Volume VII | Issue IV | July-August 2024

The HORN Bulletin

Austerity, Corruption, and Discontent

Comparative Analysis of the Economic Grievances Fueling Protests in Kenya (2024) and Sudan (2019)

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By Simon Mulongo

Abstract

A comparative study of the protests and demonstrations in Kenya (2024) and Sudan (2019) reveals similarities driven by comparable economic grievances. An intersectional analysis highlights the impact of colonialism, structural racism, and various forms of oppression on the unequal distribution of resources and power. Critical race theory and postcolonial theory explain how historical and structural factors have contributed to this inequality (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017, p. 20; Ashcroft et al., 2006, p. 139). Intersectionality theory helps understand how economic status, ethnicity, and gender affect marginalized communities (Crenshaw, 1989, p. 149). Scholars like Frantz Fanon, Edward Said, and Gayatri Spivak emphasize the need to challenge dominant

narratives and give voice to marginalized groups (Fanon, 1963, p. 21; Said, 1978, p. 78; Spivak, 1988, p. 21). Global evidence suggests that public spending has a positive link with GDP growth and that public and private sector companies are equally efficient (Hall & Nguyen, 2018, p. 101). To address economic discontent, both countries must tackle austerity and corruption by restructuring tax systems, investing in public services, strengthening anti-corruption measures, and engaging with communities, especially civil society. A holistic approach that prioritizes underprivileged communities can lead to a more equitable and sustainable future for all citizens.

Introduction

The protests in Kenya in June 2024 and the Sudanese demonstrations from December 2018 to 2019 were sparked by parallel economic grievances despite their temporal disparity. In Kenya, protests erupted against the Finance Bill 2024/2025, proposing tax hikes on essential goods to tackle a mounting debt crisis, contrasting sharply with excessive government expenditure like the $7.8 million allocated to State House renovations (Oduor, 2024, pp. 45-51). Meanwhile, Sudan witnessed widespread unrest triggered, initially by the tripling of bread prices and a cash shortage, but quickly evolved into a broader movement against the 30-year rule of President Omar al-Bashir. Protesters accused al-Bashir's government of economic mismanagement and corruption and demanded a transition to democratic rule (Abdelaziz & Georgy, 2019, pp.61-63).

An intersectional analysis underscores how these grievances intersect with corruption and governmental mistrust, disproportionately impacting underprivileged groups like youth and the working class. In both countries, austerity measures and corruption have exacerbated economic hardship and fueled widespread discontent (Transparency International, 2019; World Bank, 2020, pp. 78-80).

This research paper will critically compare the economic grievances fueling protests in Kenya (2024) and Sudan

Hundreds of protesters march to the supreme court and parliament to protest against corruption and demanding the goverment crack down on it –Nairobi, Kenya (Photo Credits:Ben Curtis/AP)

(2019), and examine how austerity and corruption intertwine to fuel economic discontent in both countries, exploring the implications for democracy and economic justice in Kenya and Sudan, and by extension, the Horn of Africa region.

Background on Kenya (2024) and Sudan (2019)

In Kenya, the 2024 protests unfolded against a challenging political and economic landscape under President William Ruto's administration since September 2022. Ruto inherited a high debt burden, rising cost of living, and high unemployment, particularly among the youth (Oduor, 2024, pp. 45-47). The Finance Bill 2024, introducing tax hikes on essential goods and services, ignited protests. Protesters vehemently opposed these measures, highlighting the disproportionate burden on the working class and young people, juxtaposed with perceived unnecessary spending (Oduor, 2024, pp. 48-51).

Corruption was also a driving force, with widespread allegations of government mismanagement and resource diversion favoring the affluent few. Kenya's dismal ranking of 137 out of 180 countries in Transparency International's 2019 Corruption Perceptions Index, underscored pervasive public distrust and discontent (Transparency International, 2019, pp. 23-25).

Similarly, in Sudan, the 2019 protests were sparked by economic mismanagement and corruption allegations under President Omar al-Bashir's rule. The Sudanese economy was in a dire state, characterized by high inflation and a substantial budget deficit. Austerity measures disproportionately affected the poor and working class, fueling discontent (World Bank, 2020, pp. 78-80). Corruption was a major issue, with the government accused of diverting resources to benefit the elite (Transparency International, 2019, pp. 27-29).

These parallel protests in Kenya and Sudan underline a shared narrative of economic disenchantment fueled by austerity measures and systemic corruption. This analysis will delve into the intertwined dynamics of austerity, corruption, and public unrest in both nations, offering insights into their implications for democratic governance and economic justice within the broader Horn of Africa context.

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Austerity Measures and Economic Discontent

The implementation of austerity measures in Kenya and Sudan has had a profound impact on the economic well-being of citizens, significantly contributing to widespread discontent and fueling protests. In Kenya, the proposed Finance Bill 2024 included tax hikes on essential goods and services, such as cooking oil and bread, and increased taxation on digital revenue (Oduor, 2024, pp. 45-47). These measures aimed to raise $2.7 billion to service the country's debt. However, protesters contended that tax increases disproportionately affected the working class and young people, already burdened by high unemployment rates (Oduor, 2024, pp. 48-51).

According to data from the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, the unemployment rate in Kenya was 7.2 per cent in 2024, with youth unemployment reaching 14.2 per cent (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2024, pp. 33-35). The proposed tax hikes in the Finance Bill 2024 were expected to further escalate the cost of living for these vulnerable groups, intensifying economic strain and social unrest.

In Sudan, the government implemented austerity measures to address the economic crisis, such as cutting subsidies on fuel and electricity (World Bank, 2020, pp. 78-80). These measures led to a sharp increase in prices, disproportionately affecting the poor and working class (World Bank, 2020). The 2024 Sudan Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan, launched by the United Nations, requested a massive amount of $2.7 billion to address the humanitarian crisis in Sudan but has reached less than 17 per cent of the target (OCHA, 2024).

The austerity measures implemented in both countries have had a detrimental impact on public services and social welfare programs. In Kenya, the government's focus on debt servicing came at the expense of investment in healthcare, education, and infrastructure (Oduor, 2024, 55-57). Similarly, in Sudan, the reduction in government spending due to austerity measures led to a decline in the quality and accessibility of public services (World Bank, 2020, pp 84-86).

Critics argue that the Bretton Woods institutions, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank, have often required developing countries to cut subsidies, reduce government spending, and liberalize markets as part of their austerity programs. These measures have often led to a loss of government revenue, increased costs of essential services, and reduced access to services for the poor. For example, in Kenya, the IMF approved a $2.34 billion loan in 2021 to support the country's pandemic response and economic reforms (IMF, 2021, pp. 19-21). As part of the loan agreement, Kenya was required to implement austerity measures such as reducing the wage bill and cutting spending on non-priority areas (IMF, 2021, pp. 22-24).

Similarly, in Sudan, the World Bank and IMF have been involved in the country's economic reforms since the 1990s. In 2019, the IMF approved a $2.5 billion loan to support Sudan's transition to democracy and economic reforms (IMF, 2019, pp. 15-17). As part of the loan agreement, Sudan was required to implement austerity measures such as cutting fuel subsidies and devaluing its currency (IMF, 2019, pp. 18-20).

Research has consistently shown that austerity measures can have long-term negative impacts on economic growth and development. A study by the IMF found that austerity measures can lead to a decline in GDP and an increase in unemployment (IMF, 2016, p. 15). The study also reveals that austerity measures can exacerbate income inequality and reduce social mobility (IMF, 2016, p. 20).

Given the foregoing discussion, it is evident that the actions of the Bretton Woods institutions in requiring austerity measures have been criticized for exacerbating economic hardship and fueling discontent in developing countries like Kenya and Sudan. These measures have been linked to increased costs of essential services, reduced access to services for the poor, and long-term negative impacts on economic growth and development. Critics argue that the Bretton Woods institutions need to adopt a more holistic approach to economic reforms, one that prioritizes social welfare and addresses the root causes of economic problems.

Implementation of austerity measures in Kenya and Sudan has had a devastating impact on the economic well-being of citizens, exacerbating economic hardship and fueling discontent. The Bretton Woods institutions' requirements for austerity measures are criticized for neglecting the social and political consequences of their policies, prioritizing fiscal stability over social welfare, and ignoring the underlying causes of economic problems. A more holistic approach to economic reforms, one that prioritizes social welfare and addresses the root causes of economic problems, is necessary to promote sustainable economic growth and development, eradicate poverty and inequality, and promote social justice and human rights.

Corruption and Lack of Trust in Government

Corruption has been a pervasive and debilitating factor in fueling economic grievances and discontent in both Kenya and Sudan. In Kenya, the protesters accused the government of perpetuating a culture of impunity, failing to address corruption, and diverting resources away from public services to benefit the elite (Transparency International, 2019, p. 12). Transparency International's 2019 Corruption Perceptions Index placed Kenya 137 out of 180 countries, indicating a high level of perceived corruption (Transparency International, 2019, p. 15).

The protesters in Kenya argued that the government's misplaced priorities, characterized by a disproportionate focus on debt servicing and unnecessary spending, such as the $7.8 million budget for State House renovations, were a result of corruption and mismanagement of public funds (Oduor, 2024, p. 3). They demanded that the government redirect its budgetary allocations to invest in critical public services and address the pervasive scourge of corruption that had eroded public trust.

In the same vein, in Sudan, the protesters and demonstrators accused the government of egregious economic mismanagement and endemic corruption and called for a transition to democratic governance and the prosecution of corrupt officials (Transparency International, 2019, p. 12). Corruption has become a deeply entrenched problem in Sudan, with the ruling regime accused of diverting resources to benefit a narrow circle of elites and political cronies, rather than the wider interests of the citizenry (Transparency International, 2019, p. 15).

The high-profile corruption cases in Kenya and Sudan vividly illustrate the profoundly detrimental impact of graft on governance, economic development, and public trust. In Kenya, the National Youth Service scandal, where officials embezzled millions meant for youth empowerment, and the Eurobond scandal, where funds were allegedly misappropriated, demonstrates how corruption diverts resources away from critical public services and erodes government accountability (Transparency International, 2019, p. 137). Other cases, such as the Ksh. 63 billion Arror Dam scandal, the Ksh. 588 million graft case against former Kiambu Governor Ferdinand Waititu, and the Ksh. 1.3 billion embezzlement case against former Kakamega Governor Wycliffe Oparanya, further underscores the pervasive and systemic nature of corruption that has permeated the country's political and economic spheres (Transparency International, 2019, p. 138).

Similarly, in Sudan, high-profile cases like Ahmed Haroun's embezzlement of $1.2 billion, Ali Osman Taha's accused bribery worth $10 million from foreign companies, and Omar Al-Bashir's amassing of a fortune over $9 billion through corruption and embezzlement, reveal the staggering scale of graft and its impact on the country's development (Sudan Tribune, 2019, para. 3; Al Jazeera, 2019, para. 5; International Criminal Court, para. 4). The government's alleged diversion of oil revenues to fund the military and security apparatus, rather than investing in public services and infrastructure, further exacerbates economic grievances and erodes public trust in governance (Transparency International, 2019, pp. 12, 139). These corruption scandals have fueled protests and demonstrations in both countries, as citizens demand accountability, transparency, and the equitable distribution of resources.

Anti-corruption protesters Sit-in government offices of South Darfur's El Radoom region, demanding the dismissal of local executives over corruption in the mining industry (Photo Credit: Save the dream)

The austerity measures implemented in response to economic crises, such as cutting subsidies and reducing government spending, have been criticized for disproportionately affecting the poor and marginalized while failing to address the root causes of economic hardship – namely, corruption and mismanagement of public funds (World Bank, 2020, p. 84). To address these challenges and alleviate economic grievances, governments in Kenya and Sudan must prioritize anti-corruption efforts, strengthen institutions, and ensure that public resources are used for the benefit of all citizens, rather than being diverted to enrich a few at the expense of the many.

The lack of trust in government institutions due to perceived and reported corruption exacerbated economic grievances in both countries. In Kenya, the protesters argued that the government's failure to address corruption had led to a decline in public services and a reduction in living standards (Oduor, 2024). They accused the government of prioritizing the interests of the elite over the welfare of its citizens. In Sudan, the protesters demanded a transition to democratic rule, arguing that the government's lack of accountability and transparency had led to widespread corruption and economic mismanagement (Transparency International, 2019, p. 139). They argued that a transition to democratic governance would help to address the issue of corruption and improve the economic well-being of citizens. The comparison of the role of corruption in fueling economic grievances in Kenya and Sudan reveals the detrimental impact of corruption on the economic well-being of citizens. In both countries, corruption has led to a decline in public services, a reduction in living standards, and a lack of trust in government institutions. The protesters in both countries have demanded that the government address the issue of corruption and prioritize the welfare of its citizens over the interests of the elite.

