

AFRICA FACILITY TO SUPPORT **INCLUSIVE TRANSITIONS (AFSIT)**

**Annual
Report
2023**

AFRICA FACILITY TO SUPPORT INCLUSIVE TRANSITIONS (AFSIT)



TABLE OF CONTENTS

AFSIT in 2023	1
Timeline	3
AFSIT 2023: Highlights	5
Strengthening governance and safeguarding development during political transitions in Africa	
AFSIT Approach	6
AFSIT Activation	7
AFSIT Analysis	7
AFSIT Advocacy	9
AFSIT Investment	11
AFSIT Assessments	12
Partnerships and resource mobilization efforts	13
What to expect in 2024	14
Annexes	15

AFSIT IN 2023

Introduction

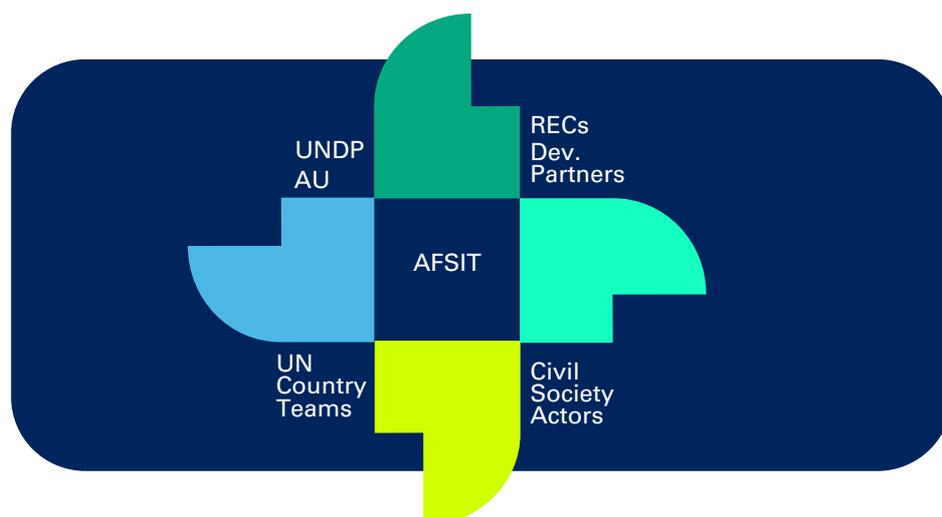
Between 2020 and 2022, six coups and three coup attempts occurred on the African continent: a sharp rise from the previous two decades. Coups and other forms of unconstitutional changes of government (UCG) are complex phenomena where critical junctures arise for strengthening governance, promoting democracy and safeguarding development. Achieving this, however, calls for an agile and demand-driven mechanism.

Against this backdrop, UNDP launched the new Africa Facility to Support Inclusive Transitions (AFSIT) on 15 July 2023. A joint initiative of UNDP and the AU Commission (AUC), the AFSIT intends to provide integrated programmatic support to countries in Africa undergoing complex political transitions.

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 AU and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), as well as the country presence of UNDP as the premier development agency of the UN system, 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.



While countries are going through transition, citizens need to be included in the process, have their livelihoods safeguarded, and have their immediate priorities met. It is therefore imperative to accompany transition processes with urgent and immediate development support.

AFSIT is a programmatic instrument that works to:

- Support the implementation of a legitimate and inclusive national transitional roadmap towards the restoration and deepening of constitutional order;
- Enhance regional and cross-regional exchanges to foster understanding and learning about complex political transitions, which is increasingly impacting development progress; and
- Enable 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.



AFRICA FACILITY TO SUPPORT INCLUSIVE TRANSITIONS (AFSIT)

15 JULY 2023

NAIROBI, KENYA



Timeline

Launch of the AFSIT in Nairobi, Kenya 15 July 2023

AFSIT is launched, representing a unique programmatic intervention that could resolve gaps in current international and regional responses to countries undergoing or at risk of UCG.



AFSIT Monitor launched 31 August 2023

The AFSIT Monitor provides quarterly analysis of Africa's transition contexts, highlights entry points for AFSIT implementation and, disseminates knowledge products and key dates aligned to the AFSIT. Read the [first](#) and [second](#) issues of the AFSIT Monitor and [subscribe](#) to stay informed.

