

Empowering the next generation of African journalists

THE allure of the African Union Media Fellowship (AUMF) is irresistible. It promises a unique opportunity to delve deeper into the continent's narratives, challenge stereotypes, and amplify voices often unheard.

As a journalist with a burning passion for telling authentic African stories, I could not resist the call.

Despite landing a coveted position at an international organisation, I was disheartened to discover that my proposed story didn't align with their preconceived notions of Africa. This realisation solidified my determination to take matters into my own hands and become a catalyst for change.

The AUMF provided the perfect platform. My proposal to investigate the impact of backstreet abortions in Southern and East Africa was selected, and I embarked on a journey that would shape my career and challenge harmful stereotypes about the continent.

Selected from a pool of over 6 000 applicants, I was honoured to join 19 other talented journalists, media professionals, and content creators from across Africa in this prestigious fellowship.

The fellowship also offered unique experiences, such as moderating a panel discussion at "The Future of Media in Africa: Migration Narratives in Motion" in Bonn, Germany,

and speaking at the African Union Summit in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. These opportunities, combined with valuable training and networking, have significantly contributed to my personal and professional growth.

The AUMF is a transformative initiative designed to elevate African journalism and empower a new generation of storytellers. By providing a platform for talented journalists, media professionals, and content creators to hone their skills, expand their networks, and produce impactful work, the fellowship is driving positive change across the continent. The rapid evolution of the African media landscape necessitates a new breed of journalists equipped to navigate this complex digital age.

The AU Fellowship is pivotal in addressing this need. By providing rigorous training in digital journalism, data journalism, and multimedia storytelling, the fellowship empowers journalists to harness the power of technology to tell compelling stories that resonate with diverse audiences.

A catalyst for professional growth

The AUMF offers a unique opportunity for African journalists and content creators to enhance their skills and knowledge. Through rigorous training programmes, mentorship from industry experts, and access to

cutting-edge technology, fellows are equipped to excel in the ever-evolving media landscape. The fellowship's emphasis on practical experience allows participants to apply their learning to real-world projects, fostering creativity and innovation.

Amplifying African voices

By supporting in-depth investigations and thought-provoking analyses, the AUMF empowers journalists and content creators to shed light on critical issues affecting Africa. Fellows are encouraged to challenge conventional narratives, explore untold stories, ensure grounded and ethical journalism, and promote positive change. By amplifying African voices, the fellowship contributes to a more accurate and nuanced understanding of the continent.

Building a pan-African network

One of the most valuable aspects of the AUMF is the opportunity to connect with a diverse group of talented journalists, media professionals, and content creators from across Africa.

Through collaborative projects, knowledge-sharing sessions, and networking events, fellows forge lasting relationships that extend beyond the program. This robust network fosters cross-border collaboration facilitates the exchange of ideas and strengthens the African media ecosystem.

Empowering the future of African journalism

The AUMF is not just about training journalists; it's about shaping the future of African media. By investing in the next generation of storytellers, the fellowship is empowering individuals to become agents of change.

The fellowship is a powerful tool for empowering African journalists and promoting a more informed, engaged, and empowered citizenry. By investing in the future of African media, we are investing in the future of Africa itself.

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The Trump administration's return: What it means for Africa and Namibia

Introduction

The recent election of Donald Trump as the President of the United States has sparked mixed reactions worldwide. With a leadership style that previously prioritized an "America First" agenda, Trump's policies could bring both opportunities and challenges for Africa.

For Namibia, a country reliant on international trade, foreign aid, and diplomatic support, Trump's return as the US head of state will require strategic navigation. This opinion piece explores the potential benefits, challenges, and considerations for Namibia and the broader African continent under Trump's new administration.

US-Africa Relations under Trump: A Look Back and Forward

During Trump's previous term, US-Africa relations were often marked by a focus on counterterrorism and trade, with the US reducing aid allocations and stepping back from multilateral partnerships.

Trump's "America First" approach often translated into a limited engagement with African nations. However, it also brought an emphasis on mutual trade rather than aid dependence.

His administration pushed for African countries to pursue economic independence, emphasizing partnerships through trade rather than long-term aid commitments.

1. Trade and Investment Opportunities

Trump's campaign manifesto has again hinted at fostering trade agreements that prioritize reciprocity, which could be an advantage for African nations with the

capacity to export goods and services to the US.

For Namibia, this could mean opportunities in sectors such as minerals, agriculture, and tourism if strategic trade policies are pursued. African countries may also see more American companies interested in investment opportunities that align with Trump's market-driven approach, potentially boosting job creation and economic growth on the continent.

2. Aid and Development Funding Cuts

One concern is that Trump's administration may reduce foreign aid, especially humanitarian aid, which Africa has historically relied on for health, education, and infrastructure programmes. His previous term included cuts to funding for programmes under USAID and the World Health Organization, impacting Africa's healthcare infrastructure.

Namibia, which has benefited from US-backed programmes in healthcare and education, may need to reallocate resources or seek alternative partnerships to compensate for potential funding reductions.

3. Security and Counterterrorism Efforts

Trump has been vocal about his intention to combat terrorism, an agenda that could continue in Africa. During his first term, US operations in African regions such as the Sahel and East Africa increased to counteract extremist groups. For Namibia and other southern African nations, this could mean strengthened security alliances, but at

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the cost of African autonomy in handling regional security concerns.

4. Climate Change and Environmental Concerns

Climate policy under Trump remains uncertain, especially given his prior administration's decision to exit the Paris Agreement. African countries, including Namibia, are some of the most vulnerable to climate change and heavily depend on international climate funding.

If the US takes a less active role in

combating climate change, Namibia might face challenges in accessing crucial funding and support for climate resilience and environmental protection.

5. China-Africa Relations and US Competition

Trump's "tough on China" stance has often translated into policies aimed at curbing China's influence, which has significant implications for Africa, where Chinese investments in infrastructure and trade partnerships are substantial.

Trump's election could lead to more competition between the US and China in Africa. While this rivalry might offer Africa bargaining power, it could also create tensions. Namibia could potentially benefit by leveraging this competition to secure favourable trade and infrastructure deals from both superpowers.

Conclusion

Trump's return to the White House holds mixed implications for Africa and Namibia. The focus on trade over aid could push Namibia toward greater economic autonomy, opening doors for investments that create jobs and drive growth.

However, reduced funding for development and climate initiatives could create new challenges. As Namibia navigates this evolving landscape, it must strategise to maximise the potential trade benefits while seeking alternative partnerships to mitigate the impacts of reduced aid and shifting climate policies.

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