

EUROPE, THE U.S., & AFRICA: NEW INTERESTS, INITIATIVES, AND PARTNERS

On Thursday, June 12, the Wilson Center's Global Europe program hosted a presentation and discussion on Africa's evolving relationships with the U.S. and Europe, featuring Global Fellow Ludger Kühnhardt, Director of the Center for European Integration Studies at Bonn University, Germany. The presentation focused on the ways in which Africa is growing and developing, as well as how other countries can adapt their relationships to work multilaterally with Africa. This also served as a launch of Dr. Kühnhardt's new book: *Africa Consensus: New Interests, Initiatives, and Partners*, recently published by The Woodrow Wilson Center Press.



Global Europe Program

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On June 12, 2014, the Wilson Center's Global Europe and Africa Programs co-hosted a discussion with **Dr. Ludger Kühnhardt** on his recently published book, *Africa Consensus: New Interests, Initiatives, and Partners*. Kühnhardt is Director at the Center for European Integration Studies (ZEI) and Professor of Political Science at Bonn University, Germany. Kühnhardt spoke regarding a new global perception of, and approach to, Africa. The conversation and subsequent question and answer session were moderated by the Global Europe Program's Director, **Dr. Christian Ostermann**.

Kühnhardt introduced his talk with an historical overview of foreign involvement in Africa, a chronicle of "slavery, territory, and resources". He then turned to the new perspective on Africa, describing a post-colonial world that scrambles *with* Africa as opposed the former colonial approach of scrambling *for* Africa. During the presentation, Kühnhardt outlined five reasons the dynamics in Africa are changing.

1. Africa's younger generation yearns for greater employment opportunities, along with "the implementation of African ownership and inclusion in their respective political and social systems."
2. Rates of violence and political extremism on the African continent are at an all-time low.
3. A great number of African countries have sustained 6% growth rates for more than a decade; Africa is committed to developing infrastructure, creating jobs, and sustaining peace.
4. The African Union is restructured and ambitious.
5. Africa is hard at work, "shifting from rhetoric and vision towards pragmatic implementation processes".

While the dynamics of current foreign involvement in Africa have certainly changed, there is not yet a consensus on policy strategy. Each external partner or region maintains its own modus operandi which, in Kühnhardt's opinion, "does not automatically give credit and legitimacy to their actions on the continent." Thus, Kühnhardt proposes a "concerted global effort" between major players such as the United States, the European Union, Turkey, and BRICS countries in their scramble *with* Africa. This is not only an issue of bilateral, but also multilateral, relationships with Africa. Kühnhardt offered a list of ten essential building blocks for the creation of this strategy:

1. Establishing African ownership and responsibility.
2. Focusing on "promoting opportunities" in lieu of "correcting wrongs".
3. Transforming institutionalized developmental theory into "human-centered" developmental practice.
4. Committing to a better understanding of human security.
5. Simultaneously fostering both job creation and "social improvement of the informal sector".
6. Redefining the notion of African ownership to include its soil and natural resources.
7. Tackling hindrances to Africa's growth and supporting the implementation of African Union strategies.
8. Learning the lessons of the Arab Spring by "recognizing the interplay between stability, rule of law, market economy and social responsibility".
9. "Harmonizing nation-building and region-building" and understanding a "new interpretation of sovereignty".

10. Striking a balance between “African trends” and “global partnerships” in order to establish “coherent African strategies”.

In conclusion, Dr. Kühnhardt argues that Africa’s external partners need to recognize the changing nature and dynamics of the African continent and act both accordingly and cooperatively with each other in order to promote a better future for Africa.