The analysis of corruption in Kenya and Sudan is enriched by drawing on the work of scholars such as Amartya Sen, Joseph Stiglitz, Robert Klitgaard, Paulo Mauro, Mancur Olson, Daron Acemoglu, and James A. Robinson. Sen's work on poverty and famine highlights how corruption can exacerbate economic hardship and deprivation, particularly for the most vulnerable members of society (Sen, 1981). Stiglitz's analysis of globalization and its discontents emphasizes how corruption can undermine the benefits of economic integration and perpetuate inequality (Stiglitz, 2002). Klitgaard's concept of "tropical gangsters" provides a framework for understanding how corruption can become entrenched in developing countries, with political elites using their power to extract rents and enrich themselves at the expense of the public good (Klitgaard, 1990). Mauro's work on the economic effects of corruption demonstrates how corruption can reduce investment, slow economic growth, and divert resources away from productive activities (Mauro, 1995). Olson's theory of collective action highlights how corruption can undermine the ability of citizens to organize and demand accountability from their leaders (Olson, 1965). Finally, Acemoglu and Robinson's analysis of 'Why Nations Fail' emphasizes how corruption can lead to the development of extractive political and economic institutions that benefit a small elite at the expense of the majority of the population (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2012).

Corruption is a significant factor in fueling economic grievances and discontent in both Kenya and Sudan. The lack of trust in government institutions due to perceived corruption has exacerbated economic hardship and reduced living standards for many citizens. Drawing on the work of scholars such as Sen, Stiglitz, Klitgaard, Mauro, Olson, Acemoglu, and Robinson, we can better understand how corruption intersects with other factors to perpetuate poverty, inequality, and political instability in developing countries like Kenya and Sudan.

Intersectionality of Austerity and Corruption

The intersectionality of austerity and corruption in fueling economic grievances and protests in Kenya and Sudan can be analyzed through the lens of critical race theory, postcolonial theory, and intersectionality theory. These

... in Sudan, the protesters and demonstrators accused the government of egregious economic mismanagement and endemic corruption and called for a transition to democratic governance and the prosecution of corrupt officials theoretical perspectives shed a profound light on how the legacy of colonialism, and structural racism (refers to systemic policies that perpetuate ethnic inequalities, such as the marginalization of a race/tribe, who have faced restricted access to land and economic opportunities, leading to persistent poverty [Abdi, A.M., 2017]) and the intersection of various forms of oppression contributes to the economic hardship and discontent experienced by citizens in these countries.

Critical race theory (CRT) emphasizes the role of racism in shaping social, economic, and political structures. In the context of Kenya and Sudan, CRT can help us understand how the colonial legacy and ongoing racial inequalities have contributed to the unequal distribution of resources and power. The austerity measures and corruption in these countries disproportionately affect marginalized communities, such as ethnic minorities and the poor, who are more likely to rely on public services and are less able to access private alternatives (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017, p. 8).

Postcolonial theory, on the other hand, focuses on illuminating the profound and multifaceted impact of colonialism on the political, economic, and cultural structures of formerly colonized countries. In Kenya and Sudan, the colonial legacy has profoundly shaped the development of state institutions and the distribution of resources. The austerity measures and pervasive corruption in these countries can be seen as a continuation of the exploitative practices of the colonial era, where resources were systematically extracted from the colonies to benefit the colonizers (Ashcroft et al., 2006, p. 168).

Intersectionality theory underscores how the intersection of multiple, intersecting forms of oppression, such as race, class, and gender, creates unique and compounded vulnerabilities for marginalized groups in these societies. The economic hardship and public discontent in Kenya and Sudan are inextricably linked to how these intersecting systems of power and marginalization had been reproduced and reinforced through the imposition of austerity measures and the entrenched culture of corruption (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1244).

The work of renowned scholars such as Frantz Fanon, Edward Said, and Gayatri Spivak has been deeply influential in the development of postcolonial theory and its application to the critical examination of economic and political structures in formerly colonized countries. Frantz Fanon's seminal work on the psychological impact of colonialism and the importance of decolonization is particularly salient in understanding the role of austerity and corruption in perpetuating colonial structures (Fanon, 1963, p. 201). Edward Said's work on Orientalism and the construction of the "other" highlights the crucial need to challenge dominant narratives and deeply entrenched power structures that underpin the political and economic realities in these post-colonial contexts (Said, 1978, p. 92). Gayatri Spivak's invaluable work on subaltern studies and her emphasis on the imperative to amplify the voices and experiences of marginalized groups is highly also relevant to understanding the experiences of citizens in Kenya and Sudan (Spivak, 1988).

The intersectionality of austerity and corruption in fueling economic grievances and protests in Kenya and Sudan can also be understood in the context of the global empirical evidence on the relative efficiency of the private versus public sectors. The evidence does not support the view that there is any systematic difference in efficiency between public and private sector companies, either in services that are subject to outsourcing, such as waste management or in sectors privatized by sale, such as telecoms. If the private sector does not have this efficiency advantage, then there is nothing to offset the higher private cost of capital, and it is always likely to be better value to use the public sector (Hall & Nguyen, 2018, p. 101).

At the macro level, far from being a burden on the economy, growth in public spending as a proportion of the economy has had a persistent positive link with GDP growth for more than a century, in developing countries as well as high-income countries (Hall & Nguyen, 2018, p. 101, p. 101). The mechanisms linking public spending and economic growth include investment in, and maintenance of, infrastructure, supporting an educated and healthy workforce, redistributing income to increase the spending power of poorer consumers, providing insurance against risks, direct support for industry, including through technological innovation, and increasing efficiency by taking on these functions (Hall & Nguyen, 2018, p. 101).

This public sector activity, directly and indirectly, supports half the formal jobs in the world and has a comparative advantage in delivering public goods such as universal access to healthcare, affordable housing, and protecting the planet from climate change (Hall & Nguyen, 2018, p. 101). The need for public services and public spending is expected to grow globally due to continuing economic development, climate change, and aging populations, but, as in the past, this depends on the outcome of political processes (Hall & Nguyen, 2018, p. 101). In conclusion, the intersectionality of austerity and corruption in fueling economic grievances and protests in Kenya and Sudan can be analyzed through the lens of critical race theory, postcolonial theory, intersectionality theory, and the global empirical evidence on the relative efficiency of the private versus public sectors.

These theoretical perspectives and empirical findings highlight the importance of considering the legacy of colonialism, structural racism, the intersection of various forms of oppression, and the role of public spending in supporting economic growth and delivering public goods. By drawing on this analysis, we can develop a deeper understanding of the complex factors that contribute to economic hardship and discontent in Kenya and Sudan, and work towards more equitable and just societies.

Intersecting Forces: The Role of Structural Inequalities in Driving Economic Grievances and Protests

The economic grievances fueling protests in Kenya and Sudan are deeply entrenched in histories and colonialism, structural racism, and the intersecting of various forms of oppression. Critical race theory and postcolonial theory illuminate how these historical and structural factors have perpetuated unequal distribution of resources and power in these countries (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017, p. 95; Ashcroft et al., 2006). These systemic inequalities have created fertile ground for discontent, exacerbated by austerity measures and pervasive corruption that disproportionately impact marginalized communities, including ethnic minorities and economically disadvantaged who rely heavily on public services (Oduor, 2024, pp. 45-51; Abdelaziz & Georgy, 2019, pp. 61-63).

Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (EACC) report reveals scale of corruption in Kenyan counties amounting to billions of shillings with the populations ravaging in poverty (Photo Credit: Nairobi Law Monthly)

In Kenya, the proposed Finance Bill 2024 aimed to raise $2.7 billion through increased taxes on basic and essential goods and services, and digital revenue, leading to widespread protests among the working class and the youth already burdened by critical unemployment rates. Similarly in Sudan, economic reforms including subsidy cuts and currency devaluation, enforced under strict IMF loans, triggered protests and demonstrations because of their disproportionate impact on the poor and working class (World Bank, 2020, pp. 15-20).

The influence of international financial institutions like the IMF and World Bank in shaping these austerity measures has been critiqued for worsening social disparities and undermining local economic resilience (IMF, 2021; IMF, 2019). These conditions underscore the urgent need for comprehensive reforms that address both economic policies and governance structures to mitigate socio-economic inequalities and promote sustainable development and growth.

The economic grievances and protests in Kenya and Sudan portend significant challenges to the stability and development of these countries and the region. Failure to address, these issues could lead to further social unrest, political instability, and a deepening of economic hardship for the most vulnerable members of society. In Kenya, protests highlighted growing disillusionment among the working class and youth, who felt that the government was not doing enough to address their economic concerns. If these grievances are not substantively addressed, it could lead to further erosion of trust in government institutions and a rise in social tensions. Moreover, the continued implementation of austerity measures could exacerbate existing inequalities and lead to a further decline in living standards for the poor and marginalized. Similarly, in Sudan, the protests and demonstrations catalyzed political transitions but also underscored ongoing challenges in governance and economic management.

To effectively address economic discontent, comprehensive reforms must prioritize inclusive growth, transparent governance, and equitable distribution of resources (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Crenshaw, 1989; Fanon, 1963). This necessitates robust anti-corruption measures, targeted investments in public services, and progressive tax reforms to ensure economic policies benefit all citizens equitably. This will also require challenging dominant narratives and power structures and prioritizing the needs of marginalized communities in the development and implementation of economic policies (Said, 1978; Spivak, 1988; Hall & Nguyen, 2018).

> Corruption is a significant factor in fueling economic grievances and discontent in both Kenya and Sudan. The lack of trust in government institutions due to perceived corruption has exacerbated economic hardship and reduced living standards for many citizens.

In conclusion, the economic grievances responsible for protests in Kenya and Sudan, though manifest differently in context and timing, share underlying drivers rooted in structural inequalities and successive governance failures. Addressing these challenges necessitates a holistic paradigm that acknowledges the interdependence of austerity and corruption and their roles in perpetuating economic hardship and social injustice (Ashcroft et al., 2006; Hall & Nguyen, 2018). By instituting comprehensive reforms that foster inclusive growth, fortify anti-corruption mechanisms, and foreground the needs of marginalized communities, Kenya and Sudan can embark on a trajectory toward a more equitable and sustainable future for all their citizens.

It is recommended that governments in the Horn of Africa decisively consider introducing progressive taxation and targeted subsidies to safeguard vulnerable groups and promote economic equality. Institutional strengthening is vital to guaranteeing transparency, accountability, and public confidence in economic decision-making processes. Moreover, inclusive dialogue with civil society helps tailor policies to diverse societal needs and priorities. These measures aim to tackle systemic inequalities, drive sustainable development, and mitigate economic grievances in Kenya and Sudan.

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Climate Financing and International Public Goods: BRICS-Africa Partnerships and Prospects for the Horn of Africa

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Abstract

Climate Financing has emerged as a critical global priority, recognized for its role in tackling emerging environmental issues such as climate change. In that, climate financing aims to promote economic growth while prioritizing sustainable development. This paper focuses on how the BRICS-Africa cooperation addresses financing for climate mitigation and adaptation (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) and if it holds any significant prospects for the Horn of Africa. The primary objective of this paper is to interrogate how collaboration mechanisms between BRICS countries and Africa can contribute to climate financing efforts, emphasizing the concept of International Public Goods (IPGs) and their relevance. The paper adopts a structured approach, aiming to analyze the dynamics of climate mitigation/adaptation initiatives within the BRICS-Africa partnership, especially concerning the Horn of Africa. The discourse delves on how collaboration on climate financing can serve as an IPG, benefiting not just participating nations but also the global community. Drawing insights from successful models, the paper identifies key factors that facilitate effective collaboration and ensure fair distribution of benefits. Secondly, it looks into the specific challenges and opportunities faced by the Horn of Africa Countries regarding climate financing. Through examining the region's socio-economic and environmental vulnerabilities, the paper pinpoints areas where targeted interventions could make a significant difference. It also explores how BRICS-Africa cooperation can help address these challenges, highlighting potential areas of mutual benefit. This paper contributes to discussions on sustainable development and international collaboration, providing an in-depth analysis of the potential of joint efforts to advance climate action goals. Stressing the importance of IPGs, it emphasizes the shared responsibility of developing nations in confronting global issues like climate change. The paper offers practical recommendations for policymakers, stressing the necessity of strategic partnerships and united efforts to make meaningful progress in climate financing within the BRICS-Africa context. Due to limited time and constrained resources, the authors entirely relied on secondary data, collected from internet sources and library research.

