

THE EURASIAN CHARTER OF DIVERSITY AND MULTIPOLARITY IN THE 21ST CENTURY: AN AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE ON EMERGING REGIONALISM AND THE FUTURE OF GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

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Abstract

The post-Cold War international order has transitioned toward multipolarity, marked by the diffusion of power from Western dominance to emerging centers in Eurasia and the Global South. This article examines the Eurasian Charter of Diversity and Multipolarity in the 21st Century, a diplomatic initiative proposed by Belarus in 2023 and advanced with Russia, as a significant normative and institutional response to these shifts. Drawing on neorealism, constructivism, regionalism theory, and concepts of strategic autonomy and South-South cooperation, the article analyzes the Charter's core principles, sovereign equality, civilizational diversity, indivisible security, objectives, and functional dimensions, security, economic integration, humanitarian cooperation. From an African perspective, the review explores opportunities for strategic multipolarity, including trade diversification, infrastructure development via synergies like the Belt and Road Initiative, technology partnerships, global governance reform, and peace and security cooperation. It aligns these with the African Union's Agenda and AfCFTA while addressing risks such as great-power competition, governance fragmentation, sanctions exposure, and dependency traps. Key insights highlight the Charter's potential to foster pluralistic regionalism and enhance African agency, provided engagement is pragmatic, coordinated, and anchored in sovereignty and development priorities.

Keywords: Eurasian Charter, multipolarity, African strategic autonomy, regionalism, South-South cooperation, global governance reform, African Union Agenda

INTRODUCTION

The international order is undergoing a profound transformation from the post-Cold War unipolar system toward an increasingly multipolar order characterized by the diffusion of economic, technological, and political power across multiple centres, particularly in Eurasia and the Global South. Within this evolving landscape, the *Eurasian Charter of Diversity and Multipolarity in the 21st Century*, first articulated by Belarus at the 2023 International Conference on Eurasian Security in Minsk and subsequently advanced in coordination with Russia, has emerged as a significant normative and diplomatic initiative. The Charter seeks to institutionalize the principles of sovereign equality, civilizational diversity, indivisible security, and regional integration as the foundation of a more pluralistic and post-hegemonic international order. From an African perspective, the Charter presents both important opportunities and emerging challenges, including

the potential to strengthen South-South cooperation, diversify strategic partnerships, and advance continental development priorities while raising concerns about strategic autonomy, geopolitical competition, and new forms of external dependence. Despite growing scholarship on multipolarity and Eurasian regionalism, limited attention has been devoted to examining the implications of the Charter for Africa's long-term strategic interests and its role in the evolving global governance architecture.

This paper addresses this gap by reviewing the Eurasian Charter through the lenses of neorealism, constructivism, and regionalism. It argues that the evolving multipolar order presents Africa with an opportunity to strengthen its strategic autonomy and influence within global governance, provided that engagement with emerging regional initiatives is guided by continental priorities and collective action. Following the theoretical review, the paper examines *The Eurasian Charter of Diversity and Multipolarity in the 21st Century*, explores *An African Perspective on Emerging Regionalism*, and concludes with a discussion on *The Future of Global Governance*. The paper closes by synthesizing the key findings and highlighting their implications for Africa's role in shaping a more inclusive, equitable, and multipolar international order.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

The theoretical framework is grounded on: neorealism, which explains power diffusion and the rise of multipolarity; constructivism, an understanding on the role of ideas such as civilizational diversity, sovereignty, and pluralism in shaping new international norms; and regionalism theory to examine how emerging regional orders like the Eurasian Charter complement and reshape global governance. The approach centers the interrelated concepts of multipolarity, strategic autonomy, and South-South cooperation as the primary lenses for assessing Africa's engagement with these evolving dynamics.

