

# **Africa's Looming Mega-Challenges**

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Successive administrations have been hard pressed to tackle long-term, sweeping challenges in Africa, with breaking developments and crises on the continent too often threatening to consume more resources and attention than are typically available. Yet “mega-trends” like demographic patterns, climate change, and increasing food insecurity will affect the region’s stability and development and put at risk gains made through other targeted U.S.-backed initiatives. The magnitude, time horizon, and diffuse consequences of these dynamics, and the United States’ limited capacity to influence them, tend to relegate these considerations to the background in the policy-making process.

The Bush administration took tentative steps to address these issues, and took strong emergency action when it became apparent in late 2007 that a global food crisis was under way, but overall, efforts to address these profoundly influential trends were modest. To bolster stability, prevent crises, and protect gains made to date the new administration should be far more ambitious, addressing these issues in a focused rather than incidental way.

This chapter is concerned with three interconnected trends likely to play a significant role in shaping Africa’s future: steady growth in youth populations and urban centers, climate change, and increasing food insecurity.

## **Youthful, Increasingly Urbanized Populations**

Most of sub-Saharan Africa will be gripped by a population “youth bulge” for foreseeable future, meaning that young adults (aged 15 to 29) will account for a disproportionately large share—in many cases more than half—of the total adult population. Fertility rates remain high throughout most of the continent, and life expectancy continues to be relatively low, and thus African population structures tend to

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have vast numbers of children and increasingly large numbers of young adults. More than 70 percent of all Kenyans, Ugandans, Ethiopians, Liberians, Nigerians, and Zimbabweans are under the age of 30, and the youthful nature of these populations is not projected to change in the near future. In fact, sub-Saharan Africa is the one youth-heavy region of the world in which the youth bulge is not expected to decline significantly over the next 15 years.

As a result, the region will have to provide for vast numbers of young children and create jobs for the fastest-growing labor force in the world.<sup>1</sup> Over a dozen sub-Saharan countries are expected to experience a 100 to 157 percent growth in their labor force between 2005 and 2030.<sup>2</sup> Large populations of young people can act as engines for economic growth, but only in contexts in which they have access to education and labor markets are able to absorb them. In most of Africa today, education levels continue to lag, and even those who are highly educated often find themselves unemployed or underemployed after graduation.

At the same time, African societies are urbanizing rapidly, and the region's urban population is expected to increase from 294 million to 742 million between 2000 and 2030.<sup>3</sup> By 2025, more than half of Africa's population will live in urban areas.<sup>4</sup> Currently 72 percent of Africa's urban populations live in slums. The concentration of young people coping with poverty, unemployment and underemployment, and few avenues of social mobility and economic opportunity can lead to a volatile mix of alienation and frustration, especially as media images from the industrialized world continue to penetrate deeply into the region, magnifying the sense of relative deprivation. Young people can be agents of change that transform societies for the better, but they can only play this role when there is space for them to act constructively.

A significant body of research has found a strong correlation between the likelihood of civil conflict and the existence of an urbanized youth bulge. Population Action International, for example, found that countries with more than 67 percent of the population under the age of 30 have been four times as likely as countries with an older age structure to experience civil conflict<sup>5</sup>. Large youth populations can also contribute to increased migratory pressure, as young people unable to realize their aspirations within their own societies seek to exit them entirely in the hopes of finding opportunity elsewhere. This migration, too, can have destabilizing, dislocating effects, within the continent and further afield.

These dynamics have serious implications for U.S. interests in the region. Strong partnerships are hard to build with politically volatile states, and development goals are rarely achieved in contexts of conflict. Demographic trends may not cause conflict and instability, but in Africa they can create a context in which insecurity thrives.

## **Vulnerability to Climate Change and Environmental Degradation**

Global climate change is particularly bad news for sub-Saharan Africa. Africa currently accounts for just 5 percent of greenhouse gas emissions,<sup>6</sup> but is particularly vulnerable to global climate change. African ecosystems are already changing at a faster rate than anticipated.<sup>7</sup> Because the region has so little control over the causes of climate change, adaptation is the most important element of a response in Africa.

The effects of climate change will vary across the continent, but in total, the region confronts a likely loss of arable land largely due to desertification,<sup>8</sup> an increased frequency of natural disasters (both flood and drought), public health risks due to shortages of clean water and changes in the patterns of infectious disease vectors like mosquitoes, decreased biodiversity, and the prospect of inundated coastal communities. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has expressed high confidence in the assertion that food security in Africa will be “severely compromised” by climate change and variability, with crop yield reductions as high as 50 percent in some countries by 2020. The organization predicts that 75 to 250 million more Africans will be put under water stress because of climate change by 2025.

