Open Society Foundations

Africa Regional Strategy 2022-2026

ACRONYMS

ACHPR	African Commission on Human and People's Rights
AfCFTA	African Continental Free Trade Area agreement
AfDB	African Development Bank
AfRO	Africa Regional Office
AIRI	Africa International Relations Institute
AU	African Union
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa
COVID-19	Coronavirus 2019
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
EPRDF	Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front
FPIC	Free, Prior and Informed Consent
HRDs	Human Rights Defenders
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IFIs	International Finance Institutions
LGBTQI+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex plus
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
OSF	Open Society Foundations
OSF-Africa	Open Society Foundations Africa
OSF-SA	Open Society Foundation for South Africa
OSIEA	Open Society Initiative for Eastern Africa
OSISA	Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa
OSIWA	Open Society Initiative for West Africa
OSUN	Open Society University Network
RECs	Regional Economic Communities
SAPS	Structural Adjustment Programs
SEDF	Soros Economic Development Fund
SMEs	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
WHRD	Women Human Rights Defenders
WTO	World Trade Organisation

A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This One Africa strategy (2022-6) was developed over an intensive eight-month period in a process involving staff from across our five entities (AfRO, OSF-SA, OSISA, OSIEA and OSIWA). It sets out the overall direction for OSF in Africa in the next five years. It is flexible given our complexity and diversity, to allow for adaptation as needed across contexts and over time.

We have developed this integrated One Africa strategy to better maximise our resources and impact. Our work and those we support face additional strain due to COVID-19. We need to more strategically deploy the resources we are entrusted to manage. This means changed thinking, ways of working and partnerships. Our strategy development process also took place in a changed internal and external environment, providing the opportunity to break geographic silos, while recognising the national level remains the primary space where decisions influencing open society issues are made.

The strategy assumes the global political, economic and social fallout due to COVID-19 will worsen insecurity, injustice and inequity, and disproportionately affect the most vulnerable. But today's challenges (rising authoritarianism, disinformation, human rights violations, lack of/unequal access to social services and inequality) are not only due to COVID-19. They reflect structural problems festering for many years. Political and economic power remains captured by political and corporate elites (often working together). They exercise this power in their own interests, not those of the people, with little/no accountability. Due to discriminatory and repressive policies, laws, practices and processes, the people, especially the most vulnerable, remain excluded from political, economic, and social opportunities and human rights protection. Women are in the majority, yet the translation of their numbers into access to and control over decision-making as well as key resources, public goods and services, remains limited. Women continue to suffer gender-based discrimination and gender inequality is a major contributor to domestic and sexual violence.

We will work with and in support of the people and communities who experience autocracy, injustice, impunity, poverty, exclusion and inequality across countries and regions. We will prioritise diversity, equity and inclusion, with a particular focus on women and youth. Our work will be organised around four pillars reflecting OSF's global ambitions—Expression and Participation; Security and Rights; Accountability and Justice; and Opportunity and Equity.

Under those four pillars, we will pursue the following strategic goals:

1. *Expression and participation*: Amplify people's voices, through conscious organising to express themselves and participate in public life, challenge and disrupt the exercise of unchecked power and hold public and private bodies to account;

2. *Security and Rights:* Promote a rights-based approach to security sector governance and accountability and respond to existing and emerging security challenges;

3. *Accountability and Justice*: Promote accountable, just and inclusive democracies governed by law in which rights are promoted and protected;

4. *Opportunity and Equity*: Support progressive economic and social norms, policies and practices that create opportunity and promote equality and rights.

This strategy represents both continuity and change. While many gains have been made by African activists over the last two decades, there is now a sustained assault by enemies of open society

against the laws, policies and movements for which our colleagues in civil society have fought. Audacity in the face of opponents and our insistence on funding a diverse and unusual set of voices have been defining elements of our strategies over the last 20+ years. This will continue. However, our new strategy provides opportunity to close avenues that have not led us where we had hoped they might and chart new territory where necessary, especially on intersectional justice. This strategy will not be uniformly applied across the continent as country and regional circumstances will determine how best to implement it in different geographies.

Finally, we are mindful of the tensions created by the ongoing OSF transformation. Our promise is to be transparent and guided by values that include a feminist ethos, inclusivity, pan-African solidarity and accountability.

B. CONTEXT AND FIELD ANALYSIS: Africa's political economy

OSF began its work in Africa during the decades of hope for the continent. OSF-SA began its work in 1993, as South Africa was preparing for its first democratic elections. In Southern Africa, the first regional foundation opened as the end of Apartheid and the decolonisation of Namibia accompanied the end of civil wars in Angola and Mozambique. OSF opened its second regional foundation in West Africa, where most Francophone countries were undergoing democratic transition, initiated during by a wave of national conferences. The end of military regimes in Ghana and Nigeria gave rise to the first pluralist elections in those countries. OSIWA set up its offices in Dakar the year Senegal had its first democratic transition from the ruling party to the opposition. OSIEA started during the euphoria of the first democratic transition in Kenya, while governments resulting from armed revolutions in Ethiopia, Eritrea, Rwanda and Uganda promised to project East Africa towards unprecedented developmental democracy.

The wind of change and hope then sweeping the continent saw the emergence of civil society determined to ensure public policies consolidated promised transformations. Groups intensified civic education and improved election monitoring and protection techniques. Organisations strove to ensure greater access to justice. Activists analysed the impact of budget choices on people's quality of life and monitored public spending. Governments and state institutions made progress making decision-making procedures transparent and open to greater public participation.

The end of the Cold War led to predictions of the loss of geostrategic interest in Africa. As if to disprove these predictions, a double revolution flourished. The democratic revolution—also referred to as the Second Revolution after the Independence movement of the 1960s—started at the beginning of the 1990s. And the 'African Renaissance' ushered in by the transformation of the OAU into the AU. The democratic revolution was characterised by an unprecedented wave of norm-setting and institution-building towards constitutionalism, laws and practices for better governance and greater respect for human rights. National human rights institutions and anti-corruption bodies were set up, the judiciary strengthened together with oversight institutions such as parliamentary committees or public auditors. The AU and regional blocs also adopted norms and standards to promote democratic principles and institutions, combat unconstitutional changes of government and promote popular participation and human rights. Foundational documents included: the AU's Constitutive Act (2000); the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD, 2001); the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM, 2002); the AU Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption (2003); and the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (2007).

It is a paradox that interest in Africa as a frontier market and a theatre for ideological geopolitical and security battles is resurfacing today as the two revolutions described above are experiencing exhaustion. From the start of the 2010s, there has been an erosion of the democratic gains of the past three decades. Although Afrobarometer, the pan-African polling and research organisation, continues to record popular attachment to democracy, the euphoria of the 1990s has evaporated. Constitutionalism has come to a halt as constitutional advances, such as presidential term limits, are being dismantled. Popular participation has been reduced to formalities, with pluralist elections producing authoritarian governments. National human rights and anti-corruption institutions are failing, while the judiciary has been weakened, by co-option, intimidation and financial asphyxiation.

Progress turned out to be more fragile than anticipated. These transitions took place at the height of the neoliberal wave, whose good governance agenda carried a narrow definition of democracy as multi-party, free and fair elections, constitutionalism and rule of law. This formal approach resulted from the conception of democratic transition as divorced from an economic and social agenda, which compelled African states to liberalise, open their fledgling markets to foreign competition and disinvest from structural transformation and the provision of public goods such as education and health.