Multipolarity

Multipolarity incorporates the global distribution of power among several influential actors rather than a single power or two rival superpowers. From a neorealist perspective, it emerges naturally from the diffusion of capabilities - economic weight, military strength, technological power, and demographic advantages. The relative decline of Western, especially the US unipolar dominance since the 2000s has been driven by Asia's rise, particularly China and India, alongside resurgent Russia and assertive middle powers.

In the context of the Eurasian Charter, multipolarity is not merely descriptive but prescriptive. Belarus and Russia frame it as an objective reality that demands recognition of multiple power centers and the rejection of imposed universalism. This aligns with the Charter's emphasis on diversity as a counter to the liberal international order's regulatory tendencies. For Africa, multipolarity creates structural opportunities: greater bargaining power, diversified partnerships, and reduced dependency. However, it also carries risks of intensified great-power rivalry on the continent, turning Africa into a theater of proxy competition. Conceptualizing African strategic multipolarity triggers a deliberate, non-aligned diversification of relations across poles to maximize autonomy rather than passive adaptation to shifting power balances.

Regionalism

Regionalism examines how geographic clusters of states build institutions to manage interdependence, enhance collective bargaining, and shape global rules. Regionalism theory views regions not as fixed entities but as socially constructed projects that can complement or challenge global governance. The Eurasian Charter exemplifies this by seeking to consolidate the world's largest supercontinent through indigenous mechanisms (EAEU, SCO, Belt and Road synergies) rather than external blueprints like the OSCE. It promotes integration, a post-hegemonic model where regional organizations interact horizontally. For Africa, this is highly relevant.

The African Union's Agenda 2063 and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) mirror Eurasian efforts at continent-wide integration. Regionalism here serves dual purposes: internal cohesion in peace, trade, infrastructure and external leverage in a multipolar world. The framework suggests that strengthened African regionalism is a prerequisite for meaningful engagement with Eurasian initiatives - preventing fragmented bilateral deals that undermine collective agency.

Strategic Autonomy

Strategic autonomy is the capacity of states or regions to pursue independent policy choices without undue external influence or forced alignment. Originally prominent in EU discourse, it has gained traction in the Global South as a response to multipolarity. In the African context, it means preserving sovereignty over security, economic, and diplomatic decisions while pragmatically engaging multiple partners.

African strategic multipolarity is a practical expression of this concept. African states increasingly practice multi-alignment, maintaining relations with China, Russia/Eurasia, the West, Gulf states, and others simultaneously. This avoids the binary traps of the Cold War era. It aligns with constructivist ideas about norm entrepreneurship: African actors are not just rule-takers but are actively shaping norms around sovereignty and non-interference. Challenges include institutional weaknesses, elite capture, and asymmetric dependencies, debt or technology gaps, which can erode genuine autonomy. Policy success thus requires strong domestic institutions, coordinated AU positions, and investment in human and knowledge capital.

South-South Cooperation

South-South cooperation emphasizes solidarity, mutual benefit, and horizontal partnerships among developing countries. It carries strong constructivist undertones, challenging North-South hierarchies and promoting alternative development narratives rooted in shared historical experiences of colonialism and marginalization.

In the Eurasian Charter, South-South cooperation manifests through BRICS, deepened Africa-China ties, Russia-Africa summits, and emerging links with Central Asia and Belarus. These partnerships often prioritize infrastructure, resource-for-development swaps, and non-conditional political support - contrasting with traditional Western aid models. However, power asymmetries exist such as between China and smaller African states, and risks of new dependencies remain. The South-South cooperation should prioritize African agency, technology transfer, value addition, and environmental sustainability. Linking the cooperation with regionalism and strategic

autonomy creates a virtuous cycle: stronger African unity enhances bargaining power in South-South forums.

