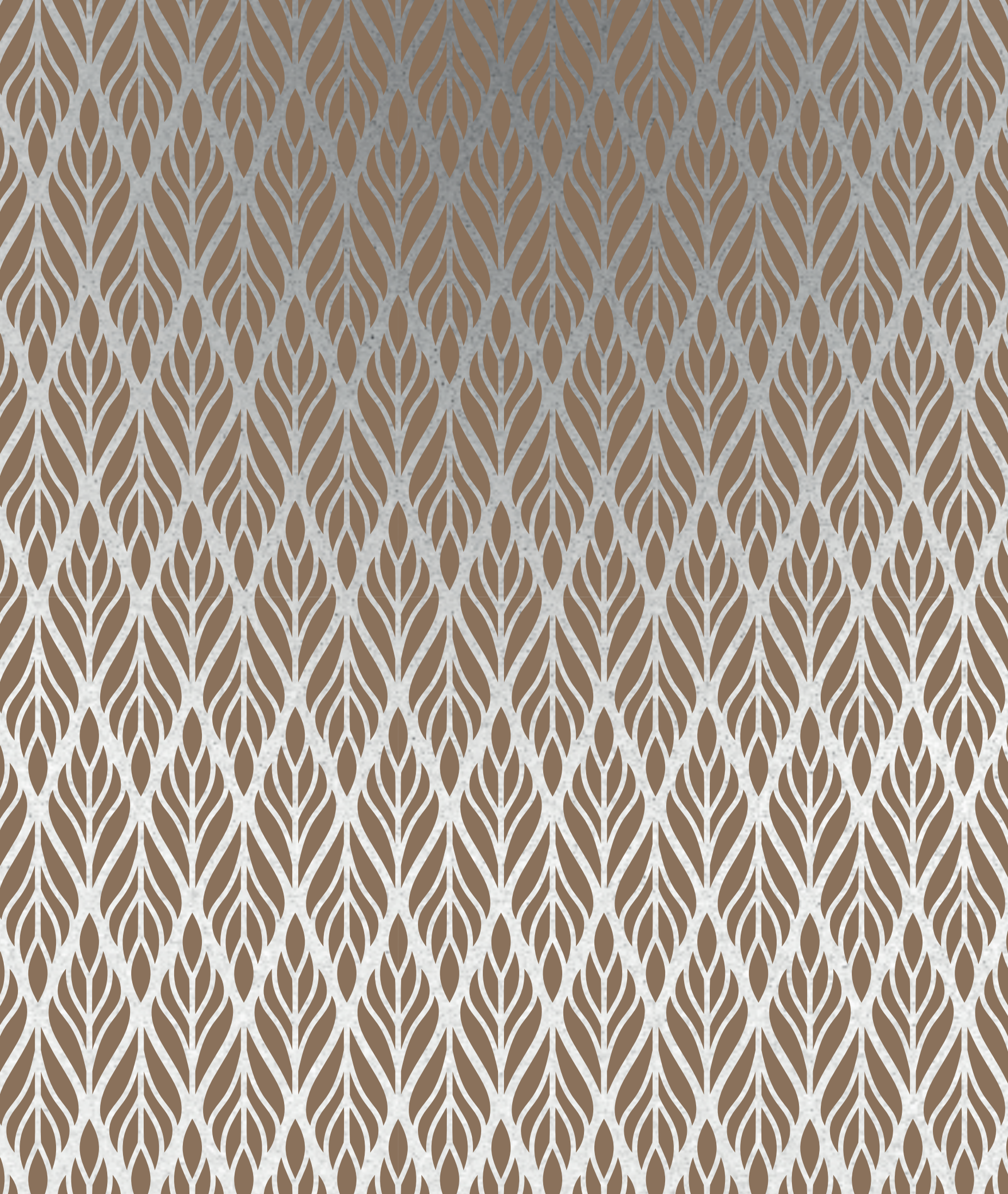
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