First AFSIT Steering Committee Meeting 7 September 2023

The strategic objective of the inaugural steering was to endorse and approve the terms of reference of the steering committee, provide strategic guidance on the piloting of AFSIT and approve the programmatic interventions that AFSIT intends to deploy.

First AFSIT assessment mission: Mali 6–15 November 2023

An AFSIT assessment mission was deployed in Mali from 6 to 15 November 2023, as approved by the inaugural meeting of the AFSIT Steering Committee. It followed the high-level UN mission to Mali, about a week earlier, led by the UN Special Coordinator for the Development in the Sahel and the UNDP Regional Director for Africa.

AFSIT Advocacy roadshow 11 September–30 October 2023

The advocacy roadshow disseminated the findings of the flagship UNDP Soldiers and Citizens report and raised awareness of AFSIT among key audiences in diverse locations across Africa, Europe and the United States.



AFSIT 2023: Highlights

Building global momentum towards a “stay-and-deliver” approach during complex political transitions

In the wake of coups, many international actors face a dilemma between non-recognition of unconstitutional governments and the need to support the affected citizenry and protect development gains. AFSIT emphasizes and enables a “stay and deliver” approach towards credible, inclusive and legitimate transitions that can usher a return to constitutional rule, sustainable development and democracy. Remaining engaged and investing in democratic processes are not only necessary, but the most constructive approach for states navigating the aftermath of complex political upheaval. The first assessment mission to Mali identified clear entry points for operationalizing AFSIT in a post-UCG context.

UNDP strategic positioning

The launch of the AFSIT and the flagship Soldiers and Citizens report and subsequent activities marked a significant stride in entrenching UNDP’s thought leadership on pressing global development issues, including the rise of UCG in Africa. Leveraging the strengths of the UNDP-AUC partnership, AFSIT champions innovative, development-centric solutions, in alignment with the UN Sustainable Development Goals and those of the AU’s Agenda 2063. These activities signalled UNDP’s deep commitment to pioneering sustainable and impactful development strategies that resonate with global and continental visions for the future.

Timely dissemination of development-centric information

The launch of AFSIT and the advocacy roadshow intersected with fresh military coups in Niger and Gabon, thus underscoring the pertinence of the research and the Facility. Through AFSIT outreach events, existing and new leadership figures in key organizations were equipped with compelling empirical information, which will contribute to development-centric and citizen-focused approaches and programming.

Education and awareness-raising

By promoting and sharing the findings from Soldiers and Citizens, an unprecedented people-centred dataset, the roadshow addressed a critical void in current research on complex transitions and UCG. It fostered a heightened awareness of citizens' experiences, drivers and dimensions of coups, which had been largely absent from global discourse. The ensuing dialogues sought to realign international efforts with people-centric, pro-democracy responses that also resonate with the domestic imperatives and strategic objectives of the countries and entities involved.

New opportunities for partnerships and resource mobilization

The AFSIT launch, roadshow and ongoing engagements have sparked new partnerships and potential avenues for resource mobilization. The tangible encounters of the roadshow, in particular, provided fertile ground for the growth and expansion of AFSIT's networks and support systems.

STRENGTHENING GOVERNANCE AND SAFEGUARDING DEVELOPMENT DURING POLITICAL TRANSITIONS IN AFRICA

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

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, support to national dialogue and 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.



AFSIT Activation

Following the launch of AFSIT in Nairobi in July 2023, the inaugural steering committee meeting took place on 7 September. 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, The Gambia and Mali.

AFSIT Analysis

Flagship new report capturing citizens’ perspectives on UCG

The launch of the AFSIT also marked the launch of a flagship new UNDP report titled Soldiers and Citizens: Military Coups and the Need for Democratic Renewal in Africa.

The research captures the views of 8,000 citizens across Africa. Among them,

5,000

lived through recent coups or unconstitutional changes of government (UCG) in Burkina Faso, Chad, Guinea, Mali and Sudan. Their views were contrasted with those of

3,000

citizens from countries on a path of democratic transition or consolidation, namely The Gambia, Ghana, and Tanzania.

This unprecedented survey yielded a uniquely people-centred dataset, revealing significant insights both for preventing further coups in at-risk countries, and for harnessing opportunities for transformative change and sustained constitutional order where UCG have taken place. The advocacy roadshow served as a dynamic platform for further disseminating the findings of the Soldiers and Citizens report, and to raise awareness of AFSIT among key audiences across diverse locations.

