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Running Like a Cheetah



This month I had the opportunity to address the senior management of the **African Finance Corporation** on how today's geopolitical shocks are reshaping the continent's prospects. From the wars disrupting trade and supply chains to the growing fragmentation of multilateralism, Africa faces a convergence of external pressures that demand sharper strategic choices. Yet these same shocks also create openings – for regional value chains, for new forms of south-south finance, and for asserting ownership of our development trajectory. I argued that the challenge is no longer whether Africa can insulate itself from turbulence, but whether it can harness volatility to accelerate structural transformation.



October 11 to 13 I joined the **ccc-COP30 meeting** hosted by the **Brazilian Presidency** in Brasilia, invited in my capacity as Special Envoy for Africa. The discussions reflected both the ambition and complexity of what lies ahead in Belem next year: how to ensure that the COP hosted in the Amazon truly amplifies voices from the Global South. My message emphasized the convergence between Africa's and Brazil's agendas – both seeking a fairer climate regime grounded in equity, innovation, and shared responsibility. The symbolism of this bridge between the Amazon and Africa is powerful, but its value will depend on whether it leads to real coordination and new financing pathways for a just transition.



At the end of October, I attended in Riyadh the signing ceremony marking **Viscom Invest's entry as a new shareholder in Arise Integrated Industrial Platforms**. The deal, valued at a record USD 700 million, represents one of the largest African industrial investments of the year. My invitation as a special guest reflected my long-standing involvement in helping shape **Arise's** evolution into one of the continent's foremost industrialisation champions, now active in 13 countries. The partnership signals growing confidence in Africa's capacity to drive its own structural transformation – attracting global capital not for extraction, but for production, innovation, and value creation.

My latest contributions



Project Syndicate
My recent article, **"What Africans Want from COP30"**, first published by **Project Syndicate** on 23 October and now republished in six languages across ten media outlets, explored Africa's priorities ahead of the 2025 summit in Belem. I argued that Africa must present a united front – shifting from reactive postures to proactive leadership in shaping the global climate agenda. The continent's message should go beyond calls for justice to one of ambition and agency: we are ready to drive the new green economy with or without external validation. The widespread republication of the piece suggests that this message resonates across regions increasingly aware that the future of climate action will be decided as much in Addis Ababa and Abuja as in Brussels or Washington.



MO Magazine
In my interview titled **"Europa blijft de belangrijkste partner van Afrika"**, with **MO Magazine**, a leading Dutch publication, I reflected on why Europe remains Africa's main partner even as new alliances emerge. The relationship's weight is undeniable, but its terms must evolve to reflect a more assertive continent. Recognising Europe's importance should not mean accepting old habits – genuine partnership now requires mutual respect and strategic clarity.



Jeune Afrique
As part of **Jeune Afrique's** series on new powers interested in Africa, I contributed to the piece **"Le Brésil est-il vraiment de retour en Afrique ?"**, assessing Brazil's renewed engagement with the continent, later published by **The Africa Report** in **gallup**. My reflections underlined the cyclical nature of this relationship – alternating between enthusiasm and neglect – and the need for greater consistency beyond ideological swings. Brazil's current outreach offers promise, but it will only be meaningful if it translates into stable, long-term partnerships grounded in mutual benefit rather than political alignment.



South China Morning Post

South China Morning Post
I was one of the contributors to the leading Hong Kong daily **South China Morning Post**, of an article titled **"How a deal US trade deal is pushing Africa further into China's orbit"**. My analysis highlighted how China's growing influence stems less from aggressive expansion than from the absence of other actors. With Washington's engagement fading and ACQU's future uncertain, Beijing's steady economic presence has filled the vacuum. The argument resonated widely – it was later echoed in an **editorial by China Daily** and **China Africa SPS**, underscoring how Africa's shifting alignments are being closely watched in major capitals.



El Salto
In a long interview with the Spanish magazine **El Salto** titled **"Carlos Lopes: ex-necociador de la Unión Africana, desmonta el 'autogenerador' en las relaciones UE-Africa"**, I discussed my book **"The Self-Deception Trap"** and its message on redefining Africa-Europe relations. I underlined that Europe's engagement often rests on outdated assumptions, and that Africa's real challenge is to move beyond dependency by negotiating collectively and asserting its own development priorities.



University of Cape Town
I contributed to the **University of Cape Town** Vice-Chancellor's initiative **"Reimagining Africa's Future in Times of Turbulence and Disruption"**, which brings together thought leaders to debate the continent's pathways amid global uncertainty. My reflections focused on how Africa can turn demographic, technological, and climate shifts into levers for structural transformation, positioning itself as a shaper rather than a subject of change.

My Videos and Podcasts



African Free Trade Area could be a solution for Africa to start trading together
RTG, 29 September

Watch Now



Wilder Lens with Carlos Lopes, Café Guyard, 30 September

Watch Now



Africa's agency in global rules, UCT, 3 October

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A Auto-Ilusão, RFI, 17 October

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