



SEEKING A “BETTER” NORMAL

**NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND RELATED CASE STUDIES
ON STRATEGIC FORESIGHT IN AFRICA
IN RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

REGIONAL WEBINARS IN AFRICA

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_ INTRODUCTION _

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like no other

Africa with (out)
Foresight culture

Lessons from
case studies

Foresight as an
imperative of
survival

• OBJECTIVES

- Understand the current trends in strategic foresight practice in Africa.
- Explore gaps in relation to institutional arrangements, national policies, etc.
- Explore opportunities for strengthening Strategic Foresight practice in the public sector

METHODOLOGY

In-depth analysis of Strategic Foresight in 7 African countries :

- Case studies : South Africa, Kenya, Ghana, Zambia and Madagascar
- Two “successful countries”: Cape Verde, Morocco

Data collection:

- Desk review
- Conversation / interviews

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- The Pandemic, a global societal crisis that causes a Faultline in evolution or, as Edgar Morin puts it, “an eruption of the unforeseen”.
- As such, a crisis like that triggered by the Covid-19 pandemic always presents two contradictory outcomes:
- The first outcome is one of regression. Crises tend to expose already existing societal drifts;
- The second alternative, seemingly poles apart from the first, is the more virtuous path, considered idealist by some, but very much achievable and realistic...
- For those concerned with the future of the continent, such a crisis provides a unique opportunity, an illumination of the right direction and the potential to transform society for a better future for Africa.

_ DEFINITION _

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- “ Strategic foresight is an organized, systematic way of looking beyond the expected to engage with uncertainty and complexity “ *(CEPA strategy guidance note)*
- “ Strategic Foresight’ has been defined as ‘the capacity to think systematically about the future to inform decision making today. It is a cognitive capacity that we need to develop as individuals, as organizations and as a society. In individuals, it is usually an unconscious capacity and needs to be surfaced to be used in any meaningful way to inform decision-making” . *(UNDP / GCPSE)*

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- “Strategic foresight” is simply “to look into the future and figure out what’s coming, so you can be ready” (Agrip)
- Strategic foresight is different to strategic planning.
 - Strategic planning looks at what has historically been offered and asks, “How do we improve or expand upon what we’re currently doing?”
 - Strategic foresight looks 10 or 20 years into the future and asks, “What will our citizens value? What will our citizens need, and how best can we meet those needs?”
 - There is a differentiation on the expectations.