A notable tendency is to isolate economic problems from political and social problems and insist on addressing them as a priority. The first generation of post-independence political leaders were community and trade union leaders who owed their credentials as mass organisers and their participation in the post-World War II struggle for political emancipation. From the 1980s, Africa saw the emergence of a new class of political leaders who base their reputation on their economic expertise. Some came straight from IFIs and have little or no experience in community or trade union organising. State agencies are invaded by technical experts. Pursuing economic growth and maintaining a good business climate now come before addressing inequality and the people's low purchasing power. Reforms are assessed based on their technical soundness rather than their political and social impacts. Throughout the design and implementation of these reforms, IFIs' and rating agencies' opinions outweigh those of parliaments and national interest groups. Forms of political consultation, such as elections and parliamentary debates seen as a nuisance if they threaten efficiency.

Attempts to isolate the economy from political interference have proven illusory and counterproductive. The prevailing neoliberal economic orthodoxy has led to atrophy of African states, an erosion of investments in public goods and services and a disinterest in the impacts of climate change. This thinking has not only emerged from outside, it is also pervasive amongst the continent's political and economic elites, together with self-destructive internal politics.

We see this in, for example, the consequences of the neoliberal wave of liberalisation and privatisation in Africa. Both were promoted to introduce market discipline in the way the state functions by reducing its grip on the economy. This, in turn, was meant to give birth to a local business class which would prosper free from the interventionist state—a thesis inspired by 19th century Europe, where the rise of an economic bourgeoisie favoured the birth of political freedoms. In Africa, however, the opposite happened. In some cases, where the economic elite was weak or yet to be built up, liberalisation and privatisation allowed the political elite to capture public resources for its own benefit. In other cases, they created dependence on public resources by the economic elite, preventing it from acting as a counterweight to the political elite. The complicity between the

economic and political elites and the state plays out in a vicious way. To prosper, the economic elite tends to seize control of—capture—the state. For its part, the political elite is too embedded in the economy for the state to properly function as a guarantor of the public interest and regulator of the economic elite. Governments thus resort to coercive and unpopular policies that undermine transparency and close civic space.

The erosion of the social contract between a captured state and an impoverished populace is why the nation-building gains of previous decades are unravelling. The erosion has given rise to its fundamentalism and violent extremism on the part of non-state actors. With all West Africa now within reach of fundamentalists, for example, violence is no longer the prerogative of failed states, nor confined to territories or segments of society abandoned by the state. In Mali, violent extremism emerged even as the government was applauded for its 'consensual democracy' that sought to bypass electoral contests. Violent extremism in the Sahel and elsewhere feeds on the inability or unwillingness to engage in public debate to confront divisions of affected societies—between farmers and pastoralists, between descendants of different castes and between practitioners of different forms of Islam

Regimes that come to power—by coup d'état—on the vow to 'clean house' and impose political legitimacy also weaken the state. Military dictatorships are systematic in their weakening of political culture and institutions through the institutionalisation of rents and co-optation. Modern versions propose an alternative to neoliberalism in the form of a 'developmental state' based on the proposition the primary task of the state is to provide security and public services and that political freedoms and rights are permissible so long as their exercise does not interfere with this task. However, the fragility of development achieved under this premise is evident in Ethiopia post-EPRDF or post-crisis Cote d'Ivoire, with the risk of losing both developmental benefits and rule of law and respect for freedoms.

In other words, the fragility of formal democratic transitions is increasingly apparent. Africa's longstanding challenges, such as patriarchal control over gender and sexuality, violence against women and gender diverse people, poor management of difference and diversity, inequality, corrupt and weak leadership, poverty and economic volatility remain rooted in the colonial, Apartheid and Cold War eras. External actors continue to erode Africans' voice and agency. These challenges persist due to the failure of most African states to transform gendered power relations and the colonial state. Africa faces the dual challenge of addressing its internal injustices, while also addressing a global hierarchy of power that continues to systematically undermine it.

The AU reform process that began in 2016 was an admission the African Renaissance had hit a dead-end and a recognition of the need to inject new momentum by refocusing the organisation's priorities and make it more efficient. A renewed African Renaissance will have to confront: gender inequality; poor management of ethnic, religious and other forms of diversity; the threat of climate change; and other threats best addressed collectively.

If change begins with a mental predisposition, the continent is in a better starting position thanks to the discrediting of fatalistic theories about Africa. For a long time, it was fashionable to believe there was something uniquely African about Africa's structural weaknesses. But the 2008 global financial crisis showed that continents outside of Africa suffer from the same pathologies and require the same types of therapies. No one now believes attacks on democracy only happen in Africa.

Authoritarianism and populism in Western Europe and North America refute the notion that democracy's fragility uniquely African. Likewise, during the COVID-19 crisis, the predictions for Africa turned out to be false.

Once the doom has been deconstructed, it is important to gamble on Africa's strengths. One of these is the resurrection of African feminism. African feminists were part of anti-colonial liberation movements. During the 20th century, African feminist movements continued to demand freedom, equality and rights. However, feminist movements contend with misrepresentation of feminism as 'un-African' and Western by conservative women and men who wish to maintain pre-colonial patriarchal orders. The same heteronormative rhetoric is used to describe homosexuality as un-African' and use colonial laws to threaten and violate the rights of LGBTQI+ people on the continent. African feminism is a political framework identifying patriarchal power, sexism and misogyny as a fundamental source of injustice and inequality and calling for the freedom of all African women.

Public or civil society institutions to monitor democratic transitions seem depleted. But the vacuum created gives rise to new and younger social movements proposing new types of civic engagement. The youth are another asset. Not only does Africa have the youngest population, its young people are among the most politically engaged. Showing imagination, including through innovative mastery of new information and communication technologies, African youth are now the forefront of the fight against authoritarianism, injustice and inequality.

One of the lessons of COVID-19 is that restoring state agency is not just desirable—it is a necessity. Just as inaction by the State enabled the most disastrous health consequences of the pandemic, the economic and social effects of the pandemic can only be mitigated by the State.

The continent is also renewing the drive for renewed and fairer multilateralism. Agreeing to the AfCFTA amidst the wave of nationalist retrenchments from multilateralism globally sends a signal. The Global South-led push for vaccine justice, anchored in a unified common African position at the WTO, is another such signal. We therefore anchor our work in change to restore Africa's voice and agency, that is owned by people domestically and connected to multilateral mechanisms and processes. Achieving better economic and societal outcomes for Africans requires us to conceptualise our work in a framing of a global Africa: one that seeks to maximise its impacts on global policy, politics and practice, for domestic and continental change.

C. A NEW OSF IN AFRICA: our role, vision, mission and principles

Role: To respond to the changing context presented in the field analysis (Section B), OSF is seeking to intensify its engagement in Africa in the coming five years. To do so effectively, OSF is integrating its five African entities into a One Africa structure and team, optimised to deliver a single, coherent One Africa strategy that is locally rooted, regionally relevant, continentally critical and globally assertive. The One Africa Strategy (2022-6) comes when OSF overall is becoming a more global organisation by re-affirming our proximity to local challenges, becoming more regionally-driven, focusing our global efforts on fewer priorities and adhering to a more integrated approach across the network—all aimed at achieving significant, long-lasting external impacts. OSF's work globally is committed to Expression, Justice and Equity, with cross-cutting work around climate and intersectional justice. The One Africa strategy seeks to advance similar priorities on the

continent, rooted in and framed from an African perspective to meet present-day, interconnected challenges to open society.

Building on three decades of work in Africa,[1] we are restructuring our work with a pan-African approach to present-day challenges and opportunities on the continent. In so doing, OSF will become the largest political philanthropy in Africa, uniquely poised to have impact at scale and able to contribute to tangible open society victories. This aspiration demands a robust approach to our framing, tracking and assessment of results as well as learning to realise our impact goals.