In addition to the economic, development, and humanitarian costs, all of these factors promise to contribute to destabilizing displacement and rising competition for resources, both potential drivers of conflict.<sup>9</sup> Africa could be caught in a vicious circle, as weak governing institutions and poverty make it difficult to adapt to climate change, leading to consequences that only exacerbate state failure and insecurity.

Climate change is not the only environmental challenge confronting the region. Africa's environmental treasures—forests, wildlife, and fisheries—are in peril. Carbon sinks like the Congo Basin forests have global significance, as does the region's rich biodiversity. But unsustainable logging and mining practices, the thriving bushmeat trade, and human migratory patterns cause deforestation, biodiversity loss, and threaten to further impoverish rural communities and indigenous people who depend upon forest and freshwater resources for their livelihood. Meanwhile, the pressures of demographic growth and climate change only promise to increase the challenge of natural resource conservation.

### **Food Insecurity**

The global food crisis became a front-page topic in 2008, but in sub-Saharan Africa, food security trends have been moving in the wrong direction for several years. While some countries have made progress in combating hunger, the aggregate picture is grim. Africa has lagged behind the rest of the world in agricultural productivity: by 2006, sub-Saharan Africa's grain yield was only about 40 percent of what the rest of the developing world was achieving. Currently, the region has the highest undernourishment rates in the world.

The causes of chronic food insecurity in the region are complex. Underdeveloped infrastructure and limited access to appropriate seeds, fertilizers, and technologies play an important role. In May 2008, the U.S. Government Accounting Office (GAO) found that in addition to low productivity, “limited rural development, government policy disincentives, and the impact of poor health on the agricultural workforce” all contributed to the problem.

International investment in agricultural development has been declining since the 1980s, and the United States has been no exception to this trend.<sup>10</sup> U.S. assistance for agricultural development declined from \$2.3 billion in 1980 to \$624 million in 2006.<sup>11</sup> Research has suffered as well, with U.S. support for the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research declining from \$46 million in 1986 to \$25 million in 2006, with further cuts on the way.<sup>12</sup>

The global trading system tends to disadvantage farmers in the poorest countries, and even the United States' flagship African trade initiative, the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), does little to improve market access for most African agricultural products. The apparent collapse of the Doha Round of trading talks further darkens the outlook for addressing this element of the problem.

Global dynamics beyond African control deepened the problem by the end of the Bush Administration's tenure. Weather-related disruptions curtailed supply, and the surge in demand for biofuels in turn generated a sharp increase in demand for key crops. High oil prices added to production costs, driving food prices even higher. The World Bank estimates that ranks of the chronically food insecure have grown by over 100 million in the 2008, with most of the hardest hit countries in Africa.<sup>13</sup> The current decline in commodity prices mitigates some of these factors, but does nothing to address the extreme vulnerability of millions of Africans to price fluctuations in the future.

Add increasing population growth and the impact of global climate change, and it is clear that Africa's food security challenge is not likely to diminish in the near future. The International Food Policy Research Institute has found that if all the effects of climate change are considered, it is possible that the number of undernourished Africans may triple from 1990 to 2080.<sup>14</sup>

Food insecurity is more than a humanitarian problem and more than an obstacle to economic development. Food insecurity can tip fragile states into instability. The recent spike in global food prices led to riots several African countries during the past year, including Cameroon, Burkina Faso, Somalia, Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, Ethiopia, and Madagascar. The 2008 coup in Mauritania has been blamed in part on the democratically elected government's inability to satisfy consumers frustrated with rising food costs.

## The Bush Administration's Record

The Bush administration's record of engagement and accomplishment on these issues ranges from minimal to modest, with some of the most important efforts on climate change and food security taking place too late in the administration's tenure to bear much fruit. Emergency food aid was a notable exception: the administration ramped up food assistance dramatically to respond to crises on the continent. Faced with multiple competing priorities, the necessity of responding to urgent crises, finite resources, and the challenges of coming to agreement with Congress, any administration will find it difficult to devote significant effort and resources to long-term trends through investments and programs that do not lend themselves to immediate, measurable results.

