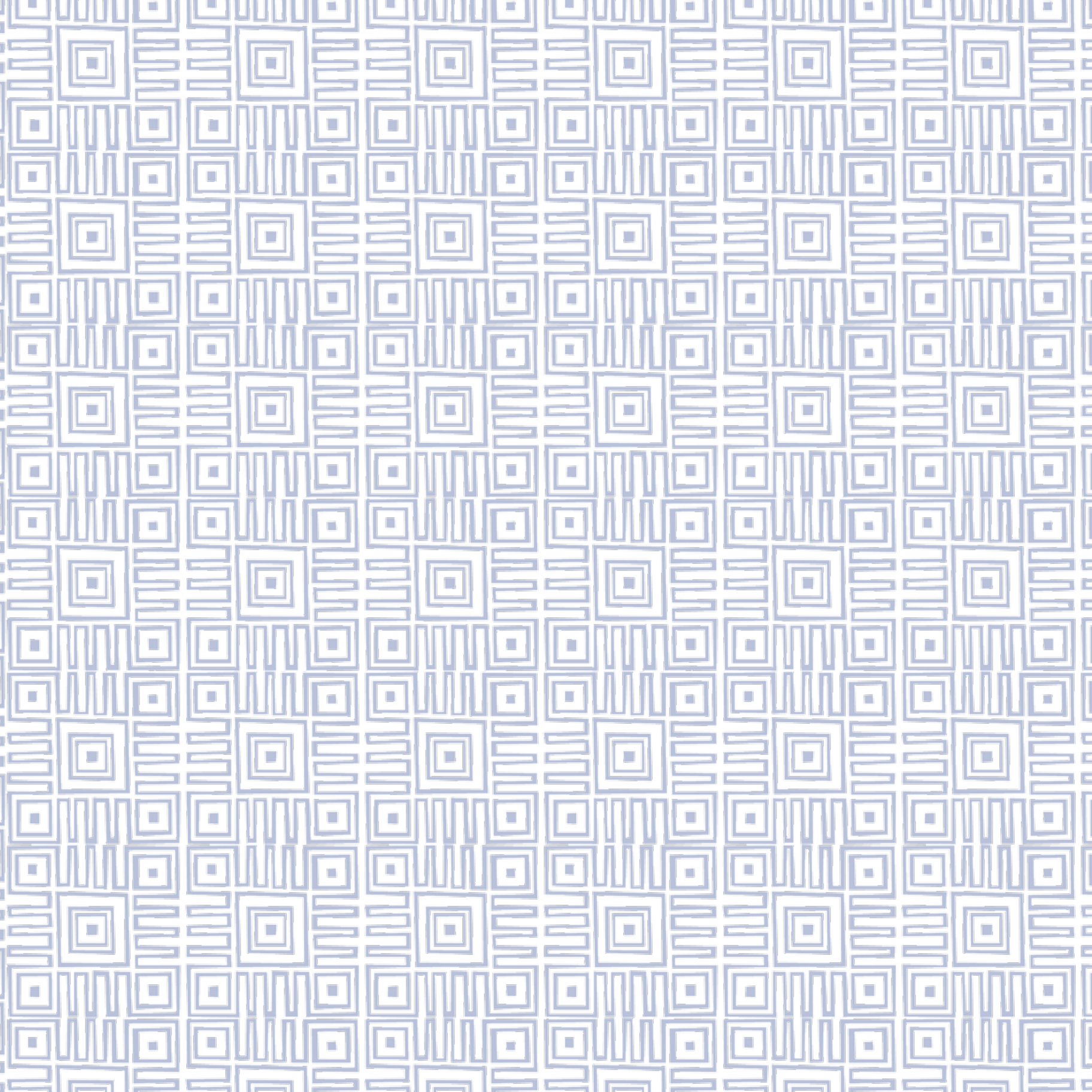


The African Policy Voice in Washington



Annual Report 2011



A Message from the Director



Photo by Ralph Alswang

Between 2008 and 2010, the Africa Growth Initiative (AGI) at the Brookings Institution successfully completed its establishment phase during which it put in place the necessary infrastructure to support its operations in Washington. Over these two years, AGI also undertook a number of activities, including researching African economic issues, providing timely commentaries on contemporary political developments in Africa, and convening forums to discuss major issues pertaining to Africa's development. Through these activities, AGI has developed strong relationships with other Washington-based think tanks, international development and civil society organizations, the private sector, and the U.S. government and global policy community. Now, with startup complete, AGI has established a new and unique platform for articulating an informed African voice in Washington, DC.

