

AFRICA FACILITY TO SUPPORT INCLUSIVE TRANSITIONS (AFSIT)

STRENGTHENING GOVERNANCE AND
DEEPENING DEVELOPMENT

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An Evolving Context of Complex Transitions

In recent years, democratic backsliding has become manifest in diverse contexts across the globe. On the African Continent, this phenomenon has become particularly pronounced in a wave of military coups and other Unconstitutional Change of Governments (UCG), including third-termism.

Since 2020, Africa has witnessed eight military coups in Burkina Faso, Chad, Guinea, Mali, Sudan, Niger, and Gabon. This resurgence represents a more than 200 percent increase in the number of military coups in comparison to the previous two decades. This has resulted in political tensions that undermine democratic order and governance, and threaten to create wider instability on the continent.

Unconstitutional Change of Governments have a direct economic impact on affected countries and populations. The economic cost of military coups in Guinea (2008) and Mali (2012) over a five-year period, was estimated at \$12.1 billion and \$13 billion respectively. Political uncertainty persists in many transitional contexts, while largescale humanitarian deterioration and displacements has put millions in need of urgent assistance to mitigate food insecurity, disruptions of critical services, and the impacts of ongoing sanctions.

In some UCG-affected countries, security prospects are dwindling as non-state armed actors continue to exploit political gaps. These threats are often exacerbated by the negative impacts of climate change, which place greater pressure on natural resources and spur further tensions.

Political transitions and their aftermath present a critical period for collective participation for national stakeholders and their counterparts at regional, continental and international level. Safeguarding development and strengthening governance is crucial to protect and promote ongoing gains towards the goals of agendas 2030 and 2063 of the United Nations (UN) and the African Union (AU) respectively. This can only be achieved if complex political transitions are considered through a governance and development lens, which recognizes the primacy of a people-centred approach.

AFSIT: Strengthening Governance, Upholding Development Gains

The Africa Facility to Support Inclusive Transitions (AFSIT) is a joint initiative by the African Union Commission (AUC) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) that provides integrated programmatic support to African countries undergoing complex political transitions, including those that have experienced or at risk of UCG. Its overall objective is to support credible, inclusive and legitimate transition roadmaps, mechanisms and institutions towards a return to constitutional rule, democracy and stability in relevant countries.

AFSIT is a response to the call made by the AU Heads of State and Government at the 16th Extraordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union on Terrorism and Unconstitutional Changes of Government in Africa, held on 28 May 2022 in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea. The Heads of State and Government reiterated their stance on zero tolerance against UCG and called for collective actions and solidarity in developing a robust response mechanism, deepening democracy, and collective security on the continent.

Leveraging the regional leadership of the African Union Commission, the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), the country presence of UNDP as the premier development agency of the UN system, and the AU Liaison Offices; AFSIT supports the prevention and response to complex political transitions. This occurs in close collaboration with UN Country Teams, development partners, and civil society actors to ensure complementarity and reinforcing support to transition processes.



Launch of AFSIT, 15 July 2023, Nairobi, Kenya



AFSIT advocacy roadshow event, 26 October 2023, Brussels, Belgium

While countries are going through political transition, citizens need to be both included in the process and safeguard their livelihoods and ensure their immediate priorities to be met. It is therefore imperative to accompany political transition processes with urgent and immediate development support. AFSIT is a programmatic instrument that therefore:

- Supports the implementation of a legitimate and inclusive national transitional roadmap towards the restoration and deepening of constitutional order
- Enhances regional and cross-regional exchanges to foster understanding and learning about complex political transitions, which is increasingly becoming a dominant preoccupation and impacting development progress; and
- Enables the role of regional institutions through capacity building and technical assistance to assert greater leadership in addressing complex or disruptive transitions

In other words, AFSIT is a concrete expression of what it means to stay and deliver for affected populations and safeguard development during complex transitions.

The AFSIT Approach

AFSIT is founded on the centrality of conflict prevention, enhancing social contracts at the national level as well as promoting inclusive development. AFSIT has the potential advantage of pulling together, in a complementary manner, the mandates, peace infrastructures, technical expertise and resources of both the AU and the UN and, through them, relevant RECs and the wider international community, to play a role in situations of political transition, be they UCG or non-UCG contexts.

AFSIT support is structured through three interrelated, interdependent and mutually reinforcing strategic outcome areas

- ▣ National and regional actors, including women and youth groups, supported to implement inclusive, credible and participatory transition processes, institutions and mechanisms
- ▣ Enhanced capacity of mechanisms and institutions to swiftly respond to and address transitions; and
- ▣ Transitions leveraged to promote social cohesion and socio-economic development priorities of affected and vulnerable populations.