**Demographics.** The Bush administration engaged only peripherally with the changing nature of Africa's demographic landscape. Political sensitivities contributed to a lack of enthusiasm and support for reproductive health and family planning services abroad—programs that can assist ongoing demographic transition by ensuring that women can bring fertility rates down if they so desire. Since 1995 U.S. funding for international family planning programs has declined by 40 percent (adjusted for inflation) while the number of women of reproductive age in the developing world has increased by nearly 300 million. Some studies have found that over 60 percent of the 201 million women around the world with an unmet need for family planning services are in Africa.<sup>15</sup>

Skepticism about UN Population Fund (UNFPA) led the administration to withhold funds from the organization, making bilateral programs that much more important to the overall U.S. contribution. But the Bush administration's overall budget requests for U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) family planning and reproductive health programs have been consistently low. In both FY 2008 and FY 2009, the administration proposed cuts in excess of 25 percent to these programs. The administration directed larger portions of available resources to some African countries, resulting in meaningful increases from mid-1990s funding levels for programs in countries like Ethiopia, Ghana, and Mozambique, but others including Uganda, Kenya, and Mali have experienced significant declines in U.S. bilateral support for family planning and reproductive health over the same timeframe.

Bolstering girls' access to education can also help facilitate demographic transition, and the Bush administration has provided some 85,000 scholarships for girls under the auspices of its Africa Education Initiative, launched in 2002. And the administration's robust efforts to combat malaria were in an important contribution, reducing infant and child mortality can ultimately lead to long-term declines in desired family size.

But the broader issue of engaging with Africa's demographic reality and finding new ways to promote civic participation and economic opportunity specifically for young Africans was not a focus of the Bush administration energies. Youth are targeted for awareness-raising interventions in the context of the President's Emergency Plan for

AIDS Relief, but these educational efforts are narrowly focused on promoting abstinence and preventing HIV/AIDS transmission. Relatively small projects in a handful of countries seek to improve young peoples' employment prospects through job skills training, and similar types of training are regularly provided to young ex-combatants in post-conflict situations. The latter efforts often fail to recognize that these young people do not wish to "reintegrate" into old roles and communities, and this is symptomatic of a failure to recognize the transformational nature of this demographic group and the tremendous gap between youth aspirations and current realities.<sup>16</sup>

**Climate and the Environment.** The Bush administration's initial reluctance to acknowledge the phenomenon of global climate change and its persistent discomfort with many proposed policy responses and multilateral strategies for addressing it constrained, but did not entirely preclude, action to address this issue in Africa.<sup>17</sup>

Various elements of the U.S. government are involved in climate change-related work that affects Africa. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Climate Program Office does important global research. The U.S. Forest Service engages in sustainable forest management projects throughout Africa. The National Air and Space Agency (NASA) and USAID, in partnership with other international organizations and nongovernmental organizations, have been involved the Regional Visualization and Monitoring System (SERVIR) that has helped increase access to important climate-related data throughout Latin America. In 2008, NASA, CATHALAC (The Water Center for the Humid Tropics of Latin America and the Caribbean) and the Regional Center for Mapping of Resources for Development, established SERVIR Africa in Nairobi to monitor and forecast ecological changes and respond to natural disasters.

USAID's Global Climate Change Program has supported natural resource management, clean energy, and climate change adaptation projects in Guinea, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Senegal, South Africa, and Uganda, as well as regional programs in central and West Africa. The scale of these efforts has been relatively modest, accounting for about \$27.4 million in 2007. The agency has also provided some funding for collaborative climate change research. (Another effort to promote research and training in Africa and elsewhere, the Center for Capacity Building at the National Center for Atmospheric Research, closed because of budgetary constraints in 2008, four years after its launch.<sup>18</sup>) Perhaps the most important climate change-related effort undertaken by USAID has been the production in mid-2007 of a guidance manual for development, "Adapting to Climate Variability and Change," pointing the way toward the integration of climate considerations in mainstream development work.

The Bush administration contributed to the World Bank's Global Environmental Facility (GEF), which works with governments, international organizations, and NGOs to address a wide variety of environmental issues. The climate change-related portion of the U.S. GEF contribution totaled about \$26 million in 2007, and an estimated \$36 million of its total \$106.8 million GEF budget request for 2008 will go toward climate-related activities.<sup>19</sup> But to date, two funds within the GEF that are especially relevant to Africa's

climate change adaptation challenges, the Least Developed Countries (LDC) Fund and the Special Climate Change Fund, receive no support from the United States, as the Bush Administration has argued that these are Kyoto-related. Congress is pushing back on this decision; the Senate Appropriations Committee's version of the FY 2009 Foreign Operations Appropriations bill calls for providing \$20 million to the LDC Fund if certain conditions are met.