AGI has sought to leverage this platform and help African policymakers and their Western counterparts to manage the dramatic changes occurring across Africa. During the past year, several African countries—including Côte d'Ivoire, Zambia, Uganda, Nigeria and Liberia—held presidential elections, in addition to the historic referendum that resulted in the establishment of the new nation of South Sudan. Libya, Tunisia and Egypt experienced dramatic regime changes as a result of the popular protests from the Arab Spring. Yet, there continues to be prolonged political and economic instability in North Africa. Significant new oil reserves were discovered in Ghana, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Uganda, and the centerpiece of the commercial relationship between the United States and Africa—the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA)—marked its 10th anniversary with discussions questioning its progress and exploring options for successor agreements given its expiration in 2015. Another major concern this year was the poor global economic recovery, which has had serious implications for African economies. In addition, the prolonged drought in the

greater Horn of Africa has had catastrophic effects on human life and suffering and is now being exacerbated by the continued political crisis in Somalia.

During all these events, AGI has strived to articulate an informed African voice in Washington and has specifically started new partnerships with six leading think tanks from the continent. These unique partnerships have provided Brookings scholars with an opportunity to collaborate directly with their counterparts in Africa and initiate joint research projects, forums, and events on critical African issues and changing global events. We see these partnerships as an innovative way for Brookings to approach policy analysis and impact policymakers and forums outside of Washington.

In all of our work, AGI is guided by the core principles of Brookings: quality, independence and impact. By upholding these principles, the work of AGI and its partners has increasingly attracted the interest of many commentators and senior policymakers. Similarly, in this relatively short period of time, AGI has become fully integrated within the Brookings Global Economy and Development program and the Brookings Institution as a whole. This accomplishment has only been possible because of strong support from the Brookings administration, especially from the vice president and director of Global Economy and Development, Kemal Derviş, and his team. Finally, guidance from Brookings President Strobe Talbott has made it possible for AGI to smoothly execute all its work over the past year.

Mwangi S. Kimenyi
Senior Fellow and Director
The Africa Growth Initiative at Brookings



An aerial photograph of a rural landscape. A long, straight, light-colored road or path runs diagonally from the top left towards the bottom right. To the left of the road, there is a large, irregularly shaped pond with blue water. Below the pond, there are several rectangular plots of land, some of which appear to be planted with crops in rows. To the right of the road, there are more green fields and a line of trees. In the bottom right corner, there are a few small buildings or houses. The overall scene is a mix of natural and agricultural elements.

Policy Research from an African Perspective

Efforts to engage in high-quality research and to impact policy issues related to Africa's economic growth form the core of AGI's activities. To manage change and unanticipated developments, policymakers need timely analysis from objective and informed sources. In the past year, perhaps nowhere in the world was this need greater than in Africa.

AGI scholars contribute to the development of effective policies in two ways: first, by providing economic analysis through long-term research; and second, by delivering timely and relevant commentary and policy advice oriented toward the changing needs of policymakers. During the past 12 months, AGI scholars have effectively informed policy in both realms. Fellows have published working papers and op-eds as well as articles in academic journals and books. They have also presented their research and expertise to policymakers and stakeholders interested in African issues, thereby strengthening AGI's brand and presence in the Washington policy community. This past January, AGI released *Foresight Africa: The Continent's Greatest Challenges and Opportunities for 2011*, which identified the biggest obstacles and potential areas for growth in Africa. In the report, AGI scholars provided policy recommendations for African governments and development partners to leverage opportunities for growth and development across the continent.

In addition, Mwangi Kimenyi published an article on "Africa and South Korea's Leadership of the G-20" in *Korea's Economy 2011*, a journal published by the Korea Economic Institute. Kimenyi's article provided the African perspective on the debate surrounding the Group of Twenty in light of the global economic crisis and identified opportunities for engagement with South Korea. The impact of the global economic crisis and the ongoing recovery on Africa's growth

Photo by Paul Morse



Felix C. Mutati, Zambia's minister of commerce, trade and industry, speaks about the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act and its future potential at a congressional briefing co-hosted by AGI. Zambia was the host of the 2011 AGOA forum, making Minister Mutati's participation in the briefing particularly important.

has been an important area of research and engagement for AGI. Research Fellow Anne Kamau, in collaboration with Research Assistant Zenia Lewis, published "Combating African Currency Volatility from the West's Debt Crisis" to explain how the global economic downturn is creating challenges for macroeconomic management in many African countries. Kamau also answered questions in a Brookings



Photo by Paul Morse

U.S. Congressman Donald M. Payne, ranking member of the of House Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health, discusses the U.S. perspective on the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act at an event co-hosted by AGI and the Corporate Council on Africa.

online video on the implications of the eurozone debt crisis on African economies, which later appeared on *BBC Africa*. Through these and other activities, AGI was able to provide thorough policy analysis and enhance its presence as an informed voice for Africa in U.S. and international policy debates.