THE EURASIAN CHARTER OF DIVERSITY AND MULTIPOLARITY IN THE 21ST CENTURY

The Eurasian Charter of Diversity and Multipolarity in the 21st Century, first articulated by Belarus at the 2023 International Conference on Eurasian Security in Minsk and developed in close coordination with Russia, constitutes a significant diplomatic initiative aimed at institutionalizing a post-unipolar regional order on the world's largest supercontinent. As Ryzhenkov (2025) argues, the Charter functions as a foundational normative document that codifies principles suited to multipolar realities, emphasizing civilizational pluralism over liberal universalism. However, scholarly interpretations diverge: some view it primarily as a geopolitical response by Russia and Belarus to Western sanctions and containment strategies, while others interpret it as a broader constructivist project promoting indigenous Eurasian governance models (Sun, 2023; Telò, 2020). This section critically synthesizes the Charter's core principles, objectives, and functional dimensions, identifying areas of scholarly agreement and divergence, while highlighting implementation gaps particularly relevant to Global South engagement, including from an African perspective.

Core Principles

The Charter is grounded in interlocking principles of sovereign equality and non-interference, multipolarity as both empirical reality and normative aspiration, indivisible security, and civilizational diversity. These principles reaffirm classical Westphalian norms while directly challenging perceived Western practices of regime change, sanctions, and governance conditionalities. Scholars broadly agree that elevating diversity from a descriptive fact to a normative virtue represents a key innovation, positioning Eurasia's pluralism in civilizations, religions, ethnicities, and governance models as a source of resilience rather than division. Divergence arises, however, on whether these principles sufficiently mitigate internal power asymmetries. While proponents frame the Charter as genuinely indigenous and distinct from externally driven initiatives like the OSCE, critics note the risk that dominant actors (Russia and China) may instrumentalize these norms, potentially limiting genuine pluralism.

Objectives

The Charter's overarching objective is the comprehensive consolidation of Eurasia as a cohesive yet pluralistic strategic community, bridging Europe and Asia and filling long-standing institutional voids. It seeks to foster "integration of integrations" through synergies among the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), and other frameworks, thereby enhancing Eurasia's global influence given its demographic and economic weight. Literature converges on the ambition to build a stable, shock-resistant regional order capable of reshaping international norms in a pluralistic direction. Yet gaps persist regarding operationalization: optimistic assessments highlight opportunities for Global South partners as a counterweight to Western dominance, whereas skeptical analyses question the extent to which the Charter can transcend great-power rivalries and deliver equitable benefits.

Functional Dimensions

Security forms the cornerstone, rooted in indivisible and equal security, dialogue, and preventive diplomacy amid heightened geopolitical tensions. Economic integration emphasizes deepened trade, resilient supply chains, and de-risking from external sanctions. The humanitarian dimension adds normative depth through cultural, educational, and scientific cooperation, reflecting constructivist insights on the importance of societal interconnections. From an African perspective, these dimensions offer instructive alignments with AU principles of non-interference and “African solutions to African problems.” However, critical reviews reveal tensions: while the Charter promises developmental synergies and capacity-building, questions remain about translating broad principles into inclusive mechanisms that avoid new dependencies or center-periphery dynamics.

Security Dimension

Security forms the cornerstone of the Charter. The initiative emerged against the backdrop of heightened geopolitical tensions, including the Ukraine conflict and broader great-power rivalry. The security vision rests on indivisible and equal security, rejecting zero-sum approaches and bloc-based confrontations. It advocates dialogue, confidence-building measures, and preventive diplomacy to manage disputes.

Critically, the Charter seeks to transcend fragmented sub-regional security architectures. While acknowledging the contributions of organizations like the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) and SCO, it envisions a broader pan-Eurasian framework that could eventually encompass confidence-building across the entire continent. This includes arms control, crisis management mechanisms, and joint responses to transnational threats such as terrorism, extremism, and cyber challenges.

From an African perspective, this dimension is instructive. Many African states share concerns about external military interventions and the weaponization of security partnerships. The Charter’s emphasis on non-interference and sovereign security choices aligns with the AU’s principles of African solutions to African problems, potentially opening avenues for security cooperation with Eurasian actors that prioritize capacity-building over external basing or regime influence.