In contrast to the administration's ambivalence about climate change, conservation efforts have enjoyed significant support during the Bush years. The most important initiative, affecting the Congo Basin forests, has clear climate implications, since central Africa's forests are second only to the Amazon in serving as vitally important carbon sinks. The administration launched the Congo Basin Forest Partnership in 2002 and through the Central African Regional Program for the Environment funded this effort with roughly \$15 million annually (\$17.5 million for FY08). The United Kingdom and Norway have launched a more expansive Congo Basin Forest Fund, which they are financing with \$150 million over four years. The Bush administration took action to protect African forests when it supported multilateral sanctions on Liberia's timber exports while former President Charles Taylor still held office, taking an important stand linking unsustainable logging to the destabilizing, criminal nature of the Taylor regime.

Toward the end of President Bush's second term in office, the administration took new steps to acknowledge the importance of climate change, laying the groundwork for more energized engagement by the next president. In December 2007 the administration signed onto the Bali roadmap, which establishes an adaptation negotiating track to develop a more effective framework for helping vulnerable regions adapt to climate change in the future. In his 2008 State of the Union address, President Bush called for the creation of a multilateral Clean Technology Fund (CTF) that would, among other goals, help leverage private sector engagement by making clean energy projects in the developing world more appealing, a concept supported by the G-8 expressed. The CTF is less important for Africa than a serious commitment to support adaptation, but these steps help to clear away some of the antagonism that had developed between the U.S. and much of the world on this issue and contribute to heightened expectations about what a new administration might do to address climate change.

**Food Security.** Despite early indications that the Bush Administration might re-energize U.S. engagement on agricultural development, emergency food aid has received far greater emphasis than development work aimed at building sustainable agricultural capacity. This mirrors international donor trends which have, since the late 1980s seen a decrease in assistance to agriculture and steep increases in emergency assistance.

Pressed to respond to numerous food crises, the United States since 2000 has contributed about 44 percent of the World Food Program's total budget (largely in the form of commodities, not cash), and has repeatedly requested and received significant emergency supplemental appropriations for food aid. However, numerous analyses point

out that the primary method by which the U.S. provides food assistance is tremendously inefficient because it requires that most aid be purchased in the U.S. and then shipped on U.S. carriers to crisis zones, resulting in slower, more costly, and often market-distorting assistance. While the administration has repeatedly requested that Congress relax these problematic food aid requirements, it has met with only limited, late success.<sup>20</sup>

Meanwhile, despite the impassioned case for restoring USAID's focus on agricultural development made by Andrew Natsios at his 2001 Senate confirmation hearing to be the agency's director, the Bush administration never coalesced around a strategic decision to prioritize agricultural development. The Partnership to Cut Hunger and Poverty in Africa found that U.S. support for agricultural development declined by 3 percent in real terms over the course of the administration's first term in office, and the GAO has indicated that the situation did not improve over the course of the second term. The President's Initiative to End Hunger in Africa, launched in 2002, proved to be little more than a new name for ongoing, modest efforts. Rather than forging an inter-agency strategy, it involves only USAID, operates in only eight countries (in addition to regional programs), and did not receive new funding. The initiative became merely an organizing scheme for existing efforts involving about \$200 million a year.

A more significant administration initiative, the Millennium Challenge Account, did provide new funding for agricultural development. Agriculture is one of six areas of focus areas of the Millennium Challenge Corporation (the closely-related issues of infrastructure and transportation are two of the others), and the GAO found that as of mid-2007, 39 percent of the \$605 million pledged in signed compacts thus far was for agriculture-related projects.

Despite these positive steps, for the most part, the Bush administration dealt primarily with the symptoms, not the causes, of food crises in Africa. It has not been alone; the World Bank and other bilateral donors have followed the same trend for years. The soaring food prices of 2007 and 2008 provided a wake-up call for the donor community. World Bank President Robert Zoellick has pledged to double the Bank's lending for agricultural development by 2010 as part of his call for a "New Deal for Global Food Policy." Providing less specificity but still signaling renewed commitment to the issue, at leaders of the G-8 in July 2008 pledged to increase funding for agricultural development. While the administration's primary reaction to the global crisis was to release \$200 million in emergency food reserves and to appeal Congress to for \$770 million in additional emergency aid, senior officials have described a three-pronged approach that also includes increasing agricultural productivity and stimulating agricultural trade and investment.<sup>21</sup> James Kunder, acting deputy administrator of USAID, laid out an ambitious new agenda for promoting food security in the developing world in testimony before the House Agriculture Committee in July 2008, but too late in the administration's tenure for effective action.

## **Recommendations for a New Administration**

Because of the transformational nature of the mega-trends and their implications for African stability, the new administration should go beyond an incidental, episodic approach to addressing these interrelated dynamics. Mainstreaming youth, climate, and food security-related concerns into ongoing policies and development projects makes sense, but without a strategic plan and clear lines of responsibility for addressing these issues, responding to and influencing these trends will consistently take a backseat to mitigating the crisis of the day. Someone must be accountable for U.S. policy in these critical issue areas, rather than allowing multiple officials to be relevant to—but in no way responsible for—sound U.S. policy.