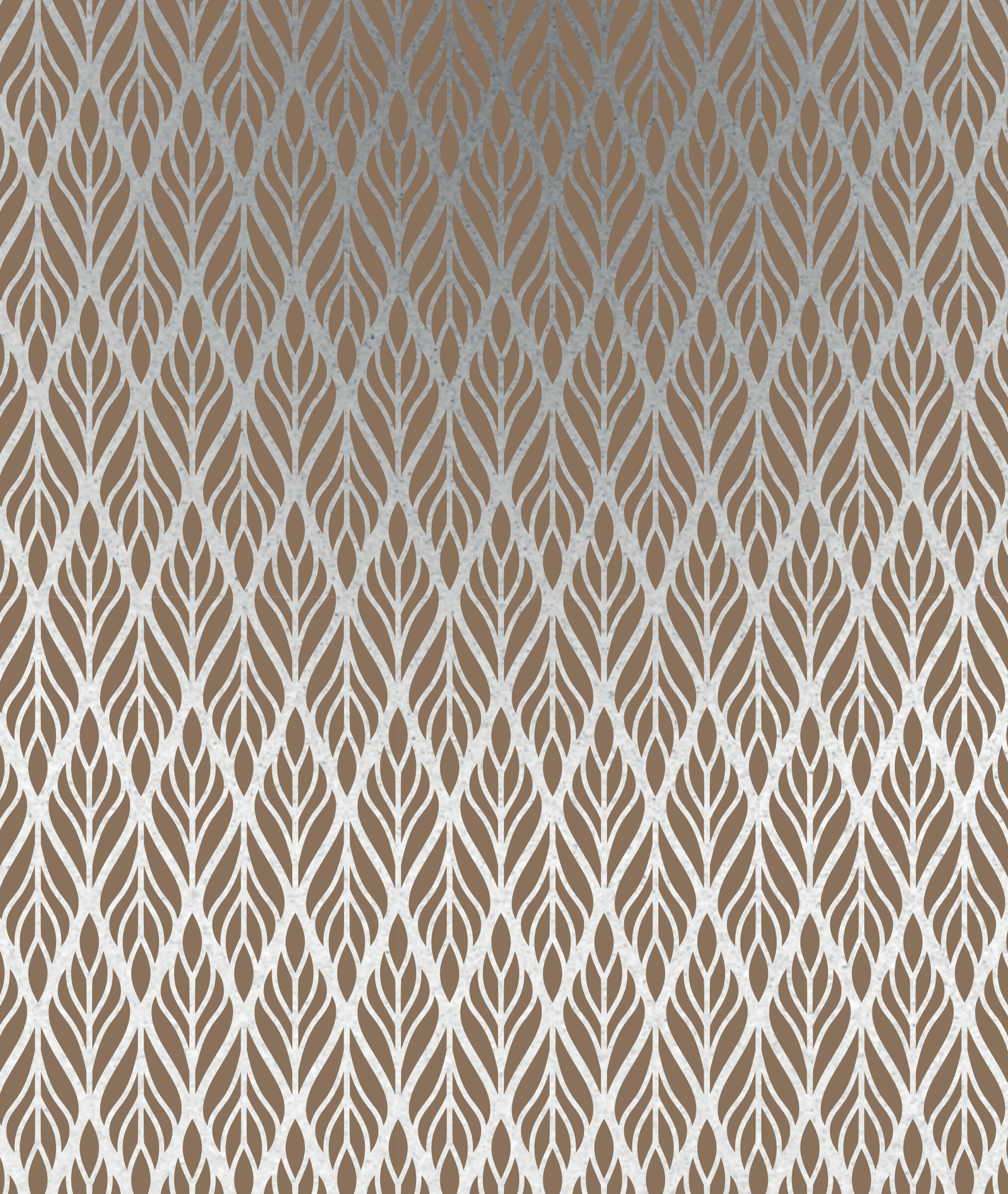
Editors
Prof. Dr. Soyalp Tamçelik
Dr. Tunç Demirtaş



