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WELCOME REMARKS:

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DISCUSSION:

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U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator and Special Representative for Global Health Diplomacy,  
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**Aloysius Uche Ordu** Good morning, everyone. Wow, a little bit, good morning, everyone.

Oh, that's much, much better. Thank you very much for making the time to be here. My name is Aloysius Ordu, I'm the director of the Africa Growth Initiative here at the Brookings Institution. First of all, I really would like to pay a special thanks to the AGI team. Nicole is over there, Sakina, you've seen walking, and I see Chris, Sakina is over there and Chris, we also have both the Global communications team under Esther and the Brookings-wide communications team under Andrea. Everybody played a key role in making this report happen. I would also like to especially thank Angela from the American University, professor, who helped us in our making sure that Joy is here with us today.

So today's report has 63 authors from across the African continent and elsewhere. We're talking of presidents, policymakers, private sector people, you know, scholars and youths, 63 of them. And we're particularly excited about 50% of these authors are women. We're grateful for all their contributions to this year's report. The timing of this report is particularly fascinating because when we launched last year's report, it seems like an eternity in terms of our world today. The world has changed inextricably since then. Sometimes when I reflect on the current times, I think sometimes we are back in the early seventies all over again. If you remember— those of you who remember— high inflation, high interest rates 20%, the stock market lost 50% of its value in a very short time. OPEC flexed its muscles and unleashed energy insecurity. Reminds you of today? The geopolitical tensions were really, really pervasive across the world. Latin America debt overhang was the issue, and the African continent saw about three decades of very, very low growth. The Economist newspaper, one of my previous employers when I was younger, you know, described the continent as a, that period as a lost decade. Today's headwinds, as I mentioned, really remind me of that particular period.

And what we have today, this picture from the World Economic Forum gives you a sense of the heightened concerns that people have. Asked about the outlook for the next two years, a staggering 82% of respondents saw progressive tipping points, persistent crises, volatility and multiple shocks. The same respondents asked to look ten years ahead. Ten years ahead. Only 9% saw a world returning to renewed stability and global resilience. So we are in for a period of uncertainty, heightened economic risks, climate risks, geopolitical risks. And yet, we're no way out of the woods yet on COVID-19. So the timeliness of this report, we thought, what are the prospects for the African continent? It's very, very easy to be pessimistic about Africa's prospects. Yet time and time again,

Africa has proved resilient, despite all the odds. We saw this during the Ebola crisis, during the HIV/AIDS crisis— you'll hear more about that in our report and here today— and of course, during the COVID 19 crisis.

I think most people thought that Africa would be decimated, Africa's people. It didn't happen. As our famous sister and author, Chimamanda Adichie once said, we have to be conscious of the danger of a single story because despite all the odds, there are African countries that will be registering robust growth this year, whether you're talking about data from the World Bank, the IMF, the African Development Bank, a growth rate of about 3 to 3.5% is suspected in sub-Saharan Africa. Countries like Senegal, Cote d'Ivoire, DRC, Kenya would drive much of that growth at about 5 to 7%. On the other hand, Nigeria, the big heavyweights, South Africa, Egypt, those countries are expected to register slower growth. So it's important to underscore that Africa's policymakers are not helpless.

Domestic policy actions are needed now more than ever. Surely rising food prices present Africans tremendous opportunities in terms of growing food at home. The last time we saw food fuel a financial crisis was back in 2008, 2009. At that time, if you recall, the G20 and the G8 before the G7, for obvious reasons, urged the multilateral development banks to act counter cyclically. And so with low interest rates across the board, we borrowed ourselves out of that crisis, financed the crisis by borrowing heavily. And in today's world, I think domestic resource mobilization is absolutely fundamental on the continent because the amount of debt countries have, it's very, very difficult to imagine that we can borrow ourselves out of the current crisis. So now more than ever, we also need policymakers to use development financing, whether internally generated or borrowed, much more wisely than we've done in the past. In preparation for today, we took an audience, we took a poll to ask people basically what in their views are the top priorities for the African continent.

As you can see in the picture in front of you, over 40% said economic recovery and growth are the overwhelming priorities. So kitchen table issues are top of the mind. Education, food security and climate change are also important. If you see in the 14%, 11%, 11.5, others are really issues of good governance: tackling corruption, democratic backsliding and fragility are the sort of things people are worried about. We didn't stop there. We compared these polls, these poll results from, with the poll from Afrobarometer. As you can see, it's again, jobs, health, education are top concerns. And when you think of, reflect on all these, that brings us to the 2023 Foresight Africa. We tried to capture some of the essence in that the two polls I just showed you.

And in Chapter One, priority there is economic recovery: how do we tackle the multiple headwinds facing our continent? Chapter Two: Food Security. This is one chapter we never used to have in the past, but obviously in today's times, the message is very clear from the audience. Chapter Three: Education and Skills. Again, we never had that before and people are very concerned about what COVID did to education of our young girls and young people. Health remains a priority. How do we assure health security for all Africans? Gender, very important, how do we close the gap? Climate change, of course, adapting to a new normal. And the final chapter, Chapter Seven, on cities and the need to realize the new urban agenda. So that's what we have for you in year's foresight.

If you look at chapter seven, for example, the governor of Lagos State, the governor of Kisumu County in Kenya, opened up that chapter with two contrasting essays, one talking about the opportunities and challenges of leading a mega city, Lagos, over 20 million people, and then another talking about a secondary city like Kisumu. And we have the governor, the mayor of Cape Town in South Africa weighing in and sharing with the world the challenges of running a city that's running out of water, which, as most of you have read in the press, is what is happening in Cape Town, South Africa. So with all that, it gives me great pleasure to really, really introduce Joy Reid. Joy is no stranger to many of us who watch, tune in at 7 p.m. MSNBC every evening. And Joy has agreed to moderate this esteemed panel, some of the best and brightest of Africa's daughters and sons. Joy, thank you very much.

**Joy Reid** Thank you very much, Aloysius, much appreciated for that presentation. I will restate good morning, if you can hear me. Everyone's tired. I have my coffee here. You might, we might want to pass some out so everyone will have some. Well, thank you. It is wonderful to be here. And I want to thank the Brookings Institute and obviously the Africa Initiative, the Africa Growth Initiative. I might be a little fired up because I just came from the 1619 documentary premiere. But I am even without that and even without the 1619 project, I am somebody who has always believed that America wouldn't be America without Africa. There is no American empire without Africa because enslavement built this country, built its wealth. And so we were already connected to Africa. We don't need to establish a connection with Africa. We need to reestablish our relationship with the continent that's based on a new paradigm that focuses on its potential rather than on what we can exploit from it, which is what the relationship has been between the West, Europe, the United States and Africa.

