilising economic growth.
- 4. Switzerland is committed to improving operating frameworks in and with Western African countries to diversify foreign trade geographically and expand into new markets.**
 - a. Supporting Western African economies' efforts to diversify with regard to foreign trade and expansion into new markets.
 - b. Assessing the current position with regard to Switzerland's economic parameters in relation to the region's dynamic economies, with the aim of diversifying its economic partners.
 - c. Cultivating high-level contacts with economically promising partner countries in Western Africa.
- 5. Switzerland creates the optimum frameworks for scientific cooperation, in compliance with the fundamental principles of Swiss ERI policy, using existing instruments and involving the actors concerned.**

Environnement

- 6. Switzerland provides targeted support to Western African states to help manage the consequences of climate change.**
 - a. Implementing bilateral arrangements under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement.
 - b. Considering and preventing climate change-related security risks.
 - c. Managing natural resources sustainably with a focus on food security and better access to water.

Democracy and governance

- 7. Switzerland strengthens democratic institutions and processes and fights corruption in Western Africa.**
 - a. Promoting efficient, transparent and accountable public administrations, especially at the local level.
 - b. Helping the media and civil society to go about their business freely.
 - c. Including certain countries in specific dialogue forums.
- 8. Switzerland advances good governance and the rule of law.**
 - a. Conducting dialogue on human rights with Nigeria that also covers human trafficking.
 - b. Seconding civilian experts and police officers to international and regional organisations engaging with the rule of law.
 - c. Supporting women's rights organisations.

³⁴ Such as courses from the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre in Accra, or the Alioune Blondin Beye Peacekeeping School in Bamako.

Regional objectives – Eastern Africa

Peace and security

- 1. In Eastern Africa, Switzerland remains a valued intermediary in cases of violent conflict, with a focus on Sudan and flexible peace policy.**
 - a. Supporting the peace process in Sudan.
 - b. Promoting local capacities for peace work through civilian and military expertise and training.³⁵
 - c. Using the political profile of the new embassy in Kigali to support peace work, in particular with respect to Central Africa.
 - 2. Switzerland seeks migration-related partnerships with Eastern African states and plays an active role in regional dialogue.**
 - a. Supporting local and regional authorities in managing migration, including labour migration.
 - b. Promoting access to economic prospects and employment opportunities for migrants and forcibly displaced persons.
-

Prosperity and competitiveness

- 3. Switzerland makes targeted improvements to operating conditions for the local private sector in selected countries.**
 - a. Supporting the diversification of foreign trade and expansion into new markets.
 - b. Improving access to high-quality basic services.
 - 4. Switzerland strengthens the operating conditions for cooperation with Eastern African countries in order to diversify foreign trade geographically and expand into new markets.**
 - a. Assessing the economic parameters within the region's dynamic economies.
 - b. Diversifying economic partners and cultivating high-level contacts with promising partner countries.
 - 5. Switzerland creates the optimum frameworks for scientific cooperation, in compliance with the fundamental principles of Swiss ERI policy, using existing instruments and involving the actors concerned.**
-

Environment

- 6. Switzerland provides targeted support to Eastern African states to help them manage the impacts of climate change.**
 - a. Implementing bilateral arrangements under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement.
 - b. Preventing climate change-related security risks.
 - c. Using natural resources sustainably, with a focus on food security and improved access to clean water.
-

Democracy and governance

- 7. Switzerland strengthens democracy and the rule of law.**
 - a. Encouraging the development of local authority capacity to ensure the provision of basic services.
 - b. Stabilising fragile contexts by reinforcing democratic mechanisms for accountability at central and local level.

³⁵ For example: the International Peace Support Training Centre in Nairobi, or evaluating options for supporting local capacity development by experts, such as the Rwanda Peace Academy in Kigali.

Regional objectives – Central Africa

Peace and security

1. **Switzerland systematically uses its peace policy instruments to prevent, manage and resolve violent conflict.**
 - a. Initiating and supporting at least one regional mediation process.
 - b. Supporting at least one national or interregional peace process.
 - c. Seconding civilian experts and police officers to organisations that engage with the rule of law and peacebuilding.

Prosperity and competitiveness

2. **Switzerland supports particularly vulnerable population groups.**
 - a. Creating new, better quality jobs and making it easier to access services and financial products.
 - b. Improving access to sanitary facilities.
 - c. Promoting the implementation of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises on responsible business conduct. Encouraging closer cooperation with the Swiss private sector.

Democracy and governance

3. **Switzerland increases authorities' participation and efficiency in the provision of public services.**
 - a. Strengthening democratic mechanisms for accountability at central and local level.
 - b. Developing local authority capacity to provide basic services.
4. **Switzerland prioritises human rights work and equality issues by implementing programmes to counter gender-based violence and impunity.**

Regional objectives – Southern Africa

Peace and security

1. **Switzerland supports peace initiatives by engaging in dialogue and establishing peace-brokering capabilities.**

Prosperity and competitiveness

2. **Switzerland seeks to improve economic conditions in South Africa and in Southern Africa generally.**
 - a. Assessing the economic situation with the aim of diversifying economic partners.
 - b. Improving conditions for the local private sector.
 - c. Facilitating access to regional and international markets.
3. **Switzerland fosters human development and universal service provision: assistance in emergency situations, job creation and access to services and financial products.**
4. **Switzerland creates the optimum frameworks for scientific cooperation in line with ERI policy, using existing instruments and involving the actors concerned, for example to support scientific implementation by the SKAO as a member state.**

Environment

5. **Switzerland supports national and local disaster risk reduction measures in the context of climate change, e.g. bilateral arrangements to tackle climate change under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement.**

Démocratie et gouvernance

6. **Switzerland strengthens democracy and promotes human rights.**
 - a. Including certain countries in the region in dialogue forums on democracy.
 - b. Conducting bilateral human rights dialogue with South Africa and accompanying projects.
 - c. Seconding civilian experts to international and regional organisations to promote the rule of law.
 - d. Supporting programmes to reduce violence and protect vulnerable persons.