_ DEFINITION _

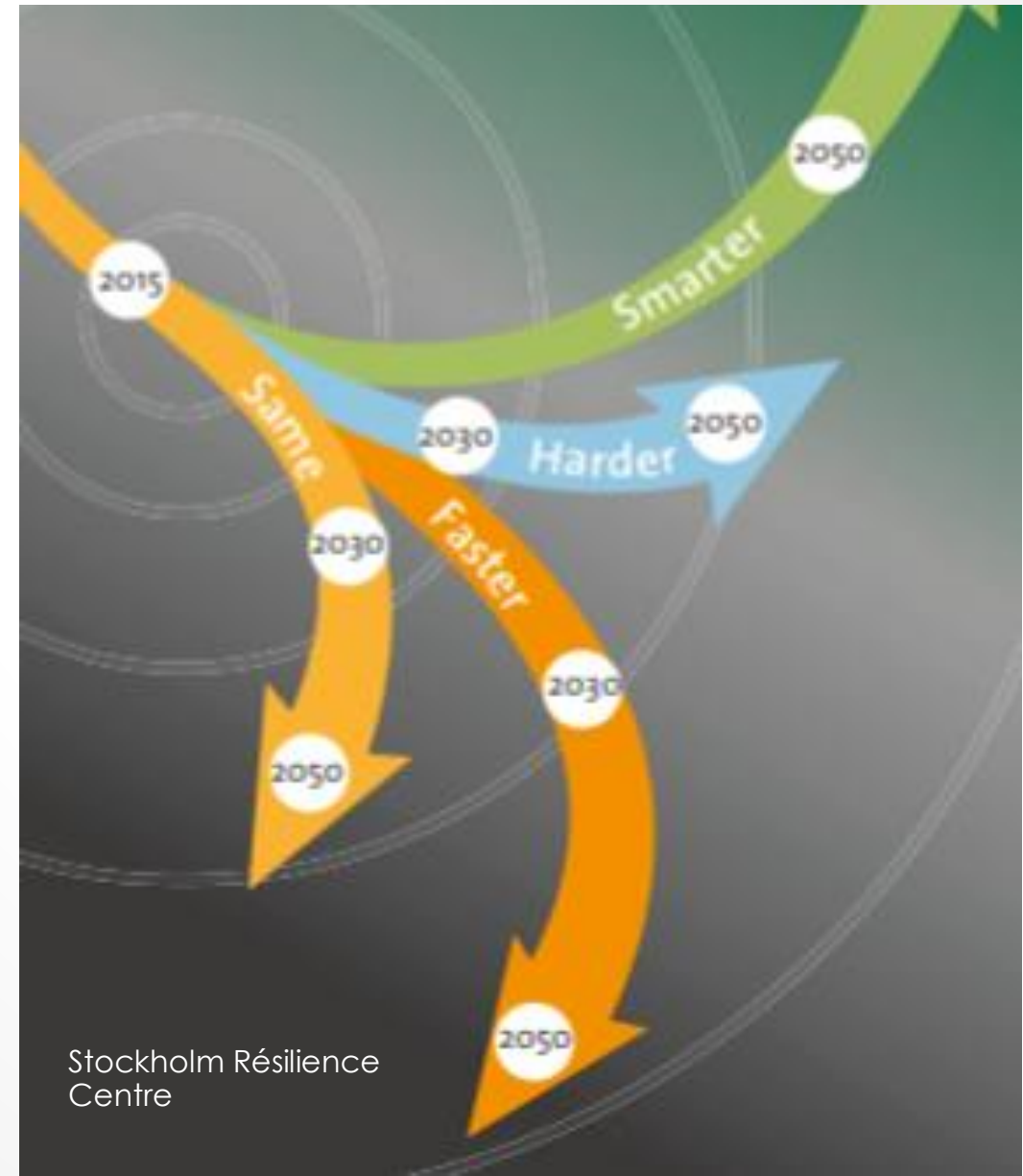
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- Strategic planning is great if your environment is stable and unchanging.
- Strategic foresight is better for dealing with “VUCA” – volatility, uncertainty, chaos and ambiguity



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- Crisis presented a surreal shift in the “natural order of things”.
- This rupture offers opportunities to build a “better normal”.
- Felwine Sarr (2020) “a historic opportunity for Africans, [like no other] to mobilize their intelligences [...],

