

METHOD, LIMITS AND CREDITS

How this briefing was made

Speeches were read as evidence of position. Delivery was judged by money, negotiated text, votes, appointments and follow-through.

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Four things kept apart

The analysis keeps four things apart. The first is what leaders said, which shows where their attention went. The second is what they proposed. The third is what money actually moved. The fourth is what governments are able to do. A crisis can fill the speeches and still receive no money. An issue can be missing from the speeches because experts handle it in technical talks elsewhere.

What was read, and when

The evidence for the overview and the seven judgements stops on 28 September 2026, the last day of the leaders' speeches in New York. The sector and recommendation pages use evidence up to 30 September 2026. Every national speech was read, whether a president, a prime minister or a minister

gave it, because several large African countries sent deputies. Each figure comes from a source that was opened and read, and the source is listed in the notes under the section that uses it.

How facts were checked

Each fact was checked against the source that first published it, such as a UN agency, a government, a court or a research body. News reports were used where no official record was available. Where two sources disagreed, the page keeps the figure from the stronger source. Figures are rounded where the exact number adds nothing for the reader.

What the confidence labels mean

Every section carries one of four labels. Observed means a primary source, such as an official record or dataset, shows the fact directly. Strong inference means several sources point to the same reading, although none states it outright. Contested means credible evidence points in different directions, and the page says so. Speculative marks a possible future or an idea that needs watching, and it should not be read as fact.

How the scores work

Each actor was scored from -2 to +2 on six measures. They are setting the agenda, raising money, writing rules, building alliances, delivering results and keeping options open for Africa. The weights are 15%, 20%, 20%, 15%, 20% and 10%. The scores are the author's judgement from the evidence on each sector page. No second, independent scorer has tested them, and no one has tried other weights. Readers should treat them as a structured opinion.

The silence index shows each issue on four separate measures: its burden, its consequence for Africa, the attention it received and the money that moved. Each issue is then classed as neglected, visible but under-served, or given priority. The single score helps to compare issues and makes no claim to be precise.

Limits

The UN's own press service could not be read directly, so coverage of meetings relies on UN News, the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Meteorological Organization and specialist news sites.

Speeches were read in English. They were not compared with speeches from earlier years, so the analysis does not claim that any government has hardened its position over time.

Several totals of money pledged come from the organisers themselves. The share of new money in the \$2.997 billion raised for Ebola has not been published.

Figures on the fall in health aid depend on the starting year. WHO projects a fall of 30% to 40% below 2023. The Accra Reset panel puts the fall in outside health money for Africa at almost 70% since 2021.

The Secretary-General gave a figure of \$34 billion for money to help countries adapt to climate change. The UN Environment Programme gives \$26 billion for 2023. The difference probably comes from a different year or dataset.

A speaker at the Assembly said that Africa holds over \$4 trillion in savings, and no source could be found for this. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), citing the Africa Finance Corporation, puts African pension funds, insurers, sovereign wealth funds and development banks together at about \$1.1 trillion.

Sources for this section (1)

- [OECD: Africa Capital Markets Report 2025, on African institutional savings of about \\$1.1 trillion](#)

Dissenting notes

Each judgement is published with the strongest argument against it.

