

ACSUS NEWSLETTER

The leading African research and engagement Centre, shaping intellectual discourse and deepening the understanding of the US as a nation, society, and global power.



JULY 2026
ISSUE 01



SHAPING
POLICY



INFORMING
THE FUTURE



FEATURED EVENTS

AFRICAN AGRNCY IN A SHIFTING GLOBAL ORDER AFRICAN PRIORITIES AND THE REFORM OF THE MULTILATERAL SYSTEM

02-03 July 2026 Wits University

ACSUS convened a two-day roundtable that brought together scholars, policymakers, civil society representatives, students, and international partners to examine Africa's role in an evolving global governance landscape.

The discussions explored Africa's priorities in the reform of the United Nations and multilateral institutions, the impact of geopolitical rivalries, and pathways for Africa to shape global norms and influence international decision-making.

[Read more on Page 02 →](#)



AGGIES IN SOUTH AFRICA SHORT-TERM STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMME

The ACSUS Summer School brought together students from leading U.S. universities for an enriching programme of academic engagement, policy dialogue, and cultural exchange, strengthening international collaboration and advancing a deeper understanding of Africa's place in a changing global landscape.

[Read more on Page 04 →](#)



ACSUS AFRICA-U.S. FORUM SERIES ADVANCING DIALOGUE ON AFRICA-U.S. RELATIONS

From November 2025 to March 2026, the African Centre for the Study of the United States (ACSUS) continued to strengthen international dialogue through its Africa's Future and Africa-U.S. Forum series. Convened under the Africa-U.S.

[Read more on Page 05 →](#)



SMART CITIES SUMMARY OUTLINE

ACSUS published its Smart Cities Summary Outline, highlighting innovative approaches to sustainable urban development and the future of African cities.

[Read more on Page 06 →](#)



INFRASTRUCTURE AFRICA SUMMIT

Representing the Centre in Cape Town, ACSUS contributed to discussions on infrastructure investment, urban resilience, and Africa's development priorities.

[Read more on Page 07 →](#)



Upcoming Events

October 2026

The launch of the Smart Cities Short course in October

25-27 November 2026

Amplifying African Voices for Strategic Action (AFSA) Conference

[Upcoming events on page 08 →](#)

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African Agency in a Shifting Global Order

African Priorities and the Reform of the Multilateral System



02-03 July 2026



University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg

Positioning Africa in a Changing Global Order

As the international system undergoes profound transformation, questions surrounding the future of multilateralism, global governance, and Africa's place within these evolving structures have become increasingly urgent. Against this backdrop, the African Centre for the Study of the United States (ACSUS), in partnership with the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (IJR) and the Institute for Global Dialogue (IGD), convened a two-day roundtable titled **African Agency in a Shifting Global Order: African Priorities on the Reform of the Multilateral System**.

The dialogue was organised to deepen consultation and strategic thinking on Africa's priorities regarding the future of the United Nations, the implications of intensifying geopolitical rivalries, and the rapidly evolving global governance architecture. By bringing together policymakers, scholars, practitioners, and civil society leaders, the roundtable sought to generate African perspectives and practical policy recommendations capable of advancing the continent's interests within an increasingly complex international order.

Positioning Africa in a Changing Global Order

The current international governance system is facing significant challenges. Increasing geopolitical competition, declining confidence in multilateral institutions, and shifting global power dynamics have raised important questions about how Africa can strengthen its influence in shaping international decision-making.

KEY THEMES EXPLORIED



African Agency



Geopolitical Competition



Multilateralism and UN Reforms



Reform of the Global Financial Architecture



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The current international governance system is facing significant challenges. Increasing geopolitical competition, declining confidence in multilateral institutions, and shifting global power dynamics have raised important questions about how Africa can strengthen its influence in shaping international decision-making.



Response to
Multiple Crises



PANEL DISCUSSION



GROUP PHOTO



ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION

“

Now, more than ever, African agency must be amplified to ensure the continent assumes its rightful place as an equal partner alongside major and emerging powers on the global stage.