In addition to ensuring that the appropriate institutional capacities are in place, the new administration should engage key congressional and non-governmental actors early on to develop consensus around the merit of targeted new initiatives. Because most efforts to engage youth, build climate change adaptation capacity, and increase food security are unlikely to yield quick, easily measured results, clarifying U.S. goals and identifying metrics for evaluating interventions will be essential to maintaining lasting support.

Of course, the new administration inherits a difficult economic climate, making it all the more important to leverage each foreign assistance dollar for maximum efficacy. Where possible, existing programs should be reformed to incorporate more of a youth focus, to be mindful of climate change adaptation, or to contribute toward a new agricultural economy in the region. Critically, the U.S. should work multilaterally, engaging energetically in international negotiations on climate change, seizing on European sensitivities to migration to develop new opportunities for African youth, and working with existing efforts to strengthen African agriculture.<sup>22</sup>

### **Adjusting Engagement to Reflect Demographic Realities**

As African societies change, becoming more youthful and more urban, the U.S. should make a concerted effort to ensure that engagement strategies do not leave the United States disconnected from the most demographically powerful groups on the continent.

*Engage youth more purposefully:* The new administration should aim to organize its diplomatic presence to more closely reflect demographic realities in Africa, expanding U.S. presence and engagement in Africa's growing cities. U.S. embassies should be explicitly tasked to engage next generation leaders, be they young legislators, civil society activists, student leaders or community activists in non-elite settings. Opening lines of communication, fostering ongoing dialogue between young Africans and the U.S. government, and making a concerted effort to stay abreast of youth concerns can help the U.S. to build relationships that will bear dividends in the future and to anticipate changing trends on the continent. In a similar vein, the new administration should work

with non-governmental organizations and educational institutions within the United States to scale up exchange opportunities that involve young people.

The new administration could launch an initiative to strengthen civic participation among young African adults, as a part of its Democracy and Governance programming. Rule-governed systems can only be sustained if Africa's tremendous youth cohort has a stake in them, and efforts to improve youth voter participation, provide young people with the tools to engage in peaceful civic activism, and encourage young Africans to use information provided by transparency and accountability initiatives to demand better governance can all help to build stronger societies and partners on the continent.

*Strengthen links between education and employment:* Efforts to improve access to education deserve ongoing support, but in this context far more attention must be paid to the issue of what happens after graduation. By engaging the private sector and U.S. universities well-versed in creating mechanisms that link students and graduates with apprenticeships, mentors, entrepreneurial infrastructure and employment opportunities, the administration can make educational interventions far more meaningful and at the same time broaden U.S. engagement with African youth. For the vast numbers of young Africans whose experience with formal education ends with secondary school or even before, initiatives designed to improve access to credit and to create space for small-scale entrepreneurs will be particularly important. Programs directed at young ex-combatants should be more directly linked with actual job opportunities. The U.S. should work with other donors and organizations to share best practices in addressing the needs of marginalized and at-risk youth.

*Empower young women: family planning, education, employment:* Finally, as a part of efforts to improve overall primary healthcare infrastructure, the next administration should support efforts to expand access to family planning and reproductive health services to address unmet needs in Africa. It should continue support for girls' education, including through new efforts to improve girls' security at schools. And the new administration should ensure that young women are not marginalized in professional mentoring, job training, or job creation initiatives.

**Prioritize Climate Change Adaptation and Environmental Protection:**<sup>23</sup> Given the magnitude of the U.S. contribution to global emissions, the new administration has a responsibility to devote far more effort to this issue, investing in concrete, on-the-ground programs, particularly those that improve water management, storage, and distribution.

*Strengthen institutional and community capacities:* The new administration should develop a specific adaptation agenda that strengthens institutions and local community capacities to respond to climate changes. Adaptation efforts should involve senior government officials and governing institutions capable of creating incentives for new agricultural and resource management practices. But top-down efforts alone will not new administration must recognize that natural resource management is primarily a local

responsibility, and empowering citizens at the community level with awareness-raising efforts and support for appropriate adaptation efforts will be critical to the success of an effort.

As the new U.S. Africa Command refines its mission on the continent, disaster preparedness training and assistance could become a major priority. The command is well positioned to help African states develop their capacity to plan for and respond to coastal flooding and other climate-related crises.