1. [The UN agreed words, while the money was raised elsewhere.](#) Declarations set the terms that money follows later. The UN's development goals of 2015 shaped a decade of national budgets before anyone had costed them. The Assembly gives Africa a voice in writing rules, which it lacks in one-to-one deals. Judging the Assembly by the money pledged on the day may miss what it is for.
2. [Aid now comes as a contract with a price attached.](#) Governments that pay a rising share, with a date when they take over, are showing the ownership that African governments have asked for since the Paris Declaration on aid in 2005. The real risk sits in the clauses on data and on who supplies goods. A 39% share paid from African budgets can fairly be read as progress.
3. [Africa won the argument for Council seats and lost the process.](#) Council reform has stalled for three decades because no region accepts a deadline that would lock in its rivals. By declining to name which countries would hold the seats, the African Union keeps the continent united. A list published now would divide Africa before there is any vote to win.
4. [Africa's peace mission gap is small beside its military spending.](#) Most African military spending pays salaries, and much of it is in North African states that do not fund missions further south. It cannot simply be moved to Somalia. The Peace Fund has also grown to \$400 million from member states' own payments. Against an African Union operating budget of about \$600 million, that is a real achievement.
5. [Africa's largest emergencies were almost absent from the speeches.](#) Speeches are a poor measure of how a crisis is handled. The Ebola response rests on the coalition's money, WHO's work in the field and vaccine trials in the region. African leaders may also have pressed for both crises in private meetings away from the podium.
6. [The UN set up new bodies on AI, with no money.](#) Leaving AI out of the African Union's main priorities may be a sensible order of work, with power, internet access and data laws coming first. Africa's small share of data centres may also reflect the business choices of buyers more than failed policy.
7. [Africa's next big deal is with its own savings and budgets.](#) Ghana's debt exchange showed that savings held at home are exposed when a government is under strain. Asking trustees to take

more risk before debt is under control makes savers the lenders of last resort. That is why every proposal on this site protects trustees and bars forcing pension funds into a debt exchange.

Image credits

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- [Philanthropy](#): Members of the business community at a meeting in Kismayo, Somalia. Photo: AMISOM Public Information, [CC0 1.0](#), [source page](#).
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- [Politics and governance](#): The Julius Nyerere Peace and Security Building at the African Union Conference Center, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 2017. Photo: USAFRICOM, [CC BY 2.0](#), [source page](#).
- [The UN and diplomacy](#): Indonesian peacekeepers with the UN mission MONUSCO on patrol near Bunia, Ituri Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo, April 2025. Photo: MONUSCO / Didier Vignon Dossou-Gbakon, [CC BY-SA 4.0](#), [source page](#).

Questions about the method?

A person reads every comment before it appears.

Words used on this page

World Health Organization (WHO)

The UN's health agency. It sets health standards and coordinates responses to outbreaks. The United States left it in January 2026. [Health briefing](#) · [Glossary](#) · [Source: who.int](#)

WMO

The World Meteorological Organization, the UN's agency for weather, climate and water. It coordinates forecasts and early warnings. [Food and agriculture briefing](#) · [Glossary](#) · [Source: wmo.int](#)

The Accra Reset

A process started in 2025 by Ghana's President John Mahama after cuts to health aid. In September 2026 its panel proposed merging several global health funds and handing their work to African governments over five to ten years. [Health briefing](#) · [Glossary](#) · [Source: healthpolicy-watch.news](#)

UN Secretary-General

The head of the UN's staff and its main public voice. The Security Council recommends a candidate and the General Assembly appoints them, usually for five years. António Guterres's term ends on 31 December 2026. [The UN and diplomacy briefing](#) · [Glossary](#)

UNEP

The UN Environment Programme, the UN's agency for the environment, based in Nairobi. [Climate and energy briefing](#) · [Glossary](#)

OECD

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, a Paris-based club of 38 mostly rich countries. It keeps the official figures on aid. [Development cooperation briefing](#) · [Glossary](#)

Pension and insurance funds

Funds that hold workers' retirement savings and insurance premiums. In most African countries they put most of their money into government bonds. [Our recommendation on this](#) · [Philanthropy briefing](#) · [Glossary](#)

African Union (AU)

The organisation of 55 African states, based in Addis Ababa. Its heads of state meet each February. It can suspend members after a coup. [Glossary](#) · [Source: au.int](#)

AU Peace Fund

A fund paid for by African Union members to finance African peace work and missions. [Security and conflict briefing](#) · [Glossary](#) · [Source: au.int](#)

Data centres and compute

Buildings full of computers that store data and run AI. Their size is measured in megawatts (MW) of electricity. "Compute" means the computing power needed to build and run AI. [AI and technology briefing](#) · [Glossary](#)