



Book Review: Security Development Nexus in Africa: Progress Towards the Agenda 2063 and Sustainable Development Goals¹²

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Africa is a continent often portrayed in extremes—brimming with potential on one hand and struggling with crises on the other. Conflicts, political instability, climate pressures, and uneven development frequently dominate headlines, overshadowing the remarkable innovation, resilience, and progress occurring across the continent. Yet these challenges cannot be separated from Africa's colonial past and its enduring legacy. Many African nations remain strangled by structures imposed during colonial rule, reinforced by a continuity of old colonialism in new forms—through foreign intervention, political meddling, and economic exploitation disguised as aid and support. What is often framed as partnership or development assistance can reflect modern colonial pursuits that undermine sovereignty, extract resources, and perpetuate dependency, limiting the continent's ability to fully chart its own path forward.

In *Security-Development Nexus in Africa*, editors Siphumelele Duma and Rich Mashimbye invite readers to step beyond these superficial narratives and understand the intricate, inseparable relationship between security and development. The book presents a vision that is at once urgent and hopeful, challenging readers to see security and development not as distinct policy arenas but as deeply interconnected forces that shape the trajectory of nations and communities alike.

From the outset, the book confronts the familiar misconception that security and development can be treated in isolation. Security is not merely the domain of armies, law enforcement, or border control. Likewise, development is not just about building infrastructure, increasing GDP, or implementing programs. True security, as the editors emphasize, encompasses human well-being, access to essential services, political inclusion, and protection from both environmental and social risks. Development, in turn, only thrives in contexts where people feel safe, institutions function effectively, and communities can plan without fear of disruption. By foregrounding this interdependence, the book sets the stage for a rich exploration of Africa's challenges, opportunities, and the ways in which integrated approaches can foster sustainable progress.

The structure of the book mirrors this balance between theory and practice, offering

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a clear yet sophisticated progression for the reader. It begins by laying the conceptual foundations of the security-development nexus, situating the discussion within continental and global frameworks, including the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These early chapters are essential, providing readers with both the terminology and analytical frameworks needed to appreciate the nuanced arguments that follow. As the book moves into empirical case studies, the discussion becomes vividly concrete. It examines political instability, governance failures, human mobility, and emerging security threats through real-world examples drawn from across the continent. This structure allows the reader to transition naturally from abstract theory to the tangible consequences and opportunities faced by policymakers, communities, and institutions on the ground.

One of the book's most compelling contributions is its redefinition of security. Traditional conceptions often focus narrowly on military capabilities or law enforcement, but this volume expands the lens to include human-centered concerns. Access to healthcare, education, employment, and protection from environmental shocks is presented as integral to security. By broadening the concept in this way, the editors and contributors encourage readers to rethink familiar assumptions: insecurity is not merely the result of external threats, but often emerges from systemic failures in governance, social support, and economic opportunity. In this light, interventions aimed at development, from infrastructure projects to educational initiatives, become inseparable from efforts to enhance security.

Governance emerges as another central theme throughout the book. Political instability, corruption, and weak institutions are shown to erode both security and development, creating cycles of vulnerability that can be difficult to break. Conversely, transparent, inclusive, and accountable governance lays the groundwork for sustained progress, enabling investment, social cohesion, and long-term stability. By highlighting governance as a foundational element of both security and development, the book underscores the interconnectedness of political, economic, and social dimensions in shaping the future of African nations.

Migration and human mobility are examined with equal nuance. The editors challenge the tendency to frame migration solely as a security problem, instead presenting it as a complex social and economic phenomenon intertwined with development. Displacement due to conflict, environmental pressures, or economic necessity is explored alongside voluntary migration for opportunity or education, revealing the multiple drivers of movement and their diverse impacts on communities, economies, and governance. This perspective encourages a more humane and evidence-based understanding of migration, emphasizing that addressing human needs can simultaneously advance security and development objectives.

While much of the book addresses longstanding challenges such as conflict and political fragility, it also engages with contemporary and emerging threats, including cybersecurity, climate-induced disasters, and the implications of technological change. By examining these evolving risks, the book demonstrates that the security-development



nexus is not static; it must be continuously re-evaluated and adapted in response to new pressures. This forward-looking approach is particularly relevant in a rapidly changing global environment, where technological disruptions and climate events increasingly affect both human security and socio-economic development.