YTB



AFRICA YEARBOOK 2024



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PRESIDENCY FOR TURKS ABROAD AND RELATED COMMUNITIES

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FOREWORD

The relations between Türkiye and the African Continent are rooted in a deep-seated history and built upon a foundation woven with friendship and brotherhood. Türkiye's "Africa Initiative," launched in 2005, has stood as a concrete reflection of our people-centered foreign policy, the high moral conscience of our nation, and our civilization's ideal of serving humanity without discrimination. This approach has revitalized our shared historical memory with the countries of the Continent, further deepening our ties. Since then, our mutually enriching relations – driven by humanitarian values and growing with increasing momentum – have taken their place in history as a unique example, once again demonstrating that Türkiye is a "*friendly and helping hand*" extended to the world, filled with goodwill.

Africa, the *cradle of humanity*, has unfortunately, for many years, been seen by the world merely as a domain of exploitation – a perception that has left behind a long history of sorrowful tears. Yet Africa, with its rich cultural heritage, youthful and dynamic population, abundant natural resources, and profound historical legacy, possesses the potential to shape the global future. As Türkiye, we firmly believe that Africa – our partner on the horizon of brotherhood – will be the shining star of the 21st century. With this conviction, we continue to take steps that contribute to the Continent's peace and stability, as well as its economic and social development.

Our growing closeness with the peoples of Africa – with whom we stand in solidarity across nearly every region of the Continent – has increasingly gained visibility in the expanding body of written literature. Cultural publications prepared under the auspices of the Presidency of Türkiye, such as the *Anthology of African Proverbs* and *African Culinary Culture*, stand as powerful symbols of this deepening relationship.

I believe that the fourth edition of the *Africa Yearbook 2024*, published by the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB) since 2021, is a highly comprehensive and distinguished resource. It offers a multidimensional perspective on the Continent, reflects the experience of our institutions on the ground, and presents an up-to-date snapshot of developments across Africa – from politics and the economy to culture and sports. Publications of this nature are the product of long hours, meticulous effort, and dedicated labor. I sincerely hope that this meaningful work will contribute to a deeper and more accurate understanding of Africa, and I extend my heartfelt thanks to all those who contributed to its preparation.

Emine Erdoğan
First Lady of the Republic of Türkiye



INTRODUCTION

With its historical legacy and multidimensional diplomatic vision, Türkiye responds to Africa's rising potential through strong partnerships. Our relations with the Continent are gaining momentum each day, grounded in increasingly robust foundations. Our political, commercial, military, cultural, and social cooperation with each African country – characterized by unique depth and scope – is experiencing a rapid upward trajectory.

Guided by a principle of respect for the core values and principles upheld by our counterparts, Türkiye is advancing its initiatives with an approach rooted in mutual benefit and within a broad and highly effective framework. Türkiye's efforts in this regard are not limited to state-level engagements but also contribute to the establishment of lasting and meaningful ties between our societies. This joint endeavor is not merely a response to the dynamics of the present day; it is also the product of a strong and resolute vision that paves the way for the prosperity and peace of future generations in both Türkiye and Africa.

In this context, the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB), which carries out various programs and projects aimed at developing human capital – an area of critical importance for the Continent – plays a strategic role in advancing our relations with Africa, our strategic partner.

The fourth annual edition of the *Africa Yearbook 2024*, which has been published since 2021 and has established itself as a significant academic contribution shaping Türkiye's perspective on Africa, goes beyond documenting historical developments. Through the topics it addresses, the *Africa Yearbook 2024* meaningfully contributes – across multiple dimensions – to the shared future that Türkiye seeks to build with Africa.