[Watch the film: Soldiers and Citizens](#)

Making sense of unconstitutional changes of government trends across Africa

An analytical note prepared ahead of the inaugural AFSIT steering committee meeting unpacked UCG trends across the continent. Military coups typically come about as the culmination of inter-related challenges, from a lack of good governance and increased insecurity to economic concerns and systemic corruption.

The note highlighted that alongside critical political engagement, **actors tasked with responding to UCG ought to apply a development lens to all processes involved in political transitions. This can support a human-rights based, people-centred approach that prioritizes inclusion at all levels of transitions activities.**

AFSIT is a timely mechanism, with the potential to amass the comparative advantages of the AU and the UN and, through them, relevant RECs and the wider international community, to support an inclusive and sustainable return to constitutional order.

Succinct and up-to-date analysis in the AFSIT Monitor

The AFSIT Monitor is a quarterly produced by the AFSIT Secretariat that provides **succinct analysis of ongoing transition contexts and tracks progress in the implementation of the AFSIT, including activities and upcoming events.** Every issue focuses on a specific country or theme.

The recent resurgence of military coups in Africa has led to military transitions in several states, making them natural candidates for AFSIT application. These countries have adopted transition roadmaps and charters, established transitional legislatures and agreed a timeline for constitutional order to be restored. Future editions of the Monitor will track the evolution and implementation of these instruments. However, AFSIT will not focus exclusively on coup-born regimes. Transition goes beyond that — as found in the Soldiers and Citizens report.

The launch edition presented AFSIT and its overall framework, along with several countries in transition. This included a special focus on Niger, while also considering opportunities for AFSIT in Burkina Faso, Chad, Guinea and Mali.

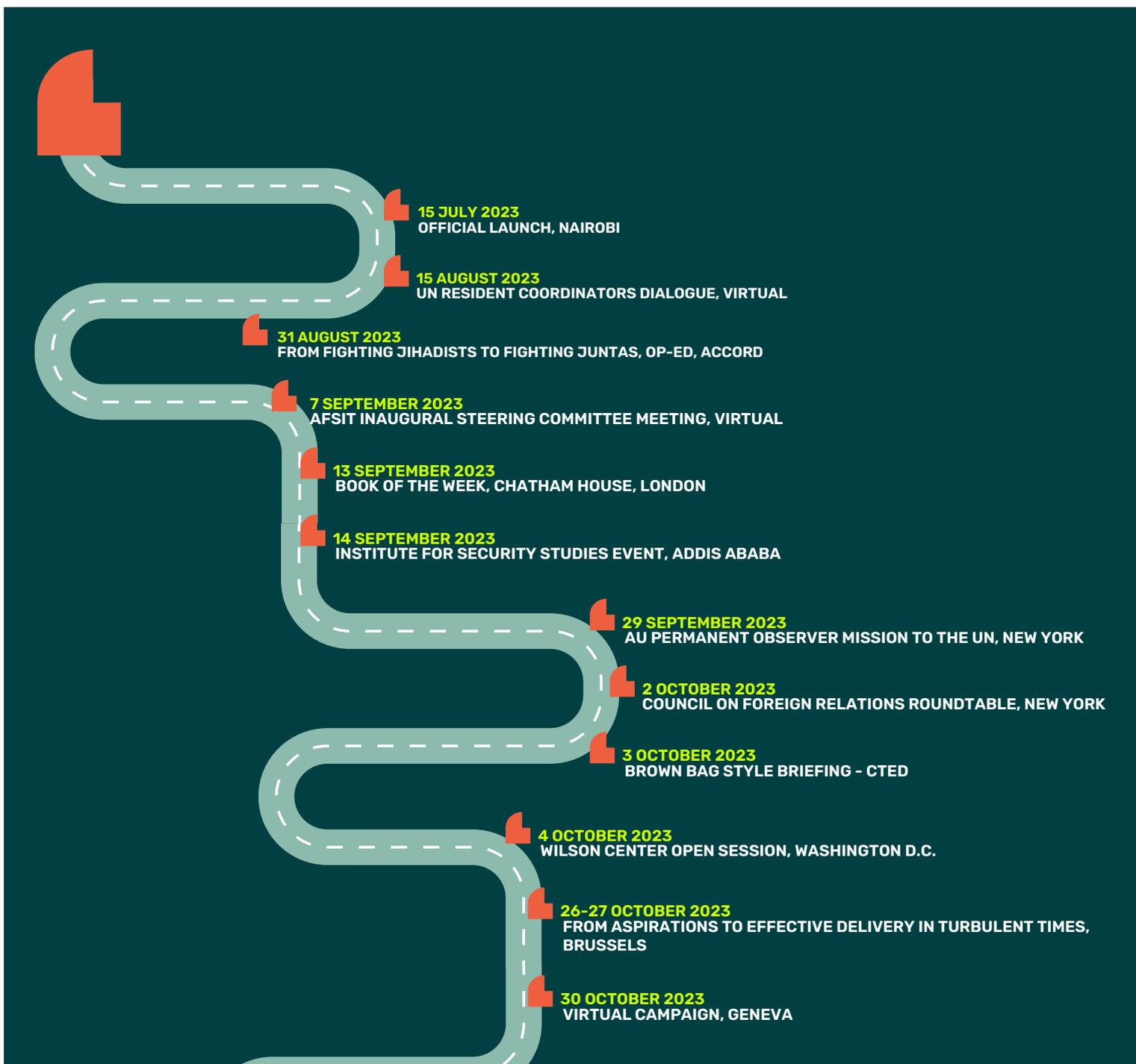
The second edition provided an update on the situations in Gabon and Niger, and also focused on the recently created alliance between three West African countries to have undergone recent UCG.