So I'm very interested in this topic about the prospects for the continent, because as a statistic here in the wonderful research that was provided to me, Africa by 2063 will be home to something like a third of the working, world's working population. It's a young population, and so the growth prospects are tremendous. And as Europe and the U.S. become aging populations, they're going to have to start looking to the continent for more than just exploitative opportunities, they're going to have to look to it for growth. So this is a great opportunity, I'm honored to be here as somebody of African American and Caribbean descent, I'm personally invested, so I thank you all for allowing me to be here.

Let me introduce this esteemed panel. Just to my right is Vera Songwe, who is the chair of the Board for Liquidity and Sustainability Facility and the co-chair of the High-Level Panel on Climate Finance, Former Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, Vera Songwe. Also on this panel is Ambassador Dr. John Nkengasong, the U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator and Special Representative for Health Diplomacy, the U.S. and our President, President Obama's for his Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief. Frannie Léautier is the senior partner and CEO of Southbridge Investments. Former chief of staff to the president, vice president of the World Bank and former senior Vice president of the AfDB. And Amadou Sy who is the assistant director for Africa Development at the IMF and the, and an AGI Distinguished Advisor and former director. Please give them a round of applause.

So what I want to discuss here, and I will note that there will be a Q&A period for the audience, including our Twitter audience, so about 30 minutes in, I hope that my lovely friend here will give me a wave and then we'll go to your questions. But my questions for this panel are in three areas that I think are important: health, wealth and growth. Because I think as the presentation that Aloysius just gave makes clear, these are the three things that are summarized in the report, and I think that's where we should focus. So let's start with health, because health is wealth, right? If you don't have health, you have nothing at all. And so when we think about the continent and you think about the health crises and the health conditions on the continent, you immediately must in this present era think of COVID, because obviously it's been a disaster, there's been a disproportionate impact of COVID on the continent and a disproportionate lack of production of vaccine on the continent itself for its own use. So I want to start by asking Dr. Nkengasong, Ambassador Nkengasong, about the progress on

the African continent when it comes to COVID, the prospects for COVID, the solutions to COVID to start coming from the continent itself, from Africa itself.

**John Nkengasong** Thank you, Joy, for the introduction and to the Brookings Institute, Aloysius, for inviting me to be part of this conversation. Let me also acknowledge the distinguished panelists here, some we've worked for, for a very closely over the last five years, including Vera. Joy, I think you took a risk by starting with COVID in Africa because that requires a one-hour conversation, a one-hour conversation.

**Joy Reid** And so we're going to finish at about 2 p.m.

**John Nkengasong** Exactly, so but suffice to say that Africa showed the world that with a coordinated approach, you can show resilience in fighting a pandemic. Africa demonstrated that the principles of what I call four Cs, you have to cooperate, collaborate, coordinate and communicate as much as possible in the face of COVID, in the face of a disease threat, an unknown disease threat. When I hear pandemic preparedness and the focus is on surveillance systems, laboratories, and I said, no, that is not what was the challenge for, for Africa or for the world, as a whole. I think what we saw during the COVID pandemic, how global solidarity collapsed, and multilateralism was questioned, and we all know that we need all of that. But it gave birth to regionalism where a region like Africa came together and demonstrated innovation, political innovation, innovation in rallying the forces and bringing all the assets together.

You touched on vaccines. Some of my best memories, including the last, over the last, up to the last seven months, was how amazing people like Vera Songwe, sitting here, Strive Masiyiwa, and Benedict Oramah, who is the president of the Africa Ex-Im Bank, all came together and determined that Africa was not going to be left behind. And fast forward, I am still surprised how they maneuvered to secure about 400 million doses of vaccines at the height of the pandemic, where there were no vaccines for the continent. That speaks to that spirit of cooperation and solidarity that we, I spoke to earlier. You also speak to the fact that engagement, building new partnerships during a disease threat like COVID is so critical. They establish again the same group, establish what today is known as AMSP, the African Medical Supply Platform, which always bragged that it was the Amazon.com for the continent at that time and is still alive. You can Google AMSP dot Africa and it will pop up where countries could go in there and procure supplies, what I call security commodities.

So, again, just in brief, the continent showed extraordinary leadership, political leadership headed by President Cyril Ramaphosa, who was the chair of the African Union at that time. And again he showed that in an emergency crisis, a health crisis, that political leadership is so important, but you need the assets that cuts across health, they engage, include in the private sector, the banks and the business sector. That is the pride of what, when I left Africa, I left with a lot of optimism that despite the limited resources, with resilience and cooperation and collaboration, the continent could withstand a lot of shocks.

**Joy Reid** And Vera, you were, or you are invoked. So I do want to ask, you know, because I think one of the challenges that we saw, at least from in the reporting side on this end, is that many of the vaccines are not produced on the continent. And so there's a matter of having to procure. So how can we create more resiliency, economic resiliency on the continent so that more of the vaccine is actually produced there rather than having to purchase it from Europe and the US?

**Vera Songwe** Well, thank you. Thank you very much, again, Joy, for doing this for us. A great pleasure to be with you. You said something which made me jealous. You said you're African-American and Caribbean. And I'm thinking I can't claim all of those, he can claim American. But at some point, I think all of us should be able to claim all of that. But it's a pleasure again to be again, this is home at Brookings for me. And thank everybody for waking up so early to listen and or be in the room with us. I think to answer your question— and John is modest because, you know, we used to call him the Fauci of, of Africa, now he's the Fauci of Africa and America or somewhere in the middle— I think three things on the production side. There was actually progress when the, when the, when the, when COVID hit, we were importing almost 94% of our pharmaceutical products from outside the continent. And of course, we were not manufacturing any COVID vaccines on the continent. Fast forward to today, I think we have about five centers on the continent that are producing COVID vaccines in South Africa, in Rwanda, in, in Senegal that had always been producing vaccines in Algeria and I think also in Egypt. And then there's other sort of satellite supply chain producers, and I'll come back to the supply chains.

The problem is not that right now. The problem then is the procurement process. How does Africa get into the global supply chains? How do we make sure that when there is a global procurement of COVID vaccines, we are also procuring from Africa? So today we have the Aspen factory in South Africa that produces for JNJ. Can we make sure that the, the products from that

factory not only serve Africa but serve the global community? Because there is always a tendency when we talk about producing in Africa that we're producing for Africa, but Africa wants to produce for the world. And so I think we do need to do that. And the leaders, as John was saying, have come together and said that, you know, for all and actually some of the initiatives, COVAX and other very laudable initiatives out there that produce vaccines for Africa are still producing, procuring from India and the United States and others. So the African leaders have said 30% of all the vaccines produced by, bought and procured by philanthropic organizations must be bought on the continent. That is a way of propping up, I think, this domestic production. So we've done that.