Introduction

Climate financing has become increasingly critical as the global community recognizes the urgency of addressing climate change. International public goods, such as a stable climate and biodiversity, benefit all countries and require collective action to protect. The funding mechanisms for climate action are designed to support projects that can provide these global benefits. Understanding the interplay between climate financing and the provision of international public goods is essential for fostering global cooperation and ensuring sustainable development (United Nations, 2015). One of the primary sources of climate financing is the Green Climate Fund (GCF), established by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The GCF mobilizes funding from developed countries to support climate-related projects in developing nations. This approach aligns with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, acknowledging that while all countries are responsible for addressing climate change, developed nations hold a greater capacity and historical obligation to contribute financially (Green Climate Fund, n.d.).

Climate financing additionally involves leveraging private sector investments. Public funds can be used to de-risk projects and attract private capital, thereby increasing the total amount of resources available for climate action. For example, blended finance mechanisms combine public and private investments to support renewable energy projects, which not only reduce carbon emissions but

Solar power projects in Garissa County northern Kenya highlighting China's new focus on smaller, more environmentally sustainable infrastructure development in Africa (Photo Credit: Xinhua)

also promote energy access in underserved regions. This synergy between public and private finance is crucial for scaling up the impact of climate initiatives and ensuring that they contribute effectively to international public goods (World Bank, 2020). However, the effectiveness of climate financing in providing international public goods depends on several factors, including the adequacy of funding, the efficiency of fund allocation, and the transparency of financial flows. Current estimates suggest that the financial resources needed to meet global climate goals far exceed the amounts currently pledged and disbursed. Ensuring that funds are allocated to projects with the highest potential for impact requires robust governance and oversight mechanisms (OECD, 2021).

The BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) are increasingly instrumental in global efforts to address climate change, particularly in Africa. Their roles encompass financial investments, technology transfer, and policy support aimed at mitigating and adapting to climate impacts. Through leveraging their economic and technological capabilities, BRICS countries are fostering sustainable development in Africa, addressing both climate change and broader environmental challenges (Bastos et al., 2019). China with substantial investments in renewable energy projects, is at the forefront of climate-related engagement in Africa. Through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), China has funded solar, wind, and hydropower projects, helping African countries reduce their reliance on fossil fuels and lower greenhouse gas emissions. China also collaborates with Africa on climate adaptation strategies, including building resilient infrastructure and improving water management systems. This partnership underscores China's commitment to sustainable development in Africa (Zhang & Chen, 2020).

India's role in Africa's climate change agenda focuses on capacity building and technology transfer. The International Solar Alliance (ISA), co-founded by India, aims to promote solar energy adoption across African countries. Furthermore, India provides training and technical support to African nations, helping them develop the skills needed to implement and maintain sustainable energy systems (Bhattacharyya, 2019). Russia's involvement in Africa regarding climate change is mainly through energy cooperation and technological support. Russian companies are involved in developing nuclear energy facilities in Africa, which, despite the controversies surrounding nuclear power, offer a low-carbon energy alternative. In addition, Russia engages in forest management projects aimed at carbon sequestration and biodiversity conservation, contributing to climate mitigation efforts on the continent (Saradzhyan, 2018).

As a member of both the BRICS coalition and the African continent, South Africa occupies a pivotal position in championing climate action and fostering international cooperation. Within the BRICS framework, South Africa serves as a vocal advocate for increased climate finance and the transfer of essential technologies to African nations. Leveraging its position within BRICS, South Africa actively pushes for policies that address the specific climate challenges faced by African countries, emphasizing the importance of customized support mechanisms. Through advocating for greater financial assistance and technology sharing, South Africa aims to bolster the resilience of African nations against the impacts of climate change while advancing their sustainable development agendas (2021). Furthermore, South Africa's proactive stance on climate issues extends beyond advocacy, as the country demonstrates leadership through its own domestic policies and initiatives. With ambitious renewable energy targets and robust climate policies, South Africa sets an example for both BRICS partners and other African nations. Through prioritizing renewable energy development and implementing stringent climate regulations, South Africa not only reduces its own carbon footprint but also provides a blueprint for sustainable development pathways within the region. Through its active participation in BRICS and its commitment to domestic climate action, South Africa strengthens its capacity to support neighboring countries in their climate mitigation and adaptation efforts, thereby fostering regional cooperation and advancing the shared goal of a more sustainable future (New Development Bank, 2020).

The Horn of Africa countries such as Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Djibouti, are highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. The region is experiencing more frequent and severe droughts, leading to significant water shortages and agricultural challenges. These climatic changes are increasing food insecurity, affecting millions of people who depend on subsistence farming and pastoralism for their livelihoods. The recurrent droughts have also led to conflicts over scarce resources, further destabilizing the region (Gebrehiwot et al., 2021). In addition to drought, the Horn of Africa faces severe flooding, particularly during the rainy seasons. These floods cause widespread damage to infrastructure, displace populations, and lead to outbreaks of waterborne diseases. The variability in rainfall patterns, with extreme shifts between drought and flooding, creates a complex challenge for the region's disaster preparedness and response efforts. This unpredictable climate contributes the vulnerability of communities already grappling with socio-economic challenges (Opiyo et al., 2018).

> Through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), China has funded solar, wind, and hydropower projects, helping African countries reduce their reliance on fossil fuels and lower greenhouse gas emissions.

Land degradation is another critical environmental issue in the Horn of Africa. Overgrazing, deforestation, and unsustainable agricultural practices have significantly degraded the land, reducing its productivity and resilience to climatic shocks. Soil erosion and desertification are particularly severe, leading to the loss of arable land and further threatening food security. Efforts to restore degraded lands through sustainable practices and reforestation are crucial but face significant challenges due to the socio-political instability in the region (Cherlet et al., 2018). The coastal and marine environments of the Horn of Africa are also under threat due to climate change. Rising sea levels and increased sea temperatures are affecting marine biodiversity and coastal communities. These changes impact fisheries, a vital source of food and income for many coastal inhabitants. Coastal erosion and saltwater intrusion into freshwater sources are becoming more prevalent, posing significant risks to both the environment and human settlements (Obura et al., 2017). Additionally, climate change related human displacement poses increased challenges and vulnerability to the Horn of Africa region. International Organization estimated that across Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Rwanda, and Tanzania, around 3 million people were displaced due to flash floods (IOM, 2024).

Climate Mitigation and Adaptation through BRICS-Africa Cooperation

The literature on climate financing mechanisms reveals a diverse range of strategies adopted by BRICS nations

> The New Development Bank (NDB), established by the BRICS nations (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa), plays a key role in financing infrastructure and sustainable development projects in member countries, essential for the transition to low-carbon economies

to address climate change. These countries are not only recipients but also significant contributors to global climate finance. For instance, China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) includes substantial investments in renewable energy projects across Asia and Africa, reflecting its dual role in mitigating climate impacts domestically and internationally. According to the Climate Policy Initiative, China alone contributed approximately $47 billion in climate finance in 2019, focusing on both mitigation and adaptation projects (Climate Policy Initiative, 2020). India's climate financing efforts are highlighted by its leadership in the International Solar Alliance (ISA), which aims to mobilize $1 trillion in solar investments by 2030. This initiative exemplifies India's commitment to expanding renewable energy infrastructure not only within its borders but also in other developing nations, particularly in Africa. The ISA provides a platform for collaboration, funding, and knowledge exchange, facilitating the deployment of solar technology in member countries. The initiative underscores India's strategic use of climate finance to drive global solar energy adoption (International Solar Alliance, 2021).

The New Development Bank (NDB), established by the BRICS nations (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa), plays a key role in financing infrastructure and sustainable development projects in member countries, essential for the transition to low-carbon economies. Since its inception, the NDB has approved numerous projects that align with its mandate to promote sustainable development. For instance, by 2020, the NDB had committed $3 billion to renewable energy projects, aiming to increase the share of clean energy in the energy mix of member countries. South Africa, as a key member of BRICS, benefits significantly from the NDB's financial resources. This access allows South Africa to undertake large-scale projects that are pivotal in enhancing its resilience to climate change impacts. Noteworthy among these are investments in renewable energy infrastructure, such as wind and solar power plants, and water management systems, which are vital for a country facing significant water scarcity issues due to changing climate patterns (New Development Bank, 2020). South Africa's engagement with the NDB underscores its dedication to regional and international cooperation in climate action. Through the NDB, South Africa secures funding that not only supports infrastructure development but also fosters sustainable economic growth. The NDB's investments in South Africa contribute to the nation's goals of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and increasing energy security. For example, the NDB has financed the 670 MW renewable energy project in South Africa, which is expected to reduce CO_2 emissions by approximately 1.3 million tons annually. This collaborative effort demonstrates how South Africa leverages its position within BRICS to access financial and technical support, advancing its climate action agenda and contributing to global efforts to mitigate climate change. By utilizing the resources and expertise provided by the NDB, South Africa sets a precedent for other developing nations on how strategic international partnerships can bolster climate resilience and promote sustainable development (New Development Bank, 2020).

The Green Climate Fund (GCF) is a critical financial mechanism under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) designed to support developing countries in their efforts to combat climate change. Since its inception, the GCF has committed over $10 billion to more than 190 projects worldwide, with a significant portion dedicated to African nations. In Africa, the GCF focuses on both mitigation and adaptation projects, recognizing the continent's vulnerability to climate impacts such as droughts, floods, and extreme weather events. For instance, the GCF has invested in the Enhancing Climate Information and Early Warning Systems project in Malawi, which aims to improve the country's meteorological and hydrological services. This project enhances the nation's ability to forecast and respond to climate-related hazards, thereby reducing the risk of loss and damage. According to the GCF, such initiatives are crucial in helping African countries build resilience and reduce their dependency on humanitarian aid during climate crises (Green Climate Fund, 2023). The impact of GCF-funded projects in Africa extends beyond immediate climate resilience. Through providing grants and concessional loans, the GCF empowers African nations to develop sustainable infrastructure and improve their overall adaptive capacities. For example, in East Africa, the GCF has supported renewable energy projects that not only reduce greenhouse gas emissions but also create jobs and stimulate economic growth. As of 2023, the GCF reported that its investments in renewable energy projects in Africa have contributed to reducing carbon emissions by an estimated 500,000 tons annually. Furthermore, the GCF's support for water management and agricultural projects helps secure food and water supplies, essential for the continent's growing population. Through these targeted investments, the GCF not only addresses the immediate impacts of climate change but also promotes long-term sustainable development across Africa, ensuring that vulnerable communities are better equipped to face future environmental challenges (Green Climate Fund, 2023).

Climate financing mechanisms, such as those provided by the African Risk Capacity (ARC), are vital for addressing the adverse impacts of climate change on the African continent, which suffers disproportionately from extreme weather events. The ARC, a specialized agency of the African Union, offers parametric insurance products customized to African countries. This type of insurance is triggered by specific weather indices, such as rainfall levels or drought severity, which are predefined in the policy. As a result, countries can receive timely payouts when these triggers are met, ensuring that financial resources are available quickly without the need for lengthy loss assessments or bureaucratic delays. Since its establishment, ARC has paid out over $65 million to member countries, helping them manage disasters more effectively and reducing the reliance on external aid post-disaster (African Risk Capacity, 2023). The effectiveness of

The headquarters of the New Development Bank (NDB), also known as the BRICS bank, in east China's Shanghai. (Photo Credits: Xinhua/Fang Zhe)

ARC's approach is demonstrated by its ability to mitigate the high economic costs associated with natural disasters. For instance, during the 2019 drought in Southern Africa, ARC provided swift payouts to countries like Zimbabwe and Mozambique, enabling them to implement rapid response measures and support affected communities. Such interventions are crucial in a continent where climate change is expected to exacerbate the frequency and intensity of natural disasters. Through financial products that promote proactive disaster management, ARC enhances the resilience of African nations. It empowers them to take control of their climate adaptation strategies and reduces the socio-economic disruptions caused by climate-related hazards. According to ARC, the insured countries have reported a significant reduction in the economic and social impacts of disasters, highlighting the importance of such mechanisms in safeguarding the future of millions of Africans (African Risk Capacity, 2023).