AFSIT Advocacy

Building on the visibility generated by the AFSIT launch, the AFSIT advocacy roadshow was designed to serve as a dynamic platform for further disseminating the findings of the Soldiers and Citizens report, and to raise awareness of AFSIT among key audiences across diverse locations in Africa, Europe and the United States.

ROADSHOW MAP: 15 JULY TO 30 OCTOBER



PSC Interview: AFSIT – a moonshot to support inclusive transitions, Patience Chiradza, Jide Okeke. [Read on ISS.](#)

Op-Ed: From fighting Jihadists to fighting Juntas: Explaining the recent resurgence of military coups in Africa, and how to prevent recurrence. [Read on Accord.](#)



The goals of the roadshow were threefold.

First, it sought to socialize the report’s findings, engaging stakeholders from various sectors to glean critical recommendations and lessons. This objective was not only about presenting the findings, but was intended to foster a two-way dialogue, ensuring that the insights produced by the research were enriched by the diverse perspectives of participants.

Second, the roadshow aimed to elevate the visibility of the AFSIT, aligning its objectives with existing efforts and mechanisms in a complementary manner. By raising awareness, the roadshow aspired to create a collaborative ecosystem that recognizes and leverages the complementarity of various stakeholders’ efforts.

Lastly, a third key goal was to mobilize resources for the AFSIT. This is essential to ensure that the interventions conceptualized under AFSIT could be effectively implemented and scaled, addressing the needs they were designed to meet.



The roadshow emerged as a pivotal platform, enhancing UNDP’s standing as a thought leader in development and governance more broadly and coup-response in Africa.



The roadshow emerged as a pivotal platform, enhancing UNDP’s standing as a thought leader in development and governance more broadly and coup-response in Africa specifically, particularly in the timely context of recent political shifts in Niger and Gabon. It facilitated the dissemination of highly relevant research findings from the Soldiers and Citizens report, fostering rich dialogue and awareness on people-centred approaches to coups and complex governance crises.



This series of events — spanning in-person, hybrid, and online formats — successfully deepened existing partnerships, forged new alliances, and opened channels for resource mobilization. Moreover, it propelled the conversation towards effective “stay and deliver” strategies, which will contribute to international actors to support democratic resilience and citizen-focused responses in amid complex transitions.

[See Annex 1 for more information on the AFSIT Advocacy Roadshow.](#)

AFSIT Investment

AFSIT delivery will occur through the following three windows

WINDOW 1

Deployment of technical assistance to support transition processes

Providing timely support during transition processes is critical for safeguarding developmental gains and to position UNDP and the AU 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 transitions (including the establishment of the Africa Political Transitions Index)

Research, evidence and analysis will be critical to the success of AFSIT support to countries in transition. AFSIT will develop analysis and contribute to research gaps. AFSIT will 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 will 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, 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 (PWD).