As a political philanthropy, our efforts will focus on supporting structural change and necessarily taking a long-term view of our work and partnerships. We will be open and willing to take risks, experiment and innovative in pursuit of impact at scale, including through work on important issues no one else is willing to engage on and learning from our efforts as we create pathways for others. This has implications for the monitoring and evaluation as well as learning approaches and practices we need to adopt going forward. We will seek to learn from our grantees, our own efforts and experiences to feed back into our long-, medium- and short-term choices and decisions. As we deliberately adopt a feminist, intersectional approach, we will employ feminist approaches and practices to our grantmaking, partnership building and learning.

We will enhance advocacy in our own name on issues and situations that would benefit from OSF's voice, networks, tools and resources for progress on causes we share with our partners. However, we are aware our ability to achieve transformative change at scale depends on how we partner meaningfully with others (activists, institutions, movements, civil society and governments) to re-energise a fit for purpose and vibrant ecosystem of social justice championing. Conscious of our own power as a grantmaking institution and limitations as a global brand, we understand our place in the African landscape being to play a catalytic, collaborative and supportive role in contributing to the vision below.

Vision: An integrated, vibrant, self-respecting and globally-respected Africa, characterised by democratic governance, sustainable development and economic systems that deliver more just, inclusive and accountable outcomes with and for the people and the environment in Africa.

Mission: To advance gender justice and women's rights, deepen democracy, accountable governance and inclusive development in Africa through participatory and strategic grantmaking and advocacy.

We will give pre-eminence to and be guided by the ideas, voices and agency of African women, youth, organisations and movements in pursuit of our vision and mission.

To achieve this, we will grow:

More equal and impactful partnerships: We remain dedicated to an inclusive partnership practice, engaging with grantees and other stakeholders with mutuality and sensitivity to contextual realities and requirements. We will assess our current portfolio to ensure the diversity of partners necessary for our pan-African mandate, appropriate levels of engagement (from local to global) and scale to achieve this strategy's intended results. We will give larger grants to key anchor institutions for longer periods while continuing to invest in emerging change-makers. We will connect our partners

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[1] OSF's current reach is in four African regions (East, Central, Southern and West Africa), with 3,800 partners in 33 countries (ranging from community organisations to governments) and a budget of over USD120 million.

working at different levels and scale to build coalitions. We will continue to invest all our funding in African individuals and institutions on the continent and in Diaspora. To strengthen intersectional gender justice, we will prioritise funding women-led and feminist organisations and strengthen investments in younger feminist organising. To advance Africa's place in the world and strengthen African and Global South voices in global policy spaces, we will forge stronger South-South as well as South-North alliances, together with and via our partners. Our partnerships, including with governments, will be driven by our commitment to supporting peoples' voice and agency as the central force for change.

Advocacy: For the past three decades, OSF has supported the advocacy of partners and engaged in direct advocacy. In step with OSF's scaled-up investment in advocacy and campaigning, we will intensify both tracks and ensure greater integration and coordination of the same. We will design a joined-up, Africa-wide advocacy strategy to advance the objectives in this strategy. We will do so in consultation with partners and key stakeholders, as the purpose of our pan-African advocacy is supporting peoples' initiatives for change.

Learning: We will increase our focus on monitoring, evaluating and learning to adapt our course towards impact as we go, given the non-linearity of change and the uncertainty of our times. All our work will be knowledge-based, to enable continuous improvement. We aim to be a thought leader in select areas and will strategically share and use knowledge generated with relevant partners and stakeholders. We will seek to overcome and rebalance patriarchal, white supremacist, elitist, neo-colonial and neo-liberal tendencies in our knowledge production and uptake.

Strategic footprint: OSF current conducts work in 33 countries through 11 offices. We will recalibrate our physical presence and continental reach through the One Africa strategy and structure. In so doing, we will strike a balance between proximity to local realities and appropriate coverage of the continent, leveraging the most politically strategic spaces and ensuring we are in places most conducive for or in need of open society work.

People and culture: As we transform into the One Africa structure, we renew our commitment to build a cutting-edge pan-African team that is curious, bold, collaborative, committed to the highest standards of integrity and impact-oriented. We will build a work environment in which we treat each other with empathy and respect, in which diversity of thought and equality is fostered and organisational values are lived and practiced.

Principles: We will be guided by the following principles in all our engagements—internally as well as externally:

- *Pan-African solidarity*: While recognising Africa's diversity, we will join hands, support and collaborate across boundaries to deepen and model Africans' aspirations for greater integration and unity based on shared values;

- *Equality:* Everyone has the right to be treated fairly and to have the same rights and opportunities;

- *Inclusivity*: We embrace diversity and draw inspiration from the different perspectives and contributions of all people and communities in their respective and interconnected struggles against poverty and injustice. We espouse the same values internally and our recruitment, staffing and interventions will adhere to diversity;

- *Humility:* We will value others and lifting their stories, admit mistakes and acknowledge the power dynamics inherent to philanthropy;

- *Courage*: Our work is grounded in our commitment to the universality and indivisibility of human rights. We will speak truth to power and not be beholden to any sectarian, political or corporate interests. We will act with conviction in the justice of our causes;

- *Accountability*: We will take responsibility for our actions and hold ourselves accountable to the people we work with and for;

- *Knowledge-driven innovation*: We believe in the power of African culture, knowledge, narratives and lived experiences to generate solutions for both African and global open society challenges. We will invest in the Africa's cultural, intellectual, people and institutional power to advance our causes in innovative ways;

- *Transformation orientation*: Our work is centred on African peoples' own initiatives for change and we will acknowledge and seek to expand people's voice and agency over their own lives and the decisions that impact them. We will seek to add value towards tangible results for the lives of the people, communities and constituencies we serve.

D. HOW CHANGE HAPPENS: theory of change and approaches

Theory of change: Our ambition is to contribute to transformative change at the national, regional, continental and global levels. We are guided by the African proverb: 'If you want to go fast, go alone and if you want to go far, go with others.' We will therefore achieve impact by being part of a pan-African ecosystem towards political and socio-economic transformation driven by values of economic and social justice. We will seek change at scale by acting in solidarity with and amplifying the voices and agency of people most directly affected by autocracy, exclusion, human rights violations, injustice and poverty.

This work is consolidated in areas where OSF has traction and value-add vis-à-vis other philanthropies. Our work rests on the principle that we must support processes of re-balancing power in political life, how the economy interfaces with society and how people's dignity is upheld through their rights. Failed political and economic governance and unsustainable policy frameworks have given rise to challenges manifest in religious fundamentalism, a culture of repression and violence, including violence against women, poor healthcare and poor and non-inclusive education systems. Our aspiration is to support the voice and agency of the most marginalised and the progressive pursuit of **Expression and Participation, Security and Rights, Accountability and Justice** and **Opportunity and Equity.** Our work centres **democratic practice,** respect for **human rights** and principles of **economic and social justice**.

Power dynamics have become more complex—shifting from formal state institutions and people as major interlocutors to multiple and invisible webs of players. OSF has to consistently and effectively support strategies that seek to visibilise, challenge and transform these power dynamics. Some problems manifest at the local level but have global roots. Such problems may require collective, pan-African and global responses, such as COVID-19 and climate change. Political and economic elites in Africa are also connected from the local to the global levels, and addressing challenges caused by elite collusion requires global solidarity within and beyond OSF.

Our understanding is that change comes from multiple angles of influence. Dismantling patriarchal and heteronormative power structures and addressing fragility, inequality and poverty requires an understanding of visible, hidden and invisible power which oppresses and profits from the marginalised. Power dynamics are always shifting in ways that we cannot always predict, and our approach will therefore be open to adjustments. Our efforts will be focused where our impacts will be most significant--where people are most affected by injustice, discrimination, exclusion, inequality and poverty or where our influence on people, institutions and decision-making has the potential to transform lives. To meet this complex and unpredictable future, we need to improve our ability to adapt rapidly to changing contexts. Our menu of approaches and tools will enable us to achieve distinctive and measurable impact. The following constitutes our theory of change and will inform everything we do.