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AGGIES IN SOUTH AFRICA

Short-Term Study Abroad Programme  25 June–8 July 2026

The African Centre for the Study of the United States (ACSUS) at the University of the Witwatersrand, welcomed students from North Carolina A & T State University. They were accompanied by Faculty Lead: Dr. Daphne Cooper, Chaperone: Dr. Yolanda Stone and Student mentor Amaya Allen, for a Short-Term Academic Summer Study Abroad Programme exploring South Africa's rich history, culture, and society.



AGGIES VISIT TO SOWETO



APARTHEID MUSEUM VIST

Participants visited Soweto (Hector Pieterse Memorial site, Mandela House), Constitution Hill, and the Apartheid Museum, gaining insights into South Africa's history, constitutional democracy, and the economic legacy and social impact of apartheid.



SHARPEVILLE MASSACRE MEMORIAL VIST

The programme also included community engagement at the Dr Judy Rashid Education and Leadership Centre in Vaal, alongside visits to the Sharpeville Massacre Memorial, HIV Service-learning Centre and also got to interact with students from Sedibeng TVET college.

PROGRAMME HIGHLIGHTS

 Academic Lectures

 Africa - US Dialogue

 Cross-Cultural Exchange

 Site Visits

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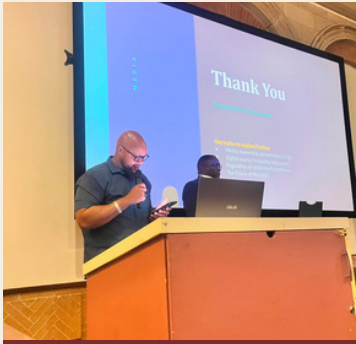
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Their leisure visits included Nelson Mandela Square, Melrose Arch, the Joburg Theatre, and Rosebank Mall, offering participants a glimpse into Johannesburg's contemporary cultural and social landscape.



LECTURE SPEAKERS DAY 1 (FROM LEFT TO RIGHT) : DR YOLANDA STONE, MR. MICHAEL SUDARKASA, DR ASAD EL MALIK, DR. WILL COB, DR. BOB WEKESA, DR. KORTNEY ZIEGLER AND DR. DAPHNE COOPER



DR. ASAD EL- MALIK LECTURE PRESENTATION



ACSUS STAFF AND THE DELTAS MENTORS

The three-day lecture series explored South African Media Landscape, Sophia town: Gender and Race in South Africa, History of African Americans in South Africa, Social Work and Resilience, Using Science and Technology to address South Africa's employment crisis, Creating Volunteer Opportunities for Social Impact and Doing Business as an Expat. The sessions were facilitated by distinguished scholars and practitioners, including Dr Bob Wekesa, Dr Asad el Malik, Dr. Kortney Ziegler, Mr. Michael Sudarkasa, Dr. Will Cobb, Dr. Kinika Hodge and Dr. Esthie Hugo.



The programme concluded with participants presenting reflections on their experiences, key learnings and drawing parallels between South African and Black American History. The presentations were followed by a certificate ceremony recognising their successful participation in the programme.



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ACSUS Africa–U.S. Forum Series

Advancing Dialogue on Africa–U.S. Relations

From November 2025 to March 2026, the African Centre for the Study of the United States (ACSUS) continued to strengthen international dialogue through its Africa's Future and Africa–U.S. Forum series. Convened under the Africa–U.S. Initiative, the hybrid forums brought together policymakers, academics, researchers, and development practitioners from Africa and the United States to discuss issues shaping the future of Africa–U.S. relations.

Hosted in partnership with the University of Southern California's Center on Communication Leadership and Policy, Howard University's Center for African Studies, George Washington University's Institute for African Studies, and the Public Diplomacy Association of America, the series reached audiences both in Washington, D.C., and virtually across Africa and the world.

Forum Highlights



30 March 2026

Topic: Africa–U.S. Forum: Meet the 2025-2026 USC African senior fellows in global health communication leadership.