Economic Integration

Economic cooperation is presented as both a means and an end. The Charter promotes deepened trade, investment, and connectivity to unlock Eurasia’s vast potential. Key elements include harmonizing standards where feasible, developing resilient supply chains, advancing digital and green economies, and ensuring that integration benefits all participants rather than creating new dependencies. Initiatives such as the alignment of the EAEU with China’s BRI exemplify the type of pragmatic synergy the Charter seeks to generalize. It also envisions new financial mechanisms, payment systems, and technological partnerships that reduce vulnerability to external sanctions and currency dominance. For resource-rich and developing economies across Eurasia and by extension, African partners, this could facilitate value addition, industrialization, and technological upgrading. The economic pillar is explicitly developmental, aiming to narrow internal disparities and position Eurasia as the engine of global growth. This inclusive approach stands in contrast to integration models perceived as exclusionary or center-periphery in nature.

Humanitarian Cooperation

The humanitarian and people-centered dimension add normative depth. The Charter emphasizes cultural exchange, educational cooperation, tourism, health, and scientific collaboration. It promotes mutual learning across civilizations and joint efforts on global challenges such as pandemics, climate change, and sustainable development. This pillar reflects a constructivist understanding that long-term stability requires not only interstate agreements but also societal interconnections and shared narratives. By fostering people-to-people ties, the Charter aims to build resilience against divisive external narratives and cultivate a sense of common Eurasian destiny grounded in respect for diversity.

Promise and Challenges

The Eurasian Charter addresses key structural realities of the 21st century through coherent principles and ambitious objectives. Its potential lies in serving as a building block for a more pluralistic global order. Nevertheless, scholars identify persistent challenges, including achieving genuine inclusivity amid rivalries and asymmetries, converting principles into actionable frameworks, and preventing dominance by a few leading powers. The Charter's ultimate value hinges on its capacity to deliver equitable cooperation and meaningful Global South agency. As an evolving initiative, it merits pragmatic engagement from African states, balanced against the continent's own regionalism and autonomy aspirations. Significant knowledge gaps remain regarding its long-term impact on inter-regional dynamics and African strategic positioning.

AN AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE ON EMERGING REGIONALISM

The evolving relationship between Africa, the broader Global South, and emerging Eurasian initiatives such as the Eurasian Charter of Diversity and Multipolarity reflects a fundamental shift in global power dynamics. African states are leveraging multipolarity to pursue strategic autonomy, institutional reform, and developmental priorities. African countries increasingly support global governance reform, with increased engagements with Eurasian partners, and alignment of partnerships with core continental objectives of sovereignty, development, and non-interference.

Emerging regionalism theory conceptualizes regions as socially constructed projects that can enhance collective agency, reshape interdependence, and influence global governance (Telò, 2020). The Eurasian Charter of Diversity and Multipolarity exemplifies this by promoting indigenous pan-continental integration as an alternative to externally imposed frameworks. From an African perspective, this initiative reflects deeper shifts in global power dynamics, where African states increasingly leverage multipolarity to pursue strategic autonomy, institutional reform, and developmental priorities. While scholars agree that multipolarity expands agency for the Global South, debates persist on whether it genuinely fosters equitable partnerships or merely replaces old dependencies with new ones (Gao & Durdu, 2025; Peters, 2023). This section critically synthesizes Africa's engagement with Eurasian regionalism, comparing scholarly viewpoints on opportunities and limitations, and highlighting knowledge gaps regarding long-term implications for African agency.

Support for Institutional Reform

African states have historically experienced inequities in the post-1945 order, including underrepresentation on the UN Security Council and limited influence in Bretton Woods institutions despite comprising over a quarter of UN membership. Decades of structural adjustment and conditional aid have reinforced perceptions of systemic dependence. In a multipolar context, African governments view the rise of alternative poles (China, Russia/Eurasia, BRICS+) as a historic window for reform. Literature converges on the leverage provided by diversified financing and platforms like the AU's G20 membership. However, divergence exists: optimists emphasize normative alignment with sovereign equality and pluralism (support for initiatives like the Eurasian Charter), while skeptics caution that fragmented multilateralism may weaken universal institutions from which Africa still derives benefits. A key gap is the limited empirical analysis of how African positions translate into concrete influence within emerging frameworks.