People power: We will amplify the voices and actions of African artists, activists, academics, civil society, social movements, private sector and state actors as well as any other stakeholders working to combat discrimination, inequality, injustice, impunity and poverty. We will offer financial and other forms of support where needed and advocate for and act with them to transform their lives. This includes supporting offline and online mobilisation and organisation to shift narratives, change opinions and engage decisionmakers at national, regional, continental and international levels through strategic communications.

Gender justice: We will adopt a gender justice approach across all our work. We will prioritise approaches and solutions that seek to end discrimination, rights violations and injustice suffered by women and gender non-conforming people. We will adopt inclusive approaches that focus on better understanding and dismantling hierarchy and subordination, as well as how power relations drive inequality, injustice and poverty (including religious fundamentalism, oppressive masculinities and systemic racism). We will also support LGBTQI+ and gender non-binary people to affirm the right of all persons to freedom of gender identity and sexual orientation and challenge the regulation and control of people's bodies, choice and gender and sexual identities.

Cross-issue and cross-movement organising: We will build coalitions within, across and between countries, regions and continents across disciplines, issues and themes from the local to the global levels. We will leverage the power of collective knowledge to understand and respond to inequality, injustice, impunity and poverty from local, regional, continental, Northern and Southern causes. We will raise awareness about how norms and institutions (public and private) that cause inequality, injustice, impunity and poverty are interrelated across geographies, issues and themes by supporting and connecting communities, civil society and social movements across countries and regions within and beyond Africa. We will build on their knowledge and campaign together to influence decision-making and achieve solutions.

Building South-South and South-North power: We will engage with relevant Global North and South powers, including BRICS, as well as key multilateral processes addressing development, security, development financing, debt and climate. When relevant, we will engage and/or partner with the RECs and AU as well as regional development banks, the UN and IFIs and other multilateral initiatives and institutions. We will work to ensure the impact of Africa within OSF and the broader world. Africa and Africans have solutions both for African and global governance and development challenges and common challenges of different continents require common solutions and greater collaboration.

Our theory of change supports working with partners to implement catalytic, context-specific and strategic interventions to achieve positive change in the attitudes and behaviour of peoples, the private sector, governments and regional bodies. Our ambition is to invest in both high impact, short-term opportunities as well as long-term structural transformation. IF we invest in strengthening broad-based movements, including new youth and women's movements, intersectional and pan-African approaches, as well as progressive state and private actors, THEN we will build critical mass towards transformative change in communities, national spaces and on the continent. The key is to make the private sectors, regional and international bodies more responsive and accountable to peoples' needs, the marginalised in particular.

How we will work for change: This strategy will further require context-specific readings to better determine how to implement it in our different sub-regions. Tactical and operational choices will be made. We will not sacrifice nuance and specificity in pursuit of a continental approach. We will incentivise curiosity and dynamism by reducing bureaucratic, administrative and financial barriers inhibiting pan-African funding and advocacy. We will use a range of approaches and tools as follows:

Grantmaking: With a focus on leadership development and community engagement to elevate the voices and experiences of the marginalised. Grants will support mobilising and organising by those fighting exclusion, injustice, impunity and poverty. We will provide direct assistance and collaborate with them to drive positive change. To advance gender justice, we will fund women-led and feminist and intersectional organisations and movements, including those of LGBTQI+ individuals. We will provide flexible, core support and longer-term grants and use feminist tracking, assessment and measuring approaches and tools.

Arts and culture: We will support artists and cultural producers to disrupt the causes of crisis and fragility, including storytelling by those drowned out, suppressed or ignored and expanding the intersections between entertainment and democracy, rights and economic and social justice promotion.

Knowledge-generation and research: To improve the evidence base for advocacy and policy engagement. We believe in the leadership, agency and power of African knowledge and research institutions to provide solutions to African and global challenges. We will invest in strengthening evidence-based African narratives and knowledge. We will seek to generate new insights into solutions to problems. We will support inter-generational exchange and learnings to build and transfer skills.

Convenings, collaborations and partnerships: We will expand our convening role nationally and continentally by strategically collaborating with others to expand our knowledge and collective influence. We will find egalitarian and flexible ways of engaging, adapt to their ways of working and hold ourselves accountable to them. We will adapt our approaches, processes and systems to ensure greater agility, innovation, responsiveness and mutual respect in our collaborations.

Advocacy and campaigns: As we increase our own advocacy and campaigns, we will not supplant African voices and agency with our own. We act with and for our grantees. Our advocacy will be pan-African focused and led, but we will always determine the best entry point (national, regional or continental) to advance a particular advocacy goal based on our analysis of context and actors, as well as on our own and our partners' capabilities.

Strategic litigation: This is one change pathway as, in the era of growing political intolerance, the courts are one of the few spaces where authority can be questioned, dissent expressed and independent scrutiny applied. We will, where appropriate, work with JI on this.

African philanthropy and impact investment: Africa has a fast-growing philanthropic sector made up of foundations, impact investment funds and various forms of community savings and investment tools. Notwithstanding its dynamism, capital flows to, on and across the continent are mired in gender and racial bias. We want to see a more just philanthropic and investment field in Africa, serving the ambitions of Africans, disrupting power dynamics in decision-making and anchored in a self-determined agenda for change. We will: a) support deepening and strengthening African philanthropy and research on giving in Africa; b) accelerate our partnership with SEDF and African investment funds to address bias, co-define social impact and ensure more tailored capital flows to African businesses; and c) proactively identify potential opportunities to support women and younger people in accessing financial capital for socially impact investments.

Learning: A key principle is learning from what we do and how we do it to maximise our impact and that of our partners in a context characterised by increased needs and limited resources. We will adopt an integrated learning approach—encouraging individual learning, team learning, organisational learning and inter-organizational learning with effective feedback loops and mechanisms. Key will be learning from the field—our grantees and communities, who are the custodians of knowledge as to what works best for them.

E. PROGRAMME PRIORITIES, GEOGRAPHIES AND TIMELINES

We will apply the above theory of change to advance progress on our four pillars of work (that mirrors OSF's global pillars: Expression and Participation; Security and Rights; Accountability and Justice; and Opportunity and Equity. The pillars are big picture lens through which we understand our work and our value-add—across thematic and geographic specificities—and from which we derive our four strategic goals:

1. *Expression and participation*: Amplify people's voices, through conscious organising to express themselves and participate in public life, challenge and disrupt the exercise of unchecked power and hold public and private bodies to account;

2. *Security and Rights:* Promote a rights-based approach to security sector governance and accountability and respond to existing and emerging security challenges;

3. *Accountability and Justice*: Promote accountable, just and inclusive democracies governed by law in which rights are promoted and protected;

4. *Opportunity and Equity*: Support progressive economic and social norms, policies and practices that create opportunity and promote equality and rights.

Shifting power in favour of women and young people is central to our work. We will commit that at least 30% of our grantmaking, advocacy, campaigning and overall programming budget to women-led and feminist organisations. Overall, a minimum of 50% of our budget will be committed to both women-led as well as youth-led and focused organisations.