AFRICA WITH (OUT) FORESIGHT CULTURE

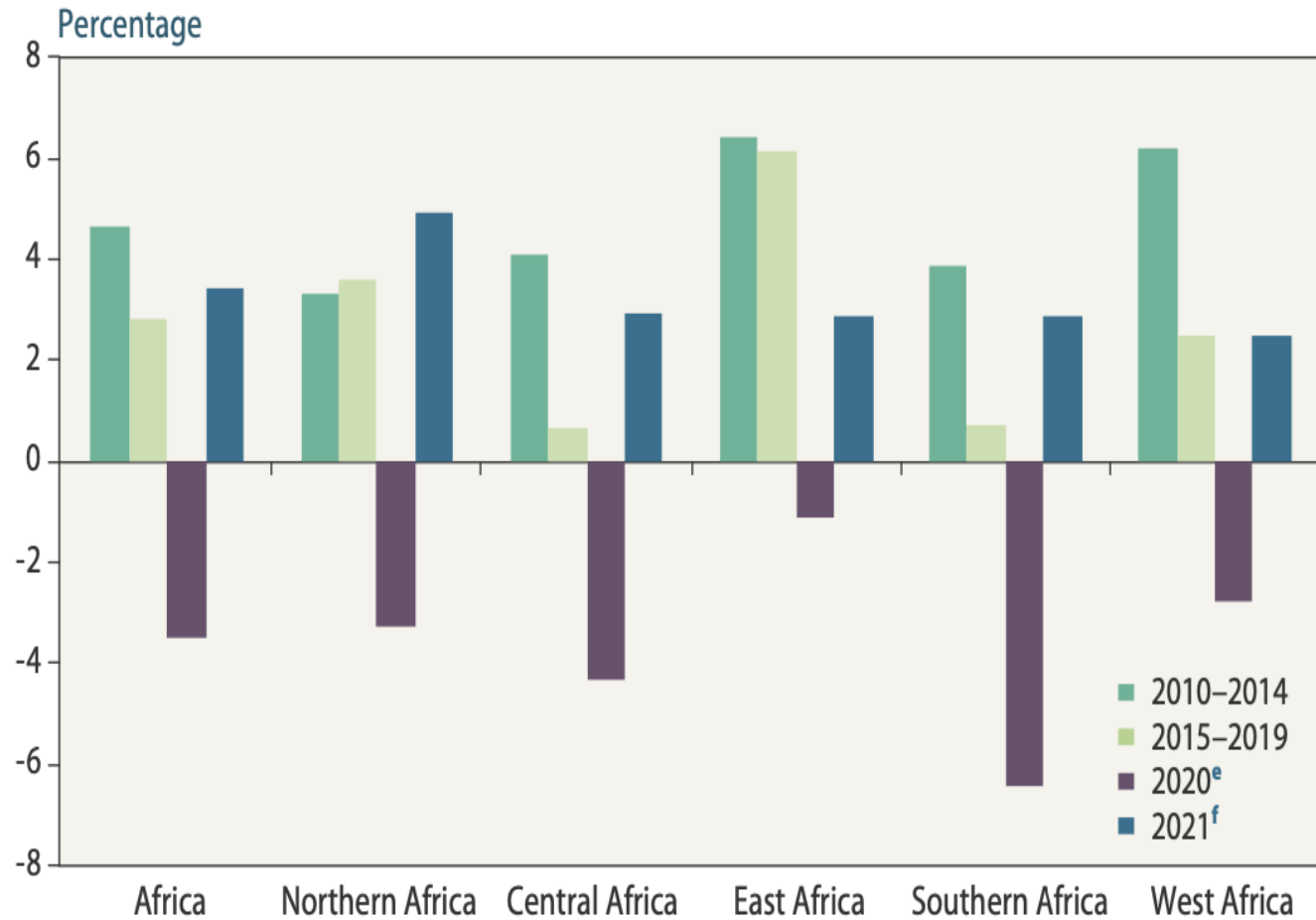
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Figure III.5
Real GDP growth in Africa, by subregion



Source: UN DESA, based on projections and scenarios produced with the World Economic Forecasting Model (WEFM).

Note: Data for 2020 are estimations and data for 2021 are forecasts (**e** = estimate, **f** = forecast). Excludes Libya.

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- **Cautiously optimistic economic forecasts.**
- **The pandemic showed things not only as they were, but also how quickly they could change.**
- **Strategic foresight offers a shift from short- to medium-term thinking and planning to long-term thinking: an alternative trajectory**

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- **South Africa (102), Kenya (64), Ghana (44), Zambia (13), Madagascar (NS), Cape Verde, Morocco.**
- **Each African country has different experience of strategic foresight.**
- **All countries will benefit from strengthening a strategic foresight culture.**
- **Many African countries have national planning commissions and have used scenario building to develop long-term strategies.**
- **Broad consensus that African nations needed to set their own agendas**