AFSIT Assessments

The first AFSIT assessment mission was deployed in Mali from 6 to 15 November 2023, as approved by the inaugural meeting of the AFSIT Steering Committee held on 7 September 2023. The mission was deployed to identify and assess the priorities and needs of the stakeholders in transition in Mali, and along with entry points for AFSIT support anchored in the principles of national ownership and leadership, and inclusiveness of processes.

Key findings of the mission included limited progress in implementing the 2015 Peace Agreement, which has affected the people's expectation towards the soon restoration of peace and security in Mali. Economic fragility was also highlighted, linked to sanctions.

Security emerged as a top priority of the authorities, and revealed a need for a balance not only between security and other needs, particularly in budget allocations, but also between military and non-military approaches to the security challenges. The withdrawal of MINUSMA is expected to have negative effects, as the mission provided several other services to the Malian authorities and populations beyond the provision of security, which may be felt with their departure. Further, the participation of women, youth and persons with disabilities in the transition processes has been limited.

Building on AFSIT's unique value proposition as demand-driven and ensuring national ownership as well as complementarity with relevant existing mechanisms and initiatives, the following areas constitute potential strategic entry points for AFSIT engagement are being considered:

Technical assistance towards the establishment and strengthening of transition processes, mechanisms and institutions, particularly:



Strengthened dialogue with regional organizations to improve relations between Mali and both ECOWAS and AU for the smooth return to constitutional order.



Effective governance and rule of law to enhance the work of transition institutions.



Reinforcement of social cohesion and state-citizen relations, focusing on supporting efforts by the state and CSOs to promote community dialogue and social cohesion in enabling a just and inclusive transition.



Restoration of constitutional order through support to the electoral process to ensure inclusive and credible polls.

AFSIT may also support the facilitation and implementation of inclusive and peaceful transitions including by:

-  Sustaining the dialogue platforms between CSOs and the Government within the framework of the transition.
-  Supporting dialogue and dissemination workshops on the reforms processes for enhanced transparency and accountability within the framework of the transition.
-  Enhancing women, youth and PWDs' leadership capacities.
-  Supporting the "Volunteers engaged for the support of the transition (VERT)" initiative to enhance youth capacities to contribute to peacebuilding and development processes.
-  Supporting the envisaged second edition of a youth caravan called Grand Tree for Peace and Social Cohesion; whose first edition was supported by some UN agencies.

Partnerships and resource mobilization efforts

The partnership between the UNDP and AUC in the establishment of the AFSIT portends several advantages. The African Union and other regional actors have established robust normative frameworks to advance democratic governance, and human security and promote the right to development on the continent. They have also often led political engagements and interventions to address complex political transitions in Africa. These political engagements have had mixed results and may sometimes constrain regional actors from direct or immediate engagements with countries experiencing complex political transitions due to decisions such as sanctions. Yet, there is a clear recognition of the need to stay and deliver for the population even during such complex political transitions.

UNDP has a clear mandate to stay and deliver during transitions. **UNDP has maintained a country presence and has provided support to several transition processes across Africa by establishing infrastructures for peace, providing technical assistance, and implementing capacity-building initiatives before, during, and after transitions.** Its value proposition in the areas of capacity deployment, solid expertise in governance, rapid procurement and the traditional management of basket funds are well known. Working with local, national, and regional civil society actors as well as implementing programmes in rural and cross-border communities remains an added value.

The combined political leadership of the African Union and Regional Economic Communities and the in-country development experience of UNDP therefore represents an innovative approach to addressing complex political transitions in Africa.

Highlights for future partnerships include:



The opportunity to present to the EU Political and Security Committee (PSC) in Brussels as part of the advocacy roadshow signalled a gathering of momentum and the potential for resource mobilization to support AFSIT. These events have piqued the interest of partners who are keen to provide financial support to AFSIT, and preparations are underway to share proposals with these partners.



Nordic think tanks have expressed a strong interest in hosting the Africa Political Transition Index, underlining the increasing momentum and commitment to advancing inclusive transitions in Africa.



A pipeline of donors including Japan, the EU and Germany have expressed strong interest in supporting AFSIT.

