

Editorial Foreword

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The African Union (AU) and its predecessor, the Organisation for African Unity, have undergone many trials and tribulations. Pan-Africanist through leader and former South African President (1999–2008), Thabo Mbeki, summed up this journey as follows:

The one thing that genuinely united the [C]ontinent was the struggle for liberation. The area of focus was to end colonialism and apartheid. Following the struggles against colonialism and racist oppression, there was also the struggle against poverty and economic oppression, in order to have total liberation of the Continent...¹

Against this backdrop, the AU has become an ever-present institution within African politics, ushering in multilateral cooperation in trade, international security, health, governance, regional integration, and digitalisation, to mention a few. The editors and contributors of this volume expand upon and interrogate many of these thematic areas. The book is divided into nine sections. Alongside the introductory section, the editors and contributors address the Pan-African Agenda, regional integration, Africa's presence and participation on the international stage, migration, democratic processes, youth and women empowerment, ICT, health, and education.

Taken collectively, this volume provides a wealth of perspectives from established and emerging scholars alike, aligning with the aims and scope of the *African Politics and*

1 African Union Development Agency. 2021. Quote from H.E. Thabo Mbeki [18 June 2025], <https://www.nepad.org/content/quote-he-thabo-mbeki#:~:text=Former%20President%20of%20the%20Republic,that's%20how%20NEPAD%20was%20born.%22>

International Relations in Focus book series to call attention to a collaborative cohort researching, pondering, and debating Africa's international relations. On behalf of the Series Editors, I would like to thank the book editors for choosing to publish their work with our series.

With the AU taking up full G20 membership in 2023 and the broader international community experiencing many geopolitical tensions, this book will become essential reading for scholars, diplomatic practitioners, policymakers, thought leaders, agents of change, and other interested stakeholders as they reflect upon the role of the AU as a political actor as well the fulfilment of Agenda 2063.

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