To achieve the strategic goals, several objectives are conceived as critical and concrete enablers, utilising the approaches and tools outlined in Section D. While themes (framed at present as: political

governance; human rights; and economic justice) remain one way to organise our work, this strategy—through the four pillars—seeks to break unhelpful thematic silos and inspire cross-thematic thinking and collaborative action to respond in a joined-up fashion to Africa's open society challenges. Similarly, on geography, this strategy seeks to break artificial geographic silos in the way we understand the continent and how we approach our work. As such, this strategy and the section below elaborates an Africa-wide roadmap for more concerted and cohesive progress towards our mission for the continent. Underpinning our collective pan-African ambition will necessarily be specific interventions in key countries and regions with tactical choices about investments and tools to bring to bear, based on contextual and intersectional analysis. We will invest in African knowledge-generation and horizon scanning (in-house and externally) to determine our best entry points to move the needle on a particular issue or situation. In this section, broad geographic implications are laid out under each pillar as guides to be further fleshed out during implementation.

Finally, while this is a five-year strategy, we will improve our agility to respond to our dynamic continent and adapt as needed across contexts and over time—especially given that it is OSF's first Africa-wide strategy, to be implemented by a brand-new, One Africa structure. Living our values of being knowledge-driven, transformation-oriented and accountable, we will use the 2022-6 period to further refine and strengthen OSF's strategic path in an iterative fashion and therefore will strengthen our MEL. We are committed to the collective, pan-African vision and ambition but remain flexible—and teachable—in our thinking and approaches to getting there.

1. EXPRESSION AND PARTICIPATION

Goal 1: Amplify people's voices, through conscious organising to express themselves and participate in public life, challenge and disrupt the exercise of unchecked power and hold public and private bodies to account.

Inclusive and vibrant democracies require engaged peoples, free to express themselves and participate in democratic processes. Expression and participation are limited in most African countries, where civic and political space is closed or closing due to the enactment of laws that restrict political freedoms and the economic marginalisation of most Africans, particularly women and the youth. To promote expression and participation, we will support disrupting and resisting the capture of democratic processes and institutions to defend against rising authoritarianism. Investments will also go to building an ecosystem supportive of people's organising by: promoting access to information and digital rights; supporting protections for HRDs, particularly WHRDs; reclaiming civic space using tools such as strategic litigation; building strong solidarity networks and movements; using arts and new age technology; and deepening actors' understanding of state capture.

Geography: Investments under this pillar will prioritise countries in which gains have been made and need sustaining and/or countries in need of democratic consolidation. The work on HRD protection will be implemented across the continent.

1.1. Resisting the capture of democratic processes and institutions to defend against rising authoritarianism

We will support the generation of knowledge and deepening of understanding about the capture of democratic institutions and processes (investigations, research, publication and education on the manifestations and impacts of capture, including by corporations and technology, in select countries).

We will support people's organising and mobilising to push back against capture and rising authoritarianism: artists, community organisations, feminist and youth social movements challenging existing narratives and demanding accountability. This will include: catalysing dialogues and debates linking African thinkers with people's engagement; building regional collaborations; and supporting those exposing and challenging corporate overreach and excessive profiteering. We will also support civic actors and social movements in ungovernable spaces. We will strengthen access to information, investigative journalism and narrative-shaping to expose and highlight capture and authoritarianism and use the media to amplify voices of resistance. We will support the review, adoption and implementation of AU mechanisms against capture.

1.2. Resisting the capture of electoral processes and institutions

The capture of electoral institutions and processes means most African elections are inordinately expensive and violent in instances of disputed electoral outcomes. We will support initiatives aimed at improving and upholding the integrity of electoral processes and institutions, including organising and advocacy to delegitimise fraudulent elections. Investments will build peoples' capacity to advance electoral reform and disrupt capture through documentation, investigative journalism, strategic communications and strategic litigation. We will support the transparent and effective deployment of ICT in electoral management. We will seize electoral moments to advance other key demands. We will also support women and young people's participation in the electoral process and strengthen civic capabilities to analyse electoral processes quantitatively and qualitatively. A political analysis of each country where elections work is proposed will be undertaken to guide specific investments.

1.3. Promoting access to information, digital rights and independent media

To promote access to information, digital rights and independent media, we will support content-creation and diffusion of credible information through community-based platforms and digital tools to provide counter-narratives to attempts by governments and the private sector to misinform the populace. We will support media literacy and strengthen civic capacities to detect and expose dis- and misinformation.

We will support independent investigative journalism and alternative media channels, including specialised reportage on the economy and climate change. We will support narrative change work, elevating African content creation and storytelling, and build regional solidarity and networks for cross-border reporting. Finally, we will support greater affordable Internet access and invest in the protection of journalists against reprisals.

Strengthening digital rights: Developments in digital technology present increased opportunities to enable people to access and use information to hold governments and other duty bearers accountable. At the same time, increased use of digital surveillance is a threat to democratisation, as is the use of Internet shutdowns to curtail people's expression and protest. These shutdowns also restrict commerce, threatening livelihoods.

We will invest in building capacity for data collection and engagement in the development of laws related to privacy, data protection and access to information. This includes supporting: the fair regulation of digital technology in a way that expands access to the Internet and curtails surveillance and algorithmic bias; accountability of big tech on the use of technology in surveillance and the use of algorithms to feed populist or narratives and electoral manipulation advancing authoritarianism.

We will support those advancing human rights in non-traditional ways through the creative use of social media as an alternative civic space and strengthening the skills of frontline individuals and organisations.

1.4. Promoting arts and culture for expression and participation

We recognise arts and culture as both rights and tools for promoting expression and participation. Arts and culture are pivotal to expanding civic space, providing avenues for building consciousness and enabling expression in closing spaces and voicing of the liberation demands of the marginalised. Arts and culture also enable diverse narratives, contributing to tolerant, plural and democratic societies. We will support artists and cultural producers, including: skills-building in marginalised communities; and the construction and promotion of platforms that integrate and strengthen the collective voice of artists and cultural actors.

1.5. Supporting HRDs in advancing rights and challenging the abuse of power by state and non-state actors

Advancing expression and participation will be resisted by many African states, creating risks for HRDs, WHRDs and pro-democracy champions. We will support and stand in solidarity with those who seek justice, accountability and equitable access to resources. As WHRDs are more at risk, facing double stigmatisation and the risk of sexual violence, they will receive special attention under this pillar.

We will support interventions that provide resources and capacity for timely and effective emergency response and protection as well as HRD platforms across Africa. To address digital surveillance, we will explore new partnerships to enhance digital security. We will contribute to donor platforms with the capacity to engage governments and intergovernmental institutions to build in a greater focus on prevention. Tools to advance this portfolio will include: grantmaking, strategic communications and advocacy as well as strategic litigation.

EXPECTED RESULTS

- Bold, innovative and effective movements resisting autocracy and capture and demanding their rights;

- Strong, broad-based women's and LGBTQI+ movements resisting patriarchy and other forms of oppression and pressuring governments and corporations to respect women's rights;

- Increased civic participation and public accountability for the distribution of resources and delivery of quality public services;

- Legislation that protects people's privacy, data and digital rights;

- Increased diversity and pluralism in information producers and distributors;

- Increased surfacing of abuse of power and corruption through investigative journalism, with cases brought to the courts and justice being served;

- Increased use of strategic litigation to challenge arbitrary state actions and corporate actions that violate human rights;

- Strong frameworks and platforms to support HRDs and WHRDs.

2. SECURITY AND RIGHTS

Goal 2: Promote a rights-based approach to security sector governance and accountability and respond to existing and emerging security challenges.