At WTO, we have now the licenses with the [inaudible] has made sure that we can actually share the licenses under the leadership of India and South Africa. So I think now it's sort of purchased. And it shouldn't only just be COVID, it should be, you know, a convex combination of all kinds of pharmaceutical goods that we produce on the continent because COVID alone is not business sustainable. It has to be, I think, a much broader array of pharmaceutical goods that we produce. And John has been leading that initiative, I think, on the continent and hopefully continues from here.

**Joy Reid** One of the other questions I want to bring Amadou Sy into this conversation, because one of the things that the pandemic, this latest pandemic has exposed is the relatively small percentage of people on the African continent that have sort of, you know, would the social spending supports people in crisis, meaning when there is a health crisis or even old age crisis, how can countries in Africa develop a more robust, you know, not that ours is perfect, but a more robust social spending regime so that people have an underpinning when there's an economic crisis?

**Amadou Sy** Thanks, and thank you, everybody, for attending. So one issue that happened this time is that the policy space for African policymakers really shrunk because of a succession of crises. Right? We had the COVID-19 pandemic, we have the lingering effect of it, we're not out of the impact of that shock. And then we had the Ukraine-Russia crisis and that really, then we have high inflation, then we have high debt for many countries, we have debt level about 60% to the level we had in the 2000s. We have many countries that are at high risk of their distress, or they are in distress, I think 19 out of 35 of the low-income countries. So the competition for resources is very, very high.



So just as an example, in many countries, fuel is subsidized. But with such a big increase in the price of oil, the international price of oil, the subsidies is, subsidies for, fuel subsidies are just taking an increasingly large share of the total budget, money that could have gone for social protection, right. So, so then typically the approach we have is twofold, in as much as possible, the idea is to target the most vulnerable, including through cash transfers, and, and then reduce the subsidies that are not well-targeted. So typical image is that you don't want to subsidize somebody with a large SUV, but rather you'd like to have that person pay the full price and take the money, some part of the money and give it to the people in the villages that are the most vulnerable. That's, that's one. But this said, in the midst of a crisis for a temporary period, it can be useful to, to have some, for example, a furlough employment protection scheme and so on. So, so it's really a very difficult policy challenge.

And to me, at the end of the day, when we work with countries, you see even the issue of protecting the most vulnerable from a politician perspective can be quite different from what we think. So, for example, you might think that the poorest of the poor, for example, could live in the rural areas. But then as a politician, I might be more worried about the urban areas and the capacity of some people in the urban areas to have riots and so on. So, so that makes it difficult. So, for example, some countries are trying to, to mitigate that problem by saying, okay, will you know, you have different quality of fuel. So diesel is often used in many countries for mass transit, and so you will still subsidize diesel for the public transportation, but the other type of fuel, you would not subsidize it. Then using digitalization for cash transfers and we have some example, like in Togo, which is very famous as they really used technology to rapidly implement their cash transfer program.

So, but for me, at the end of the day, one thing, one issue is you could call it a social contract. Because we are in a very difficult time, and one thing that my, my director Abe Selassie called the policy trilemma. So on the one hand, policymakers need, face a lot of social demand, they need to spend. But on the other hand, where do you get the money when debt is at a high level or is not sustainable? And so on. And there is resistance for raising domestic taxes. So you have this, this, this triangle that you have to navigate with very difficult tradeoffs. But at the end of the day, we need to protect the most vulnerable, we need to protect the people. I could go on and on on other issues also, because this is just in the midst of crisis management. But you also when you are out of

the crisis, you need to build resilience, you need to be buffers. And that's the issues of, of, of fiscal consolidation, domestic revenue mobilization and so on.

**Joy Reid** Well, and I want to bring Frannie into this as well, because there is that elephant in the room when it comes to the history of colonialism on the continent, is that, you know, most of the countries in Africa have been left with tremendous debt. And the debt is part of what fuels the social crises. It's part of what fuels instability. It's part of what fuels, in some cases, corruption. So. What is the responsibility, you know, at the IMF level, at the World Bank level to reduce that debt and to use debt forgiveness as a way to undo some of the damage that the world banking entities have caused.

**Frannie Léautier** Well, thank you for that question and thank you for lending your voice to this very important issue, which is what is very unique about Africa and the priorities that we would have for recovery after the crisis that we are facing. And I thank the AGI and Aloysius for inviting me to this panel. The question you raised is a critical one, and maybe we can start with how Africa got into that situation in the first place. Being a developing continent where before independence, the whole production system was oriented towards exports that were sent to Europe, the Americas and the rest of the world, Africa was saddled with a very challenging problem to develop itself because the infrastructure was all externally oriented. And this is why, even as you look today at Africa, you find that the center of the country, the center of the continent, is devoid of interconnecting infrastructure because it was all oriented towards export. So the continent started to build and invest in that infrastructure.

But that came at the same time when multilateral development institutions like the World Bank were phasing out of funding infrastructure development, and therefore countries had the only option left, which was to go and borrow out there to build the infrastructure. And given the risk ratings that were issued for African countries being very, considered very risky, even though when you look at the parameters, a country like Colombia or Argentina is no more risky than Kenya, Tanzania, but the rating agencies don't give the same rating to countries in Africa with the same risk profile. So Africa borrows at a very high cost. So infrastructure is expensive, Africa is borrowing at a high cost, and it's doing that at a time where there are no other resources to, to come in and support the infrastructure development. So that caused the first wave of indebtedness. Then we had HIPC, which was a highly indebted country program to basically eradicate the debt and have countries start from zero again. But

then immediately after HIPC, we had a series of crises and again countries were in a situation where they had to borrow to, to then meet the needs of the continent during periods of crisis.

So I think this is a pattern now that you see, there is a creation of debt, reduction of debt and then creation of debt again. And I think what I find very optimistic in looking at Africa today is that there are new solutions that are coming in that are moving the continent away from this cycle of getting into debt each time and then having a hard time getting out of it. What are those patterns? The first one is being able to attract investment that actually delivers results that are revenue-earning for the continent. I was very excited when we were, when COVID struck, everybody thought, okay, that's the end of Africa right? Then how is the continent, with all its challenges, going to meet that object, that objective of keeping its people safe and healthy? And we were very encouraged. I mean, John's briefing was one of the few things I would listen to, to Dr. Nkengasong briefings when he would do those just to tell us where things are, where they're going. And we got assured and reassured because there were things happening, and today you have manufacturing on the ground. This is an example, we have foreign investment coming in and instead of coming just to extract, it is actually coming to create capability to manufacture on the continent. That will reduce the, the debt burden going forward.