I extend my heartfelt congratulations to our esteemed researchers who have contributed to this distinguished publication, to all our institutions and organizations operating in Africa both in offices and out in the field, and to everyone whose dedication made this work possible. I firmly believe that *Africa Yearbook 2024* will serve as a guiding reference in its field. I hope it will contribute to the production of knowledge, support multidimensional research efforts, and open new horizons in Türkiye-Africa relations.

May it benefit many.

Mehmet Nuri ERSOY
Minister of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Türkiye



PREFACE

Africa – the cradle of ancient civilizations, embracing all colors and shades within its multilingual and multicultural fabric – has consistently maintained a favorable stance toward Türkiye. Leveraging deep-rooted historical ties and a shared memory, robust relationships have been established between Türkiye and various African nations, within which strategic cooperation has flourished, and bilateral relations, strengthened by mutual affection and goodwill, continue to deepen.

Serving the vision of "The world is bigger than five", frequently articulated by our President on international platforms, Türkiye extends its comprehensive material and moral support to Africa in its pursuit of future goals. This support aims to build the Continent's capacity to enhance sustainable development through the equitable and efficient distribution of its abundant resources, aligned with its significant population potential, and to improve the welfare of its peoples. Türkiye reinforces this commitment through a range of collaborative initiatives. Progressing toward a shared future with Africa, Türkiye remains vigilant regarding issues that may impede the peaceful coexistence of the Continent's peoples. In this context, the Ankara Process – initiated through Türkiye's mediation to address the year-long dispute between Ethiopia and Somalia – has achieved historic success by adopting a balanced, feasible, and mutually beneficial approach to resolve the disagreement between the two nations.

At this juncture, the critical role Africa plays in shaping multidimensional global relations, along with Türkiye's supportive stance, is particularly noteworthy. At the beginning of 2024, the Republic of South Africa filed a genocide case against Israel at the International Court of Justice, receiving strong support from various African countries. Türkiye, in turn, filed an official declaration of intervention in the proceedings.

The Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB), one of Türkiye's leading public diplomacy institutions, conducts a wide range of activities for kin communities and related groups, guided by a human-centered approach in alignment with the foreign policy of our country, which acts as a compassionate power on the international stage. With a commitment to contributing to humanity's shared goals, YTB also engages in various collaborations and joint initiatives.

In this context, during the official visit of Her Excellency Samia Suluhu Hassan, President of the United Republic of Tanzania, to Türkiye in April 2024, a Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in Higher Education Scholarships and Diaspora Affairs was signed between YTB and the official authorities of Tanzania.

As part of its ongoing initiatives focused on Africa, YTB also organized the Future of Africa panel as part of the launch of Africa Yearbook 2023 on October 30, 2024. Bringing together Ambassadors of African countries in Türkiye, diplomats of various ranks, academics, and researchers, the event fostered inclusive, productive, and thought-provoking discussions.

In the context of international student mobility, Türkiye ranks among the top ten countries globally. In 2024, a total of 1,079 African students were awarded scholarships to pursue undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral studies in Türkiye. More than twenty percent of all international scholarship recipients in the country are students from Africa. Upon completing their studies and returning to their home countries, these students become part of the extensive Türkiye Alumni network, which now exceeds 150,000 members. They serve as voluntary ambassadors of Türkiye, cultural envoys, and the foundational fabric of strong bilateral relations. Currently, 16 Türkiye Alumni Associations are active across 14 African countries, helping maintain strong ties with Türkiye through various cultural and social initiatives.

One of the key components of Türkiye's education diplomacy, the Turkish Language Program for Public Officials and Academics (KATİP), hosted participants from Ghana, Guinea, Cameroon, the Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Sudan, Ethiopia, Burundi, and Zambia during the 2024–2025 term. Three diplomats, three academics, and three public officials from these countries received training in Türkiye, during which they not only learned Turkish and experienced the country's cultural environment, but also engaged in knowledge exchange in public administration, thereby cementing intergovernmental relations.