Effective support for complex political transitions equates to protecting development. AFSIT represents an opportunity to uphold and safeguard development as a primary objective during transitions. This requires a clear recognition of the need to prioritize the restoration, and strengthening, of accountable and responsive governance as a key component of the transition agenda.

AFSIT is therefore positioned as a tool to support the implementation of comprehensive governance reform in areas such as constitutional review, justice sector reform, dialogue and social cohesion, support to electoral processes, and the overall quest for rebuilding vertical and horizontal trust between the state and citizens and amongst communities. AFSIT advances women and youth participation in transition processes, primarily by increasing the quantity and quality of women and youth participation in dialogue and political decision-making processes.

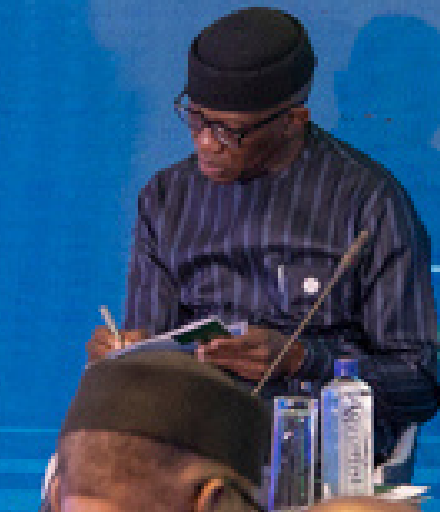


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The AFSIT Activation Process

Following the launch of AFSIT in Nairobi in July 2023, the inaugural steering committee meeting took place on 7 September 2023. The following considerations were identified to guide the piloting process:

AFSIT support spans the spectrum of transitional contexts: AFSIT is not limited to countries that have experienced coups, but includes at-risk countries in need of democratic strengthening. A core aspect of AFSIT is its application across the “transition spectrum” – from consolidating transitions to responding to disruptive transitions, including coups.

Support to legitimate and politically backed processes: AFSIT only supports countries in transition on the condition that there is a clear political agreement backed up by regional (and international) actors. In such contexts, AFSIT is geared to provide targeted and dedicated support to the proposed transition roadmap.

AFSIT is a complementarity tool: As a joint mechanism of the AUC and UNDP, the Facility aims to complement, not duplicate, ongoing efforts. Therefore, AFSIT focuses on supporting demand-driven initiatives, leveraging existing programme and filling critical gaps.

During the first phase, assessment missions are being deployed to Burkina Faso, Chad, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, The Gambia, Mali and South Sudan

AFSIT Intervention Pillars



WINDOW 1: DEPLOYMENT OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO SUPPORT POLITICAL TRANSITION PROCESSES

Providing timely support during political transition processes is critical for safeguarding developmental gains and to position UNDP and the AUC in supporting the transition processes and ensuring a return to constitutional order. AFSIT is developing a roster of highly skilled experts to be deployed to affected AU Member States to support inclusive transition processes, institutions, and mechanisms.



WINDOW 2: CROSS- FERTILIZATION OF KNOWLEDGE AND LESSONS LEARNED ON POLITICAL TRANSITIONS (INCLUDING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE AFRICA POLITICAL TRANSITIONS INDEX)

Research, evidence and analysis shall be critical to the success of AFSIT support to countries in transition. AFSIT will develop analysis and contribute to research gaps. AFSIT shall also support a series of regional dialogues to review complex political transitions in Africa. AFSIT will establish an Africa Political Transition Index and will work with relevant research partners to map the existing data landscape relevant to African UCGs.



WINDOW 3: CAPACITY BUILDING FOR WOMEN AND YOUTH CIVIL SOCIETY ACTORS TO INCREASE PARTICIPATION AND DECISION-MAKING DURING POLITICAL TRANSITIONS

AFSIT shall strengthen inclusivity and empowerment through tailored training to ensure women and youth inclusion for peace and prosperity. AFSIT will complement existing programmes and interventions by providing additional financial support and scale up the efforts. Specific support to interventions that empower women, youth, and persons with disabilities, would be supported to enable them to participate actively in political transitions roles in supporting the transition processes in those countries through volunteerism, political participation, advocacy and other forms of engagements during transitions.

AFSIT acknowledges that access to services, goods, humanitarian and development assistance must be maintained during transitions, and it is committed to restoring and strengthening livelihoods, fostering economic inclusivity, and empowering communities affected by coups, with a strong focus on the most vulnerable segments of the population, namely women, youth, and persons with disabilities.