AGI's fellows have also maintained a strong presence in regional research networks and academic institutions. At this year's biannual meeting of the African Economic Research Consortium in Nairobi, Senior Fellow John Page chaired the plenary session on "Industrialization and Economic Transformation in Africa," where he presented

a paper entitled "Can Africa Industrialize?" This work will be published in the *Journal of African Economies*. Writing alongside international development experts such as Paul Collier and William Easterly, Mwangi Kimenyi, Senior Fellow John Mukum Mbaku, and Research Analyst Nelipher Moyo published "Reconstituting Africa's Failed States: The Case of Somalia" in the Winter 2010 issue of *Social Research*. Highlighting the complex challenges to development in weak and failed states with little governing power or institutions for social protection, Kimenyi, Mbaku and Moyo explored Somalia as a case study and the consequences of instability.

When drought and famine began to ravage Somalia and other countries in the Horn of Africa, AGI scholars promptly responded with a series of web editorials that expanded on the famine's implications for governance, security and policy. Research Fellow Julius Agbor wrote about the devastating effects of drought on children and how malnutrition can be detrimental to school attendance and learning. Mwangi Kimenyi, Nelipher Moyo and Jessica Smith released a timely piece offering concrete policy advice to manage food shocks, suggesting that a regional approach could provide more effective management of resources and avoid food insecurity.

In the past year, AGI has engaged in current events by providing their expertise and analysis, and by maintaining its voice in the debates as they evolve. For example, in November 2010, Mwangi Kimenyi wrote an op-ed on "The Long Road to Sudan's Secession Vote" in the *Los Angeles Times*. Kimenyi's op-ed established AGI's insight and expertise on the issue, and the initiative has continued to publish analysis on the Brookings website as South Sudan has moved toward and achieved independence over this past year.



Nonresident Senior Fellow Ernest Aryeetey discusses the importance of Africans telling their own stories about good governance and economic performance at the 2011 Brookings Blum Roundtable, an annual conference where academics, senior policymakers, and business and NGO leaders discuss innovative ideas to alleviate global poverty.

Photo by Alex Irvin

Zambian Minister for Commerce, Trade and Industry Felix C. Mutati (left) and Namibian Minister for Trade Hage G. Geingob (right) listen to remarks on how to promote trade between the United States and African countries.



Photo by Paul Morse

A woman with dark skin is standing in a lush green tea plantation. She is wearing a vibrant red long-sleeved shirt and a colorful headscarf with blue, red, and yellow patterns. She is carrying a large, round, woven basket on her back, which is suspended by a green strap. The background is a dense field of tea bushes under bright, natural light.

A Strategy for Achieving Impact

The past year has been pivotal for AGI as it seeks to position itself in the Washington and international policy community as a source for high-quality, informed expertise on Africa's growth. As a relatively new initiative establishing its presence, AGI has prioritized efforts to solidify its role as the African voice in Washington, connecting the U.S. and international policy community with African institutions and experts. To execute its core objectives, AGI has adopted a balanced approach that engages the immediate needs of policymakers and stakeholders while maintaining its long-term research agenda on African growth.

As critical global events have unfolded during the past year, AGI scholars have participated in relevant discussions, providing unique commentary from the African perspective. AGI's impact has been evident across a variety of mediums. Its scholars have been asked to contribute to and participate in events at other institutions in Washington and around the world. For example, Director Kimenyi gave the keynote address at the German Day on Development at the World Bank, presenting his research on "The Centrality of Micro-Institutions in the Development Process." Building on AGI's profile, Kimenyi also participated in other events, including workshops during the annual meetings of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank and a panel at the Center for Strategic and International Studies on Kenya's constitutional reform and elections. AGI scholars have been invited to participate in international forums convened by the Amadeus Foundation, the International Growth Centre, the United Nations University World Institute for Development Economics Research, the United Nations Summit on Least Developed Countries and numerous other organizations.