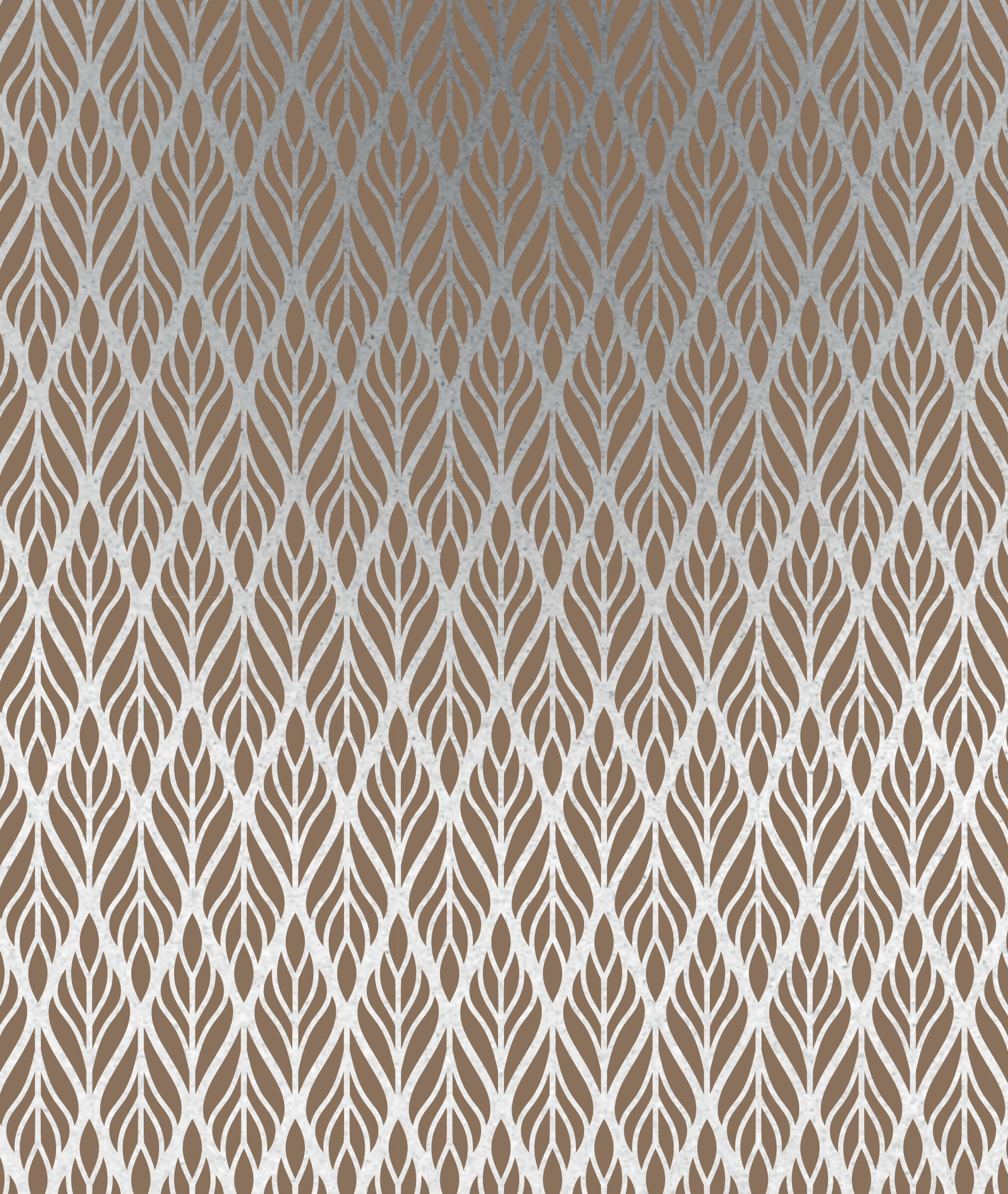
The fourth volume of the Africa Yearbook series — *Africa Yearbook 2024* — which has remained one of the most distinguished works of YTB Publications since its inception in 2021, consists of five main sections: "Politics, Economy, Society, and Environment", "Türkiye–Africa Relations", "Relations of Global and Regional Actors with Africa", "Culture, Arts, Education, and Sports", and "Publications on Africa". Aiming to make a significant contribution to the literature, the present edition offers a comprehensive con-