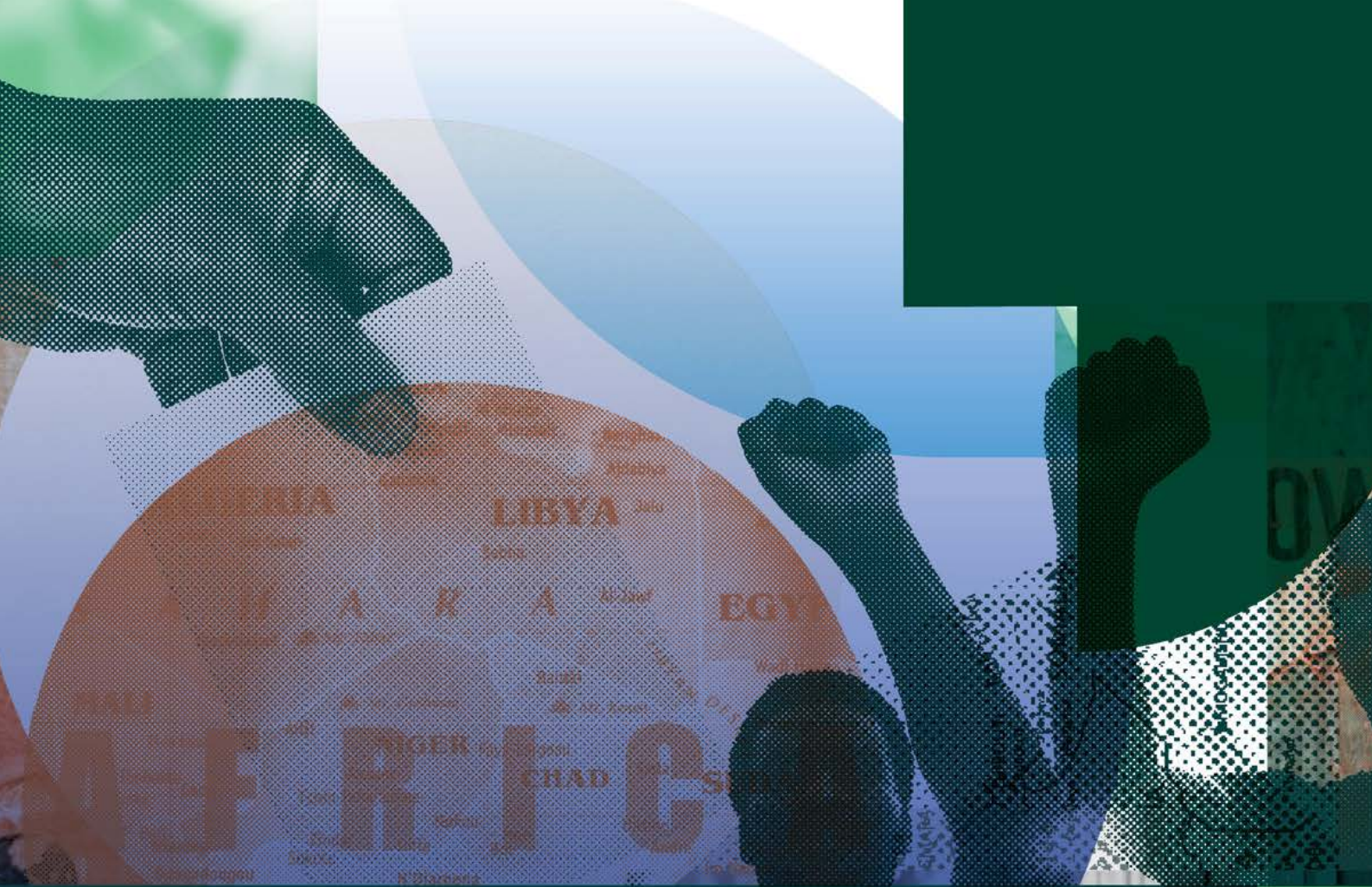
Accra CSO Forum, 25-27 October 2023, Accra, Ghana

AFSIT Governance Structure

AFSIT is envisioned as a rapid, flexible, and agile response mechanism and its governance structure reflects that principle. AFSIT governance comprises of a Project Board co-chaired by the AUC, Commissioner for Political Affairs Peace and Security, and UNDP Regional Director for Africa.

The Steering Committee includes rotational representation from the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) representatives, the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC), relevant RECs, AU Panel of the Wise/FemWise, representation from the AU field missions, the United Nations Development Coordination Office (UNDCO), the United Nations Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (UN DPPA), and relevant Resident Coordinators and Resident Representatives.

Development partners who financially support AFSIT will be invited as permanent or non-permanent members of the Steering Committee. The Project Board will ensure strategic leadership, governance, management, financial and administrative oversight of AFSIT.



African Union



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