What to expect in 2024

AFSIT anticipates a dynamic and impactful year with a focus on several key initiatives. A snapshot of our workplan and key milestones in 2024 includes:

- 1. AFSIT country assessments, and deployment of technical assistance** providing timely support to countries undergoing transition, will be critical for AFSIT to safeguard development gains and return to constitutional order. Guided by the Steering Committee outcome, assessment missions will be deployed to Burkina Faso, Chad and Guinea. Other countries will be considered based on demand. Technical assistance will be deployed to Mali in the first quarter to offer strategic support in effective political transitions through good practice and lessons learned. Through this assistance, the AU and UNDP will also establish synergy with other existing frameworks and interventions, which can be harnessed to contribute to inclusive transition in Mali.
- 2. Sub-regional dialogue:** AFSIT envisions facilitating a series of impactful dialogues and knowledge-sharing platforms among key strategic stakeholders and policymakers. These engagements will serve as robust stock-taking exercises on UCG in Africa, aiming to distil essential lessons and generate targeted policy recommendations. The dialogue sessions will play a pivotal role in fostering collaboration and consensus-building among the UN, AU, RECs, CSOs and national stakeholders. By creating a space for reflection and exchange, these dialogues seek to identify and prioritize key areas of support. Leveraging existing instruments such as AFSIT, the dialogues are strategically designed to strengthen and consolidate political transitions towards democratic governance.
- 3. Establishment of the Africa Political Transitions Index:** AFSIT is committed to developing an Africa Political Transitions Risk Index. This index will play a crucial role in forecasting and informing stakeholders about political risks, allowing proactive engagement with key actors before, during and after identifying potential risks for UCG scenarios. In the first quarter of 2024, a methodology workshop will be held to develop the conceptual framing of the index. Acknowledging the existing landscape of indices, such as the Crisis Risk Dashboard (CRD) and the Human Development Index (HDI) within the UN system, AFSIT recognizes the importance of learning from established frameworks, while carving out a distinct contribution to political transition analysis and navigating political transitions in Africa.

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: AFSIT ADVOCACY ROADSHOW OVERVIEW

<p>United Kingdom</p>	<p>Mission dates: 11 September – 14 September 2023 Event: 23 September 2023 Partner: Chatham House</p> <p>Organized in collaboration with Chatham House, over 100 people joined this hybrid event physically and online. The discussions generated critical conversations regarding the surge of coups in the Sahel, concerns regarding third-termism and other forms of UCG, and options for the international community and regional actors to respond to at-risk countries. The importance of promoting human security, especially in the context of countries experiencing coups, emerged as a cornerstone of discussions.</p>
<p>United States</p>	<p>Mission dates: 27 September – 4 October 2023: New York, Washington, US Events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 29 September: US Joint UNDP-AU high-level forum at the AU Permanent Observer Mission to the UN • 2 October: Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), In-Person Roundtable. ‘Citizens and Soldiers: Military Coups, Democratic Deficits, and Public Opinion in Africa’ • 3 October: United Nations Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, brown-bag briefing • 5 October: Closed briefing with World Bank Executive Director Koen Davidse. <p>In New York, the UNDP team had the privilege of engaging with Permanent Representatives of AU member states, the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA), and the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR). The response from AU member states was highly positive, with appreciation for the thorough and timely scholarship presented in the Soldiers and Citizens report. There was strong advocacy for further socialization of the report to ensure its recommendations, particularly in the areas of prevention and transition support, are embraced.</p> <p>Under the leadership of Ambassador Michelle Gavin, the CFR characterized our engagement on the report and AFSIT as a rare privilege and a tour de force. They encouraged UNDP to engage with the US State Department on the report and the facility. Importantly, CFR also extended an open invitation for further engagements, marking a significant opportunity for future collaboration.</p> <p>In Washington DC, we had an impressive and positive engagement with the Fragility, Conflict, and Violence (FCV) team. The presentation of the FCV team’s findings resonated well and highlighted the necessity for a deeper partnership between the World Bank and UNDP in addressing complex political transitions.</p> <p>Koen Davidse, currently serving as the Dean of the World Bank Group of Executive Directors, extended invitations to other Executive Directors, their alternates, and directors to engage on the report and the facility. He commended the quality of the Soldiers and Citizens report and welcomed efforts to operationalize the AFSIT in collaboration with the AUC.</p>
<p>Europe</p>	<p>Mission dates: 21-23 October: Stockholm, Sweden</p> <p>Description A series of strategic bilateral meetings were held including with research think tanks – SIPRI, FBA and the Nordic Africa Institute. Discussions focused on possible areas of collaboration on AFSIT with the Africa Transition Index. A high-level forum as part of the development dialogue series on the Soldiers and Citizens report was organized and panellist included Ulf Källstig, Africa Director SIDA. The event had a high attendance – almost 200 participants (including virtual attendees). There is an opportunity to sustain the positive momentum received on the report and AFSIT, it was advised to follow up with the relevant SIDA focal point in Addis Ababa.</p>

