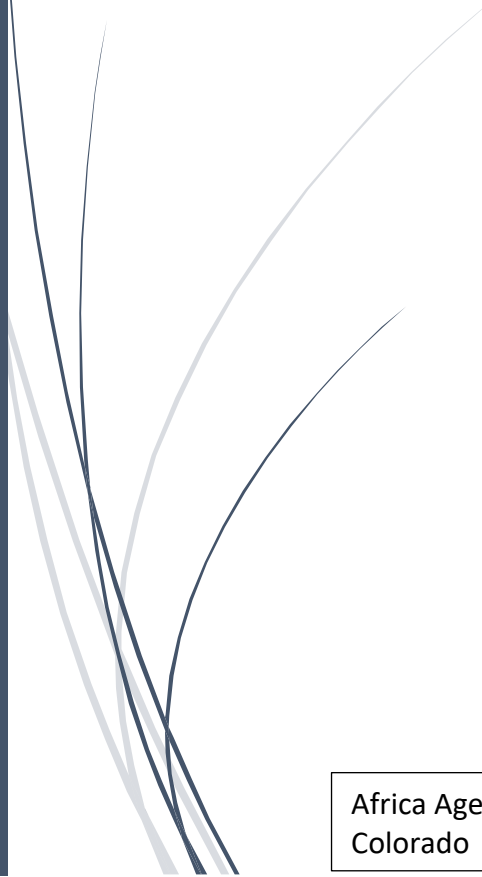


11/1/2019

2018 Africa Summit in Colorado

Summary Report



Africa Agenda, Denver,
Colorado

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Summary Report Africa Agenda

The annual Africa Summit in Colorado began as a way to hold a “citizens forum” at the same time as the 2014 U.S.-Africa Leaders’ Summit (in Washington, DC) to consider how to improve U.S.-Africa relations. The first Summit, held in partnership with World Denver Young Professionals, brought together 125 participants from business, academia, politics, non-profit and the African community in Colorado. It has become a regular event to help us all not just to understand and shape the news, but to knit together the loose community that is active every day in Colorado to improve US-Africa relations.

What Happened?

In 2018, Africa Agenda held its fourth Summit on November 2 in Denver. The theme was: *The Media as Bridge – Setting Priorities for Accurate Reporting on Africa*. The Summit came at a time of increasing concerns and alarms about the future of US-Africa relations stemming from negative remarks and even name calling about Africa coming from the US President.

The Results

More than 100 participants had intensive discussions on ten topics on how the media can be a bridge with more accurate reporting on Africa. Each topic was led by local specialists from nonprofit, government and business. Event partners were from Regis University, CU Boulder, Metropolitan State University of Denver, Colorado People’s Alliance, among others.

Overall all tables agreed on the **critical role that the media can play to open up opportunities and build understanding about African countries, peoples and contributions in the United States and around the world.**

Some specific suggestions made by table participants were:

- 1) The news media needs to commit to **providing more and better Africa-related content**. And improving the “branding” (or way that the continent is portrayed). We all can participate in this by sharing important news on social media.
- 2) We need to **expand knowledge about African contributions to the world** and how politics affects the news. How do we encourage fearless reporting?
- 3) The media should make **greater use of the African diaspora** as a reporting resource. The diaspora can help change the image of the continent and promote investment in it.

- 4) We want the media to **engage in storytelling**—real stories about Africa that help to give the facts a context and a face.
- 5) How the media reports on Africa can help **encourage travel to the continent**, promoting people-to-people interaction and relationships that will bring opportunities for both the travelers and the hosts.
- 6) Journalists, students, and others who are interested can collaborate via **information exchanges and partnerships** to deepen the way we relate.
- 7) Media can help by reporting on **policy proposals** giving us time to press for better policy and creating better accountability on how the US or other governments relate with their African counterparts. Can we also use social media to promote specific policy changes and changes in media practices that will open information and improve the bridges to the Continent?
- 8) Organize and support **networks here and in Africa** that encourage free speech and press freedom, demand the internet as a human right, and open up more just business investment and innovative small businesses.

Future Summits

Participants who joined us afterwards to think about the future of the Summit felt that the African Summit is practically “the only event of its kind in Colorado.” They felt it is playing an important role in strengthening understandings and linkages. Several suggested that Africa Agenda may have outgrown the idea of a small Summit and that we should consider ways to expand and build on the discussions that happen each year to reach a wider community. Some ideas were:

- Deepen **partnerships with universities and non-profits** and make sure that students can afford to come.
- Consider a **half-day Saturday Summit** to enable a variety of topic discussions
- Incorporate **journalistic training** into Summit events
- Consider a **larger venue** in order to increase attendance

You set the agenda

Africa Agenda has followed up throughout the year with Africa News Matters, our news analysis website, to promote the ideas stemming from the four Summits and analyze where media coverage gets it right. The Summit has proved to be not only a rare convening space for the Africa community in Colorado but a positive force in promoting real change in the way we relate with and think about the 1.2 billion capable, amazing Africans and the 54 countries they call home.