temporary panorama of the Continent. In addition to key developments in the military, economic, technological, political, and environmental spheres, the volume also includes essays on a wide range of topics — from education to cultural and artistic activities, from football to traditional games, and from cinema to music.

Since its first publication in 2021, the *Africa Yearbook* has distinguished itself among its peers as the most comprehensive of its kind. It further enhances its value by including firsthand accounts of activities carried out in Africa in 2024 by key institutions such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of National Defense, Presidency of Religious Affairs, Yunus Emre Institute, TİKA, Türkiye Maarif Foundation, Turkish Red Crescent, Anadolu Agency, TRT, The Foreign Economic Relations Board (DEİK), and Turkish Airlines.

This editorial volume, thematically compiling major developments in and related to Africa throughout 2024, is enriched by the valuable contributions of eminent academics, esteemed ambassadors, accomplished scholars and postgraduate students, as well as the commendable efforts of public institutions that make us proud with their work. We hope this publication will serve as a valuable resource for the literature and offer benefit to all — especially researchers and academics specializing in African studies, as well as public and private sector representatives operating on the Continent. We wish you an engaging and insightful reading experience.

Abdullah EREN
YTB President



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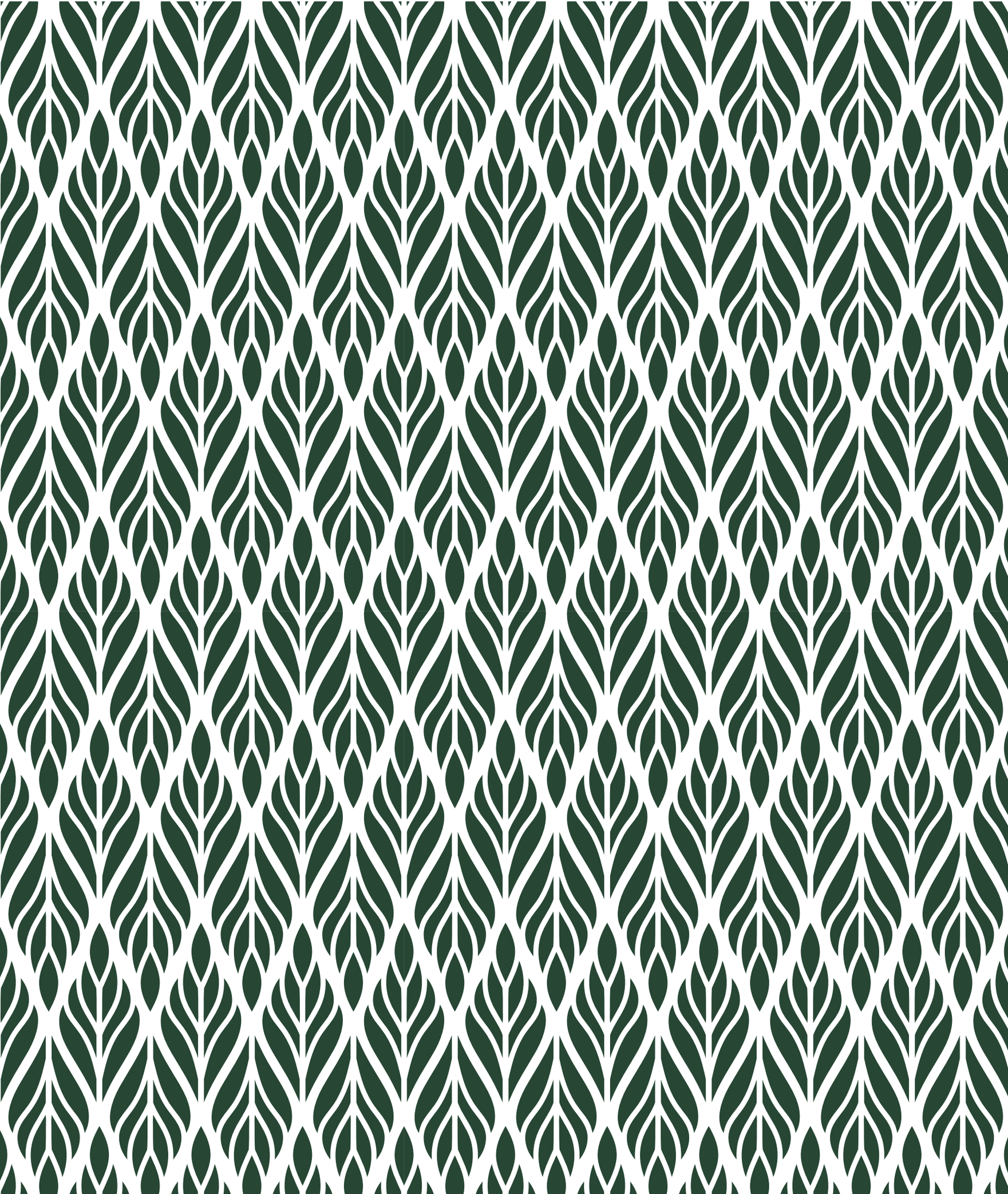
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Smart Africa in 2024