Concept of International Public Goods (IPGs) in Climate Financing

The concept of International Public Goods (IPGs) plays an important role in understanding climate financing, particularly within the context of BRICS countries Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa. IPGs are benefits that are non-excludable and non-rivalrous, meaning their use by one country does not reduce their availability to others, and no country can be excluded from benefiting from them. In the context of climate change, IPGs include stable climate systems, clean air, and biodiversity. The BRICS countries, due to their significant economic and environmental footprints, are key in providing and maintaining these public goods. Their collective actions in climate financing are essential for global sustainability and the mitigation of climate impacts (Kaul et al., 1999). China, among the largest emitter of greenhouse gases among the BRICS, has been heavily investing in renewable energy both domestically and internationally. Through initiatives like the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), China is financing renewable energy projects in several developing countries, contributing to the global IPG of reduced greenhouse gas emissions. This international investment is crucial for global climate stability and highlights China's role in providing global public goods through substantial climate financing. The BRI's focus on sustainable infrastructure development helps in mitigating climate change on a global scale (Zhang et al., 2018). India's contribution to IPGs in the context of climate financing is exemplified by its leadership in the International Solar Alliance (ISA). This initiative aims to

Despite facing domestic challenges, Brazil's initiatives to protect the Amazon have significant implications for global climate stability and underscore the importance of international support in financing such public goods

promote solar energy adoption worldwide, particularly in tropical countries with high solar insolation but limited financial resources. By facilitating technology transfer, capacity building, and financial cooperation, India supports the global transition to renewable energy, thereby contributing to the IPG of a stable climate. The ISA's goal of mobilizing $1 trillion in solar investments by 2030 underscores India's commitment to fostering international cooperation in climate financing (International Solar Alliance, 2021).

Brazil's efforts in climate financing are closely linked to the preservation of the Amazon rainforest, a critical global carbon sink. Through mechanisms like the Amazon Fund, Brazil secures international funding to combat deforestation and promote sustainable development. These efforts are vital for maintaining biodiversity and regulating global climate patterns, both of which are key IPGs. Despite facing domestic challenges, Brazil's initiatives to protect the Amazon have significant implications for global climate stability and underscore the importance of international support in financing such public goods (Amazon Fund, 2020). South Africa and Russia also play significant roles in climate financing, each contributing to the provision of IPGs in different ways. South Africa, through its Renewable Energy Independent Power Producer Procurement Programme (REIPPPP), has successfully attracted private sector investments to expand its renewable energy capacity, which helps reduce global greenhouse gas emissions. Meanwhile, Russia focuses on energy efficiency and renewable energy projects to modernize its energy sector and lower its carbon footprint. Both countries' efforts in enhancing their renewable energy infrastructure contribute to the global effort of mitigating climate change, thus providing crucial IPGs (New Development Bank, 2020; Russian Ministry of Economic Development, 2021).

Collaboration Mechanisms for Climate Financing between BRICS and Africa

Collaboration mechanisms for climate financing between BRICS nations and Africa are becoming increasingly vital as the continent seeks to address the severe impacts of climate change. The New Development Bank (NDB), established by BRICS, is at the forefront of this cooperation. Since its inception, the NDB has focused on financing infrastructure and sustainable development projects that promote low-carbon economies. By 2023, the NDB had allocated over $5 billion for projects across Africa, including significant investments in renewable energy and sustainable water management. This financial support is crucial for African countries to develop the necessary infrastructure to adapt to and mitigate the impacts of climate change. For instance, in South Africa, the NDB's funding has facilitated the construction of solar and wind power projects, contributing to the country's goal of generating 17.8 GW of renewable energy by 2030 (New Development Bank, 2023). BRICS nations have facilitated knowledge sharing and capacity building through various platforms and initiatives. The BRICS-Africa Outreach initiative, launched in recent years, aims to enhance cooperation in areas such as technology transfer, research and development, and climate resilience. This initiative supports African countries in building the technical expertise needed to implement effective climate strategies. According to recent reports, these collaborative efforts have led to the implementation of over 20 joint projects focused on climate adaptation and mitigation across the continent. For example, joint research initiatives between South Africa and Brazil have resulted in innovative approaches to sustainable agriculture, which are crucial for food security in the face of changing climate conditions. These collaborative mechanisms underscore the commitment of BRICS nations to support Africa in its climate action efforts, providing both financial and technical assistance to drive sustainable development (BRICS, 2023).

One key trend is the diversification of financing sources, with a shift towards innovative funding mechanisms such as green bonds and climate-focused investment funds. This trend underscores a growing recognition of the importance of leveraging private sector resources alongside traditional sources of climate finance. Moreover, there has been a notable increase in South-South cooperation, with BRICS countries playing an important role in providing financial and technical assistance to African nations for climate adaptation and mitigation projects (Jones & Patel, 2022). The lack of capacity and institutional frameworks in many African countries poses a significant hurdle to the effective implementation of climate financing initiatives. Despite the availability of funds, the limited technical expertise and administrative capacity within local governments often result in delays in project implementation. Inadequate coordination between relevant stakeholders further increases these challenges, leading to inefficiencies in resource allocation and utilization. Without the necessary capacity-building efforts and institutional reforms, African countries may struggle to fully harness the potential of climate finance to address pressing environmental challenges (Brown & Wang, 2021). Moreover, the issue of governance and transparency presents a critical barrier to the optimal utilization of climate funds in Africa. Instances of mismanagement and corruption undermine public trust and confidence in the allocation of resources, hindering progress towards climate resilience. Strengthening governance structures and promoting transparency are essential to ensure that climate finance is allocated effectively and reaches the communities most in need. By enhancing accountability mechanisms and fostering greater transparency in decision-making processes, African countries can enhance their resilience to climate change and achieve sustainable development goals (Nguyen et al., 2020).

Climate Financing Challenges and Opportunities for the Horn of Africa

Climate financing presents both challenges and opportunities for the Horn of Africa, a region highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. With an estimated 80 per cent of the population dependent on agriculture and natural resources for their livelihoods, the Horn of Africa faces significant climate-related risks, including droughts, floods, and desertification (World Bank, 2023). Despite these challenges, there are opportunities for leveraging climate finance to build resilience and promote sustainable development in the region. However, several key obstacles must be addressed to maximize the effectiveness of climate financing initiatives. One major challenge is the limited access to climate finance resources in the Horn of Africa. Despite the urgent need for investment in climate adaptation and mitigation measures, the region receives only a small fraction of global climate finance flows. According to the Climate Policy Initiative, in 2020, Sub-Saharan Africa received just 3 per cent of global climate finance, with the Horn of Africa receiving an even smaller

Some of the BRICS members in a discussion on how to be the catalyst for a new global alliance to power solutions to the world's climate crisis leading global investors in renewable energy (Photo Credits: Dhesigen Naidoo/ISS Pretoria)

share (Climate Policy Initiative, 2020). This disparity highlights the need for greater international support and investment in climate resilience projects in the region to address the disproportionate impacts of climate change on vulnerable communities.

This fact notwithstanding, the effectiveness of climate financing in the Horn of Africa is hindered by challenges related to governance and institutional capacity. Weak governance structures and limited institutional capacity undermine the efficient allocation and utilization of climate funds, leading to delays in project implementation and reduced impact. According to the World Bank, corruption and bureaucratic inefficiencies continue to impede development progress in many countries in the region, hampering efforts to address climate change (World Bank, 2023). Strengthening governance mechanisms and building institutional capacity are essential for ensuring transparent and accountable use of climate finance resources in the Horn of Africa. The lack of coordination and coherence among stakeholders involved in climate financing initiatives in the Horn of Africa. Fragmentation and duplication of efforts often result in inefficiencies and missed opportunities for synergies between projects. According to the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, improving coordination among donors, governments, civil society, and the private sector is crucial for enhancing the effectiveness of climate finance interventions in the region (United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, 2022). Through fostering greater collaboration and coordination, stakeholders can maximize the impact of climate finance resources and address the interconnected challenges of climate change and sustainable development. Regardless of these challenges, there are opportunities to unlock the transformative potential of climate finance in the Horn of Africa. Investing in climate-resilient infrastructure, such as water management systems and renewable energy projects, can help build adaptive capacity and reduce vulnerability to climate-related risks. Promoting nature-based solutions, such as sustainable land management and ecosystem restoration, can contribute to climate mitigation efforts while providing co-benefits for biodiversity conservation and livelihood enhancement (United Nations Development Programme, 2021).

Contribution to Sustainable Development and International Collaboration

Climate financing within the BRICS framework holds key for contributing to sustainable development and fostering international collaboration, particularly in the African context. BRICS nations have emerged as key players in global climate finance initiatives, leveraging their economic strength and commitment to address climate change challenges. According to recent data, BRICS countries have increased their climate finance contributions, with a focus on supporting developing countries, including those in Africa, to transition to low-carbon and climate-resilient development pathways (Smith et al., 2023). In the African context, BRICS climate financing initiatives play a key role in addressing the continent's pressing climate challenges while promoting sustainable development goals. African countries, disproportionately affected by the impacts of climate change, require substantial financial support to enhance their resilience and adapt to changing environmental conditions. BRICS nations have stepped up their efforts to provide climate finance to African countries through various channels, including bilateral cooperation, multilateral institutions, and private sector investments. These investments not only support climate adaptation and mitigation projects but also contribute to poverty alleviation, job creation, and inclusive growth, aligning with the broader sustainable development agenda (Jones & Patel, 2022).

BRICS climate financing initiatives facilitate international collaboration and knowledge sharing on climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies. Through platforms such as the BRICS Climate and Sustainable Development Bank, BRICS countries exchange best practices, technologies, and expertise to support African nations in addressing climate-related challenges (Brown & Wang, 2021). This collaboration strengthens South-South cooperation and enhances the capacity of African countries to develop and implement effective climate policies and projects. Through fostering mutual learning and partnership, BRICS climate financing initiatives contribute to building a more resilient and sustainable future for Africa and the global community. However, despite the positive contributions of BRICS climate financing, challenges remain in ensuring the effective implementation and impact of these initiatives in the African context. One key challenge is the need to enhance coordination and coherence among BRICS countries and African governments in prioritizing climate finance investments and aligning them with national development priorities. Strengthening institutional mechanisms and improving communication channels can help overcome barriers to coordination and ensure that climate finance resources are efficiently allocated and utilized for maximum impact (Nguyen et al., 2020).

Conclusion and Recommendation

The synergy between BRICS and African nations holds the potential to address climate challenges effectively. With coordinated efforts and a focus on long-term sustainability, these partnerships can pave the way for a more resilient and prosperous Horn of Africa. The region frequently plagued by droughts, floods, and other climate-related disasters, stands to benefit significantly from increased financial flows and technological support. BRICS nations, with their growing economic influence and diverse experiences in managing climate issues, can provide much-needed assistance through investment, knowledge sharing, and capacity building. Key to the success of these partnerships is the alignment of interests and the establishment of mutual benefits. African nations need substantial funding to develop infrastructure, improve agricultural practices, and implement renewable energy projects. Meanwhile, BRICS countries can gain by fostering new markets, securing raw materials, and enhancing their geopolitical influence. For these partnerships to be effective, it is essential to ensure transparency, accountability, and inclusivity in the allocation and utilization of funds. Involving local communities in decision-making processes will help tailor climate initiatives to the specific needs and contexts of the Horn of Africa. The prospects for the Horn of Africa through BRICS-Africa partnerships are promising but require sustained commitment and strategic planning. Through leveraging international public goods such as technology transfer and shared knowledge, these collaborations can significantly contribute to climate resilience and sustainable development in the region. It is thus paramount to observe the following recommendations:

- Strengthening the technical capacity of local communities and governments is essential for the effective implementation of climate strategies. BRICS nations should intensify efforts to transfer cutting-edge technologies and provide comprehensive training programs. These initiatives should focus on climate science, renewable energy technologies, and sustainable agricultural practices, equipping local stakeholders with the knowledge and tools to drive climate action. Successful climate interventions require the active involvement of local stakeholders.

- Engaging community leaders, civil society organizations, and the private sector in project planning and implementation ensures that initiatives are context-specific and address the unique needs of the region. Inclusive approaches not only enhance the effectiveness of interventions but also promote local ownership and sustainability, leading to long-term success.
- Establishing strong monitoring and evaluation systems is critical for tracking the progress and impact of climate projects. These frameworks should incorporate clear metrics and indicators to assess the effectiveness of interventions. Regular monitoring and feedback loops will enable continuous learning and adaptation, ensuring that projects remain responsive to evolving climate challenges and community needs.
- Climate change impacts do not respect national boundaries, making regional cooperation imperative. BRICS-Africa partnerships should facilitate greater collaboration among countries in the Horn of Africa, promoting the sharing of best practices, lessons learned, and successful models of climate resilience. Regional platforms and networks can be established to foster dialogue, exchange expertise, and coordinate joint actions, enhancing the overall effectiveness of climate financing efforts.