The second thing that is also very optimistic, in my view, is the aggregation of the stock markets in Africa, because Africa is not just waiting for the rest of the world to, to come and help, but it's actually creating its own capabilities by linking up the Johannesburg Stock Exchange with the Kigali Stock Exchange, Nairobi, Dar es Salaam and so on. And that's giving a bigger playground for companies that invest in Africa to find the financing that they need. And that would again, reduce the dependency on public debt. But the third one, which I think is really very exciting and it got very visible during COVID, and it comes from the young creative people of Africa, which was to use digital technology and platforms to actually have small investments coming in from individuals inside Africa and outside Africa.

So the African diaspora, they engaged in transferring resources, buying small companies and investing in the creative development of the continent. And I think that was really encouraging because not only did it tap into a technology that Africa has proven it can use really well and maybe better than other continents with mobile money, e-commerce, digital, foreign exchange between countries and so on, but could do it by leveraging its own young people and their creativity to create

those opportunities. To the extent that even in Nigeria you can now buy a portion of a painting. And Nigerian artists have become very famous now globally, right? So you can now as an African own an artwork that probably before, you wouldn't be able to because of this potential. That's creating a lot of dynamism in the financial markets that will bring the kind of solutions that we need.

And I'll close by saying two things about my sister sitting here. Because African debt is so costly, we needed solutions at the global level to reduce the costs of cost of borrowing. One which I hope Vera is going to talk about, which is this liquidity solution that she is chairing, which I think is really much needed to bring down the risk of borrowing. But the other one is what we've been able to see with philanthropy. Philanthropy has been present for a long time supporting Africa through all sorts of initiatives, from direct grants to communities to partnering with government, including in the health sector, if you think of the Gates Foundation and so on. But today, philanthropy is coming in in a very unique way, which is saying that we have those resources that are flexible. Let's see how we can help African countries and companies to actually bring down the cost of tapping into that liquidity in the market.

I think this is a spectacular transformation and which will really link because most of philanthropy is in the United States, and therefore brings an even closer relationship between Africa and the United States. But in a way that limits this dependency, which I think is what has been one of the problems where when you get a grant, it's like a gift and it's not really helping you become sustainable. But when you give it in this way, it's actually building up your financial capability in a way that you could then sustainably move forward. So I'm excited about those trends.

**Joy Reid** Yeah. And Vera, can you build on that? Can you talk a little bit more about the initiative that you're talking about, about trying to increase the liquidity and the opportunities on the continent?

**Vera Songwe** Thank you. Thanks. Thanks, Frannie. Maybe, I think it's important as we start even talking about liquidity, to go back to the point on inflation, we're all talking about inflation. And I think for once in some sense we talked about development and the imposition of development, but we've seen how the West has taken inflation seriously. We've seen how the West has said, you know, we're going to tighten interest rates I think almost 450 basis points increase now in the United States, 350 in Europe, almost going to 5% on rates, mortgages because we want to bring down inflation. And the reason is because if you have high inflation, it just stores growth. If you have high inflation, it is the

fastest producer of poverty that you can have. If you have high inflation, it is very difficult to actually get employment going at a sustainable rate for a longer time. And so I think this is something that as the developing economies and as Africa we must come back to.

Today on average on the continent, inflation is in some cases in some countries, in the order of 20%, in the order of 10%. And I really think that, you know, the conversation on inflation and I'm looking at Amadou for our developing and emerging market economies has to come back and be center, because we've talked a lot about, you know, domestic resource mobilization. But there is no point raising resources if with inflation, what you can do with those resources is constantly being eroded. And this is really where Africa has been caught in a growth trap because, you know, as we raise domestic resources, inflation goes up.

You can do even little, of course, with inflation and in increasing interest rates, the debt, our debt service goes up. So it tightens our fiscal space. And so we can do even less because we need to pay out. And so this has become for, for the developing economies, you almost get into a spiral where you can, you can't continue to grow. So it is really important that as the West, you know, works on tightening inflation, we look at it and we have lived with it in some sense in many of our economies for 10, 15, 20 years. And so I think people have almost gotten used to it, we should not get used to it because it is clearly a poverty trap. I think if you, if you just look at it as inflation, maybe people do not digest that. But if you look at it as a poverty trap, then you begin to understand why this is very important.

The second thing is, is today we talk about, you know, domestic resource mobilization on average on the continent. And it's in the report, it's a nice graph there that says that we are on average at about 15, 17%. But we're a little bit cheating because we have two countries, Seychelles and Mauritius, that are 30. So we have a huge two outliers. You know, if you bring it back to 20, then domestic resource mobilization on the continent is really in the order of 12%. No economy has grown with domestic resource mobilization at 12, 15%. You need to get to 25, 30, 40%. And this is the big I think constraint is where does Africa get the resources, the liquidity to grow. And I want to bring in and so today we have three big challenges in the world.

The first one is this big issue of inflation. The second one, because of the war in Ukraine, is this sort of new conversation around trade, you know, on shoring, reshoring, friend shoring. But that is an important conversation because what we know is the trade has, is what has lifted almost every

emerging market economy out of poverty and into prosperity. So we must protect trade. And the good news is that Africa or the African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement has the tools to do that. The question is, are we really going to be able to do it? Can we do it in the way that will take us forward? And the answer is with the right infrastructure, with the right resources, we should be able to do that. But we are going to need a few things to make sure that that happens. And those are the supply chains.

The third conversation that you have a lot is about supply chain disruptions. And this is another benefit for Africa. And I'll show you how these things can benefit Africa is because there's supply chain disruptions, and we're talking about should we continue to get our goods from China or Russia and Ukraine, we can actually become the sort of supply chain node of the world. If Africa were structured in a way that works. And a good example of that is the Inflation Reduction Act in the United States, almost \$635 billions of quote unquote, industrial policy, right, to help see how one can shore up American business, to get rare minerals so that we can all continue to have our iPhones and other things that we need, our electric vehicles. 70% of the raw materials for that come from Africa. The reason why we cannot directly import, import those rare minerals into the United States is because we have some trade restrictions in the United States that prevent the direct imports.