Over the past year, AGI has connected directly with policymakers by engaging in high-level meetings and issuing policy briefs to inform debates on Africa's growth. For example,

Senior Fellow John Page met with the senior public policy planning team at the U.S. State Department to discuss AGI's current research on AGOA, as well as industrial growth models for Africa. By engaging policymakers and providing them with informed research and analysis, Page was able to collaborate with policymakers and offer them sound advice on how to improve U.S. trade and industrial policies toward Africa.

AGI's heightened profile and unique expertise on Africa have not gone unnoticed by the media. In early June 2011, AGI Fellow Melvin Ayogu was interviewed for a story on *CNN's Situation Room* about the Washington visit of Gabonese President Ali Bongo Ondimba. Bongo has been accused of abetting corruption while many of his citizens live in destitute poverty, so his meeting with U.S. President Barack Obama sparked controversy and media attention. As the Obama administration stepped up its engagement with Africa in early summer, AGI scholars were at the forefront of analyzing the administration's policies and activities. Scholars from AGI appeared in several major media outlets to discuss the White House and the State Department's renewed engagement with African countries. For example, during First Lady Michelle Obama's visit to the continent, Melvin Ayogu was interviewed by *NBC News* on



Mobile phones are providing new ways for people in remote communities to manage their finances. Njuguna S. Ndung'u (left), governor of the Central Bank of Kenya, and Maria Otero (right), U.S. undersecretary of state for democracy and global affairs, discuss the importance of these services at an AGI conference.

Photo by Sharon Farmer

the expectations of Africans for the first lady's trip. And as popular uprisings broke out in northern Africa, AGI also provided its insights on the changing dynamics in the region. Director Kimenyi appeared on *NPR's Tell Me More* program to discuss Libya, following the publication of his editorial on "The Arab Democracy Paradox" on the Brookings website.

In June, the initiative's research on AGOA was cited by several African and U.S. newspapers, including the *Wall Street Journal*, during the 2011 AGOA forum in Lusaka. Over the last year, AGI scholars have been cited on issues, including trade, famine, South Sudan, failed states and governance in major media outlets, such as *Al Jazeera*, *Bloomberg*, the *Los Angeles Times* and the *Washington Post*. AGI's communications and outreach efforts have helped position it as an essential resource for policy-relevant and informed commentary on current events related to Africa.

AGI's impact has been especially evident in its efforts to bring high-level African officials to Washington as visiting fellows. Most notably, Mukhisa Kituyi, Kenya's former minister of trade and industry, joined AGI in the late spring and was able to substantially contribute to AGI's core objectives. Kituyi met with U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Johnnie Carson and discussed AGI's ongoing research on improving Africa's economic performance. Kituyi's time at Brookings also gained international recognition, and he was able to accompany AGI to the AGOA forum in Lusaka, representing the initiative in a number of local and international media interviews. AGI also brought on Visiting Fellow Vera Songwe, former adviser to World Bank Managing Director Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, who left her position as managing director in July to assume the position of Nigeria's finance minister. AGI's visiting fellows provide direct linkages to policymakers in Washington as well as Africa.



Screen Shot by George Burroughs

AGI Fellow Melvin Ayogu discusses the 27 national elections expected to be held in Africa in 2011 in a Brookings podcast. He suggests that while these elections provide an opportunity to entrench democracy, they also pose challenges for electoral systems across the continent.



Photo by Sharon Farmer

Ian Solomon, U.S. executive director to the World Bank, offers his thoughts on mobile financial services during an AGI panel discussion with Priya Jaisinghani, senior adviser at the U.S. Agency for International Development.



Photo by Paul Morigi

AGI Visiting Fellow Vera Songwe talks with Alassane Ouattara, president of Côte d'Ivoire, after a roundtable discussion with think tank leaders at Brookings.

Bringing African Voices to the Policy Dialogue



Before the 2008 global economic crisis, African countries experienced one of their longest periods of sustained economic expansion. This progress stimulated both unique financial innovations and opportunities for further growth. Although Africa has weathered the crisis better than other regions, the current global economic downturn has significantly weakened growth rates and related efforts to strengthen institutions. Therefore, during the past year, AGI has sought to utilize Brookings' unparalleled convening power to address these dynamics in Africa through a series of public and private events, each with the goal of expanding the dialogue on mobilizing opportunities for continued growth.