*Work with international partners:* The African Union is expected to adopt a common African position on climate change at its summit in the summer of 2009. The new administration should be prepared to offer a constructive response to the agenda set by the AU, laying the groundwork for effective partnership.

The new administration should seize the opportunity presented by the Bali roadmap to improve existing multilateral mechanisms for funding adaptation efforts, which are often confusing and slow. Influencing the development of a better approach will require a meaningful U.S. commitment to participate, and the upcoming UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen in December 2009 provides a focal point and structure for this effort. The new administration is likely to work with Congress to enact cap and trade legislation, and revenues generated from auctions of emissions should be seriously considered as a source of funds for adaptation contributions.

Investments in urban infrastructure will be critical to Africa's successful adaptation to climate change. The new administration should make a special effort to reach out to China in this regard, which is deeply involved in infrastructure projects on the continent. Such an effort could help to defuse some of the unnecessary tension that has developed around China's engagement in Africa, and could set the stage for working cooperatively with the Chinese on a code-of-conduct effort for major external actors that would set new norms for incorporating climate and conservation priorities and sensitivities in development projects.<sup>24</sup>

Finally, the new administration should leverage the interest, expertise, and ongoing effort of non-governmental actors, including research institutions, universities, environmental protection organizations, philanthropic foundations and private sector actors already engaged in climate change adaptation and resilience work, focusing on how U.S. policy can strengthen their hands.

*Promote clean energy and protect carbon sinks:* While adaptation should be the primary focus of efforts to address climate change in Africa, the new administration should seek opportunities to promote clean energy technologies in Africa. As growing economies and urban areas experience surging energy demands, opportunities to promote clean energy strategies should be aggressively embraced. The African Development Bank is putting together its own Clean Energy and Development Investment Framework, which may be worthy of the new administration's attention. The World Bank has also noted that many

African countries have a comparative advantage in biofuel production—another potentially job-creating opportunity that could be worthy of U.S. government and private sector support.<sup>25</sup>

Addressing climate change globally requires protecting carbon sinks like the Congo Basin forests, and the new administration should increase U.S. investment in the CBFP, and work multilaterally and with NGOs to increase the costs for actors involved in unsustainable and illegal logging.

**Invest in African Agriculture:**<sup>26</sup> The 2008 global food crisis focused international attention on the need for a new approach to African agriculture, and helped to mobilize political will within the United States that could make bold new action possible. International organizations, several African governments, and non-governmental organizations are in the process of reinvigorating their own efforts, making this a valuable opportunity to establish a new, collaborative dynamic between the U.S. and other international actors.

*Use presidential leadership to launch ambitious food security initiative:* There are strong indications that bipartisan support for a bold new approach could be mustered in Congress. Most notably, the Global Food Security Act of 2008, introduced by Senators Richard Lugar and Robert Casey, offers an ambitious approach to reforming and strengthening U.S. policy. This kind of initiative could gain traction in the new Congress, but given domestic economic constraints and diminishing media attention to the issue, presidential leadership will be required to sustain momentum.

*Revisit how the U.S. provides emergency food aid:* The new administration should work to reduce the portion of assistance that must be purchased in the United States and then shipped abroad and increase the portion that can be used for local and regional purchase. The current system promotes strong support for food aid among a powerful coalition of American constituencies. But this approach leads to inefficient use of taxpayer dollars and limits the ability to provide the most timely and constructive help to communities in humanitarian crisis. With the right strategy, change is politically possible. Other politically sensitive issues also need to be addressed, including U.S. subsidy policies (especially for biofuels) and trade barriers.

*Put a focus on agricultural development:* In addition to pushing a new political discourse on food security, the new administration should aim to refocus energy on agricultural development in Africa. USAID should recruit new agricultural expertise to the agency and should make sustainable agricultural growth in Africa one of the agency's top priorities. This should be part of a stronger interagency mechanism aimed at driving a cohesive, goal-oriented agenda on agricultural development. A high-level interagency working group should be established for this purpose, and senior officials from participating agencies should be held responsible for achieving specific benchmarks

relative to research capacities, agricultural yields, and other indicators within specific timeframes by the Congress and the president.

There is broad agreement on how to effectively promote sustainable agricultural growth in Africa. Farmers need increased access to better seed varieties, fertilizer, extension services, credit, crop insurance, market information, and markets themselves. More intensive research on Africa's crops is needed, with a particular sensitivity to climate change and a focus on alternative crops and new drought resistant crop varieties. Other priorities should include bolstering technical capacity, modernizing rusty facilities, and promoting partnerships with agricultural centers of excellence. Ministries of agriculture should be strengthened and encouraged to attract capable scientists and managers and central government may need to undertake land tenure reform efforts to clear barriers to agricultural investment. Appropriate water conservation infrastructure is urgently needed, and transportation infrastructure requires continued investment, through the MCC or possibly through collaborative work with China.