Existing Engagements with Eurasian Partners

Africa's multifaceted ties with Eurasia, through China's BRI, Russian security and resource cooperation, and niche partnerships with Belarus and Central Asia, demonstrate deepening South-South cooperation. Institutional links via EAEU memoranda, BRICS expansion (including Egypt, Ethiopia, and others), and SCO dialogues further illustrate this trend. Scholars agree these engagements embody pragmatic multi-alignment, contrasting with Cold War binaries and enabling African Strategic Multipolarity. Yet analytical insights reveal asymmetries: while partnerships often feature fewer conditionalities than Western models, concerns persist about debt sustainability, resource-backed deals, and limited technology transfer. Critical comparisons highlight agreement on short-term gains in infrastructure and food security but divergence on long-term autonomy outcomes, with gaps in longitudinal studies assessing impacts on intra-African integration (e.g., AfCFTA).

Alignment with Core Priorities: Sovereignty, Development, and Non-Interference

Eurasian initiatives resonate strongly with African Union principles. The Charter's emphasis on non-interference and respect for domestic choices aligns with Africa's historical resistance to external domination, offering a counter-narrative to perceived Western conditionalities. On development, synergies in infrastructure, industrialization, and value addition directly support AU Agenda priorities. However, scholarly viewpoints diverge regarding sustainability: proponents celebrate no-strings-attached cooperation and mutual benefit, while critics point to risks of elite capture, environmental costs, and new center-periphery relations. Analytical synthesis underscores that genuine alignment requires stronger African agency, through coordinated AU positions and technology localization, rather than passive bilateralism. Significant knowledge gaps remain on how these partnerships affect governance norms and conflict dynamics on the continent.

THE FUTURE OF GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

The future of global governance is increasingly shaped by the interplay between multipolarity, emerging regional initiatives like the Eurasian Charter of Diversity and Multipolarity, and African agency. As traditional Western-led institutions face legitimacy challenges, parallel frameworks

offer pathways toward greater pluralism but also risk fragmentation. Scholars diverge on the net outcome: optimists (e.g., Gao & Durdu, 2025) see opportunities for a more inclusive, post-hegemonic order that amplifies Global South voices, while realists caution that intensified great-power competition and institutional proliferation may erode multilateral coherence (Peters, 2023; Shahzad, 2026). This section critically synthesizes strategic opportunities and risks for Africa, drawing on regionalism and multipolarity literature to highlight agreements, divergences, knowledge gaps, and analytical implications for the continent's role in reshaping global rules.

Trade Diversification stands as a foundational opportunity. For decades, African economies have remained heavily oriented toward European and North American markets, exposing them to commodity price swings, tariff barriers, and geopolitical disruptions. Eurasian markets present substantial untapped potential. China already accounts for the largest share of Africa's external trade, with volumes surpassing billions of dollars in recent years, driven by demand for raw materials and growing exports of African manufactured goods. Russia, India, Turkey, the Gulf states, and Central Asian economies offer complementary opportunities in agriculture, energy, and light manufacturing.

The Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), with its framework agreements and observer mechanisms, could serve as a bridge for preferential access to a combined market of over 180 million consumers. Synergies between the AfCFTA and Eurasian integration processes promise to boost intra-South trade, reduce dependence on volatile Western demand, and foster regional value chains. For mineral-rich nations, this means better terms for critical resources such as cobalt, lithium, and rare earths essential to the green transition. Strategic diversification would not only cushion against external shocks but also strengthen Africa's bargaining position in negotiations with all partners, advancing the AU Agenda goal of a vibrant, self-reliant economy.