Mission dates: 23-29 October: Brussels, Belgium

A series of strategic bilateral meetings were held in Brussels including crucial actors from the European External Action Service (EEAS) – Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI), Pan-African Affairs, INTPA. Most noteworthy, a dedicated session with the EU Political and Security Committee (PSC) was held in Brussels for further advocacy of the report, hosted by the Permanent Representative of Denmark to the EU, the discussions were timely and hopefully will inform policy decisions and reflections on the Sahel and encourage development partners to stay and deliver.

In partnership with ETTG, a dedicated session was held at the Belgium Permanent Representative to the EU, where the report was presented to over 75 participants who attended physically. The event was opened by the Belgium Minister for Development Cooperation. At the time, there is an upcoming AU-EU Ministerial meeting coming up in November, the priority areas will be peace, security and prosperity. The EU Delegation were travel to Addis Ababa on the week of the 6th of November to commence planning, notably the suspended UCG countries will not be in attendance. It is expected that a joint communique will be issued with the AU-EU as part of the outcome.

Mission dates: 29-30 October: Copenhagen, Denmark

In Denmark, the UNDP team had the opportunity to present the Soldiers and Citizens report and the AFSIT during a public event held at UN City. The newly appointed Director, Ketil Karlsen, who will be overseeing the Department for Africa and Development Policy, Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, opened the event and was part of the discussions along with Professor Thomas Mandrup, from the Royal Danish Defence College.

It was an excellent forum for socialising the report and a timely intervention as the Department for Africa and Development Policy is currently developing its new Africa Strategy and promoting sustainable development in Africa is a key priority for the Government. For the same reason, development aid to the continent is proposed to increase significantly in the draft Finance Bill for next year. More than half of Danish aid to developing countries is targeted at efforts in Africa – approx. DKK 9bn/USD 1.3bn (increase of USD 393m as compared to 2023).

We also had the opportunity to present the report to technical experts at the Ministry and conversations focused on practical steps to stay and deliver even during instances of coup d'état to safeguard development gains.

A timely briefing session was held with NGOs and Globalt Fokus. These entities responded very positively to the findings of the report and noted that they would use it as an advocacy tool. The discussion emphasized the urgent need to invest in democracy, address political impunity, and work toward peace and security, with a focus on promoting international cooperation and the role of Denmark – specifically, in their UNSC candidacy. A meeting was also conducted with the Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS), an independent public research institution for international studies, that conducts and communicates multidisciplinary research and aims to be agenda-setting in research, policy, and public debate. This was our first meeting with Peter Kragelund, the new Director of DIIS. This meeting presented an opportunity for further collaboration with DIIS on the analysis and knowledge products for AFSIT, in particular the Transition Index.

Africa**Mission dates: 11–15 September and 22–29 October 2023****September event:**

- Lusaka, Zambia, 11–15 September: The 2023 East and Southern Africa Regional Governance Forum and Democracy Day Roundtable.

The 2023 East and Southern Africa Regional Governance Forum and Democracy Day Roundtable is an annual event co-organized by UNDP and the International IDEA, and this edition was held against the backdrop of a trend of democratic reversals in parts of the continent, with a string of military coups. UNDP made a presentation, as part of a panel of the first session of the forum, on 13 September, on the recently published Soldiers and Citizens report, as well as on the Africa Facility to Support Inclusive Transitions (AFSIT). The above background of the Forum made the flagship report very timely and positively received.