Given the scope and scale of needs, meaningfully improving agricultural sustainability must be a multilateral endeavor—but U.S. the leadership will be vitally important. The United States should develop its efforts to be explicitly complementary to NEPAD's Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP), while urging African governments to meet their own CAADP commitments to devote significant resources to agriculture. A collaborative approach that engages African civil society could also help move the debate surrounding genetically modified organisms beyond the mutually accusatory stalemate that persists today. The U.S. should work with other UN member states to reform of the Food and Agriculture Organization, which is currently too slow and bureaucratic to meet the urgent needs of Africa's agricultural sector.

In addition to partnering with other governments and international organizations, the new administration should draw on the private sector, where actors from around the world can help to point the way toward needed reforms to increase private capital flows quickly. Similarly, academic and research communities, and philanthropic efforts like the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa, an initiative of the Bill and Melinda Gates and Rockefeller Foundations, may generate promising new approaches appropriate for rapid scaling up.

*Link to demographic and climate change:* Africa's mega-trends are interlinked. The new administration should avoid the temptation to address agricultural development needs with a purely rural strategy. As Africa becomes increasingly urbanized, urban and peri-urban agriculture will demand increased attention, and linkages between urban markets and rural farms will be even more important. U.S. policy should encourage ministries of public works and municipal authorities to collaborate with ministries of agriculture to provide supportive regulatory frameworks to peri-urban agriculture. Job opportunities should be developed in urban areas where value can be added to raw agricultural goods. Urban youth are unlikely to be coaxed back to rural communities to take up farming, but

some can become a part of a sophisticated new agricultural economy. Job creation in programs that aim to improve resilience to climate change and strengthen food security should receive priority.

## Conclusion

Demographic, environmental, and food security mega-trends intertwine in complex ways, making them easy to set aside as amorphous, overwhelming phenomena threatening to consume massive resources without tangible results. When so many other urgent issues compete for policymakers' attention, these issues rarely take priority. Indeed, confronted with numerous crises on the continent, committed to a historic effort to combat HIV/AIDS, guided by a skeptical view of climate change, and constrained by domestic political imperatives, the Bush administration often had little to offer in the way of energy and resources to address the mega-trends reshaping the African landscape. The new president and his team can find opportunity in these challenges. Policy interventions to respond to and influence the mega-trends will promote new multilateral, public-private, and civic partnerships that can make U.S. policy stronger. Better yet, successful policy responses can do more than stave off disaster; they can promote meaningful economic growth and even positive political change.

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *2007 World Youth Report*, p. 96-97.

<sup>2</sup> Adele Hayutin, "How Population Aging Differs Across Countries: A Briefing on Global Demographics," Stanford Center on Longevity, March 2007.

<sup>3</sup> United Nations Population Fund, *State of World Population 2007: Unleashing the Potential of Urban Growth*, 2007. <http://www.unfpa.org/swp/2007/english/introduction.html>.

<sup>4</sup> United Nations Human Settlements Program (UNHABITAT), Global Urban Observatory and Statistics Unit, Africa Trends. <http://ww2.unhabitat.org/habrdd/africa.html>

<sup>5</sup> Richard Cincotta *et al.*, *The Security Demographic—Population and Civil Conflict After the Cold War*, (Washington DC: Population Action International, 2003); and Elizabeth Leahy *et al.*, *The Shape of Things to Come: Why Age Structure Matters to a Safer, More Equitable World* (Washington, DC: Population Action International, 2007).

<sup>6</sup> World Economic Forum, *Africa at Risk Report*, 2008.

[http://www.weforum.org/pdf/Africa2008/Africa\\_RiskReport\\_08.pdf](http://www.weforum.org/pdf/Africa2008/Africa_RiskReport_08.pdf)

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) estimates Africa's emissions at 3.8 percent of the global total, an even lower estimate than the 5 percent cited.

<sup>7</sup> Michel Boko *et al.*, "Chapter Nine: Africa," in *Climate Change 2007: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability*, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Fourth Assessment Report, 2007, <http://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar4/wg2/ar4-wg2-chapter9.pdf>.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* As many as 232,000 square miles of arable land may become untenable for agriculture due to climate change.

<sup>9</sup> Estimations of the negative economic impact on Africa as a result of climate change fluctuate. The *Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change* estimated that the income effects of climate change are 1.9-2.7 percent of GDP in Africa. [http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/sternreview\\_index.htm](http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/sternreview_index.htm).