Infrastructure Connectivity represents perhaps the most visible and transformative opportunity. Africa's infrastructure deficit estimated in trillions of dollars has long hampered growth and integration. Eurasian partners, particularly through China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), have demonstrated unmatched scale and speed in delivery. Landmark projects such as Kenya's Standard Gauge Railway, Ethiopia's industrial parks, and Senegal's new airport and port expansions illustrate the potential for rapid modernization. The Eurasian Charter's vision of continent-wide connectivity, including transport corridors and digital linkages, can be extended to Africa through trans-regional initiatives linking Eurasian land bridges with African seaports and inland hubs.

When aligned with the AU's Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA) and the AfCFTA, these efforts can create seamless economic corridors from the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean, facilitating trade, investment, and people-to-people exchanges. Beyond physical infrastructure, cooperation in energy, renewables, hydropower, and nuclear addresses Africa's power shortages, enabling industrialization. The key is ensuring African ownership: joint ventures, local content requirements, and transparent debt management will determine whether these projects deliver sustainable benefits or create new dependencies.

Technology Partnerships offer pathways to enhance developmental stages. The industrial revolution demands capabilities in digital infrastructure, artificial intelligence, biotechnology, and green technologies. China leads in affordable 5G deployment, e-commerce platforms, and

renewable energy solutions tailored to emerging markets. Russia and Belarus bring expertise in precision agriculture, heavy machinery, and space technology, while broader Eurasian collaboration can support skills transfer and joint research.

Under the Charter's humanitarian and scientific cooperation pillar, African states can pursue collaborative innovation hubs, technology localization agreements, and capacity-building programs. This is particularly vital for AU Agenda priorities such as youth empowerment and knowledge economies. By negotiating technology transfer clauses and investing in STEM education, Africa can move from being a consumer of innovation to a co-creator, narrowing the digital and industrial divide while building long-term resilience.

Reform of Global Governance constitutes a higher-order strategic opportunity. Multipolarity amplifies Africa's decades-long demand for equitable representation. With the African Union part of G20 member and several African nations integrated into BRICS+, the continent possesses greater institutional leverage. The Eurasian Charter's emphasis on pluralism, sovereign equality, and rejection of unilateralism provides ideological reinforcement for African positions on UN Security Council reform, democratization of Bretton Woods institutions, and fairer trade and climate rules.

African engagement can help shape the Charter's evolution toward genuinely inclusive multilateralism. By coordinating through the AU at the UN, African states can ensure that emerging Eurasian frameworks complement rather than fragment the global order. This contributes to a rules-based system that accommodates diverse development paths, an essential condition for Africa's rise as a global player.

Peace and Security Cooperation complete the opportunity matrix. Persistent conflicts, terrorism, and transnational threats undermine development across the continent. Eurasian partners offer pragmatic alternatives to traditional security providers. Russia has expanded military training, equipment supply, and advisory roles in several Sahelian and Horn of Africa nations. China contributes significantly to UN peacekeeping and naval anti-piracy operations. The Charter's principle of indivisible security and non-interference resonates with the AU's "African solutions to African problems" doctrine.

Cooperation can extend to intelligence sharing, counter-terrorism capacity building, and post-conflict reconstruction without political conditionalities. When integrated with developmental approaches, addressing root causes through infrastructure and economic inclusion, such partnerships enhance human security. The challenge lies in maintaining coherence with AU frameworks and avoiding proxy dynamics in great-power competition.

Potential Risks

While the Eurasian Charter of Diversity and Multipolarity and associated initiatives offer compelling strategic opportunities for Africa, a clear-eyed assessment must also confront the inherent risks. Multipolarity is inherently fluid and competitive, and deeper engagement with Eurasian actors, while promising diversification, introduces new vulnerabilities. African states must approach these partnerships with strategic caution, robust safeguards, and strong continental coordination to avoid exchanging one form of dependence for another. The primary risks include

intensified great-power competition, fragmentation of global governance, sanctions and economic exposure, and the practical challenges of balancing relations with multiple partners.