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INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS	NATIONAL POLICIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The institutional set-up is sometimes a sticking point • Political considerations over institutional arrangements • Institutional set up more controlled than open • National Long-Term Planning Studies are at stake 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry in charge of planning....(NPC vision 2030) • involvement of other ministerial departments • Capacities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less donor -oriented • More engagement of the private sector and civil society • Independent institutional set up with (advisory, steering committee, working groups, scientific committee) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build more capacities on LT planning and SF • Build capacities in other Ministerial departments • Promote participation and good governance • Evaluation capacities

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STRATEGIC FORESIGHT AND THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPEMENT AGENDA (2030 / 2063)

- Misalignment of SDGs focus with citizen's priorities,**
- SDG 16**
- SDGs 1,3,4,6 and SDG 3**

FINANCING STRATEGIC FORESIGHT

- Funding from development agencies and institutions**
- More and more countries are self-financing their long-term strategic studies**
- Countries like Ghana, Nigeria, South Africa decided to self-finance their long-term strategic studies in early days**

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- Key additional lessons:

1. **Strategic foresight capacity must be seen as an ecosystem interwoven into government. (i.e. all ministerial departments, private sector, civil society, universities, youth and women groups)**
2. **Needs the right people, asking the right questions, in the right place.**
3. **Context matters: it influences a society's appetite for long-term thinking, comfort with complexity, and uncertainty.**

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MOROCCO: REAPING THE BENEFITS OF STRATEGIC FORESIGHT

- Set up Royal Institute for Strategic Studies adopting “*Global Foresight*” as a national strategic foresight approach.
- The political commitment at the highest levels of government to constantly monitor operations making it possible to reach grassroots communities.

LESSONS FROM CASE STUDIES

CAPE VERDE: THE DIVIDENDS OF GOOD GOVERNANCE

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- **Success is owed to:**
 1. **Good governance and sound management of the state;**
 2. **Long-term investments in human development.**
 3. **Underlying social-political stability with successive governments and citizen's trust.**
 4. **Among the top recipients of development assistance and remittances, with high market access.**
 5. **An in-built culture of resilience and grit in the face of multifaceted adversities.**
 6. **A strong political, and owned ideology built on from Amilcar Cabral's legacy in the independence struggles.**

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- **This new era is an era of multiple uncertainties (“VUCA” – volatility, uncertainty, chaos and ambiguity) with extremes events that we cannot predict**
- **“.....We need to understand the world where we will spend the rest of our lives.” *(Dr Alioune Sall)***
- **Strategic foresight becomes a survival imperative and not a luxury”.**
- **Countries can use strategic foresight to not only grow but to also manage risk and uncertainty.**

_ FORESIGHT AS AN IMPERATIVE SURVIVAL _

- An African leadership for alternative futures is key.

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SCALES	OPPORTUNITIES
GLOBAL <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Environmental and economic globalization	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Globalization recommends adopting a more subsidiary approach:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• « Global Foresight »
REGIONAL <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Economic integration : SADC, ECOWAS, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Opportunity to develop Strategic thinking within a supranational ecosystem and more integrated economic context
<u>NATIONAL</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• All sectors participation and consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• incorporate more regional and global perspectives to strategic foresight.
<u>LOCAL</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Local Government level• Municipalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promote and consider the practice of local foresight. (Territorial Foresight)

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- Strategic foresight needs a more gender-balanced approach, to fully respond to future challenges.
- Supporting capacity building for strategic foresight: a critical mass of agents and decision-makers experienced in SF will be required.
- Consider legalised approach and communities of practice
- The Africa that Africans want: “an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens, representing a dynamic force in the international arena.” Agenda 2063
- Create a pan-African “ubuntu” mechanism under Agenda 2063 to support national efforts and share expertise and resources.

- Thank you for your attention
- *Institute of leadership for development –Africa*
 - *Senegal*