AGI provides a platform for inserting African voices into the Washington policy debates on issues concerning Africa. In 2010, AGI hosted Ruhakana Rugunda, the Ugandan permanent representative to the United Nations, for a talk on the role of Africa's regional organizations in preventing and resolving conflicts. The initiative also hosted Uhuru Kenyatta, Kenya's deputy prime minister, to discuss his country's economic growth path, and John Rwangombwa, Rwanda's minister of finance and economic planning, for a presentation on aid effectiveness in Rwanda.

In 2011, AGI collaborated with the Corporate Council on Africa to host a conference on the current status and future of the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act. The conference consisted of a congressional briefing and a one-day forum with public and private panel discussions. The briefing was hosted by U.S. Representative Donald M. Payne (D-NJ) and supported by U.S. Representative Bobby L. Rush (D-IL). Zambia's minister of commerce, trade and industry, Felix M. Mutati, offered remarks and was joined by Namibia's minister of trade, Hage. G. Geingob. Forum speakers and supporters

included the assistant U.S. trade representative for Africa, Florizelle "Florie" Liser; the president and CEO of the Whitaker Group, Rosa Whitaker; the president of Schneidman and Associates International, Witney Schneidman; and the president of the Corporate Council on Africa, Stephen Hayes. The participants discussed whether AGOA alone is enough to promote U.S.-Africa trade and the critical role that nongovernmental stakeholders play in ensuring its success.

The conference was followed by the publication of an AGI report, *The Africa Growth and Opportunities Act: Toward 2015 and Beyond*, which provided a synthesis of efforts to improve the program and build on its successes. The report drew from the opinions of U.S. and African governments, regional organizations, business associations, civil society and academia, and provided a set of recommendations for African trade officials and their U.S. counterparts. As emerging economies such as Brazil, Russia, China and India have expanded their commercial linkages with Africa, the United States' commercial presence on the continent has been shrinking. Experts from AGI took on this issue with an



Photo by Sharon Farmer

Michael Joseph (left), fellow at the World Bank and former CEO of Safaricom, Kenya's largest mobile phone service provider, offers his perspective on the need for increased mobile financial services for people living in remote areas in Africa. Brookings Senior Fellow John Page (right) moderated the session.

and academia, and provided a set of recommendations for African trade officials and their U.S. counterparts. As emerging economies such as Brazil, Russia, China and India have expanded their commercial linkages with Africa, the United States' commercial presence on the continent has been shrinking. Experts from AGI took on this issue with another report, *Improving AGOA: Toward a New Framework for U.S.-Africa Commercial Engagement*. In this report, AGI scholars and scholars from its partner think tanks in Africa argued that the Obama administration needs to develop a coherent strategy to significantly deepen the U.S. trade relationship with African countries.

In May 2011, the United Nations held its fourth conference on least developed countries in Istanbul. In preparation, AGI co-hosted a public panel discussion at Brookings with InterAction and the Center for Concern in order to start a dialogue on what the United States and the international community should do to address development in the least developed countries of Africa.



Photo by Paul Morse

Florizelle Liser, the assistant U.S. trade representative for Africa, shares her thoughts on the status of the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act and its potential renewal.

As many experts and policymakers know, political calamities and discontent are all too common in many African countries. However, these crises are perhaps worse under the current global economic downturn, with growing inequalities now dangerously merging with elements of corruption and impunity that exist in certain African countries. Recent events in the Middle East demonstrate how these combined factors have the potential to foment dramatic unrest and unprecedented change. To explore how these new and growing trends are being manifested in Sub-Saharan Africa, AGI hosted John Githongo in June for private and public discussions of his ongoing work on governance and development in Africa. Githongo served as Kenya's permanent secretary for governance and ethics from 2003 to 2005 and has devoted his efforts to eliminating corruption, impunity and injustice in developing countries. In 2011, he launched Kenya Ni Yetu (Kenya Is Ours)—a national effort to empower Kenyans seeking to advocate against corruption—and was appointed to Britain's Independent Commission for Aid. In his remarks at Brookings, Githongo focused on the role of worsening inequality and poor governance in Africa and other developing countries. Brookings Global Economy and Development Senior Fellow Daniel Kaufmann moderated both the public and private discussions, which were attended by key stakeholders from the Washington policy community.