Great-Power Competition constitutes the most immediate geopolitical risk. As the United States, China, Russia, and other powers vie for influence across Africa, the continent risks becoming a theater for proxy rivalries. The Eurasian Charter, though framed as an indigenous project of diversity and cooperation, is closely associated with Russian and Belarusian diplomacy and operates within a broader network that includes China. Heightened Western concerns about debt-trap diplomacy, authoritarian alignment, or erosion of democratic norms could lead to countermeasures such as targeted sanctions, reduced aid, or security realignments that place African governments in uncomfortable positions.

In the Sahel and Horn of Africa, for instance, shifts toward Eurasian security partners have already triggered diplomatic tensions with traditional Western allies. Without careful management, Africa could face a new scramble characterized by militarization, elite co-optation, and destabilizing zero-sum dynamics. The risk is particularly acute for smaller or more fragile states lacking the institutional capacity to navigate competing pressures. To mitigate this, African strategic multipolarity must emphasize pragmatic hedging rather than exclusive alignments, prioritizing national and continental interests above external agendas.

Fragmentation of Global Governance presents a longer-term systemic risk. The proliferation of parallel institutions, alternative payment systems, development banks, and regional charters while challenging unipolar dominance, may erode the coherence of the multilateral system. For Africa, this could complicate trade, investment, and regulatory compliance. Divergent technical standards between Western-led and Eurasian-led initiatives might raise transaction costs and hinder integration. More fundamentally, a fragmented order could weaken universal norms on issues such as human rights, climate action, and pandemic response areas where Africa has vital stakes.

The Eurasian Charter's emphasis on regionalism is double-edged: while empowering continental agency, it may accelerate the shift toward a minilateral world where power blocs compete rather than cooperate. African states, many of which benefit from universal institutions like the UN and WTO despite their imperfections, must therefore advocate for interoperability and inclusivity in emerging frameworks. Strong AU leadership in harmonizing positions across forums will be essential to prevent marginalization in a more fragmented landscape.

Sanctions and Economic Exposure represent tangible financial and operational risks. Western secondary sanctions have already affected countries with significant Eurasian ties. Overexposure to Chinese loans, Russian energy deals, or Belarusian agricultural partnerships could trigger liquidity crises or asset freezes if geopolitical tensions escalate. Debt sustainability remains a concern: while Eurasian financing often comes with fewer governance conditions, it frequently involves resource-backed arrangements or sovereign guarantees that limit policy space.

Commodity-dependent African economies are especially vulnerable. A sudden shift in Eurasian demand, supply chain disruptions, or targeted export restrictions could devastate revenues. Moreover, hidden costs such as unfavorable contract terms, limited local content, or environmental externalities may undermine long-term development gains. African governments need

sophisticated risk assessment, transparent debt management, and diversified financing strategies, including greater use of domestic resource mobilization and blended finance.

Balancing Relations with Multiple Partners is perhaps the most persistent diplomatic challenge. Multi-alignment requires high-caliber diplomacy, institutional memory, and policy coherence resources that many African states possess unevenly. The temptation of short-term gains from one partner can undermine longer-term strategic autonomy. Elite capture, where narrow interests align with external powers, further complicates balanced engagement. Additionally, domestic political polarization between pro-Western, pro-Eurasian, or pan-African factions—can destabilize foreign policy continuity.

Effective balancing demands clear prioritization frameworks rooted in AU Agenda, investment in diplomatic training, and mechanisms for inter-agency coordination. Regional Economic Communities and the AU can play a vital role in pooling expertise and presenting unified positions, reducing the ability of external actors to exploit divisions.

Policy Recommendations

To maximize the benefits and minimize the risks of engagement with the Eurasian Charter of Diversity and Multipolarity, African states and the African Union should adopt a proactive, coordinated, and interest-driven approach. Four interlinked recommendations provide a practical roadmap for harnessing multipolarity while safeguarding long-term autonomy.