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From Digital Mobilization to Street Protests: A Comparative Analysis of Social Democracy in Burkina Faso, Kenya, and Sudan

By Faridah Mariah Muli

Abstract

Africa's demographic landscape is heavily youth-centric, with countries like Kenya, Burkina Faso, and Sudan serving as prominent examples where young populations play a critical role in shaping socio-political dynamics. In Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), youth unemployment is a significant challenge, exacerbated by United Nations projections indicating a median age of just 24 by 2050, and an annual growth of approximately six million in the 15-24 age group over the next decade. Many young people are currently trapped in low-income, low-productivity jobs, underscoring the urgent need for economic reform. This article begins with a comparative analysis of recent youth-led digital mobilizations in Burkina Faso, Kenya, and Sudan, focusing on how social media platforms such as X, TikTok, Instagram, WhatsApp, and Facebook have been instrumental in driving protests and advocating for change. In Kenya, protests against the controversial Finance Bill 2024, which proposes extensive tax amendments aimed at expanding the tax base and increasing revenue for the 2024-2025 budget, highlight the power of digital activism. These additional taxes, impacting both ordinary citizens and business costs, sparked widespread public outcry, leading to amendments in the Bill after significant youth-led mobilization. The analysis then delves into the specific details of each country, examining how the youth in these nations have used digital platforms to amplify their demands for economic equality, social justice, and political accountability. In Kenya, for instance, Generation Z and Millennials successfully pressured the government to suspend taxes such as a 16% value-added tax on bread and a 2.5% tax on motor vehicles. These movements reflect deep-rooted grievances, including the high cost of living, unemployment, corruption, and economic disenfranchisement, while also highlighting the transformative potential of youth activism in reshaping political landscapes across Africa. The article concludes by reflecting on the lessons learned, the future of youth activism, and its critical role in advancing evolving social democracy across the continent.

Introduction

The Constitution of Kenya guarantees the right to protest under Article 37, which affirms that everyone has the right to assemble, demonstrate, picket, and present petitions to public authorities in a peaceful and unarmed manner (Kenya Law Reports, 2011). This right is also reinforced by international instruments such as the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, both ratified by Kenya. Despite these protections, successive Kenyan governments have often criminalized protests, leading to frequent police responses with excessive force against demonstrators (The Conversation, 2023).

Young people, the largest demographic group in Africa, significantly influence socio-economic and political developments across the continent. According to the United Nations, approximately 16 million young Africans—around 13.4% of the 15-24-year-old labor force—are unemployed. Furthermore, over 40% of young Africans describe their living conditions as poor, and about 60% believe their governments are inadequately addressing youth needs. This widespread discontent has driven many young Africans to participate in protests aimed at reforming political systems they view as ineffective (Eze, Kevin, 2015).

In June 2024, Kenya experienced substantial public dissent in response to the Finance Bill 2024. This legislation, which proposed amendments to key tax statutes including the Income Tax Act, the Value Added Tax Act, and the Excise Duty Act, sought to broaden the tax base and enhance revenue for the forthcoming fiscal year (Oyuke & Ndung'u, 2023). Notable proposals included a 16% value-added tax on essential goods like bread and a 2.5% levy on motor vehicles. These measures were perceived by many as exacerbating the financial burden on ordinary citizens and businesses. Additional provisions included expanding definitions related to "digital content monetization" and "digital marketplace," introducing motor vehicle tax payable at the time of insurance issuance, and implementing advance pricing agreements to reform transfer pricing guidelines.

The decision by the Finance and National Planning Committee to seek public feedback on the bill in May 2024 was intended to demonstrate an inclusive approach to governance. However, the ensuing protests, predominantly led by Generation Z and Millennial Kenyans, revealed a profound disconnect between governmental economic policies and public sentiment. These protests utilized digital platforms—such as X, TikTok, WhatsApp, Instagram, and Facebook—to amplify grievances and mobilize support, reflecting a significant evolution in how Kenyan youths engage with and influence the political landscape.

The political unrest in Kenya also has broader implications for the geopolitical landscape and regional security. The protests underscore a growing trend of youth-led digital mobilization across Africa, challenging established power structures and demanding greater accountability. This trend may influence regional stability and international relations, as neighboring countries observe Kenya's response to economic grievances and political activism. Additionally, the government's handling of these protests could impact security dynamics, potentially leading to increased tensions or shifts in regional alliances. This

Gen Z protesters show the power of digital activism and togetherness, driving change from screens and keyboards to the streets of Nairobi's Central Business District (Photo Credits; LUIS TATO/AFP via Getty Images)

> The protests, which began on June 18, 2024, saw extensive use of social media platforms for organizing and voicing concerns. The demonstrations, termed #OccupyParliament on X, involved thousands of participants nationwide and led to confrontations with law enforcement

article explores how youths not only in Kenya but also in Sudan and Burkina Faso are reshaping the nation's political landscape through digital advocacy, with a focus on economic equality, social justice, and governmental accountability, while also considering the broader geopolitical and security implications of their activism.

The Role of Social Media in Youth Lead Protests

Social media platforms such as Twitter now (X) and TikTok have fundamentally reshaped youth activism by amplifying their voices and streamlining protest organization. These platforms offer accessible tools for young people to broadcast their views globally, influencing public discourse and policy agendas, as noted by (Boyd and Hargittai , 2010). Twitter now known as X use of hashtags and retweets facilitates rapid information dissemination, enhancing the visibility and impact of youth movements. TikTok, known for its short video format, plays a crucial role in organizing protests by enabling swift mobilization and coordination. (Castells, 2015) underscores how social media foster horizontal communication and networked organization, essential for spontaneous mobilization efforts. Platforms like TikTok are pivotal for sharing protest strategies, mobilizing support, and documenting events in real-time, engaging young people who may not participate through traditional means and directly influencing public opinion (Bennett et al., 2014).

Young people harness the internet and social media for mobilization and organizational purposes. Prominent youth-led groups such as Senegal's Y'en a Marre (Fed Up), Burkina Faso's Le Balai Citoyen (The Citizen's Broom), South Africa's #FeesMustFall movement, and Sudan's Forces of Freedom and Change emerged as influential movements driving demonstrations. Leaders like Fou Malade and Aliou Sane from Y'en a Marre, as well as Robert "Bobi Wine" Kyagulanyi Ssentamu from Uganda—a musician, activist, and politician—become inspirational figures during protests. These young leaders have spearheaded street protests, marches, and rallies that inspire unity and collective action among youth in Africa. (Honwana, Alcinda , 2015)

Social media platforms offer youth a powerful outlet to express their viewpoints to a worldwide audience instantly. This amplification of voices facilitates swift dissemination of information and garners support for various social and political causes. For example, platforms like Twitter have played a critical role in spreading messages, coordinating demonstrations, and mobilizing participants during movements such as #BlackLivesMatter and climate change protests (Castells, 2015). The global reach of platforms such as X and TikTok enables youth movements to cultivate international solidarity and garner support. Activists utilize these platforms to exchange experiences, strategies, and messages across borders, fostering a sense of global unity and reinforcing their advocacy efforts on a larger scale (Bimber et al., 2012).

Despite its advantages, social media activism encounters challenges like misinformation, surveillance, and platform censorship, which can undermine the effectiveness of protests and youth movements (Tufekci, 2017). These platforms play a pivotal role in amplifying youth demands and coordinating protests by facilitating rapid communication, fostering global solidarity, and promoting decentralized activism. These platforms have significantly reshaped the landscape of social and political activism, empowering young people to actively participate in civic discourse and advocate for meaningful social change.

Kenya Digital Activism against the Finance Bill 2024

On Wednesday, June 26, 2024, Kenyan President William Ruto reversed his endorsement of the contentious Finance Bill 2024, which proposed new taxes aimed at addressing the country's debt burden. This decision followed widespread protests across Nairobi, where demonstrators breached Parliament, leading to over 20 reported fatalities. The bill sought to impose additional taxes on essential goods like bread, cooking oil, sanitary pads, diapers, electronic devices, vehicle ownership, specialized medical facilities, and imported goods, which would have led to significant price hikes.

The protests, which began on June 18, 2024, saw extensive use of social media platforms for organizing and voicing concerns. The demonstrations, termed #OccupyParliament on X, involved thousands of participants nationwide and led to confrontations with law enforcement. The government's initial tax proposals, aimed at raising 346.7 billion shillings ($2.7 billion) to support the budget and reduce borrowing, faced backlash for potentially exacerbating economic hardship among the poor and middle class. This raised broader questions about the equity of fiscal policy and economic management (Channels Television, 2024; Nation, 2024). On June 25, 2024, the protests reached a critical point with a large youth-led demonstration in Nairobi and other cities, highlighting frustrations over the rising cost of living. This marked a new phase in Kenya's political landscape, where a generation previously criticized for disengagement demonstrated a vigorous opposition to perceived governmental failings. Despite legislators voting to pass the bill, the protests led to significant disruptions, including breaches of the Parliament building and a forced evacuation of lawmakers (Aljazeera, 2024).

Geopolitical Context and Security Implications

The Finance Bill protests illustrate a significant shift in Kenya's political and social dynamics. This unrest, driven by economic grievances, reflects broader regional and global trends where economic policies and governance issues increasingly intersect with security concerns. The protests underscore the role of digital activism in influencing national politics and the potential for such movements to impact regional stability (The Indian Express, 2024).

A significant development in the aftermath of the protests was the announcement of the resignation of Inspector General of Police Japhet Koome. President Ruto's decision to make changes in the National Police Service was widely interpreted as a response to the intense public pressure resulting from the protests. With over 43 fatalities reported, the resignation of Koome signifies the government's attempt to address criticism regarding the handling of the demonstrations and the broader implications for national security. This change could impact the effectiveness and public perception of Kenya's security institutions, potentially influencing future responses to public dissent and shaping the broader security landscape (Deccan Herald, 2024).

Digital Activism's Role and Impact

Digital activism played a crucial role in these protests, demonstrating how online platforms can mobilize substantial physical action. Young Kenyans leveraged digital tools to organize and amplify their message, using AI-generated content and social media strategies to educate and engage a broad audience. Hashtags like #OccupyParliament and #RejectFinanceBill2024 trended, while crowdfunding and digital platforms enabled logistical support for the protests (The Indian Express, 2024; Deccan Herald, 2024).

Drawbacks and Challenges

Despite its effectiveness, digital activism faced challenges such as government censorship and internet slowdowns. These issues highlight the vulnerabilities of digital platforms in activism but also underscore the transformative potential of online mobilization in shaping political discourse and policy (Deccan Herald, 2024). One can note that the 2024 Finance Bill protests not only reflect a new era of digital activism in Kenya but also signal important shifts in the interplay between economic policies, public dissent, and national security. This holistic perspective underscores the growing influence of digital platforms in political engagement and the complex dynamics of governance and security in the region.