Stabilising and advancing African democracy require concerted efforts to address the continent's pervasive insecurity. Africa is plagued by security challenges giving rise to gross and systemic human rights violations and grave crimes. Africa's protracted insecurity has its roots in failed political governance, economic policies and global injustice resulting in joblessness, vulnerability to shocks such as COVID-19 and climate change, exposing Africa's woman and youth in particular religious and other identity fundamentalist and extremist violence. Protracted conflicts have devolved into criminal enterprises with deep-seated interests making resolution difficult. Ungoverned territories under control of insurgents and terrorist groups are expanding and the adverse effects of disrupted trade, climate change and food (in)security is impoverishing people and fuelling further violence. Geopolitics in the Sahel, Gulf of Guinea, Lake Chad Basin and the Horn of Africa and their intersection with various elites in the private sector (foreign corporate interests) and the State has enabled capture of the state and democratic processes by militaristic interests. Many countries struggling to transit to democracy are governed by militaristic regimes, making militarism a key factor hindering democratic transformation. Chad, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Sudan, the Sudan, Uganda and Zimbabwe are a few examples. We will support the growth of an accountable security sector and promote civilian oversight of security agencies. We will also invest in changing dominant narratives about terrorism while advancing accountability for the human rights violations characteristic of state responses to violent extremism. While our overall framing is that of human security, beyond responding to crises, we will focus on the nexus between insecurity, crisis and rights.

2.1. Supporting civilian oversight of and an accountable security sector

We will support efforts to hold military power accountable to civilian authorities and security sector reforms to address the role of military in democratic processes and systems, including demands for accountability.

We will build an understanding of militarism through comparative research, mapping securitisation in selected countries. We will be working with the AU and RECs to develop and monitor norms and standards on the role of the security sector, including Agenda 2063 [Free Movement, Malabo Protocols (Court of Justice and Human Rights)] and develop reporting systems with the AU and the ACHPR. We will support efforts to hold military power accountable to civilian authorities and security sector reforms to reshape the role of the military in democratic processes, including providing demands for accountability. We will also support advocacy to inform and build alliances with organisations with niche expertise in security and challenge the influence of foreign actors in African militaries in so far as it contributes to increased militarisation of democratic processes.

2.2. Supporting narrative change around insecurity and terrorism

We will seek to change dominant narratives on terrorism while also advancing accountability for human rights violations characteristic of state responses to violent extremism. We will support evidence-based analysis on violent extremism and the provision of said analysis for engagement. This will include strengthening: research foregrounding voices from affected communities on continental insurgencies in the continent; and research on foreign actors involved to advance more

nuanced geopolitical framing. We will support: narrative change as concerns terrorism, focused on governance gaps and community agency; and public demands for legal and institutional transparency related to security and military funding and cooperation agreements.

2.3. Security and safety for women and girls in conflict areas and sexual and gender minority groups advanced

During conflict, sexual violence, unwanted pregnancies and STIs, including HIV/AIDS, and trauma increase. Women and sexual and gender minorities tend to suffer disproportionately. Access to services, especially SRHR and psychosocial services and access to PEP, critical for recovery, is limited.

We will invest in feminist analysis of securitisation of political and economic governance and support peace-building efforts that build stakeholder capacity to prevent, stop and hold perpetrators of sexual violence accountable.

EXPECTED RESULTS

- In select countries experiencing militarism or undergoing violent extremism, voices of those impacted amplified towards sustainable solutions;

- An understanding of militarism and violent extremism's impacts on those affected informs state responses;

- Those affected using regional norms and mechanisms state, non-state and external actors accountable for human rights violations and grave crimes;

- Accountability and justice for women in militarised contexts or contexts of violent extremism.

3. ACCOUNTABILITY AND JUSTICE

Goal 3: Promote accountable, just and inclusive democracies governed by law in which rights are promoted and protected

Accountability and justice require that the state and its institutions have the capacity to both effectively perform and function within the constraints of the law. In many African countries, the rule of law and accountability institutions are captured or weak. Accountability institutions are also patriarchal and have not transformed from their colonial roots. Classist and racist colonial laws remain, which criminalising many people. Although such laws were recently successfully challenged before the ACHPR, they remain the basis of policing. The existence of multiple legal regimes (traditional, religious and statutory) deny women their rights. This legal and institutional set-up underpins today's rising authoritarianism and complicate demands for accountability in cases of human rights violations and grave crimes.

We will support efforts aimed at promoting the rule of law and challenging the abuse of power by states, non-state, private sector and foreign actors towards legal and institutional reform, accountability and justice.

Geography: This work will be anchored in countries where legal and institutional strengthening is possible and those experiencing human rights violations, grave crimes and impunity.

3.1. Promoting institutional transformation and renewal for accountability and justice

To advance accountability and justice (including gender justice), we will support the reform and strengthening of independent oversight mechanisms and institutions in select countries to promote transparency and accountability (parliament, the judiciary, election management bodies, human rights, public procurement, public resource management and anti-corruption agencies as well as other public watchdogs such as Ombudspeople's office).

We will support the policing reforms and the strengthening of prosecutorial capacities to enhancing state capacities to deliver justice and address corruption. To improve the broader political environment defining the character and performance of these institutions, we will also support civil society's proactive engagement in the design and implementation of these reforms through: training, civic engagement platforms and social movements; South-South experience-sharing and learning; campaigning and litigation). We will support efforts towards a pluralistic media ecosystem to investigate and expose abuses of power.

3.2. Strengthening national, regional and continental human rights and legal accountability mechanisms towards better human rights protection and access to justice

At the core of accountability is the right to an effective remedy for survivors and victims in the form of norms, institutions and processes. We will support interventions to advance judicial independence and adherence to procedural safeguards in criminal proceedings. We will support legal and policy reform to enhance human rights and accountability institutions (national human rights institutions and policing oversight agencies). We will support historically marginalised groups (women, LBTQTI+ communities and PWDs) in addressing the systemic discrimination that denies them access to justice from these institutions.

In addition, we will support efforts aimed at building capacity for investigations, transitional and international criminal justice proceedings, including with: national and sub-regional justice mechanisms. We will support civic actors' documentation, reporting on and advocacy towards accountability for gross and systemic human rights violations and grave crimes, including sexual violence, at national, regional and international levels.

3.3. Challenging corporate power to ensure public institutions function without the influence of capture

We will support work on business and human rights, challenging state and non-state actors violating community rights through profiteering without community benefit, environmental damage and pillage through: knowledge generation and research; investigative journalism; campaigns to expose state and corporate capture and demand accountability; domestic and extraterritorial litigation; and reform efforts on related laws, policy, laws and regulations. We will support voices demanding FPIC and ensuring affected communities are involved in decision-making about benefit-sharing. We will also support the review, adoption and implementation of AU mechanisms to mitigate against the capture of accountability mechanisms.

3.4. Supporting and strengthening broad-based intersectional movements to advance human rights and accountability agenda at the national, regional and international levels

To entrench human rights and accountability, it is essential to protect the individuals and movements at the forefront of these struggles. The continent is in need of reinvigorated and robust human rights

and accountability intersectional movements employing new tactics and tools to effectively respond to the needs of the time.

In recognition of the potential of African youth to drive change, we will support youth-led human rights and accountability movements in developing new organising and mobilising strategies, engaging new allies and re-energising their support base. We will support efforts to develop and advance youth leadership in civil society, politics and the economy, including through: cross-border learning; digital activism; as well as content development and narrative change.

We will also support African solidarity movement-building to respond to human rights and accountability challenges around the continent including through protection institutions and platforms.

EXPECTED RESULTS

- More transparent and accountable governance evidenced through enhanced independence and strengthening of select democratic, human rights and rule of law institutions;

- Improved laws and policies to protect human rights;

- Improved mechanisms to challenge undue corporate power and influence;

- More citizen organising and mobilising into effective movements against autocracy and capture, demanding rights, challenging injustice and demanding accountability;

- Sustainable solutions to protracted conflicts and recurring crisis generated by those most impacted;

- Improved culture of human rights and the rule of law.

4. OPPORTUNITY AND EQUITY

Goal 4: Support progressive economic and social norms, policies and practices that create opportunity and promote equality and rights.