In early 2011, AGI initiated a series of events to raise awareness and provide an independent venue for discussing the political, economic and humanitarian turmoil that hit the once-prosperous nation of Côte d'Ivoire, which plunged into a sustained political crisis after disputed presidential elections in late 2010. During this time, escalating conflict forced hundreds of thousands of Ivorians to flee their homes. The conflict was only resolved with the arrest of the country's former leader Laurent Koudou Gbagbo and the inauguration of elected President Alassane Ouattara. In the midst of this crisis, AGI collaborated with the Project on Internal Displacement



Photo by Sharon Farmer

At an AGI public lecture, John Githongo, a member of Britain's Independent Commission for Aid, discusses corruption, impunity and inequality in Africa.



Photo by Paul Morigi

AGI Director Mwangi Kimenyi (left) welcomes Alassane Ouattara (right), president of Côte d'Ivoire, to Brookings for a private roundtable discussion on Côte d'Ivoire's economic development and recovery.

at Brookings to host a public event to propose options and facilitate discussions about mechanisms to resolve the political and humanitarian challenges in Côte d'Ivoire. This public event featured presentations by Chaloka Beyani, U.N. special rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons; Margaret McKelvey, director of the Office of Assistance for Africa at the

U.S. State Department; Sarah Margon, associate director for sustainable security at the Center for American Progress; and Ann Hollingsworth, senior analyst at the International Crisis Group. This discussion was moderated by AGI Visiting Fellow Ezra Suruma, a former finance minister for Uganda, who offered an African perspective.

After the resolution of the political crisis in Côte d'Ivoire, AGI turned its attention to the country's economic recovery, hosting President Ouattara in September for a private roundtable moderated by AGI Director Mwangi Kimenyi. During this off-the-record talk, a small group of Brookings scholars and leaders in policy and academia, as well as members of the media discussed key issues facing President Ouattara and Côte d'Ivoire. The issues covered included plans for constitutional revisions, mechanisms for productively engaging international and bilateral aid groups, and the important role of regional integration and trade for the country's recovery. In the next year, AGI aims to continue to focus on Côte d'Ivoire and support its national recovery.

In addition to addressing ongoing challenges, AGI also used Brookings' convening power to raise awareness and facilitate dialogue vis-à-vis unique innovations and opportunities existing exclusively in Africa. For example, during the past decade, mobile telephone use in Africa has increased dramatically, radically altering how people on the continent access and use financial services. Populations that previously had no access to these services now have a growing range of them delivered via their mobile phones. Nowhere is the impact of mobile financial services greater than in Kenya, where the mobile banking product M-PESA has fundamentally altered Kenyans' financial habits and shifted how development professionals and central bankers approach financial inclusion.

However, despite the potential of these mobile services in providing the region's poor with more access to financial



At an AGI event, Uhuru Kenyatta (right), Kenya's deputy prime minister and minister of finance, discusses his country's political and economic growth trajectories with Brookings Global Economy and Development Senior Fellow Daniel Kaufmann (left).

AGI staff photo

In August 2011, former AGI Nonresident Senior Fellow Ngozi Okonko-Iweala became Nigeria's new finance minister. Here, she speaks to participants at the Brookings Blum Roundtable on global poverty in Aspen, Colorado.



Photo by Alex Irvin

tools, they have yet to gain traction elsewhere in Africa. Therefore, AGI, the Alliance for Financial Inclusion and the Central Bank of Kenya hosted a conference and a series of private workshops on mobile financial services. Focusing on the lessons learned about implementing these services, the conference brought together development professionals, mobile financial services experts, central bankers and academics.

At the conference, panelists voiced their interest in and aspiration for mobile financial services in Africa. Noting that Kenya's success was not unique, they determined that similar programs could be replicated in other parts of the continent. However, they also discussed the diverse challenges faced in implementing such services in other African countries including: slow uptake and growth despite the regulation of e-money and high mobile phone penetration; problems

linking existing models to a safe environment for financial intermediation and the need to coordinate regulation of mobile financial services for banks and telecommunications.

At the conference, AGI Director Kimenyi noted that the goal for participants was to develop ideas that could advance financial inclusion in developing countries. Participants were challenged to identify policy initiatives that could have an impact. In the end, the conference met these goals by fostering an innovative discussion and by creating steps for donors and governments to promote mobile financial services worldwide.

These and other efforts have highlighted African policy issues and provided a forum for Africans to articulate their voices in Washington.



Photo by Sharon Farmer

Mukhisa Kituyi, AGI visiting fellow and former minister of trade and industry for Kenya, poses questions to the panel during a public event at Brookings on expanding mobile financial services in developing countries.