Leading African experts explored the role of global health communication leadership in advancing public health and strengthening international collaboration. [Watch the session here.](#)



SCAN TO WATCH



26 March 2026

Global Health, Public Diplomacy, and International Collaboration

The forum examined how diplomacy, leadership, and cross-sector partnerships can contribute to improved health outcomes and stronger Africa–U.S. cooperation. [Watch the session here.](#)



SCAN TO WATCH



9 December 2025

The Future of Africa–U.S. Health Diplomacy: Perspectives from the Continent

The forum examined how diplomacy, leadership, and cross-sector partnerships can contribute to improved health outcomes and stronger Africa–U.S. cooperation. [Watch the session here.](#)



SCAN TO WATCH



13 November 2025

Update on the War in Sudan

Major General (Ret.) Hosameldeen Elsharief provided an expert analysis of the conflict in Sudan, examining its regional implications and broader geopolitical significance. [Watch the session here.](#)



SCAN TO WATCH

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SMART CITIES LAB 2025

Re-imagining Smart African Cities: Concepts, Practices and Implementation

The second annual Smart Cities Lab was held at the University of the Witwatersrand from 1–3 October 2025, as a signature initiative of the Africa-US Cities Project at ACSUS. Convened in partnership with stakeholders from academia, policymaking and government, think tanks, and the private sector, the Lab created a platform for knowledge sharing and dialogue on the future of African cities.

Under the theme "Re-imagining Smart African Cities: Concepts, Practices and Implementation," the Lab sought to demystify the smart cities concept from an African perspective while exploring practical approaches to inclusive and sustainable urban development. Discussions addressed shared urban challenges including socio-economic inequality, governance capacity, financing, climate change, and digitalisation, drawing on relevant South African and international smart cities frameworks and experiences.

Building on the inaugural Smart Cities Lab held in August 2024, the 2025 edition continued ACSUS's work on the internationalisation of cities and its commitment to advancing conversations on urban development. The Lab intentionally drew on experiences and frameworks relevant beyond South Africa, recognising that many of the challenges facing African cities are shared across the continent and require context-sensitive approaches, knowledge exchange, and collaborative solutions.

SESSIONS AT A GLANCE



Governance session



Infrastructure Session



Digital Session



Climate and Energy session



MS VICTORIA FLATTAU, AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK



MR CYRIL XABA, MAYOR, CITY OF ETHEKWINI



MS MOJABENG MONYAMANE (DBSA)



MR WILLIE VOS, CEO, WATERFALL CITY MANAGEMENT COMPANY



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Infrastructure Africa Summit

Hluma Luvo Ralane Participates in Infrastructure Africa Conference Panel Discussion

Hluma Luvo Ralane, Project Coordinator for the Africa-US City Relations Project at the African Centre for the Study of the United States (ACSUS), Wits University, participated in a panel discussion at the Infrastructure Africa Conference held at the Cape Town International Convention Centre.

The panel explored the theme, "Urban Infrastructure for Africa's Growing Cities – The Role of Municipalities in Catalysing the Economy." The discussion examined the critical role municipalities can play in driving economic growth as Africa's urban population continues to expand.

Panelists explored how strategic investment in infrastructure—including water, sanitation, transport, and housing—can contribute to job creation, improved service delivery, and increased urban productivity. The conversation also considered how municipalities can mobilise resources, attract private-sector investment, and align infrastructure development with broader economic and social priorities.

During the discussion, Hluma highlighted the importance of data infrastructure as a critical foundation for sustainable urban development. He emphasised the need for municipalities to invest in credible and reliable data collection systems to support data-driven planning and decision-making, ultimately enabling cities to better prioritise infrastructure investments and respond effectively to the needs of growing urban populations.

This conversation underscores the importance of strengthening municipal capacity and using data and strategic infrastructure investment to build more inclusive, productive, and sustainable African cities.



HLUMA LUVU RALANE

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UPCOMING EVENTS

October 2026

The launch of the Smart Cities Short course in October

25-27 November 2026

Amplifying African Voices for Strategic Action (AFSA) Conference

October 2026

The publication of the Smart Cities Impact Report in October.

01-11 December 2026

DST Two-Week Academic and Cultural Exchange Program in Johannesburg

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