So Africa is now constrained to imports to, to export to China that re-imports to the United States. If we could lift some of those restrictions, Africa begins to grow its trade, reduce poverty, gets revenue, increases taxes, and becomes part of a supply chain that is more resilient as well as we go forward. So I think these become important levers for growth. But finally, we are always going to need some degree of equity, some degree of own resources to grow. And this is where the conversation on when we go and borrow in the markets becomes important, because as Africa goes to the markets, one of the things that we have realized is that we have sort of three components to Africa's pricing of Africa's bond papers. The first is our macro stability. And we have to keep that, and we make sure and that's why inflation is important and managing our fiscal balance is important as well.

The second is what we call the liquidity premium. The liquidity premium is basically the fact that when people borrow, when bond holders buy Africa's security, you cannot make it liquid again. So there is a price for the illiquidity of holding, you know, a bond paper for five years or ten years or 20 years. Actually, that is one of the reasons why for very long time, Africa paper was 5 to 7 years, because nobody wanted to hold illiquid paper for very long. Right. And so essentially, you need to

create a secondary market. In the United States, it's a repo market, it's a \$5 trillion market a day. That's how actually, when you think about it, the way the US economy works is that there's a liquidity producing segment of the banking sector that allows for this to happen. We didn't have it on the continent or in many emerging markets. So what we have created, and I founded, is this liquidity and sustainability facility, which essentially allows, it says to bond holders or equity managers that want to come and invest in the continent, if you invest in the continent, we can actually give you liquidity the next day. Right.

So people want to invest, they want to know how liquid their investment can be, if they want to change it, turn it around. And so that's what we're doing, where it's not something very new in the sense that it started in 1869 in the United Kingdom, in 1918, in the, in the United States. So it really is— and this is the, I think, the next part of Africa's development, Frannie mentioned it a little bit— is the financial infrastructure for emerging markets. Developing countries' growth is not there yet. We don't have repo markets. We don't have, you know, we're beginning to the rest of the world is beginning to talk about central bank digital currencies. We don't have the institutions in place to be able to sort of say, how do we put those in place? How do we function? We don't have effective payment systems on the continent today that will allow for this trade that is going to bring growth out.

We have a huge non-bank financial institution segment that is growing but is totally unregulated, which could become a systemic risk for us if we don't regulate it and improve on it. The non-bank financial segment of our economy is actually the part that gives those loans to small women entrepreneurs and the SMEs, and that is really the engine of our economies is the credit unions. On the other side, of course, is the pension fund, \$60 billion. Today I was thinking to myself, you know, we are talking of getting \$100 billion in SDRs, we had about 60 or 70 billion. If we use Africa's pension funds and we're able to collateralize that at 60, \$70 billion, as it said in the report, we could actually go a long way in terms of leveraging investment, doing blended finance, bringing down the cost of investments because pension funds are long-term investments, they have 30 year patient capital, which Africa could use, but we don't have the structures to see how you plow that back in. Today, when we talk about the PIMCO's, the BlackRocks of the world, its pension funds, its pension funds, resources that have been well capitalized that are well managed that are actually driving investments in green energy and climate change.

And the final part of the domestic resource mobilization conversation that we have, of course we haven't talked about climate change a lot, but climate is the biggest risk we face, right? Yes, we have a security risk. We have a supply chain risk. We have inflation. But climate change is what is going to determine over the next ten years the trajectory of growth for many of our economies. When we have a climate shock in some of our economies, we lose 11% of GDP immediately. So when you think about, you know, Ukraine is 2% of GDP got lost, it will pale in comparison. But there is a benefit there, Africa has been one of the contributors to making sure that we don't get to 1.5 degrees as fast as we did because we have the peatlands where we have been sequestering carbon every year, we sequester about three, three years of carbon, which is equivalent to the carbon produced in China, United States, Japan, let's say the top ten largest emitters. So we do actually have an asset there that we can monetize.

Monetizing that asset will provide another \$80 billions of additional revenue to the continent to make sure then that we can do some more growth, provide some more revenue and see how we grow. So I think with the constraints that we have with the, and if we did that, inflation goes down, we produce a little bit more on the continent, if we improved on our trade barriers both on the continent but outside the continent, trade is going to be where we go and the supply chains that we can use. So I think we do have the global constraints, which could be really hard opportunities for the continent as long as we can find the resources that are needed.

And the final thing that I say is this, we're going to have, we have fragile and conflict affected countries on the continent that will not maybe be able to immediately benefit from a lot of this. And that's where we need the Washington institutions, the IMFs and the World Bank to continue giving in coordination with philanthropy, some grant financing to these economies so that they can, you know, sort of lift all boats at the same time.

**Joy Reid** Well, Amadou Sy, do you want to weigh in on that? Because how do we incentivize all of this? Sounds like a great solution, I'd like to implement it tomorrow. How do we get that to happen?

**Amadou Sy** So, so the way I see it is, okay. So we right now, we had this crisis, so we have to recover. We have to build resilience. And then we have to also maximize the long-term potential. So, one, it's not just foresight, but it's also hindsight in the sense that we've experienced these severe shocks and we have to deal with it. So for inflation, then we, African countries have spent a lot of time,



you know, in the sixties we had this high growth and then as Aloysius said in the eighties with the oil shock, oil dropped, and it took us maybe 20 years until the early 2000s to go back. But and then we had this big growth and then suddenly now we're going back down a little bit, I don't think it's going to take us 20 years to recover, hopefully because we've built institutions.

If you look at the central bank's monetary policy and so on, there's been a lot of lot of work in many, many countries. We're not there yet. There are some issues, definitely. Sometimes a lot of the inflation is just imported. It's not easy, but I think we, compared to in the eighties, we are better equipped to have the appropriate monetary policy to deal with inflation. It's not exact science. If you hike too much, you can end up in a severe recession. You need the central bank to be credible. Politicians are always, can interfere and so on. But I think there we've, we've done a lot of work when it comes to the inflation.

On the debt, I remember my first job, a long time ago, I remember I had a Bloomberg machine and I was always asking myself— I was following emerging market debt, it was mostly Latin America and I was always coming from Africa— I was always asking myself, will there be a day when there will be quotes in the Bloomberg machine of Eurobonds from my country, for example? And now it's there. But, you know, in various point, one, I mean, we have some colleagues working on looking at the issue that Frannie and Vera mentioned that at the same level of risk, are African countries paying too much and so on. It is empirically, I think it's a very important question, but one issue is the liquidity premium.

**Vera Songwe** We've studied it, 176 basis points difference. Yes.

**Amadou Sy** So, you know, research, research is always something, evolving. But one, one reason many traders were mentioning it is that like the liquidity premium, if I am just a buy and hold investor and I'm buying and holding a Eurobond from the African countries, that could be fine. But I want to get rid of it if, because let's say I have this index, my performance is a, is judged compared to the performance of an index, so sometimes I have to rebalance my portfolio and suddenly I cannot sell it to anybody. So what, what Vera said is, I think, very, very useful.

