

A partnership for shared prosperity and security the Canada Africa Strategy

Ottawa, June 2025 - In a landmark event that signaled renewed Canadian engagement with the African continent, the Africa Study Group, in partnership with Carleton University's Norman Paterson School of International Affairs (NPSIA) and the Continental African Diaspora Scholars Network-Canada (CADSN-Canada), hosted a high-level panel on "A Partnership for Shared Prosperity and Security: The Canada-Africa Strategy."

Held at Carleton University, the event drew scholars, policymakers, members of the African diaspora, and government officials, united by a shared vision: to examine and reflect on Canada's first-ever Africa Strategy—a comprehensive blueprint aligned with the African Union's Agenda 2063 and built on extensive consultations with nearly 690 African, Canadian, and international stakeholders.



Setting the Tone: Opening Remarks

The event commenced with Professor Teddy Yagadeesen Samy, Director of NPSIA, offering introductory remarks, followed by a welcome address by Carleton University President and Vice-Chancellor Professor Wisdom Tettey, and a keynote address by Ms. Cheryl Urban, Assistant Deputy Minister for Africa and Pan-Geographic Affairs at Global Affairs Canada.

Urban emphasized the centrality of youth, diaspora communities, and renewed diplomatic engagement in the new strategy, underlining Canada's growing ties with the African Union and the significance of Toronto hosting renewed Canada-AU talks. "Africa has the world's largest youth population, and here in Canada, our African diaspora continues to grow," Urban stated. "This isn't just diplomacy it's partnership, trade, and opportunity."

Professor Tettey lauded the strategy as a "step forward long overdue," cautioning that it must remain responsive to African realities and shaped by African voices. "What is before us is viable and should be measured by how well it adapts to African contexts. But there is no doubt this is a move in the right direction," he remarked.



Framing the Dialogue

Dr Cheickh Bangura Chair of the Africa Study Group thanked attendees and introduced the panel, which featured a lineup of six distinguished scholars and policy experts who offered critical reflections on the new strategy.

Panel Highlights: Critical Reflections

Marcia Burdette, with a background in foreign affairs and governance, contextualized Canada-Africa relations historically. She referenced the 1993–2006 era as a “golden age” of Canadian engagement, when Canada led initiatives like landmine bans and meaningful development partnerships under Liberal governments.

Dr. Thomas Kwasi Tieku stressed that “diplomacy is an insurance policy” and that Canada must treat Africa as a strategic priority. He flagged persistent gaps in funding and political commitment, calling for the creation of dedicated strategic missions.

Dr. David Black focused on bureaucratic obstacles that could hinder implementation. He questioned how African priorities would be integrated in a meaningful way within the machinery of the Canadian government.

Dr. Nadège Compaoré addressed the sensitive intersection of natural resources, mining, and partnerships, urging the government to ensure that Canadian mining operations in Africa are guided by principles of mutual benefit and ethical responsibility.

Dr. Adetoun Ilumoka, joining from Vancouver, reflected on the strategy’s approach to poverty reduction, economic development, and youth empowerment. She emphasized the importance of free trade regulation that protects vulnerable communities and supports sustainable development.

Professor Edward Akuffo underscored the need for stronger Canadian leadership and coordination across departments, warning that without coherence and accountability, even well-designed strategies can falter.

A New Chapter Begins

Canada’s Africa Strategy is structured around five strategic pillars:

- Strengthening diplomatic engagement and people-to-people ties
- Enhancing economic cooperation
- Reducing poverty and promoting youth empowerment, humanitarian support, and climate adaptation
- Bolstering peace, security, and human rights partnerships
- Advancing shared priorities on the global stage

As the event concluded, attendees left with a cautious sense of optimism. The message was clear: Canada has taken a bold step forward, but real success will depend on action, sustained investment, and accountability—both to Canadians and to African partners.

Whether this strategy will translate into meaningful change remains to be seen. But as Professor Tettey reminded the audience, “whoever puts this forward must be held accountable. This is not a document—it’s a commitment.”

The event wrapped up with roundtable discussions, providing participants a chance to delve deeper into key thematic areas, exchange perspectives, and propose collaborative approaches for ensuring the strategy’s long-term success.

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