A photograph of a textile factory. A worker wearing a white short-sleeved shirt, white trousers, and a white cap is standing on the right side of the frame, facing left. They are operating a large industrial machine that is producing a dense, horizontal spray of many fine, white threads. The threads are spread out across the middle of the image, creating a sense of motion and volume. The background shows a typical industrial setting with a grey wall, some pipes, and a yellow door or panel on the left. The floor is a dark, polished surface.

Partnerships in Africa

Most analysts and research institutions agree that if Africa is to achieve transformative progress, policy solutions must come from African sources. In 2010, AGI established an ambitious new approach to achieving this goal, which to date is unequalled in Washington's policy research community. In September of this year, AGI announced formal partnerships with six leading African think tanks:

- The Economic Policy Research Center (EPRC) in Uganda
- The Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis (KIPPRA)
- The Center for Social and Economic Research (CRES) in Senegal
- The Institute of Statistical, Social, and Economic Research (ISSER) at the University of Ghana
- The Nigerian Institute for Social and Economic Research (NISER)
- The Development Policy Research Unit (DPRU) at the University of Cape Town in South Africa.

In the coming years, AGI will collaborate with the scholars of these think tanks on a series of policy analysis initiatives that address the critical economic priorities for stimulating growth in Africa. With the help of these partners, AGI will also provide a new direct link between the U.S. government, multilateral agencies, and Africa's best independent policy analysts. "AGI's partnerships place Brookings in a unique position," explains Director Kimenyi. "We aim to use this resource to report to policymakers in Washington on what matters to African governments and people and similarly to inform African researchers about the pressing policy decisions under consideration here in the U.S." Few groups in Washington provide this direct contact and AGI has already sought to leverage this resource.



Photo by David Gitonga

DPRU Deputy Director Morne Oosthuizen (left) and KIPPRA Principal Policy Analyst John Omiti (right) share insights during a roundtable discussion on forthcoming policy challenges for Africa.

In 2011, AGI pursued several joint research projects with its African partners. These projects provided an opportunity for timely collaboration as well as lessons for how to best pursue joint research. In particular, the Institute of Statistical, Social, and Economic Research at the University of Ghana (ISSER) and the Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis (KIPPRA) collaborated with AGI to address the centerpiece of the commercial relationship between the United States and Africa—the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act.



Photo by David Gitonga

AGI Director Mwangi Kimenyi (center left) and fellow staff members engage with their new think tank partner Moses Ikiara of the Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis (center) in Nairobi.

After 11 years, the global environment in which AGOA was enacted has changed, and although the act has been amended several times, there is a need to consider not only marginal reforms but also more innovative approaches to strengthening the commercial relationship between Africa and the United States. Thus, ISSER and KIPPRA collaborated with experts from AGI to develop strategies to deepen the United States' trade relationship with Africa. ISSER and KIPPRA's locally informed and independent research brought a fresh perspective on regional African markets and country experiences. Their recommendations were advanced during AGI's participation in the 2011 AGOA forum in Lusaka. Brookings' reputation as a source for independent and high-quality policy analysis provided KIPPRA and ISSER's research on AGOA with a new audience and level of access to policymakers in the United States.

In 2012, AGI plans to mobilize its partnership with the six African think tanks on a much larger scale to tackle issues of crucial importance for the continent's growth. The ongoing droughts in northern Kenya and Somalia have brought the world's attention once again to issues of food security and agricultural productivity. Despite the human tragedy of these events and the ongoing turmoil in Somalia, agricultural development on the continent has a new momentum, accelerated by key policy initiatives including the Obama administration's Feed the Future program and the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program. AGI and its partners will undertake a series of agricultural policy studies in various strategically chosen locations across the continent to engender new insights and locally informed perspectives on agricultural growth programs and priorities for policy audiences in Washington and in Africa.

In addition to the key issue of agriculture, AGI also plans to collaborate with its partners in Uganda and Ghana to analyze the newly discovered oil reserves in these countries. These resources hold the potential to either precipitate new and sustained levels of national growth or, if poorly managed, provoke the corruption, discontent and macroeconomic dysfunction that have hurt so many other oil-rich nations. "Successful examples of well-managed oil reserves exist in various locations throughout the world," notes Director Kimenyi. "We hope collaboration between AGI, ISSER and the Economic Policy Research Center in Uganda will provide African governments with oil wealth and related stakeholders in the West with sound policy recommendations that build on these best practices."

AGI's senior financial manager, Amanda Armah (left), works with NISER's Helen Odiwe (center) and ISSER's Ophelia Ankrah (right) to establish effective operational procedures for partnership engagement moving forward.

