



Mo Ibrahim Foundation

Do not take Africa for granted – says Mo Ibrahim

2023 Ibrahim Governance Weekend (IGW) unpacked Africa's changing position and expectations as a key stakeholder in the fight against global challenges

You can re-watch and download content from across the weekend [here](#).

Nairobi, 2 May 2023 – The 2023 Ibrahim Governance Weekend (IGW), hosted by the Mo Ibrahim Foundation, from 28-30 April, gathered African leaders, politicians, thought leaders, private sector and civil society representatives to discuss the key role that the continent has the potential to and requires to play in a world confronted to multiplying, cumulative global challenges, be it climate change, pandemics, or conflicts.

The 2023 Ibrahim Governance Weekend opened with the Leadership Ceremony, awarding in-person to former President of Niger, Mahamadou Issoufou, his 2020 Ibrahim Prize medal. This offered the opportunity to hear from some of the most prominent voices in global leadership and governance on the challenges and prospects facing African leadership.

Held over the whole Saturday, the 2023 Ibrahim Forum focussed on *Global Africa*. The first session – *Africa in the World: multiple assets* – examined Africa's place in the world, highlighting the continent's assets and potential, without downsizing the current barriers to achieving this potential. The second and third sessions – *The World in Africa: a growing competition – state and non-state actors* – invited conversation from a range of actors present in Africa to expose their interest for the continent. The fourth and final session – *Africa in the multilateral architecture: where is its voice?* – explored Africa's current and future position in the multilateral system, the need to amend both the representativity and efficiency of the current system, and the rise of alternative 'competitors' at multilateral level.

The ongoing conflict in Sudan featured heavily in various discussions across the three days, with public interventions from the likes of Abdalla Hamdok, former Prime Minister of Sudan, Amina J. Mohammed, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission, and Comfort Ero, President and CEO of the International Crisis Group. In a public one-to-one conversation, Abdalla Hamdok and Mo Ibrahim discussed Sudan's historic roots of instability, and the conditions and prospects of solving the current crisis. The IGW also offered the opportunity for closed meetings and discussions between key stakeholders and partners.

To conclude the Forum, Mo held another one-to one conversation this time with H.E. William Ruto, President of Kenya, around the ongoing climate change debate – including the value of creating an efficient carbon market – as well as discussing reforms to the multilateral architecture and processes, such as removing the currently punitive assessment of African risk. They concluded by discussing Kenya's current political and economic situation and prospects.

The Forum was followed by a public concert on Saturday evening featuring some of the biggest names in African music, including Nyashinski, Femi One, Otile Brown and Youssou N'dour. You can watch highlights from the show [here](#).

Throughout the course of the three days, there were also a series of parallel events discussing key African challenges. Ahead of the Africa Climate Summit, to be hosted by Kenya between 4–6 September 2023, a specific focus was given to the climate topic, with a meeting of the Climate Overshoot Commission, and the launch of the Carbon Market

Working Group by the Africa Europe Foundation, which was co-founded in 2020 by the Mo Ibrahim Foundation.

The IGW also sought to elevate the voices of the youth representatives, by systematically including them in all central debates during the weekend. The Foundation's Now Generation Network also led a series of parallel events, including an *In conversation with...* Hanan Morsy, Deputy Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, to discuss the need for debt restructuring and reform of the financial multilateral system.

Mo Ibrahim, Founder and Chair of the Mo Ibrahim Foundation, said: "As we speak, the world is changing around us. I think everybody knows that. All of the previous assumptions are being broken. We are seeing different powers rising, tensions, camps being formed – so where exactly is Africa's place here? Europe, and the rest of the world too, should not underestimate Africa, talk down to Africa or give instructions to Africa – Don't take Africa for granted!"

H.E. William Ruto, President of Kenya: "It is our responsibility. They say it is the wearer who knows where the shoe pinches. So, it is our responsibility to engineer the debate that will put on the table our perspective, our point of view, on what kind of financial architecture – global financial architecture – that would work not just for us but for everybody."

H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission, said: "Africa's population will more than double by 2100, its youth will be half of the world's youth. Africa, Latin America and Europe will lose about 490 million people in the same period. The result is an immeasurable potential for initiative, creativity and productive growth in all areas of human assets... This will be Africa's century."

H.E. Abdalla Hamdok, former Prime Minister of Sudan, said: "There is blame on all sides, mistakes made on all sides, but I also think from crisis comes opportunity, if our political space will learn the lesson that there is need to work together, we need to work on common denominator programmes. Politics is an art of compromise in the interests of the country."

H.E. Yemi Osinbajo, Vice-President of Nigeria: "I think it is now imperative to commence a coordinated approach towards innovation on the continent, bringing together all stakeholders to coordinate efforts at scaling up investments and building programmes that provide the right enabling environment and produce talent pipelines that support the growth of innovation on the continent."

Comfort Ero, President and CEO of the International Crisis Group: "States compete, there's competition, whether we like it or not. The nature of that competition is what we have to deal with. An example: every two years, there are 54 votes up for grabs and Africa's weight suddenly becomes relevant."

Koen Doens, Director-General for International Partnerships (DG INTPA) at the European Commission: "I think that it's really clear in this multipolar world, Africa is shaping up as a pole of that multipolar world and we need to recognise that and that shift of mentality, that shift of approach, is happening."

H.E. Amina J. Mohammed, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations: "The state of our world is undeniably at its lowest points in history, with one crisis after another... COVID-19, climate, conflict... Instead of unifying us in solidarity, it has shown us the fissures that tear us apart."

H.E. former President Mahamadou Issoufou of Niger: “No country on the continent can go it alone, Africa needs the glue of the values of pan-Africanism as defined by Agenda 2063.”

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Notes to editors

Images and videos from the event are available at:

<https://moibrahimfoundation.mediavalet.com/portals/2023-igw-media>

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About the Mo Ibrahim Foundation

The Mo Ibrahim Foundation was established in 2006 with a focus on the critical importance of political leadership and public governance in Africa. By providing tools to assess and support progress in leadership and governance, the Foundation aims to promote meaningful change on the continent.

The Foundation, which is a non-grant making organisation, focusses on defining, assessing and enhancing governance and leadership in Africa through various key initiatives:

- [Ibrahim Index of African Governance](#)
- [Ibrahim Prize for Achievement in African Leadership](#)
- [Ibrahim Governance Weekend](#)
- [Ibrahim Fellowships and Scholarships](#)
- [Now Generation Network](#)