The 2019 Sudan Uprising Revolution

In April 2019, Sudan's President Omar al-Bashir was removed from power in a coup d'etat following prolonged pressure from the country's largest social movement. In August 2018, Sudan's long-standing leader, Omar al-Bashir, declared his intention to seek a third term, sparking division within the ruling coalition over supporting a constitutional amendment. By December 2018, widespread protests erupted in multiple cities due to escalating food prices. On January 1, 2019, hundreds of civic and political groups united to establish the Forces of Freedom and Change (FFC), a committee that organized a nonviolent resistance movement. This movement ultimately led to the president's removal from office. (Freedom House, 2019)

The unprecedented scope and scale of this movement were fueled by several factors. It began in January 2019, despite years of economic discontent, due to specific events such as Omar al-Bashir's unconstitutional bid for a third term and the subsequent rift within the ruling coalition. The government's aggressive response,

President Omar Hassan al-Bashir of Sudan in 2009 was indicted by the International Criminal Court (ICC) on charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity in Darfur (Photo Credits; Lynsey Addario /The New York Times)

including violent crackdowns on protests and internet shutdowns, further inflamed public anger and bolstered the movement. Critical to its development was the longstanding preparation by non-political entities like the Sudanese Professionals' Association (SPA) and youth-led neighborhood resistance committees (NRCs). Since 2013, these organizations had been refining their organizing capabilities. Originally spurred by violent protests over government subsidy cuts, they evolved by training activists in strategy, movement building, and nonviolent resistance. The NRCs, in particular, developed leadership skills and practiced community organizing, effectively replacing dysfunctional government services in many areas. (Alexander Durie, 2019)

Following al-Bashir's announcement in August, the SPA and NRCs leveraged their expertise in coalition building, mutual support, and innovative tactics. They drew from global movements inspired by figures like Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr., and strategies from the Occupy movements and Arab Spring. These efforts facilitated the movement's growth and success in challenging al-Bashir's regime. (TDB, 2020) Amid stringent control over traditional media by the regime, effective communication within the resistance became crucial, particularly given the widespread geographical reach of the protests. Globally, social media has increasingly empowered ordinary citizens to hold those in power accountable. "It forced the government and the rest of the world to pay attention to us," remarked Hiba Siddig Diab, a young protester in Khartoum. Despite Sudan's economic challenges, internet connectivity rates are relatively high, exceeding 30% of the population in both Africa and the Arab world. This enabled a significant portion of Sudanese citizens to stay informed and disseminate information among friends, neighbors, and family members who lacked internet access. (Emma Graham-Harrison, 2019)

During the nine-month uprising, a United Nations Development Program study highlighted that Twitter alone saw approximately 400,000 shares of media files, including photos, videos, infographics, caricatures, and satirical images depicting the unfolding situation. For instance, after significant events involving security forces, solidarity tweets often included descriptive hashtags, while calls for participation in rallies utilized specific hashtags to mobilize support. These posts gained international attention and were widely circulated among networks of activists. (Ismail Kushkush, 2019) The live-streaming of the June 3 massacre further galvanized Sudanese and international opinion against the Transitional Military Council (TMC). Although the subsequent internet shutdown posed a setback, it reinforced to activists that the revolution could continue without full internet access. Samahir Elmubarak of the SPA noted the shift to traditional mobilization techniques like door-to-door outreach and rallies, culminating in Sudan's largest-ever rally on June 30, organized without social media.

Social media also played a pivotal role in connecting the resistance with the Sudanese diaspora community, enabling them to spread news, mobilize support, raise funds, and exert pressure on foreign governments. Munzoul Assal, director of the Peace Research Institute at the University of Khartoum, emphasized the diaspora's significant influence in Bashir's downfall through social media activism, lobbying efforts, and demonstrations worldwide. (Laurie Penny, 2011) While acknowledging social media's substantial impact in Sudan's uprising, it is emphasized that the revolution's driving force ultimately stemmed from people rather than technology, as demonstrated during periods of internet blackout. The success achieved in Sudan, where demonstrations compelled the military to establish a coalition government with protest leaders and sustained a robust protest movement advocating for civilian governance, stands as a rare accomplishment among youth protest movements in Africa. This milestone in influencing post-protest politics and development underscores the importance of understanding the dynamics that contributed to Sudan's achievement in this regard. (Mo Ibrahim Foundation, 2019)

A crucial lesson learned was the protest movement's resilience in facing persecution while steadfastly pursuing the revolution's objectives. In many African contexts, the military is typically deployed to maintain peace but often aligns with political elites or internal army factions. Instances of forcefully clearing streets, sometimes using live ammunition, are common, as witnessed multiple times in Sudan, notably during the severe crackdown on June 3, 2019, when the Rapid Support Forces killed numerous protesters. Despite this, the people's collective voice proved more potent. Demonstrators remained determined to reform the political system, enduring military brutality and gaining international support through continuous protests. (Laurie Penny, 2011)

Their persistence compelled the military to accede to demands for a civilian government, leading to the establishment of Sudan's Sovereignty Council. This success underscores the influence held by youth movements. Sustaining momentum and achieving revolutionary goals amid severe police and military repression necessitates clear ideology, strategic planning, and effective leadership. It's also crucial to innovate in mobilization and information dissemination during protests, not solely relying on the internet, which governments often disconnect during crises, a common practice across many African nations. The protests in Sudan were effectively promoted through methods like graffiti and megaphones even without internet access. This highlights the importance for youth movements to develop diverse communication strategies that are not exclusively reliant on electronic or social media platforms, which governments frequently disrupt in times of unrest.

Burkina Faso Youth Revolution

Burkina Faso is among the poorest countries in Africa, with an urbanization rate of just 31.88% as of 2022. Out of its total population of 18.9 million, only 2.15 million are active internet users. More than three-quarters of these users access the internet via smartphones, while only 20% have access to computer devices. Despite even lower connectivity rates between 2013 and 2015, hashtags such as #Burkina and #Lwili still managed to create substantial connections. Burkina Faso exemplifies how a rich history of socio-political mobilization, renewed interest in a slain former revolutionary leader, and the digital connectivity of the social media era converged to achieve a successful revolution. (ROAPE, 2017)

On October 30-31, 2014, a popular uprising in Burkina Faso ousted President Blaise Compaoré from power. This insurrection, referred to at the time as "a revolution," marked a significant democratic breakthrough in a country previously characterized by a semi-authoritarian regime or a façade democracy. After 27 years in office, Compaoré decided to amend the Constitution to extend his term indefinitely, effectively aiming for a lifetime presidency. This autocratic move sparked a massive mobilization of civil society organizations, labor unions, opposition parties, and ordinary citizens, who collectively declared, "enough is enough." Following Compaoré's fall, a one-year political transition was established to prepare for democratic elections. Retired diplomat Michel Kafando was appointed as the Transitional President, and he selected Lieutenant Colonel Isaac Yacouba Zida, the second-in-command of the infamous Régiment de Sécurité Présidentielle (RSP), as Prime Minister. (Ouédraogo dit Damiss, 2016)

Hundreds of thousands of predominantly young Burkinabé participated in mass protests in Ouagadougou and other cities. Nearly a year later, in September 2015, another surge of popular mobilization saw massive acts of civil disobedience defending the new democracy against an attempted military coup. Young Burkinabé activists leading the protests coined the term "Revolution 2.0" for two reasons. (Ouédraogo dit Damiss, 2016) First, it highlighted the digital connectivity of protesters, journalists, and opposition politicians who live-tweeted the events. Second, it symbolized a revival, drawing inspiration from a renewed interest in Thomas Sankara, Burkina Faso's former president from 1983 until his assassination in 1987. Sankara, often referred to as the "African Che Guevara," remained an enduring symbol of radical aspirations. His legacy was revitalized with the massive mobilization of Burkina Faso's youth from 2013 onwards.

Popular movements such as Le Balai Citoyen (the 'Citizen's Broom'), established by musician-activists Serge Bambara (the rapper 'Smockey') and Sams'K Le Jah (a reggae artist), rallied support through concerts, mass gatherings, and social media. During the chaotic days of street clashes at the Parliament building, Place de la Revolution, and other locations in 2014, those with smartphones—although a minority among the hundreds of thousands of protesters—tweeted events and information, which became a crucial part of a highly adaptable strategy for moving street blockades. Facebook, the most popular social media platform in the country, was extensively used for organizing. While the Compaoré regime shut down SMS services (but not the internet), cellphones—even those not internet-enabled—played an important role in transmitting information from another, older medium: radio. Independent radio stations played popular rap and reggae songs celebrating Sankara's life and ideas, and during the insurrection, they broadcast strategic instructions and information. (Saidou, A. K. 2018)

Burkina Faso's 2014 uprising was not a 'Facebook revolution,' yet social media played a crucial role in linking activists from popular movements, opposition

Burkina Faso President, Ibrahim Traore, commissions the acquisition of more powerful missiles and other military equipment from Russsia, July 12, 2024 (Photo Credit: Burkina Faso's Presidency/SPUTNIK Africa)

The young generations in Sudan, Burkina Faso, and Kenya have demonstrated an impressive ability to harness the influence of digital platforms for their endeavors towards political transformation and societal fairness

politicians, trade union leaders, and journalists. They shared updates on street events, with Twitter images particularly important in connecting 'Revolution 2.0' with the Burkinabé diaspora in neighboring West African countries, elsewhere on the continent, and in the 'Global North.' These images also reached influential international media. The President's attempt to amend the Constitution to create a 'presidency for life' became increasingly isolated both locally and internationally. Digital social media contributed to the success of the 2014 uprising in toppling the unpopular regime. Although opposition leaders and human rights groups had been condemning the Compaoré regime for years, earlier waves of intense protests in the late 1990s and again in 2011 were brutally suppressed and stood no chance of success. (Peterson, B. J. 2021)

Drawing parallels to the North African uprisings that toppled long-standing leaders in the Arab world, observers have dubbed the Burkinabé insurrection an 'African Spring.' The hashtag #AfricanSpring gained traction, although it was used less frequently than #Lwili, named after the traditional fabrics worn in Burkina Faso. These local woven garments were also fervently promoted by Thomas Sankara during his presidency in the 1980s as part of his push for economic self-reliance. Sankara vocally opposed the repayment of African debts to powerful Western leaders and initiated child immunization campaigns and a large-scale effort to combat desertification. Unusually progressive for his time, Sankara elevated women to high positions and banned female circumcision, famously stating that the revolution could not succeed without women's emancipation. The charismatic young leader, known for his red beret, integrity, soccer skills, and guitar playing, challenged entrenched interests both locally and internationally, which ultimately led to his assassination and the coup led by his former associate Blaise Compaoré. (Saidou, A. K. 2018)

Today, Sankara's legacy and ideals resonate strongly with young Africans in Burkina Faso and beyond. From Burkina Faso, Senegal, and The Gambia in the west to South Africa, Namibia, Kenya in the East and Zimbabwe in the south, a social media-savvy generation has taken to the streets with their posts, tweets, cellphone videos, blogs, and rap music. They express deep anger towards postcolonial conditions, austerity measures, unaddressed global racism, and corrupt, authoritarian postcolonial elites. They share a fervent desire for democracy and social justice. In the 21st century, young Africans with their smartphones are arguably at the forefront of an alternative globalization from the south. (Peterson, B. J. 2021)

Lessons and Conclusion

The young generations in Sudan, Burkina Faso, and Kenya have demonstrated an impressive ability to harness the influence of digital platforms for their endeavors towards political transformation and societal fairness. In Sudan, social media channels such as Twitter and Facebook played a critical role in mobilizing large-scale protests that eventually led to the removal of longstanding President Omar al-Bashir. These platforms allowed activists to disseminate real-time updates, coordinate actions, and garner international solidarity, despite governmental efforts to suppress communication through internet shutdowns.

Similarly, in Burkina Faso, movements like Le Balai Citoyen utilized social media extensively to orchestrate demonstrations against President Blaise Compaoré's attempts to extend his tenure. The digital connectivity facilitated by platforms like Facebook and Twitter connected activists, propagated messages of opposition, and amplified their voices globally. This played a pivotal role in the successful removal of Compaoré and the subsequent advocacy for democratic reforms.

In Kenya, the digital advocacy against the Finance Bill has set a new precedent for how digital platforms can be harnessed to effect social and political change. The lessons learned from this movement can serve as a

> ... the integration of social media into youth-led movements underscores its significance as a contemporary tool for revolutionary change, capable of overcoming traditional barriers and challenging entrenched power structures

blueprint for future activism, demonstrating the power of digital tools in mobilizing support, bridging gaps, and advocating for shared concerns.

It is imperative for governments to initiate open dialogues and foster inclusivity by actively involving youth-led movements and civil society organizations in policymaking processes. Ensuring internet freedom and avoiding arbitrary shutdowns is essential to uphold communication and freedom of expression, critical for effective civic engagement. Empowering young people economically and politically through job creation, skills training, and entrepreneurship initiatives will harness the demographic dividend and bolster national development efforts.

Governments should enhance transparency, accountability, and the rule of law in governance practices. Governments must combat corruption, avoid high taxations, ensure equitable resource allocation, and provide transparent mechanisms for public accountability. Investing in education that promotes critical thinking, digital literacy, and civic education will empower young people to actively participate in democratic processes and contribute meaningfully to societal progress.

In conclusion, the integration of social media into youth-led movements underscores its significance as a contemporary tool for revolutionary change, capable of overcoming traditional barriers and challenging entrenched power structures.