Photo by David Gitonga



Photo by David Gitonga

Members of AGI gather in Nairobi for a kickoff meeting with the director, lead researcher, communications specialist, and financial manager from each of its new partner think tanks.

AGI Staff

AGI is especially grateful to its committed team of scholars and staff. Their contributions are appreciated as the initiative works to inform policy that promotes economic growth and alleviates poverty in Africa.

FELLOWS

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John Page, Senior Fellow

Melvin Ayogu, Fellow

Vera Songwe, Visiting Fellow

Ezra Suruma, Visiting Fellow

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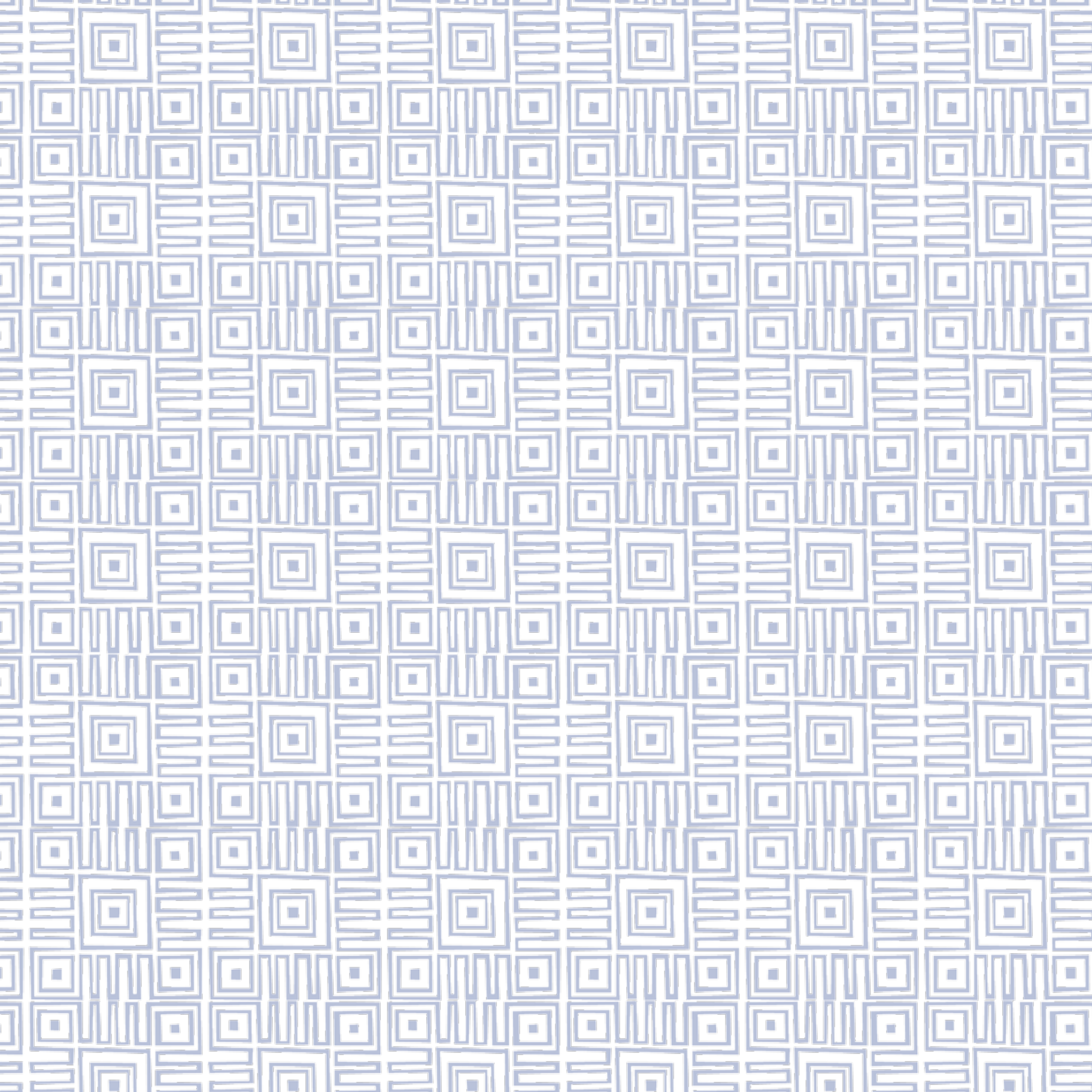
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