Regional objectives – Northern Africa

Peace and security

1. Switzerland promotes peace initiatives and dialogue between regional actors to advance political solutions to conflict.
2. Switzerland supports multilateral peace processes, and those of the UN in particular.

Protection of persons in need

3. Switzerland promotes ordered migration governance and protection for migrants, especially children and young people.
4. Switzerland boosts the opportunities opened up by regular (and circular) migration.
5. Switzerland maintains its humanitarian support in the relevant contexts.

Prosperity and competitiveness

6. Switzerland promotes inclusive, sustainable economic growth in Northern Africa and supports reforms to advance sound macroeconomic governance.
7. Switzerland strengthens economic ties with Northern Africa.
8. Switzerland provides support to governments and companies in Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia in relation to corporate responsibility.
9. Switzerland creates frameworks for scientific cooperation in line with ERI policy.

Environment, climate and energy

10. Switzerland supports all efforts to reduce the impact of climate change (town planning, green funds, water management and waste management).
11. Switzerland encourages the implementation of existing bilateral agreements on climate protection.

Governance, human rights and combating corruption

12. Switzerland promotes political participation and strengthens the basis for inclusive economic and social development.

Regional objectives – multilateralism

Peace and security

- 1. Switzerland supports the African Union and regional organisations with their peacebuilding efforts, and makes its own experts available where needed.**
 - a. Regional organisations benefit in selected policy areas from Switzerland's peacebuilding support and expertise.
 - b. Strengthening relations between African states, the AU and regional organisations with International Geneva.
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Prosperity and competitiveness

- 2. Switzerland supports the AfCFTA and seeks access for its companies.**
 - a. Reviewing the inclusion of technical support measures in the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area.
 - b. Encouraging contact between the Swiss private sector and the AfCFTA Secretariat.
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- 3. Switzerland strengthens its strategic partnership with Afreximbank. Switzerland proposes Geneva as the location for an Afreximbank European office.**
- 4. Switzerland advocates for a coordinated, consensus-based international tax architecture and also the development of relevant capacities, in particular through increased mobilisation of national resources, as part of international cooperation work, to support the implementation of the OECD/G20 Inclusive Framework on BEPS.**
- 5. Switzerland conducts dialogue with African countries with regard to their needs in relation to an impact-driven post-2030 follow-up agenda.**
 - a. Using the annual High Level Political Forum in New York as a platform for dialogue.
 - b. Anticipating future technologies, specifically with a view to achieving the SDGs, with the involvement of the Geneva Science and Diplomacy Anticipator (GESDA) foundation.
- 6. Through its representation in governing bodies, Switzerland influences the strategic, institutional and operational direction of multilateral development banks.**
 - a. Focusing on global challenges such as climate change and poverty reduction.
 - b. Reinforcing coordination between development banks to achieve a greater systemic impact.

List of abbreviations

AfCFTA	African Continental Free Trade Area	G20	Group of the 20 most important industrialised and emerging countries
AfDB	African Development Bank	GCSP	Geneva Centre for Security Policy
Afreximbank	African Export-Import Bank	GDP	Gross domestic product
APSA	African Peace and Security Architecture	GESDA	Geneva Science and Diplomacy Anticipator
ASS / AES	Alliance of Sahel States / Alliance des États du Sahel	GICHD	Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining
AU	African Union	IC	International Cooperation
BEPS	Base Erosion and Profit Sharing	ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
BRICS+	Union of states consisting of: Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (as at 2010), expanded to include Ethiopia, Egypt, Iran and the United Arab Emirates (as at 2024)	IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
CO ₂	Carbon dioxide	IMF I	International Monetary Fund
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease 2019	IOF	International Organisation of la Francophonie
DCAF	Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance	IPSTC	International Peace Support Training Centre, Nairobi, Kenya
DTA	Double taxation agreement	MENA	Middle East and North Africa
EAC	East African Community	MINUSMA	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development	NGO	Non-governmental organisation
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States	OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
EDCTP	European & Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership	PSC	African Union Peace and Security Council
EMP-ABB	Alioune Blondin Beye Peacekeeping School, Bamako, Mali	REC	Regional Economic Commissions
ERI	Education, Research and Innovation	RPA	Rwanda Peace Academy
EU	European Union	SADC	Southern African Development Community
FDFA	Federal Department of Foreign Affairs	SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
FPS	Foreign Policy Strategy	SHA	Swiss Humanitarian Aid Unit
		SKAO	Square Kilometre Array Observatory
		UN	United Nations
		UNSC	UN Security Council
		USA	United States of America

Glossary

The FDFA website contains a [glossary](#) with foreign policy terms, which is kept continually up to date. The aim of the glossary is to contribute to a common understanding of foreign policy terms.



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