One of the remarkable strengths of *Security-Development Nexus in Africa* is the way it integrates rigorous research and evidence into a highly readable narrative. Contributors draw on government reports, field studies, policy papers, and empirical research to substantiate their analyses, but they do so without overwhelming the reader with jargon or excessive citations. Data and case studies are seamlessly woven into the discussion, illustrating complex ideas with clarity and authority. This careful integration of sources enhances the book's credibility while maintaining accessibility, making it valuable not only to academics but also to policymakers, development practitioners, and professionals working in a variety of fields.

The relevance of this book in today's world cannot be overstated. Across Africa, communities are grappling with overlapping challenges, from political instability and economic inequities to climate pressures and migration crises. Traditional approaches that treat security and development separately often fail to address the underlying drivers of these problems. By presenting a framework in which these forces are understood as mutually reinforcing, the book equips readers to think holistically and strategically about contemporary challenges. Its insights are immediately applicable for designing policies, shaping programs, and guiding investment in ways that enhance both security and human development.

This volume also opens important avenues for further research. By articulating a framework that links security and development, it encourages scholars to investigate how this nexus operates in different local and regional contexts, and how sector-specific interventions in areas like health, education, or infrastructure can influence security outcomes. It also invites exploration of emerging technologies, digital governance, and climate adaptation strategies as part of integrated security-development planning. In this way, the book not only synthesizes existing knowledge but also acts as a springboard for new inquiry and innovation.

The appeal of *Security-Development Nexus in Africa* extends beyond academia. Students, researchers, and professors across political science, international relations, development studies, African studies, and security studies will find its insights invaluable for both teaching and research. Professionals in government ministries, international organizations (IOs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and think tanks can draw practical lessons for policy design and program implementation. Even private sector stakeholders with investments in African markets can benefit from a deeper understanding of how security and development intersect to shape the social, political, and economic environment. Its combination of theory, evidence, and practical guidance ensures that the book resonates across disciplines, professions, and industries.

The marketing appeal of the book is significant. By addressing a topic that is both urgent and globally relevant, it positions itself as an essential resource for anyone

interested in Africa's future. Its focus on Agenda 2063 and the SDGs provides an aspirational angle, making the book not only informative but visionary. It can be promoted effectively in academic circles, professional development programs, policy forums, and global development conferences. The human-centered storytelling, integrated research, and practical recommendations make it compelling to a wide readership, from scholars and students to policymakers and development practitioners.

Security-Development Nexus in Africa succeeds in bridge the gap between theory and practice. It challenges conventional thinking, offering a vision of Africa where security and development are integrated and mutually reinforcing. The book is deeply analytical yet accessible, grounded in research yet attentive to the lived experiences of communities across the continent. It encourages readers to see security not merely as the absence of conflict, nor development as a series of isolated programs, but as interconnected forces shaping human potential, social stability, and economic prosperity.

This volume is much more than an academic text; it is a roadmap for understanding the challenges and opportunities that define Africa today. It combines conceptual rigor, empirical depth, and practical insight in a way that is simultaneously informative and inspiring. Students, researchers, professionals, and policymakers alike will find themselves challenged to rethink assumptions and look at the whole picture when addressing the continent's pressing issues. For anyone seeking to engage meaningfully with Africa's complex realities or to contribute to solutions that enhance both human security and sustainable development, *Security-Development Nexus in Africa* offers indispensable guidance. It is a testament to the idea that progress is possible when security and development are understood as two sides of the same coin and when policies, programs, and research are oriented toward integrated, human-centered outcomes.

I enthusiastically recommend this book to anyone seeking a deeper, more nuanced understanding of Africa's developmental challenges. It is particularly valuable for readers who want to move beyond surface-level narratives and engage with thoughtful, evidence-informed perspectives. Whether readers are students, researchers, policymakers, or simply individuals interested in Africa's future, this volume offers meaningful insights that resonate long after the final page.