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The Impact of Climate Financing to the Global South from the Global North; a Case Study of Kenya

By Rabecca Kavithe Ndeto

Abstract

Collaboration by the Global North and the Global South through climate financing offers solutions to issues related to climate change. Climate change is a global issue and therefore it affects the Global North and the Global South equally. However, the Global North remains advanced economically and technologically hence the ability to deal with climate change effectively. On the other hand, the Global South faces different challenges such as political, economic, technological and social. Climate financing to the Global South from the Global North elevates the South from the adversity of experiencing the aforementioned challenges. Developed states offer developing countries with capacity building, technology transfer and economic empowerment through climate financing. The Global North, through the United Nations commitment in saving the earth, takes responsibility in enabling the developing countries to realize development while considering sustainability. Climate financing advocates for implementation of projects that are aligned and adhere to sustainability. As well, the Global North targets on the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SGD's) such as SDG 13 (Climate Action) and SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy). Climate financing creates opportunities such as raising living standards, economic development and job creation specifically through implementation of various projects related to climate change. Additionally, climate financing has enabled the Global South to experience reduction of greenhouse gas emission. Health complications associated with climate change also reduce due to climate action. Climate financing from the Global North offers numerous advantages to the Global South but this fact does not limit scholars from highlighting some of the challenges and issues associated with climate financing.

Climate Financing: Background

Climate finance is a multifaceted ideology that incorporates the number of resources and activities that aims to mitigate and adapt to the different impact of climate change across the globe. It is a critical concept that was designed to address the global issue of climate change. Climate financing focuses on reducing or rather eliminating emissions and reducing the greenhouse gases as a way of reducing the vulnerability associated with the negative climate change impacts towards human and ecological systems. Across the world Climate financing is vital for addressing climate change due to the high-scale investment required for transitioning from high-carbon economy into low-carbon world economy to help countries develop resilience and adapt to the various impacts of climate change.

Across the globe, climate financing is obtained from different sources such as private and public institutions, national or international government and from bilateral or multilateral agencies. Financing is done in form of grants, green economy bonds, donations, equities, guarantees, debt swaps and concessional loans. According to Brown et al. (2010) climate financing program and initiatives are designed in a way that they can be used for various climate change activities like climate mitigation, resilience-development and adaptation. The Global South is a region that is composed of many developing countries. This means that there is limited public budget that can be channeled towards climate mitigation and adaptation programs. Therefore, the effects of climate change are increasingly being felt by the different sectors of the economy thus increased impacts of climate change. Scoville-Simonds (2016) highlights that, some of the available climate financing available to the Global South from the Global North includes the Green Climate Fund (GCF), Adaptation Fund (AF) and the Global Environment Facility (GEF). Most of the developing nations can also access climate financing as loans from different financial

KenGen wind turbines and an electricity tower in Ngong Hills, Kajiado County. Kenya is lauded for achieving over fifty per cent electricity access rate (Photo Credit: The Standard)

institutions such as the World Bank, Inter-American Development Bank and the African Development Bank. The loans and funds are used to establish projects like renewable energy plants, forest conservation and other initiatives that aims at developing resilience toward climate change such as establishing infrastructures that can withstand natural calamities like floods and droughts.

Carbon trading and taxes is another form in which governments in the Global South can mobilize financial resources to mitigate and adapt to climate change. In this case, the governments are involved in carbon trading where the Greenhouse gas emissions are measured and quantified as carbon credits which are bought by other countries mostly from the Global North or private industries that wants to enhance their emission reduction efforts. Carbon taxes is a form of financing where tax is applied to discourage people from use of products that contain big carbon footprints. The revenue from the carbon taxes are used to invest in climate change mitigation and adaptation initiatives such as renewable energy.

Climate Financing in Global South

Countries in the Global South continues to experience several losses and damages linked with the global climate change. Most countries in the Global South are categorized as either developing or least developing countries thus the need to finance for climate change. Khan & Munira (2021) state that, climate financing is important in this region as it is associated with the overall economic development of the region. For many countries of the Global South, financial hardship is the order of the day. Financial handicaps include increased debt crisis which is considered to be a hindrance of the overall climate ambitions. Most of the developing countries like Kenya pay more debt servicing costs compared to what they spend on an annual basis on their national development goals. Moreover, the countries in the Global South are consumers and thus high costs of capital is required especially when it comes to investing in green economy technologies. This acts as a hindrance toward them being considered as attractive to clean energy investments by other developed countries. Therefore, there is need to analyze the scope of climate financing and its impact in mitigating climate change in the Global South.

Despite the increased momentum when it comes to climate financing across the globe, most of the developed nations from the Global South have failed to meet and provide their climate fund pledges. Most of the developed countries have significantly no attained the set commitment on their climate fund contribution in support toward the developing nations of the Global South. For instance, out of the USD 100 Billion commitment toward the support of climate actions, only USD 84 billion was mobilized by the developed countries in support for climate change initiatives in the developing countries (Ciplet et al., 2022: Cozier, 2019). Since the contribution is not enough it means that majority of climate finance is presented as loans and not in form of aids. Therefore, the mode of funding has exacerbated the economic strains of the developing nations in the Global South. The situation continues to worsen due to the increased interest rates thus most of the developing countries have plunged deeper into debt in their quest to address the several challenges associated with climate change.

Moreover, instead of allocating new financing resources, a huge part of the climate finance aid is redirected into providing towards a preexisting climate aid. With about half of the climate fund being directed towards developing countries and being presented as loans thus creating huge inequality in the global fight against climate change. For example, countries in the Global North like Austria and France prefer giving out climate finance as loans as their funding mechanism. Michaelowa & Namhata (2022) indicate that, it is approximated that about 90 per cent of France's climate finance is given out as loans. This is a similar situation that has been adopted by the multilateral institutions such as the World Bank. This funding structure has created some form of inequality where the developed nations have been seen to undermine the vital climate change discussions that is currently affecting the world.

Financing for Climate Change Adaptation in the Global South

The climate finance structure used across the world was developed by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The organization was established by different countries across the globe to handle and create initiatives that can help manage the issue of global warming in 1992 (Prys & Wojczewski, 2015). The organization is sustained under the Conference of Parties (COP) that is composed of 196 parties working on countering the issues of climate change across the globe (Krantz, 2021). Despite the establishment of the conference, the emission problem across the world continued to persist which led to the establishment of the Kyoto Protocol. The protocol is an established treaty that compels its parties to invest in efforts that aim at reducing the carbon emissions by setting up the required reduction targets. According to the Kyoto Protocol, most of the developed countries in the Global North are expected to come up and execute several initiatives as a way of attaining the set targets when it comes to reducing the emissions. However, the protocol noted that there were some financial discrepancies which made the vulnerable countries to be less endowed in matters climate change. Therefore, most developed countries were tasked with providing the necessary financial resources to help support the developing countries in the fight against climate change.

The climate finance structure includes the Green Climate Finance (GCF) which provides financial resources that aims at providing support toward climate change. The fund is provided to developing countries like Kenya to support climate resilient initiatives and projects with a particular attention aimed at supporting the needs of the community that are considered to be vulnerable to the negative impacts of climate change (Ha et al., 2015). The Adaptation Fund Network (AFN) is a climate financing tool designed to provide financial resources and guarantee positive climate change projects for the societies. It is referred to as a key player that provides public adaptation finance for most developing nations in the Global South. The Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) is statutory requirement that was developed in 2015 during the Paris Agreement that focuses on streamlining the different climate change policies for the different countries (Timilsina, 2021). NDC's provides a national framework on the budgets and allocations of fund towards climate mitigation and adaptation initiatives of the various countries. According to the agreements, all Member Countries to the Paris

> Across the globe, climate financing is obtained from different sources such as private and public institutions, national or international government and from bilateral or multilateral agencies

> Transaction cost is the most common type of operational cost during climate financing. The key divers of transaction costs are categorized as the lack of enough data and weak institutional structures for the countries involved in climate financing

Climate Agreement of 2015 must submit the NDC's as part of their commitment towards the climate agreement on global reduction of the Greenhouse emissions.

Challenges in Accessing Climate Financing

The global climate finance landscape can be described as complex and fragmented. The collection of climate funds is still nascent which has made it difficult to access different funding for climate change mitigation and adaptation initiatives especially for the developing nations in the Global South. The multilateral climate financing was established as a way of mobilizing both public and private financing to cater for the climate change action especially for the developing countries. However, most of the developing countries like Kenya, India and Pakistan have difficulties in accessing adequate funding to counter the negative impact of climate change. Most of the climate funding is available inform of loans and grants thus creating several challenges in accessing climate financing for the developing countries.

I. High transaction costs and small projects are considered to be the key barriers for countries in Global South when it comes to accessing climate financing. Transaction cost is the most common type of operational cost during climate financing. The key divers of transaction costs are categorized as the lack of enough data and weak institutional structures for the countries involved in climate financing. These factors have created several issues when it comes to climate financing in the Global South. Unfortunately, most of the developing countries lack a clear legal framework on analyzing the uncertainties such as high transaction costs for small projects thus poor execution and ineffective structures when it comes to adoption of effective climate mitigation and adaptation measures exposing the global south to severe climate change impacts.

II. Another challenge is that multilateral funds are mostly out of access for the developing nations in the Global South. This creates issues such as the proliferation of the climate finance funds. The OECD list of climate funds is designed in a complicated way which creates confusion for both the donors and recipient nations, increased competitions and wastage. This has made countries to borrow and access fund which can barely address their needs. Proliferation of funds has led to limited accessibility of climate fund thus an increased gap in climate financing between the Global North and the Global South.

Climate Financing in Kenya

Climate Financing is a vital aspect to Kenya's realization of the different climate policy goals that have been designed to meet the country's vision 2030 as a key to attaining the Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Agreement of 2015 and the African union Climate Agenda of 2063. The imperative impacts of climate change dictates that there is need to develop robust financial resources and mechanisms to support the initiatives and programmes geared towards fighting climate change in Kenya (Asikainen & Stadelmann, 2018). Following the 2015 Paris Agreement, developing countries like Kenya have been offered a great opportunity to obtain flexible funding outside the UNFCC framework which includes the bilateral and multilateral loans and grants, the green economy bonds and the climate change trust funds.

The climate finance policy for Kenya is considered as sophisticated and it is guided by the Kenya's climate Change Act of 2016 and the National Climate Finance Policy of 2018. To enhance the climate finance policy, Kenya has developed some key elements that aims at strengthening the relationship between the government and non-governmental organizations in strengthening the fight against climate change. However, there is a huge discrepancy between the amount of financing available and the mitigation and adaptation to climate change impacts in the country. According to the Climate change policy guidelines, the Kenyan Constitution highlights that each person living in Kenya must be guaranteed to a clean and a healthy environment as a fundamental human right in accordance to the bill of rights. This led to the development of the national climate change action plan (NCCAP) which established the National Climate Change Fund a funding mechanism for the major climate change actions and initiatives in Kenya.

Impact of Climate Financing in Kenya

Climate change is a current issue that faces the globe which requires the development of a collective action and solutions. This calls for the development of several techniques to effectively handle the climate change challenges. Climate financing is a climate action strategy that aims at developing effective climate adaptation and mitigation strategies in Kenya. It is known to accelerate several transformative climate actions using a flexible approach through country-partnerships to increase climate investment as a way of tackling climate change. Climate financing in Kenya is associated with several positive and negative impacts.

Positive Impact of Climate Financing

I. Achievement in Clean Energy Transition Across the Country.

Through increased climate financing, Kenya has been able to achieve an increased use of clean energy across the country. Initially, most people in rural parts of the country relied on use of firewood and charcoal as the main source of energy. This led to increased pressure on the forest resources and the ecosystem. Over-dependence on firewood and charcoal as the principle source of energy led to increased deforestation and thus increase in semi-arid and arid land area especially in the Global North-Eastern part of Kenya. Increased climate financing in Kenya has led massive transitions in the adaption of clean renewable energy across the country. According to a 2023 report by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), around 80 per cent of Kenyans living in urban areas have access to clean cooking energy and 30 per cent of the rural population transitioned to

The Green Climate Finance provides financial resources and support that aim at offering climate resilient initiatives at supporting the needs of the community that are considered to be vulnerable to the negative impacts of climate change (Photo Credit: ECF) use of clean renewable energy. This is associated with the increased funding in the sector which has accelerated the use of clean energy with zero or less carbon emissions. Kenya like most developing nations have recognized the need and potential associated with use of renewable energy to achieve their sustainability goals. Increased financing for solar, hydro, geothermal and wind energy has emerged as viable solutions to counter emissions. Climate financing in the country has helped in fostering increased collaborations, facilitating transition from non-renewable to renewable energy and driving an innovative financing mechanism that promotes reduction in carbon emissions.