<sup>10</sup> The General Accounting Office (GAO) found that the share of official development assistance (ODA) from both multilateral and bilateral donors to agriculture for Africa has significantly declined, from about 15 percent in the 1980s to about 4 percent in 2006. See *International Food Insecurity: Insufficient Efforts by Host Governments and Donors Threaten Efforts to Halve Hunger in sub-Saharan Africa by 2015* (Washington, DC: GAO, May 2008), p. 5.

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- <sup>11</sup> Keith Bradsher and Andrew Martin, "World's Poor Pay Price as Crop research is Cut," *The New York Times*, May 18, 2008.
- <sup>12</sup> Statement of Peter McPherson, president of the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges, "Food Security in Africa" before the House Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health, July 18, 2007.
- <sup>13</sup> Statement of James R. Kunder, acting deputy administrator, U.S. Agency for International Development, "U.S. Response to the Global Food Crisis: Humanitarian Assistance and Development Investments" before the House Committee on Agriculture, July 16, 2008.
- <sup>14</sup> Joachim von Braun, *The World Food Situation: New Driving Forces and Required Actions* (Washington DC: IFPRI, 2008), p. 20.
- <sup>15</sup> Shusheela Singh *et al.*, *Adding it Up: The Benefits of Investing in Sexual and Reproductive Health Care*. The Alan Guttmacher Institute, 2003.  
[http://www.unfpa.org/upload/lib\\_pub\\_file/240\\_filename\\_addingitup.pdf](http://www.unfpa.org/upload/lib_pub_file/240_filename_addingitup.pdf)
- <sup>16</sup> For an excellent discussion of these issues, see Marc Sommers, "Embracing the Margins: Working with Youth Amid War and Insecurity" in *Too Poor for Peace? Poverty, Conflict, and Security in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, Lael Brainard and Derek Chollet, eds. (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2007), pp. 101-118.
- <sup>17</sup> The Bush administration's record regarding policies aimed at reducing U.S. emissions that contribute to global warming is obviously relevant in a broad sense, but is not the focus of this chapter.
- <sup>18</sup> Andrew Revkin, "Climate-Change Program to Aid Poor Nations is Shut," *The New York Times*, August 7, 2008.
- <sup>19</sup> FY 2008 Federal Climate Change Expenditures Report to Congress (May 2007),  
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/legislative/index.html>.
- <sup>20</sup> The last and most serious skirmish on this front involved the 2007 Farm Bill, which became law in 2008. The Bush administration had requested authority to use up to 25 percent of available for PL 480 Title II food aid to purchase food in theater. Congress responded by authorizing only a \$60 million, four-year pilot program.
- <sup>21</sup> Statement of Henrietta Fore, administrator and director of Foreign Assistance, United States Agency for International Development, "Responding to the Global Good Crisis" before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, May 14, 2008; and remarks of Ed Schafer, Secretary of Agriculture, at UN Food and Agriculture Organization Conference June 5, 2008,  
<http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usdahome?contentidonly=true&contentid=2008/06/0150.xml>.
- <sup>22</sup> For a discussion of the need to improve evaluation measures on youth employment initiatives, see *A Review of Interventions to Support Young Workers: Findings of the Youth Employment Inventory*, October 2007, The World Bank Social Protection Discussion Paper No. 0715.
- <sup>23</sup> For a helpful discussion of the issues at stake in planning for more robust international support for adaptation in the developing world, see Heather McGray, Anne Hammill, and Rob Bradley, *Weathering the Storm: Options for Framing Adaptation and Development* (Washington DC: World Resources Institute, 2007).
- <sup>24</sup> This could be particularly important given China's reported plans to build new roads in the Congo Basin.
- <sup>25</sup> "Suggested Action items on Food Prices for Consideration by the G8," The World Bank. July 2008,  
<http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900sid/ONIN-7G6MEA?OpenDocument>.
- <sup>26</sup> For a more detailed discussion of appropriate U.S. policy responses to the global food crisis, see "A Call for a Strategic U.S. Approach to the Global Food Crisis." (Washington DC: CSIS, July 2008).  
[http://www.csis.org/media/pubs/080728\\_food\\_security.pdf](http://www.csis.org/media/pubs/080728_food_security.pdf). Also see *World Development Report 2008: Agriculture for Development* (Washington DC: World Bank, 2007) for a detailed discussion of lessons learned from past, unsuccessful agricultural development interventions,  
<http://econ.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/EXTDEC/EXTRESEARCH/EXTWDRS/EXTWDR2008/0,,menuPK:2795178~pagePK:64167702~piPK:64167676~theSitePK:2795143,00.html>