

Understanding the Concept of African Solutions to African Problems

By [Kester Kenn Klomegah](#)

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During the 36th Ordinary Session of the African Union (AU) held in Addis Ababa, African leaders have indeed prioritized the most significant questions especially those including peace and security necessary for sustainable development, halting the frequency of military's appearance unto the political scene and consolidating continental efforts for improving intra-African trade and economic development.

Under the aegis and guidance of the African Union, the continental organization which unites African countries, it is utterly important to continue making its tireless efforts and operate, keep in mind, the deeply-held wisdom – the principle of **“African solutions to African problems”** – especially during this current time of geopolitical changes sweeping across the world. It is well-known that **a number of external countries are using Africa to achieve geopolitical goals**, sowing seeds of confrontation which threatens African unity. In March 2022, Africa was sharply divided over resolutions at the United Nations.

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE), interestingly used the phrase – **“African solutions to African problems”** – seven times during his speech delivered on February 18. Besides that, he further offered the suggestion that all existing conflicts and disputes on the continent, it is necessary to mobilize collective efforts to resolve them and **“must be confined to this continent and quarantined from the contamination of non-African interference.”**

Strengthening African unity has long been a sought-after goal that has never been fully achieved. The challenges to achieving integration are to expand trade among African countries, build more roads and other badly-needed infrastructure, and reform regional institutions. He emphasized, however, that **while leaders are looking for external investment, much should be based on practical and valuable investment, and that Africa needs to improve its economy**. Therefore, Africa needs to be neutral and importantly has to look towards direction of attaining economic sovereignty.

Continental food security and food sovereignty is one such issue. Without mincing words,

Abiy Ahmed said “While **the principle of African Solutions to African Problems** is widely raised in the scope of conflict, it is imperative that we begin to extend this principle to a wide range of peace and security issues. Our continent is not only well able to feed itself, but can become a bread basket of the world. With 65% of the world’s remaining uncultivated arable land in our backyards, we need to critically assess why one third of the hungry people in the world are in our continent.”

In addition to above, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed called upon the African Union and development partners to offering investment support in unleashing this potential that exist for possible production in Africa. “Sadly, **the principle of African Solutions to African Problems** is not a silver bullet to address all challenges, because not all our problems are the products of our own making,” according to Prime Minister Ahmed.

The challenge of climate change is a case in point. Global meetings on climate change are rich with the rhetoric of climate justice, the just transition, common but differentiated responsibilities of parties. ***These talks, however, are hardly ever backed up with action. And Africa cannot wait.***

The 2023 Dakar Declaration on Food Sovereignty and Resilience rightly acknowledged the continental awakening that **‘it is time for Africa to feed itself and fully unlock its agriculture potential to feed the world’** – reminding what is necessary steps are Africans have to take towards its long-term solution.

There are still more to that. In fact Africa should adopt, at least, a leading unified voice for a better world in a lot of ways. Its collective voice directed increasingly at resolving their differences by peaceful means. The African continent is fast-tracking the establishment and implementation of a rules-based system of trade governance that promises to create the world’s largest free trade area.

Worth noting further that African countries are engaged in environmental conservation, reforestation and massive investment in the generation of clean energy from hydro sources. In short, Africa is leading the world in areas that matter for all humanity and it is time for Africa’s leadership role to be recognized and institutionalized.

Senegalese President and Former AU Chairperson Macky Sall together with African Union Commission’s executive leader Moussa Faki Mahamat, and now Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed have strongly been advocating, using again this summit opportunity, Africa’s inclusion on foreign bodies. They are lending their voices yet again for Africa to be represented on the UN Security Council with, at least, one permanent seat and double non-permanent seats. It also needs to have proportionate representation at the G7, the G20 and similar international institutions.

The African Union is headquartered in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Its vision is focused on an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena. It has designed a continental development programme, referred to as the AU Agenda 2063, which is Africa’s development blueprint to achieve inclusive and sustainable socio-economic development over a 50-year period.

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Kester Kenn Klomegah, who worked previously with Inter Press Service (IPS), is now a regular contributor to Global Research. As a versatile researcher, he believes that everyone deserves equal access to quality and trustworthy media reports.

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