But I would go also to, to, to the other angle. There is money in, in Africa, in, with the institutional investors, and I've seen things that really can be fixed. One is who decides where a pension fund should put its money. It's the investors committee and you have some investors committee that are very, very risk averse. So you have a tradeoff. You have to protect the, the income

of these pensioners, that's, that's, that's, that's the goal. But what's the risk tolerance? What's the capacity of these pension funds to manage and have a risk adjusted return? That makes sense.

Right. But you'd see sometimes a lot of these pension funds in Africa have their money in real estate, which is illiquid sometimes, most of the time, which might be risky.

**Vera Songwe** Or US treasuries.

**Amadou Sy** Yes. And sometimes they even get out of the country to invest. But if you take one of the largest South African pension fund, if it were just to cross the Limpopo and invest 2 to 3%, I think it's more than \$150 billion of assets in South Africa. You know, so there's, there's a lot of things to do. But I think it has to do with, you know, also working with the investors committee of this pension fund, safeguarding the future income of the pensioners and so on. So but we can definitely discuss more about that. So, so on the, on, on. Yeah, so that was on inflation that was on debt, but so, so, so coming back to this hindsight and foresight. So in hindsight definitely, you know food security for example, we've seen rising food prices, [inaudible] so I know like OCP, which is the second exporter of phosphates in the world, which is a Moroccan company, is going through many African countries that produce gas and so on, because with, I don't know in English, but with azot [phonetic], anyway it was that in the phosphate you can make fertilizers, right.

So this crisis, so that's, that's bring me to the, what are the lessons of this crisis for the food for the future. Food security, we will, we can produce more fertilizers. We have lots of gas, we have lots of phosphate and so on. We can do it and it's useful. I'm not an expert in agriculture, but definitely we have to fix this issue with agriculture, the productivity of agriculture and so on. I've seen the social network more and more young people in my country investing in agriculture. So these are graduates and so on and it's very encouraging. But the institutions, the World Bank, AfDB, there was a summit in Dakar not long ago looking at that. But definitely we have to do that. So we have food security.

Then then then we have this issue of what are the future engines of growth, right. And there, climate change, we have to have a strategy about the transition and see where we can be on the value chain. Right. If we have the commodities, the rare earth, the, the lithium and so on, we should avoid doing the, repeating the mistake that we did with cocoa and coffee. We should be in that value chain. We should create jobs; we should be technologically involved and so on. And this is very important. Even the issue of illegal mining has, sometimes it's illegal mining, we have to deal with that.

And this is of the utmost importance. We've seen the industrial policy of some richer countries and how they are positioning themselves. We have to be in that debate, have a strategy and execute. So I will discuss later. Maybe we could discuss about the, the demographic dividend, about regional integration, about, you know, all the themes that you've seen that are very important. But I think on the transition, climate transition, this is a priority.

**Joy Reid** Yeah, and also health security. Before, we're going to go to the audience questions, but I did want to come back to you, Ambassador Nkengasong, because health security is very important and you have the pin on, I see that you're wearing your, your pin. So I want to let you at least say a word about the ongoing HIV AIDS crisis, which disproportionately does affect the continent. Health security is also very important in terms of growth.

**John Nkengasong** Absolutely. And we started off this conversation with your framing of health, wealth, and growth. And today, as we speak sitting here, we are celebrating the 20th anniversary of the United States president's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, which is a huge initiative that President Bush, W. Bush launched 20 years ago to fight AIDS in Africa. And over the course of 20 years, the United States government has invested \$110 billion to fight AIDS in Africa. And through that investment, 25 million lives have been saved, 5.5 million children have been born free of HIV AIDS, the whole health infrastructure on the continent has been rebound, to the extent that when COVID hit, that infrastructure was the main infrastructure that was happening in the fight against COVID. And [inaudible] close to 350,000 health care workers through week of celebration, President Biden over the weekend issued a statement, Secretary Blinken issued a statement. The whole world has been celebrating that, I think we should pause to, in the spirit of hindsight and foresight, see where we've come from.

I start there because HIV AIDS 20 years ago was a serious security threat for the continent of Africa, was a serious economic threat for the continent of Africa. It was a serious development for the continent. Life expectancy had dropped about 12 to 15 years in most countries in southeastern Africa. And today, because of PEPFAR, as it's commonly called, and the initiative, of course, that Kofi Annan helped launch, the Global Fund, the face of, the ugly face of HIV AIDS had been clean. I used to go to Uganda, where you land in the airport in Entebbe, and you drive to Kampala, you saw nothing but a coffin. That was the trident market at that time, 20 years ago, with coffins lining up the streets, the road, the highway from Entebbe to, to Kampala.

All of that is gone. However, the fight is not over. I think we've got, we've bent the curve. But the disease, HIV, being a very clever virus, is now hiding in adolescent girls and young women in Africa, in children, in key populations, female sex workers, men who have sex with men, transgender. And because of that, the remarkable success that the program had over the last 20 years, we don't talk about it anymore. But it's there, it's there, it's creeping up in in young girls and women. I just came back last night from Kenya and Ivory Coast to look at this program. And I was struck to see that 60% of the new infections is occurring both in girls and young women, which means if we leave the eyes off the ball, that catastrophe that we saw 20 years ago will come back and have direct implication for the growth and development of the economy.

So when I hear you all, the economists speak with the competing priorities, I hesitant to say that it only tells me that there's more to be done in the health security space to bring that to the radar screen of, of the continent and the world. Because disease threat anywhere in the world is a disease threat everywhere in the world, as we've seen in COVID. COVID, maybe for the first time taught us how, three major things, our interconnectivity, our vulnerability, regardless of where you live in the world, and our inequalities that exist and the massive inequalities. And HIV AIDS was a promoter of that. The ARV drugs, that is, the drugs that are designed to treat HIV infections were made available in 1996. They took this initiative that is PEPFAR, and the Global Fund, the establishment in 2002, 2003, for Africans to have access to these drugs. And between 1996 and 2005, where we started seeing the benefits of this initiative, 12 million Africans died.