October events:

- Abuja, Nigeria, 24-25 October: International IDEA's 2nd Retreat of Special Envoys and other Officials of Regional Economic Communities on constitutional transitions in Africa.
- Accra, Ghana, 26-27 October: Joint UNDP-ISS-IDEA-OSF Accra Civil Society Forum

At the second edition of the International IDEA's Retreat of Special Envoys and other Officials of Regional Economic Communities on constitutional transitions in Africa, Abuja, Nigeria, a presentation of AFSIT highlighted the important role it could play in helping countries in transition. The UNDP representative shared a panel with Dr Mohamed Ibn Chambas, the AU's Special Envoy for silencing the guns, Dr Ogunyisen, the acting head of the Mediation Unit of ECOWAS; and Amb. Mohamed Yonis, IGAD's Special Envoy for Sudan. The need for complementarity between AFSIT and other mechanisms, so as to avoid any duplication, was emphasized.

In Accra, a presentation on the recently published report, *Soldiers and Citizens*, as well as on the Africa Facility to Support Inclusive Transitions (AFSIT), was deepened through further presentations on the drivers of UCG in Africa and the issue of presidential term-limits in Africa.

COMMUNICATION AND VISIBILITY

To underpin the success of the advocacy roadshow, a communications strategy was imperative. With the roadshow's expansive geographic footprint, the need for a common working methodology among and with partner organizations, and a clear demarcation of roles and responsibilities was paramount. A comprehensive communications blueprint, in concert with a detailed Trello board, was crafted and disseminated among the internal and external teams to synchronize efforts and in particular to attain the following objectives:

1. To create awareness among relevant stakeholder groups of the *Soldiers and Citizens* report by means of hybrid and virtual events in key locations.
2. To leverage partner presence in key locations to amplify the key findings and messages of the *Soldiers and Citizens* report.
3. To position UNDP as a trusted and timely thought leader against a rapidly evolving backdrop of transitional contexts across Africa.
4. To raise awareness of AFSIT as a joint response by UNDP and AU to political transitions.
5. To support resource mobilization efforts for AFSIT.

Operationalizing this plan involved a multi-layered approach: a thorough workflow document outlined pivotal actions to be taken before, during, and after the events; a repository of digital and physical communication assets was created and shared, ensuring visibility and cohesive branding. This repository included an array of tools from the report and its associated website to the engaging *Soldiers and Citizens* documentary film, versatile social media templates, QR code printouts, eye-catching digital banners, key messages for both AFSIT and the *Soldiers and Citizens* report, and a press release.

Additionally, a customizable social media strategy was developed, with essential links, handles, hashtags, and pre-designed content, to foster a harmonious promotional effort among UNDP, the host entities, speakers, and their respective organizations. A 'common approach to comms' template made up of guiding questions was employed and adapted in tandem with partners for each event, setting clear expectations and maintaining message alignment. To ensure consistent messaging throughout, a generic concept note was also devised.

It is crucial to recognize the adaptive nature of the communication plan; as the roadshow progressed, the plan proved to be a living document, evolving in response to the dynamic nature of the events. Key sections, such as the event calendar, were regularly updated, reflecting the agility and responsiveness of our approach to the roadshow's unfolding narrative.

Online and social media campaign

From 28 September to 23 October, some 33 posts were published on X, including 19 original posts and 14 reposted from partners' accounts. Because of changes on the platform, analytics on Twitter weren't reflected

The 19 original posts on X, published on UNDP Africa, generated the following:

- 38,572 impressions. Impressions being the number of times posts were seen.
- 2,088 engagements. Engagements are the total number of times a user has interacted with a post. This includes all clicks anywhere on the post (including hashtags, links, avatar, username and post expansion), reposts, replies, follows and likes.

Media approach

Given the sensitive and evolving nature of the themes addressed – particularly in the immediate wake of the coups in Niger and Gabon – a decision was made to cautiously abstain from pursuing interview opportunities. This was a deliberate decision to navigate the sensitivities and complexities inherent in real-time political developments. Nonetheless, the roadshow's core messages and findings achieved media penetration through a combination of public events, a targeted social media campaign, and strategically disseminated press release. To further bolster understanding and offer clear insights into our stance and research, a comprehensive series of AFSIT FAQs was developed, serving as a cornerstone document to guide media engagement and public discourse.



Copyright © UNDP AUC
2023 | All rights reserved