Building and sustaining open societies means restoring the hope and trust that a continent of 1.3 billion people, with a median age of 18, has in the social contract, political life and economic prospects. The continent's future depends on whether young women and men, LGBTQI+ people and other marginalised groups feel safe, like they belonging and can participate towards the of their and their communities' conditions. Space for public engagement is closing off. We need to re-catalyse dynamism towards inter-generational dialogue, better representation and participation, access to resources and services and transformation. Patriarchal prejudice, discrimination and other inequalities rooted in culture and religion and colonialism continue to criminalise, exclude and violate large segments of African populations. African economies continue to be based on extractivist development patterns generating jobless growth and be fraught by cronyism and rent-seeking, limited to only few, often a politically connected circle. We want to ensure political, economic and social norms and practices create opportunity and promote equity, safety and rights, particularly for women and young people. This work will focus on policies and regulation but we are cognizant of the need for diffused ownership and greater service to the public interest. While the mid-term goal is policies and regulation, the long-term goal is changing power dynamics in public life towards economic justice.

4.1. Access to justice and the rights of the marginalised

To counter discrimination, enhance equality and create a more inclusive Africa, we will support legal and policy reform as well as organising and mobilising to challenge systemic barriers faced by marginalised persons. We will support challenges (including legal challenges) to the weaponisation of laws and policies against identity and support the enactment of laws and policies to protect the rights of the marginalised. Structurally, we will support approaches and tools aimed at improving the administration of criminal justice. Women, LGBTQI+ and sex worker communities in particular face legal, economic and social discrimination.

4.2. Addressing inequality by supporting transformative policies and practice

Years of underinvestment, together with the undermining and destruction of public institutions due to internal governance failures and external pressures make it challenging to rebuild the social contract. Our goal is to enhance the ability of fragmented civil society to demanding more viable, well-resourced and accountable states that prioritise well-being through progressive social policies.

Health and education as essential public goods: Many Africans have to contend with non-existent or dysfunctional public services while remaining unable to pursue their right to these essential public good, exacerbated by systemic discrimination on class, gender, racial, ethnic and other grounds. COVID-19 provides the opportunity to reclaim essential public goods (health and education). We will support organising and mobilising towards agency and accountability, focused on universal healthcare and insurance as well as education. We will focus on rights, governance and financing of these essential public goods. We will invest in institutions responsible for guaranteeing access to health and education and support processes towards greater domestic financing on the same. We will seek to ensure African perspectives and ambitions also shape global health and education governance and financing. This work will take place in select countries, connecting civil society across specialties and geographies in support of uptake of policy commitments on health and education from the RECs and continental institutions.

Engagement in support of social policy, led by women and young people: We will support movements in favour of social protection and invest in generating policy options on the same, including through: enhancing the bargaining power of (women) workers in the informal sector; and working with states, RECs and the AU on the harmonisation, piloting and implementation of cross-country frameworks. This is a space few philanthropies are willing to invest in, where we think scalable change can emerge. Finally, we will support work towards the continental recognition of the care economy as an economic building block, including by currently underfunded, pan-African, feminist alternatives. While this work is cross-country, we will identify a limited set of countries with political opportunities to advance scalable and replicable frameworks.

4.3. Supporting enablers and catalytic economic reforms towards people-centred, inclusive and sustainable economies

Africa needs to both address internal economic deficiencies and, externally, leverage South-South cooperation towards transformation of the international financial architecture. Both require sustained political will and African integration, allowing the continent to speak and act as a unified bloc.

Support tax justice domestically and globally, to finance development: Taxation remains a potent tool to address local and global inequalities. We will build on the global momentum towards tax,

spearheaded by persistent demands from the Global South, to overhaul global tax rules and foster a continent that is more self-reliant and independently driving its economic development. This work will strengthen African and global momentum towards stemming illicit financial flows by supporting synergies between research, civil society and movements to build political pressure for action, in select countries where needs are most pressing and political openings exist. Nationally, we will invest in addressing corruption in the management of public resources. At the continental level, we will support institutions under African financial architecture (the African Central Bank, African financial regulatory authorities, African tax institutions and African rating agencies) and calls for the reform of the international financial architecture (fiscal and monetary policies driving Africa's cyclical debt crises as well as the regulation of private sector actors). In addressing sovereign debt, we will also support domestic accountability mechanisms.

Making trade and investment work for Africans: The AfCFTA has the potential to break from existing trade agreements and be a progressive force for change. It could be a rallying point for peoples, civil society, formal and informal (women) workers and policymakers to engage around the rules and regulations shaping our economies and economic activity. The AfCFTA is yet to finalize phase II protocols on investment, intellectual property (IP) rights and competition policy. These all affect the ability of states to maintain policy independence, uphold rights, create opportunity and advance sustainable development and managing climate. To advance an agenda that centres rights and opportunity, we will: support the representation and power of civil society and local enterprise in shaping and monitoring implementation of the AfCFTA; advance a gendered approach as concerns formal and informal labour and local enterprise; and support multidisciplinary spaces for African expertise and activism advancing reform proposals towards gender and climate justice. This work will have a sub-regional and continental outlook and will be led by anchor organisations with access to bilateral and multilateral trade and investment spaces.

Reforming the management of natural resources: The continent remains economically dependent due to an extractive development model. Natural resource management (beyond the mining and gas sectors to Africa's forests, rivers and seas) needs transformation as concerns domestic ownership and value chains. Beyond the accountability agenda (transparency and community rights), we will support demands for transformation and transitions away from extractive industries and towards more diversified, people-centred and climate-sensitive industries. This work will happen continentally by supporting implementation of regional and continental natural resource management frameworks, such as the AU's African Mining Vision.

Supporting African and Global South proposals on new economic development models: We recognise the violence of an unregulated and unchecked neoliberal and financialised view of development that de-emphasises the well-being of people and communities. We will support spaces and processes for African thinkers, activists and policymakers to challenge economic orthodoxies in ways that reflect African contexts and priorities and go beyond critique to new imaginations. We will support reform of economics teaching in African institutions and support African feminist economists. We will support communications and engagement to incentivise popular support for new economic models.

Technology, governance and opportunity: The fourth industrial revolution holds promise as concerns public engagement, job-creation, new ways to cure disease, tackling climate change and more. But it may also concentrate wealth and power and accelerate inequalities. Technology will also shape

geopolitical dynamics, with potentially adverse effects on Africa, as a site for proxy wars. Technology is central to people building power and increasing access to opportunity. Yet it is uncertain African countries, civil society, businesses and people are positioning themselves for conversations and actions on digital rights, cyber-security, net neutrality, corporate control and capture, intellectual property, ethical standards and so on. We will support the growth of an ecosystem of African academics, artists, activists and policymakers equipped to engage on how digital technologies can advance transformation. We will support:

People-focused, inclusive and accountable digital transitions: Advancements in the automation of the mining industry, financial and service sectors, trade and climate technology will have impacts on labour, fiscal and competition policy and practice as well as the economy as a whole, including opportunity and equity. We will work with regulators and civil society to: support policy engagement on the future of labour and taxation; address collusion between digital platforms and governments on policy; and support dialogue on green technologies and natural resources management.

Incentivise African visioning on the intersection of technology and society: Africans need to more intently consider how rapid technological progress will shape political, economic, social and cultural life. We will support more robust platforms to deconstruct and reconstruct visions of change given technological changes. This work will support existing or new reflection spaces, think tanks or other research spaces, unorthodox ideation initiative, and thinkers towards co-creation of African visions about the digital future.

