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Newsletter 32 | June 2025



Running Like a Cheetah



I have accepted the [invitation of the Brazilian President of COP30](#) to serve as Special Envoy for Africa. The idea is to enhance regional dialogues ahead of the November summit in Belém and ensure that Africa's priorities are heard loud and clear. It's a creative move by Brazil, which has appointed envoys from across the globe – not just diplomats, but scientists, activists, and public figures – to broaden the scope of engagement and implementation. My role will be entirely voluntary and personal, but I see it as a unique chance to help shape a more inclusive and delivery-focused COP.



I had the opportunity to contribute to the strategic formulation of the campaign that led to the successful election of the new President of the African Development Bank, [Sidi Ould](#). These elections are always a combination of behind-the-scenes consensus building and geopolitical balancing acts, but this time the outcome also reflected a broader convergence around continuity and delivery. The result was widely covered across the web, confirming how closely watched ADB leadership has become in shaping Africa's financing future.



At the margins of the Berlin Forum for Globala Zusammenarbeit 2025, I presented The Self-Deception Trap at [Humboldt University](#) in a session hosted by the Centre for Rural Development (CEC). It was a lively discussion, connecting the book's critique of Africa-Europe relations with the forum's broader reflections on multilateralism and global equity. The exchange among scholars, practitioners, and policymakers reinforced how structural blind spots continue to hinder genuine partnership. It was also encouraging to see strong engagement with the book's arguments from a new generation of European thinkers.

My latest contributions

Project Syndicate

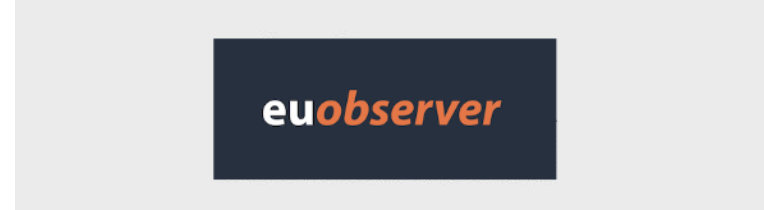
Project Syndicate

My recent piece, ["Europe Must Choose Its Direction in Africa"](#), first published by Project Syndicate, has sparked considerable debate. It has been translated into Spanish, French, Dutch, German, Portuguese, and Arabic, and picked up by a wide range of outlets across continents. The article calls out the persistence of a patronising EU attitude that undermines genuine partnership, especially as Africa asserts more agency on the global stage. I argued that equal footing is not just rhetoric – it must reshape the terms of engagement. Encouragingly, the piece has already been cited in several policy discussions.

ecdpm

ECDPM

An insightful piece by Philippe Van Damme titled ["How \(not\) to reform for the next AI EU summit"](#), published by ECDPM, draws heavily from the arguments in my recent book and serves as a timely warning. With the latest AI-EU ministerial meeting, he rightly cautions against falling into yet another rhetorical exercise that obscures the structural flaws of the partnership. The article echoes many of the frustrations I've expressed – about asymmetry, performative engagement, and missed opportunities – and adds valuable proposals to avoid irrelevance.



EUOBSERVER

The EU Observer published a commentary titled ["Europe's Insecurity and Delusion about Africa"](#), based on an interview with me, which captured the growing frustration with the EU's entrenched paternalism. I argued that Europe's posturing towards Africa is shaped more by its insecurities than by any genuine willingness to engage with the continent's evolving priorities. The piece reflects themes I've explored in The Self-Deception Trap, and its wide circulation shows how urgent this debate has become.



RFI

In an interview with RFI titled ["Avec 60% du PIB de l'Afrique, la dette est un poids"](#), [Cécile Bédier](#) discussed the structural challenges posed by the African Union debt conference. I stressed that with debt levels averaging 60% of GDP, Africa is facing a serious constraint on its development prospects – not just because of the numbers, but due to a broken system that perpetuates risk misperception and external dependence. It's time to move beyond the ritual of restructuring towards real architectural reform.



RFI

RFI published a retrospective analysis titled ["Cinquante ans après sa création, quel bilan pour la Cdadec?"](#) For which I contributed background insights and was quoted extensively. I underlined how Cdadec, once the most promising reformist body on the continent, with real achievements in free movement and conflict mediation, has gradually lost credibility due to leadership vacuums, political incoherence, and external manipulation. The piece reflects the broader concerns about the institutional drift affecting regeneration in West Africa.



Al Jazeera's

Al Jazeera's in-depth piece ["Did the US and China shift tactics... and what's next?"](#) offers one of the clearest analyses so far of the intersectionality in trade policy between the two giants. Drawing on a range of analysts, including myself, it explains how domestic inflation concerns, industrial overcapacity and a bid to recalibrate global supply chains led to this shift. But the piece also warns that the deeper reality is far from over – while we swing a pendulum to multilateralism, but a tactical pause. I stressed the implications for Africa: as trade blocks adjust and evolve, the continent risks being either bypassed or instrumentalised unless it asserts a proactive strategy.

Le Monde

Le Monde

Le Monde's piece ["Africa promises to defend its interests against Donald Trump"](#) features my comments on how the return of aggressive tariff politics and transactional diplomacy is once again isolating Africa. I pointed out that while Washington ramps up rhetoric on strategic interests and courting China, its actual policies reveal a worrying indifference toward African development priorities, as evident in proposed cuts to concessional funding and the marginal role Africa is being assigned in global trade discussions.

jeuneafrique the africa report

Jeune Afrique/The African Report

The Africa Report and Jeune Afrique jointly published our ranking of Africa's 20 top performing countries, a much-debated new index that blends economic, social, and governance indicators. I served as one of the external evaluators and was quoted on the need to go beyond traditional macroeconomic snapshots to capture actual performance. Rankings of this kind always provoke reactions, but they also help refocus debates about what success should mean on a continent facing multiple transitions. Read the English version [here](#) and the French version [here](#).

exame.

Exame

In an interview with Exame, Brazil's leading business magazine, I discussed why Africa is poised to lead global growth in 2025, driven not by hype but by fundamental factors overlooked. The piece, titled ["África vai lider o crescimento global em 2025: entendendo o motivo"](#), explores shifting investment patterns, demographic momentum, and emerging policy enablers across the continent. I argued that the narrative of Africa as a "perpetual prisoner" is giving way – albeit no recognition of its strategic weight.

My Videos and Podcasts



The Africa Taking Up Space Roundtable: Why the map is a big fat lie, and why it matters.
Africa No Filter, 25 May

Watch Now



Conférence de l'UA sur la dette, RFI, 12 May

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