Okay, so I say that you make the point that to agree with the point you raised earlier about the connectivity between hard work and development, we should always remember that, that these initiative should be celebrated, but that sustaining the response from the continent and should also be a key priority. That's why I mean, I started off my trip in Africa by meeting with the leaders of Kenya and Cote d'Ivoire to say, hey, you have to elevate these, it has to be on your radar screen. The fight is not over. 500,000 Africans die every year because of HIV AIDS. If you have an additional 600,000 from tuberculosis and another 400,000 to 500,000 from TB to contribute to over 1.2 million deaths every year on the continent besides COVID.

**Joy Reid** Well. Thank you. And I, and I will say I have deep respect for Dr. Anthony Fauci, but I think rather than you being the African Fauci, I'm going to dub Dr. Fauci, he would like to be the American Dr. Nkengasong. So let's bring in the questions. I have one question already that has been

submitted, and I will throw it out to the panel. And it is this, are you optimistic on Africa's post-pandemic economic recovery and will it accelerate? The report suggests a range of, the report suggests a range of thoughtful recommendations, many of them sounding like they would require pretty drastic system-wide reforms. So is there an order of operations? Who would like to take that one.

**Frannie Léautier** So I'm an optimist by nature, so I'll start off with that. But I think in this case, I am very optimistic for Africa. Why? Because Africa rebounded very quickly from COVID. And I think thanks to the measures that John has gone through here, but also because it has a very youthful population, it was able to learn from the past, from polio, Ebola and then COVID. And thirdly, because it was able to coordinate quickly with private initiative coming together with public policy in a very important and speedy way. And those three features, I think, bode well for Africa.

When I start with the youth, we have an opportunity to grow in a very different way from the rest of the world, because in the next 30 years to be young is going to be African because 1 to 2 people in every five people in the world who is young will be African. Right. So I think that is very important to me that being young will be to be African if you are young in the future. And that means being able therefore to bring all the creativity that comes with, with youthfulness. We see it for example, in sports, Africa has now generated top performance in global sports. We see it in the fashion world, we see it in music, we see it in film and many other of these creative sectors where the young mind can bring in unique talents.

The second, which is being able to learn from the past. I find it really interesting today when you look at health and nutrition, which is one of the top topics that we look at it, people are looking for longevity within that. It turns out that the African diet is very good for health, which is nut based, tubers and grains. And the continent has land available to actually grow that kind of food and do it organically. Therefore, the agricultural revolution could be a health and nutrition revolution, not just for Africa, but for the rest of the world. And you saw it with COVID, when the cost of wheat imports and the war in Ukraine raised the costs of wheat and rice imports, Africans went back to traditional dishes with cassava and yam replacing bread for breakfast. And chefs all over Africa, including in New York, of African origin, came up with unique ways to present those meals in a very exciting way that has now held. And that trend is going to continue. So creativity in that aspect as well.

And then the third one, which is public sector and private sector coming together quickly to solve problems. We've seen that happen in the telecom sector, and it's not a surprise that Strive who was a revolution in the telecom sector from Zimbabwe to the rest of southern Africa with his investment in there. Econet also was one of the people who came forward when the crisis on COVID showed up. So you can see that African entrepreneurs are not only sitting back in their own sectors, but they are coming forward with solutions for other areas, and that should bode well for economic growth. I'll close with the dynamo of African economies, which is the small and medium enterprises. They make up 90% of the African economies. They are dynamic, they are creative, and they are growing. And what they're missing right now is innovative finance to accompany that creativity, dynamism and growth. But I'm optimistic when I see the trends.

**Joy Reid** And I will endorse the creativity of the continent. I am obsessed with a couple of dramas that are coming out of Africa, out of South Africa. They're really good. If you haven't seen Blood and Water on Netflix, I highly recommend. It's very good. Let me see if we have time for one more question, maybe from Twitter or from the audience. If somebody wants to raise their hand, there are microphones around. I believe there's a microphone that can be passed to you. Where's our microphone, ah, there we are, there we are.

**Audience Member** Hi, I'm Dr. Angela Pashayan, I teach at American University in International Development. Very happy to hear everything that you all are saying. I'm staring at the words Africa Growth Initiative. What comes to mind is the population. There's lots of different areas for Africa to grow in, but the population is the one that really, really stands out to most of us, and we wonder what's going to happen with all of these people. One of my primary concerns and I think, you know, throughout the development world it may be the same, is that a large portion, 50% or more of the African population live in informal settlements. And so because of that, they don't have access to clean water, they don't have access to stay, so they don't have access to social services, they don't have access to anything that would help them to become, you know, a part of the economy.

And so it's part a question, but also just part a comment that I believe that this is something that has been left out of planning for Africa's growth. And I think it's really important when you think that half the continent also needs to grow. And together with half of that continent being lifted, that that's where even further innovation can take place and where more taxes can be paid into a system to provide services. And I know that domestic resources are really, really tight. But I think that it's

really important for this issue to be put on the minds of people like yourselves and others that growth is going to be very difficult if 50% of the continent is left behind.

**Joy Reid** Who wants to tackle that?

**Vera Songwe** I could try. I think a very good question and I think, thank you so much, and Frannie and Amadou, I think, talked a little bit about the population as a, as a big asset. If you look at history, in history to sort of, you know, do the hindsight and the foresight, history is a very good lesson for all of us. And many of us who watch the news or read the Financial Times would have seen, I think last week the Japanese government sort of worried about growth, and they have been in sort of stagflation for the longest time because essentially their populations has, has dropped so substantially and did not have an active labor force. If you look at China, China essentially has been growing more or less at 10%. Right. And even in the middle of the 2008, 2009 crisis, there were still sort of the ones who [inaudible] Latin America and Africa because they continued to grow and then they continued to grow because they had a consumption base, which is essentially their population that was able to bring them up. The country that is growing the fastest in the world today is probably India. And essentially a lot of it is domestic consumption from the population.

So my problem is not so much the population, I think you would see me coming. My problem is essentially whether that population has the right skills, whether we are skilled enough to be able to, we are going to be the factory of the world. Right. And so essentially what you want to worry about is whether that factory of the world can actually continue to produce. What we have also seen is if you look at a country like Scandinavia, 20 years ago, they were having 13 kids on average per person, right. 30 years ago. But with the standards of living with the right social services, with the right access to jobs, you know, with women going to school and staying longer, then populations adjust.

So my problem is not that again, my problem is what is the percentage of girls that are going to school and getting a good education. It's not enough to go to school. It's even better to get a good education. What are the percentage of small and medium enterprise led by women that have access to the right amount of financing? I think that's the problem. I think when you put the problem as there is a population problem, it's very difficult to solve it. Having said that, I think today over 90% of the African countries actually do have populations in their strategy. They do have— and John can confirm some of this— birth control availability to those who are willing to have it and ready to have it and whether it is accessible or not.