4.4. Fair global climate governance and justice, anchored in human rights

Strengthen African agency on and mechanisms for climate change governance, financing and justice: Climate change will continue to be an existential threat to human life and progress. As the struggle to find technological, political, economic and social solutions advances, African states and people must not only be engaged, but reinforce principles of equitable and shared responsibility. There is need to build domestic (regional and continental) political capital in support of more progressive leadership and alignment of climate policies and regulations against the window of opportunity for new economic activities, employment and environmental justice. Critical sectors for the continent include: energy, agriculture together with land and water and carbon markets. Our goal is to grow political and social capital for climate action, engage on global governance of climate and address environmental crimes. We will support expanding stakeholder organising and mobilising, accelerating the development and implementation of national strategies on climate adaptation and mitigation and advancing African biodiversity.

We will: nurture a groundswell of women- and youth-led coalitions of peoples, movements making use of African-centred climate research to engage with domestic and global climate negotiations; support advocacy on African climate change agendas; support advocacy towards more transparent, just and accountable climate financing; and d) support organising and mobilising to address environmental crimes in selected geographies.

EXPECTED RESULTS

- Strengthened and connected civic communities (environmental activists and movements) across countries and sub-regions towards solidarity and action on decision-making and policy;

- Better civic coordination on demands transparency and accountability as concerns climate action;

- New thinking and alternative economic development models on just transitions;
- More strategic African and African-centred participation (state and non-state) in global responses to climate change.

5. WOMEN'S RIGHTS

We recognise the threats to women's **bodily autonomy** (SRHR and sexual violence); women's **political autonomy** (closing space for organising and mobilising; conflict and insecurity); and **economic autonomy** (corruption taking away much-needed economic and social security, as well as the impacts of COVID-19 on socioeconomic rights), A Women's Rights pillar is proposed to advance feminist perspectives and women's rights. We will support the field in agenda-setting towards gender justice and women's rights. We will ensure all our work advances gender justice and women's rights across the other four pillars. We will technically backstop the executive team to enable them to ensure we deliver for women.

Feminist work has contributed to the growth of the SRHR and LGBTQI movements, as well as younger feminist and sex worker movements. These have been robust at times and stagnant during others—often affected by under-resourcing. Concepts of gender and sexuality are dynamic and, working within a binary, some interventions have proven exclusionary. The inclusion of trans, intersex and non-conforming as genders has been limited, pointing to gender justice being more layered and our understanding of it requiring broadening to ensure no genders are marginalised or excluded.

In movements both established and nascent, marginalised women have had to contend with cultural and religious intolerance, exploitation and sexual violence. Movements cannot operate in isolation and must show solidarity across different forms of marginalisation and inequality. The struggle for gender justice is connected to queer struggles, young women's struggles, labour and economic struggles, climate justice struggles and racial justice struggles. Intersectional feminist movement building is an imperative.

5.1. Positioning African women's rights globally

We will connect with other OSF entities as well as other global players to advance the visibility and voice of African women globally through creating and supporting platforms and spaces of diverse African women, their communities, organisations, networks and movements to engage internally and externally.

5.2. Strengthening the field to anchor the work of the other pillars

We will support the field in setting the agenda for gender justice and women's rights across our other four pillars. The governance crises in several countries (resulting in closing civic space and depleting funding), the a rise in anti-gender movements and COVID-19 have resulted in women's rights organisations scaling down or closing shop. We need to assist in reviving the field including through connecting different struggles. But there have also been positive shifts, presenting us with an opportunity to influence and rebuild the field in a positive way.

5.3. Supporting intersectional feminist movements

Interlocking forms of oppression and increased complex challenges are shaping global politics, calling for intersectional movements that are inclusive in their form and approaches. We will connect

movements not usually connected and exploring, designing and leveraging models of care and healing frameworks.

5.4. Strengthening intersectional feminist knowledge-production and uptake

We will prioritise intersectional, feminist knowledge-production and uptake to inform how we interpret the world and improve the quality of our work and partnerships. Feminist knowledge and narratives will enable us to go beyond the binaries of Global North and Global South to gendered power dynamics globally.

EXPECTED RESULTS

- OSF prioritises gender justice and women's rights across its work;

- OSF is a key contributor to and supporter of gender justice and women's rights with at least 30% of our budgets going towards the same across all pillars;

- Strong and well-resourced intersectional and intergenerational feminist movements;

- Alternative ideas about the African women's political, economic and social realities of women;

- African feminist knowledge and practices shape gender justice and women's rights strategies, programmes and initiatives;

- African women assert their rights through increased advocacy formations, organisations, networks and movements.

6. SPECIAL INITIATIVES

Three special initiatives will support our strategic ambitions, each serving distinct purposes and cutting across all pillar. These are not parallel to our work, they are central and foundational enablers linking the pillars.

6.1. Re-invigorating pan-African civil society: decolonising academia and more impactful research and policy influence

More substantial, flexible, longer-term and predicable funding and support for African changemakers (the Sunrise Initiative): African civil society operating across countries and engaging continental institutions face acute and longstanding challenges. They lack adequate funding, leading to failures of governance, leadership and strategy. They are unable to sustain rigorous testing of their ideas at the levels required. We will dedicate an initial injection of at least half our budget to core, flexible and predictable funding for an ecosystem of anchor organisations at the continental, regional, national and local levels (including the 30% allocation to women-led and youth-led organisations).

Our support will go beyond funding to ensuring our changemakers develop better pathways towards sustainability by integrating organisational development into our grantmaking. This initiative will require at least two dedicated staff, whose primary focus will be to ensure clarity of purpose, evaluation and learning, supported by a representative group of all programmatic staff. The initiative is not standalone (outside our regular grantmaking). It a clear commitment about how we will allocate our budget under this strategy. Following the lifecycle of this strategy and upon evaluation, the possibility exists to further this work through an endowment with a focused mandate.

A continental policy centre: We will set up a policy centre as a platform for African civil society to engage the AU in Addis Ababa more robustly on a sustained basis. The goal is to advance

implementation—and challenge regression—of continental norms related to our pillars by supporting a new crop of pan-African organisations pushing for the people-centred AU we want. The policy centre will also serve as a focal space for OSF's own policy engagement with the AU, to OSF's policy centres in Brussels and DC. Increasing OSF's advocacy capital in the Global South is part of OSF's transformation into a more global organisation with a strategic geographic footprint, in step with our multi-polar geopolitical context.

More resourced and connected African academic, research and higher education initiatives: A history of underinvestment, politicisation the legacy of colonial and structural adjustment has deepened the divide between well-endowed research spaces globally and those on the continent. The quality of research from the continent will be an asset in shaping our societies in a globalised world. The decolonisation of higher education is a priority. We will support academic, research and higher education initiatives and networks.

6.2. Advancing African influence in the globe

Given the intensified interest of external players in Africa, current geopolitics with new opportunities and challenges for Africa to assert itself globally and the fragmentation of Africa's foreign policy stances, seeding an Africa International Relations Institute to address these issues is critical. The Institute will serve as an independent, Africa-owned and led resource for African academics, civil society, private sector, policymakers and AU Member States, to produce quality Afrocentric, foreign policy-oriented data analysis articulating long-term and strategic pan-African interests that centre African peoples and bolster Africa's relations with the rest of the world. There is no such Institute at present. Attention will be given to African women in international relations, creating intergenerational opportunities for upcoming African researchers and policymakers to interact with our seasoned former diplomats, mediators, force commanders, go beyond state-centric international relations and encourage non-state actors as key influencers and determinants of international relations. Our role is to catalyse and seed this initiative by piloting several ideas designed to ultimately converge in the Institute.

EXPECTED RESULTS

- Sustained civil society engagement with the AU;

- An African International Relations Institute that addresses the structural fragmentation of African foreign policy;

- African researchers, civil society organisations and current policymakers engaging former diplomats, mediators, force commanders and continental institutions.