II. Promoting economic development through addressing energy poverty.

Climate financing has been acknowledged to promote economic growth and development for most of the developing nation. It helps in addressing energy poverty in Kenya which is a key factor in fostering economic development. Adoption of clean energy is not just a climate change mitigation but also a driver of economic development. This means that by accelerating the use of clean energy especially in the rural areas, the initiatives are able to unlock the economic potential of the local people. Addressing energy poverty acts as a pathway for increased investment which is associated with increased innovation and job creation for the people.

Increased investment in renewal energy technologies plays a vital role in sustainable development of the country. Renewable energy contributes to sustainable development through reduced carbon emissions, improved clean energy security and increased access to clean renewable energy. By relying on clean energy technology like solar and wind energy, Kenya has been able to reduce the use of fossil fuels which amounts to high greenhouse gas emissions. This has also helped in supporting rural development through improved quality of life and increased productivity in the agricultural sector thus promoting economic growth and development of the country.

Climate financing for Kenya is a strategy that is considered to help mobilize resources required in increasing the country's resilience to climate change. This strategy is designed in a special way that it accelerates the access to the international climate finance funds, helps in mobilizing climate finance from the private sector, enhance domestic investment in climate mitigation and adaptation projects and ensure the adoption of a sustainable and coordinated financing toward climate change initiatives in the country. Therefore, climate financing is a strategic approach that helps in addressing energy issues which in line fosters economic growth especially among the developing countries.

Negative Impact of Climate Financing

Most of the developed counties in the Global North provide majority of their climate finance to the Global South in form of loans and minimal grants. According to a 2021 report by the OECD out of the total climate funds contributed by the developed countries about 70 per cent was issued as loans and only 30 per cent of the funding was disbursed as grants. The numbers highlight a long term-trend which has created inequality when it comes to climate funding. This has exposed the developing countries in the Global South to experience harsh impacts of climate change. Recently Kenya has experience massive floods and droughts which is associated with the increased global warming and lack of proper and enough resources channeled towards climate mitigation and adaptation initiatives in the country. The high interest rates have been associated with an increased cost of tackling climate change in the Global South.

The interest levy from the loans increases pressure on the climate change initiatives thus an increased vulnerability by the creditors which reduces the region's ability to implement a robust implementation of the various climate mitigation and adaptation programs in the Global South. This means that the region is exposed and thus adoption of poor climate resilience programs and economic shock thus lack of economic development. A report by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) indicate that the increased debt distress has created several inequalities across the world and thus most countries in the Global South have not been able to repay climate finance loans thus facing high debt levels and debt crisis.

Moreover, research studies suggest that most of the developing countries budget spending on the domestic and foreign debt services is ten times more than what they can spend on the climate adaptation and mitigation initiatives as a way of countering climate change impacts, thus they remain exposed toward the adverse effects of climate change such as floods and droughts and lack of food security. International organizations like the United Nations (UN) explains that the use of public debt and increased multilateral external borrowing to address the climate change disasters which leads to increased debt servicing and thus increased economic constrains which means reduced ability to invest in long and resilient climate change measures.

The long shadow of Multilateral Institutions climate Finance Loans is another negative impact of climate financing. Multilateral climate finance by several institutions such as banks is considered as a climate finance solution especially for climate-related development projects. However, multilateral financing for climate in the Global South inhibits economic development in the region despite the finance being offered at lower interest rates compared to the others.

Negative consequences associated with paralyzing the climate finance loans is another issue that is facing countries like Kenya. Global Environmental Facility (2023) posits out that most countries that are faced with the severe climate change impacts are known to have little to no resources but to give in and accept the climate finance loans. For instance, it is estimated that the total cost of the 2024 Kenya's flood and drought was around $ 40 billion. However, the limited access to climate grants forced the country to borrow more so as to tackle the floods thus accumulating more debt. This is a clear indication that most climate financing provided to the global South is in form of debts thus increased debt ceiling while the Global South needs grants and not loans. Therefore, the countries have a weakened domestic response ability

... it is estimated that the total cost of the 2024 Kenya's flood and drought was around $ 40 billion. However, the limited access to climate grants forced the country to borrow more so as to tackle the floods thus accumulating more debt.

towards climate change and thus continues to face the adverse effects of climate change.

Another issue is the lack of scrutiny towards the irresponsible borrowing and the lending in the climate finance mechanism. This leads to increased corruption and mismanagement of the funds as they are channeled to dead projects. Therefore, limited investment or capabilities in handling climate change resilience. Lack of debt scrutiny and irresponsible borrowing is associated with increased risks of accruing debts which negatively impacts economic development. This leads to unsustainable levels of climate debts.

Gaps and Barriers in Climate Financing

Climate finance gap is a global issue which has led to the emergence of losers and winners in the fight against climate change. Climate finance is defined as key to reducing global emissions as a way of reducing the vulnerability of climate change. However, the climate finance structure lacks an effective way to analyze and measure the flows of emissions and impact of climate change thus lack of a global taxonomy on the key investments required in the fight against climate change. The lack of data on climate change and required investment and resources have created several barriers and gaps in climate financing structure currently adopted in the world.

According to the OECD report 90 per cent of climate fund is geared toward climate mitigation measures. This means that only 10 per cent of the fund is channeled towards the adaptation and other combined measures to eradicate the effects of climate change. According to the UN report around 55 per cent of the funding is channeled to the energy sector and around 30 per cent of the funds is directed to the transport sector. 50 per cent of the climate finance fund is known to originate from the OECD nations located in the Global North and the funds are directed to the non-OECD nations in the Global South. Out of the cash around 50 per cent of the finance is directed to the Asian Countries while 3 per cent of the funds is directed towards Africa. This huge discrepancy indicates the major gap across the globe when it comes to climate financing. The available climate finance for Africa is very minimum when it comes to the implementation of the Africa's fight against climate change impact.

Another climate finance gaps and barriers are the fact that the adaptation initiatives for African nations are considered to be a blind spot in the issue of financing. This means that despite the continent being vulnerable to climate change the finance channeled towards adaptation is quite low thus limited flows when it comes to financing. Other factors that causes gaps in climate financing includes governance and policy issues in Global South, currency instability, lack of expertise and technical capacity, transparency and accountability issues. Moreover, the gaps and barriers in climate financing is also fueled by the limited attention towards climate adaptation measures due to the complexity of the initiatives and the difficulties in measuring the impacts of the measures especially among the marginalized populations in the Global South.

What does Global South need in terms of climate finance?

Most countries in the Global South aiming at attaining the set objectives of the Paris Climate Change Agreement are categorized as developing nations and need financial aid. Despite the $100 billion climate fund goal from the developed nations, climate financing is still an issue as the amount is considered to be a drop in the oceans. Recent report by the UNFCCC approximates that the Global South needs about USD 6 Trillion to enhance the fight and resilience against the climate change impacts that is a major challenge in the region (Ameli et al., 2021: UNFCC, 2024). The climate finance gap is a concern due to the significant shortfall noted in the finance flow from the developed nations to the developing countries which brings in a lot of complexities. Moreover, the available financing is offered in form of non-concessional loans which have increased the debt burdens to the recipient developing countries. This means that the Global South is faced with several challenges including achieving their economic development goals while at the same time addressing the key climate change adaptation and mitigation initiatives and their associated costs. Most people in the developing nations have no access to clean energy such as electricity has led to increased vulnerability to the climate change impacts.

The Rural Electrification and Renewable Energy Corporation (REREC), Kenya, has embarked on an ambitious mission to achieve universal electricity access by 2026 and ensuring clean, modern cooking solutions by installing electricity across the rural country-side (Photo: Credit: KenGen)

Therefore, the Global South needs different climate financing terms as a long-term strategy towards addressing climate change. Developing nations in the Global South must then have access to sufficient public and private funding to tackle the adverse impact of climate change. The key priorities required to improve the current climate finance mechanisms includes debt relief, harnessing finance from multilateral institutions like the developing bank, increase mobilization of private funding and innovative adoption of the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) special drawing rights. Debt relief is a special measure that is required to minimize the gap in financing among the developing countries in Global South.

Most nations in the region are engulfed in debts and nearing a debt distress thus an indicator for immediate debt relief. This can be achieved by amplifying climate finance grants as a key source of climate funding. Moreover, developing a concessional multilateral debt structure and process will help in reducing the escalating debts and improve the climate resilience of the region.

Increased climate financing in the Global South can be attained by harnessing the development banks. Concessional loans from multilateral institutions are offered at a lower interest rates thus an increased in the availability of climate funds. Collaboration between development banks and national governments helps in bringing expertise opinion on the climate finance needs of the country thus fostering a holistic approach towards the technical and social aspect of climate change and financing.

Increased mobilization of private finance is what the Global South need in terms of climate finance. It is necessary to incentivize and legalize private climate finance to align with the country's overall climate goals and initiatives. Increased mobilization of private financing can be attained by adopting new financing tools such as the green bonds and debt swaps. This will help bridge the climate finance gap between the Global North and Global South.

The Global South must adopt the Special Drawing Rights, an innovative approach by the IMF that aims at increasing climate financing while ensuring the nations remain debt free. This is achieved by increasing liquidity by ensuring climate funds are properly utilized in order to maximize the overall economic development and increase resilience toward climate change impacts. It can also be done by redirecting the multilateral loans to ensure fair allocation of climate funds that are tailored toward effective climate mitigation and adaptation initiatives thus increased resilience.

The way forward includes developing a collaborative action between the public and private players. Collaboration helps improve the climate finance landscape and thus the ability to develop sustainable solutions and reduce the gaps and issues associated with climate financing to the Global South from the Global North. Also, adopting new financing tools such as grants, private philanthropic supports and concessional loans will help improve climate change initiatives and resilience thus improved climate economy. This will pave way for the adoption of clean and renewable energy, and the adoption of sustainable climate mitigation and adaptation initiatives. Therefore, develop capacity and provide innovative solutions in quest to bridge the financing gap between the emerging and developing economies in the Global South.

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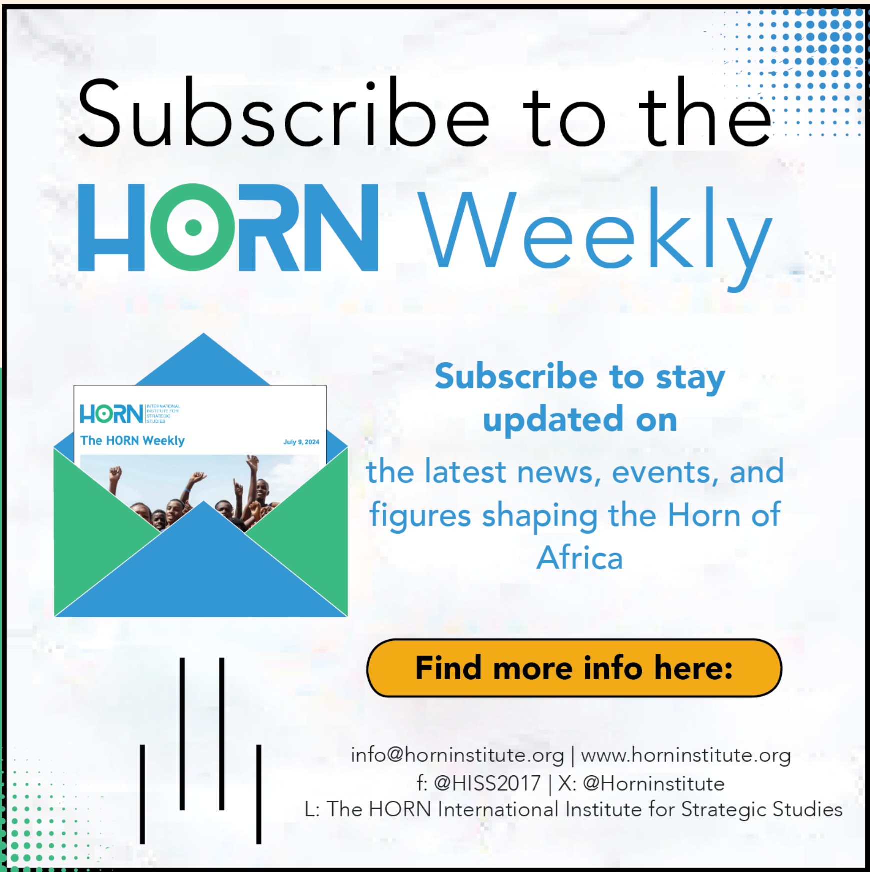

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HORN Bulletin ISSN: 2663-4996

2663-4996