So it's no longer, I think, a debate on the continent about whether you can use, I think, you know, maybe seven or eight years ago in northern Nigeria, this was an issue. But I think even in northern Nigeria, we have passed that. And the conversation's about girls' education. The easiest way to win that fight is to fight girls' education, to fight, you know, access to women for better financing, access to women in land. And if you do that, then I think we have, we have a controlled way of getting to it and not sort of a cliff where, you know, you have policy like in China, where one of these days we'll have a problem because we just will not have the kind of productive labor that we need.

**Joy Reid** I think we have time for one more in the back. Can we pass the mic to the back there or there? Either way, go with whichever wherever you feel. Go where the spirit takes you.

**Audience Member** Does this work. Oh, yes, it does. Thank you for a wonderful panel. Extending this conversation on access to financing on these different sectors, what is the, the likelihood or the realistic approach of closer or directly supporting local NGOs or civil society organizations or networks of NGOs, civil society organizations? There's a pretty strong society, you know, West Africa and other parts of Africa that might address issues of corruption or, or the kind of dissemination of these finances, these funds to especially rural areas.

**Joy Reid** Frannie or Amadou.

**Frannie Léautier** I'll say very quickly. I think, first of all, the current crisis is really hurting civil society in Africa because resources from outside have practically dried up. So all those NGOs who are working on issues like governance and democracy and human rights or even looking at issues like access to services in distressed areas, whether it's urban or rural, they are really having a huge budget crisis. Many of them are shutting down, downsizing and trying to figure out different ways to function. That also sadly impacts thinktanks. I mean, Professor [inaudible] is here, he was heading ARC, one of the largest networks of economists that are thinking and researching African issues and they are having trouble funding the research that is so critical. So I think we have a massive crisis right now on the continent to support civil society.

There are two important new trends. One is where governments are actually coming up to pick up the slack. So you have the case of Tanzania, where there's an institute called the UONGOZI Institute that focuses on developing leaders who can lead in sustainability concepts like climate change and so on. And the government is putting resources to support that institute and helping tide itself through these difficult areas. Countries like Ghana are giving buildings to organizations say,



okay, you be rent free in this government building until your finances can be resettled. So you see governments stepping in to, to do that is quite unusual that civil society is being supported by government, but it's happening in a number of countries.

And then the third trend, which is equally interesting, is the small scale philanthropy. So this is individual philanthropy. There is the giving by, you know, in Africa, philanthropy is a little bit different from the rest of the world where you give to your extended family in your community. So this is not counted in the global statistics, but it's actually there because people give to the extended family and community. So that has just been extended further now and deeper with people actually contributing even more than they used to before from their own pockets.

**Joy Reid** Can we get that? There's one person at the back, then I think we all do have to wrap there in the glasses. Yes. Well, both of you have glasses. Or maybe you should ask, ask your question and then ask your question. Maybe both can get answered. So there and then in the hat.

**Audience Member** My question is for Vera, this question of supply chains, I'm wondering, supply chains across countries whether there is any hope of kind of some continent-wide, I know there's the African Union, but either enhancing a stronger African union or looking like at something like, I don't know, this is a work in, the United States of Africa or something where there's more cross-border collaboration to enhance effective supply chains. Could you talk about that a little bit?

**Joy Reid** And before you answer, let's have the other gentleman in the glasses.

**Audience Member** Thank you. Lawrence Freeman, economic political analyst for Africa for several decades. In terms of what is necessary in Africa, it seems to me that infrastructure, hard infrastructure and manufacturing are essential. On grid electricity is going to be necessary. I just came back a couple of weeks ago from beginning a tour of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, which will be fully completed in two years. It's a marvel of scientific and engineering capability which the Ethiopians built themselves and financed themselves almost 5 billion, no outside money. Is this a model of domestic development using domestic resources? Because without energy, none of these other ideas are going to work. You also have one thing that was not mentioned in terms of progress is Hong Kong is now doing a feasibility study in Zimbabwe to produce lithium batteries now, and Zimbabwe is canceling the export of lithium. So they're building a lithium battery manufacturing plant. Manufacturing is what creates wealth along with infrastructure. And that does lead me to one question, which is I do disagree with the moderator, the United States was not built on slavery.

Slavery was a cancer that is still affecting our country. But if you want to know how the United States was built, look towards Alexander Hamilton, a Caribbean immigrant who wrote four reports on economic development for Washington. And that's really the basis of our, our economy.

**Joy Reid** We'll have the slavery debate later. Let's have their answer, we are actually out of time. We're going to have this answer. And then I think that they're going to wrap.

**Vera Songwe** Very quick. Alexander Hamilton was also, of course, treasury secretary of the Treasury, and he issued the first bond which helped finance the war. And so essentially, he built the beginning of good financial infrastructure for the, for, for the United States. I think that infrastructure is needed. On the CFTA, and maybe because it is the CFTA and it is because it's Africa, you know, we have done, it's a marvel, right? It's bringing over 50 countries together. You know, Africa 50 the other day just started the first sort of cross-border infrastructure where we will have one checkpoint. And eventually we want to erase those checkpoints. So I don't think we need another thing.

There's always this case in the continent where, you know, when you don't think that something's working, you think you should get something else. Well, the African Continental AfCFTA Secretariat in Ghana and all of us here, a lot of work is already happening, rules of origin, the working, you know, there is what we, what we actually need is more logistics companies that can take cargo from Malawi to Algeria and from Cape to Cairo. That's what we need. But I think the institutions, the policy, that need for harmonization is in place for us to go forward.

**Amadou Sy** Can I just add something? That one thing also is the financial infrastructure, the plumbing. We want to trade, but we all have different currencies. And sometimes you have to settle in US dollar in euros, right. So we have to really look at that. How can we trade and reduce the cost of having all these different currencies and so on?

**Frannie Léautier** And quickly on that, there are companies right now, small and medium enterprises can export and import across each other's countries using digital platforms for foreign exchange. So it's already happening.

**Vera Songwe** I would be remiss if I don't talk about the African payment system, the Africa Ex-Im Bank, because it exists. So you can actually small holders can trade with that so that infrastructure exists.

**Joy Reid** I want to thank Vera Songwe, Ambassador John Nkengasong, Frannie Léautier and Amadou Sy. Thank them with me please and thank you very much to my good friends sir Aloysius.

Thank you all for being here. Thanks. If you have closing remarks, you can do. Yeah. One moment, let's properly close.

**Aloysius Uche Ordu** Very good. Thank you very, very much, everyone, for coming. We really appreciate your support in launching this report today. Thank you, and have a wonderful day.