Preserve Strategic Autonomy as a Guiding Principle

African governments must avoid exclusive alignments with any power bloc. This requires maintaining diversified partnerships across Eurasia, the West, Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America. Strategic autonomy means evaluating every initiative on its concrete deliverables, trade terms, technology transfer, debt sustainability, and respect for sovereignty rather than ideological affinity. National governments should establish inter-ministerial oversight mechanisms and transparent frameworks for assessing external partnerships, ensuring decisions serve domestic development needs rather than external geopolitical agendas.

Engage Constructively with Eurasian Initiatives

The Eurasian Charter should be viewed not as a finished document but as an evolving platform open to Global South input. African states, through bilateral channels, the AU, or BRICS+, should actively participate in shaping its principles and implementation. This includes proposing mechanisms for inter-regional cooperation, advocating for inclusive decision-making, and exploring synergies with AfCFTA and other African frameworks. Constructive engagement does not imply endorsement of every aspect but rather pragmatic contribution that advances African priorities such as infrastructure, industrialization, and non-interference.

Align participation with the African Union's Agenda and National Development Priorities

All engagement must be anchored in continental and national strategies. Partnerships should directly support AU Agenda flagship projects, AfCFTA, infrastructure (PIDA), peace and security architecture, and science, technology, and innovation. Governments should integrate

Eurasian cooperation into national development plans, ensuring alignment with priorities such as value addition, youth employment, climate resilience, and gender equality. The AU can play a central role in harmonizing member states' positions to prevent fragmented bilateralism that weakens collective leverage.

Promote African Agency in Shaping Emerging Multilateral Frameworks

Africa must move beyond rule-taker status to become a norm-shaper. This involves investing in diplomatic capacity, research institutions, and narrative power to articulate distinctly African perspectives on multipolarity, sovereignty, and development. The continent should champion interoperability between Eurasian and African initiatives, advocate for equitable global governance reform, and build coalitions with other Global South actors. By strengthening the AU's institutional capabilities and fostering intra-African unity, the continent can help define the rules of the emerging order rather than merely adapting to them.

CONCLUSION

The Eurasian Charter of Diversity and Multipolarity reflects the ongoing transformation of the international system toward a more multipolar and pluralistic global order, presenting both significant opportunities and complex challenges for Africa. From an African perspective, the Charter aligns with aspirations for greater strategic autonomy, sovereign equality, diversified partnerships, and enhanced participation in global governance. It offers a framework through which African countries can leverage emerging geopolitical dynamics to advance continental priorities, including Agenda 2063 and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). However, realizing these benefits requires careful navigation of risks associated with geopolitical rivalry, debt dependence, institutional fragmentation, and external influence. Ultimately, Africa's ability to benefit from the evolving multipolar order will depend on strengthening continental institutions, maintaining policy coherence, and engaging external partners from a position of unity, strategic pragmatism, and African-led development priorities.

African governments and the African Union should adopt a coordinated continental strategy for engaging with the Eurasian Charter and other emerging multipolar initiatives, ensuring that all partnerships advance Agenda 2063, the AfCFTA, and national development priorities while safeguarding strategic autonomy. Engagements with Eurasian partners should prioritize technology transfer, industrialization, local value addition, sustainable infrastructure financing, transparent debt management, and capacity building rather than short-term geopolitical considerations. The African Union and Regional Economic Communities should strengthen diplomatic coordination to develop common negotiating positions, enhance Africa's influence in global governance reforms, and prevent fragmented bilateral engagements that weaken collective bargaining power. Additionally, African policymakers, research institutions, and universities should expand empirical research on the long-term implications of multipolarity, including its effects on governance, economic resilience, security cooperation, and continental integration, to generate evidence-based policies that enable Africa to emerge as an active norm-shaper rather than a passive participant in the evolving international order.

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