



The *Africana Conference 2025* aims to center interdisciplinary and diverse voices, promote intellectual inquiry, and foster rigorous discourse dedicated to the development and advancement of the African continent, its structures, and its people. We strive to interrogate and examine Africa’s current realities across various sectors to enlighten listeners and evaluate a pathway forward. The Fletcher School invites students, scholars, practitioners, and the community to join us for this year’s conference, **“Changing the Lens: Redefining African Agency for a New Generation.”**

### **What is “African Agency”?**

African agency refers to the ability of individuals, communities, and nations throughout the continent to independently shape their destiny, influence global decisions, and drive transformative change on their terms. It emphasizes the assertion of leadership, the reclamation of narratives, and the ownership of the socio-economic, political, and cultural pathways that define Africa’s future.

By 2050, it is projected that one in every four people globally will be African. Currently, over 70% of Africa’s population is under 30 years old, making it the youngest continent in the world. This theme urges us to reconsider and redefine the concept of African agency for a new generation, highlighting the importance of empowering African decision-makers and citizens as the primary architects of their future. Building on last year’s conference focused on reclaiming the narrative in Africa’s cultural production, it is now essential for us as a Fletcher community and beyond, to explore how the concept and conviction of African agency can be strengthened. This will foster conversation that will begin to enable a new generation of Africans to gain a greater stake in the continent’s future and its international influence.

### **Why “Redefining African Agency”?**

Africa is at a historic crossroads as its collective voice gains prominence on the global stage. The African Union’s recent inclusion in the G20, South Africa’s presidency in the G20, and growing calls for a more influential African bloc in the UN give the continent an unprecedented opportunity to redefine its agency. However, the idea of African agency is often misinterpreted both externally and internally and is limited by outdated frameworks that fail to support Africa’s objectives. The Africana Conference 2025 intends to:

- Facilitate dialogue about the frameworks and strategies vital for redefining African agency, both presently and into the future.

**“CHANGING THE LENS: REDEFINING AFRICAN AGENCY FOR A NEW GENERATION”**

CONCEPT NOTE

- Identify methods to promote the integration of African women and youth and in governance, entrepreneurship, and decision-making processes.
- Celebrate examples of African-led innovations, leadership, and cultural contributions to inspire future initiatives.
- Foster collaboration opportunities between African stakeholders both internally and in the diaspora communities with international partners to promote sustainable development and innovation.

**Key Conference Questions to Explore:**

- How are emerging African leaders and institutions driving advancements in science, technology, education, and entrepreneurship to address key challenges, including those outlined in the African Union’s Agenda 2063, while preserving indigenous knowledge to position Africa as a strategic global partner?
- How can African countries implement tighter regulations over their resources, industries, and trade strategies to promote better security, inclusivity and growth?
- How can African governance systems and external global partnerships engage the new generation and meet the demand of Africa’s emerging population?
- How can Africans elevate their heritage, values, and stories for genuine representation and global contribution?
- How can Africa enhance its influence in global decision-making on matters ranging from trade or climate action, to human rights advocacy?