Fevzi Kırbaşoğlu*

1. Introduction

The *Smart Africa Alliance* (SAA) is an international initiative established on the basis of the *Smart Africa Manifesto* signed by African Union (AU) member countries in 2014. The alliance aims to transform the African continent into a knowledge-based economy through information and communication technologies, to expand broadband internet access at affordable costs, and to accelerate socioeconomic development and digital transformation.

The core mission of SAA is to strengthen digital infrastructure in Africa, expand digital skills, increase digital inclusion and implement sustainable digital transformation projects. The Alliance, covering 40 African countries and more than 1.2 billion people in 2024, continues to serve its vision of creating a single digital market in Africa by 2030. Achieving this goal involves a wide network of stakeholders, including heads of state of member states, international organizations and representatives of the global private sector.[1]

Accordingly, this article will examine the institutional structure and governance model of the SAA, and analyse the continent's agenda in the digital development process in the context of projects, international cooperation, and strategic initiatives implemented in 2024.

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1 "Who We Are", *Smart Africa*, (n.d.), https://smartafrica.org/who-we-are/, Access Date: 25.01.2025.



2. Institutional Structure of Smart Africa

The institutional structure of the SAA is built on a multi-stakeholder governance model. The board, one of the most important bodies of the alliance, is chaired by the President of Rwanda, Paul Kagame. The board is composed of presidents of the member states, the Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union, representatives of the AU Commission and

Platinum Members of the SAA.[2] The board undertakes the responsibilities of supporting the SAA agenda, carrying out high-level advocacy activities and providing policy and strategic leadership.[3] The secretariat, another pivotal mechanism of the SAA, oversees the Alliance's operations and the execution of its strategic plans. The Secretariat is governed by a senior management team led by CEO Lacina Koné. This team is composed of the directors of strategy and growth, finance, digital transformation and services, infrastructure and empowerment, and events and partnerships. The Secretariat coordinates with member countries and develops cooperation with the private sector and international organizations to achieve the strategic objectives of the SAA.[4]

3. Smart Africa's Activities in 2024

SAA experienced a transformative period in 2024, drawing on the advantages provided by its institutional structure.[5] The board, led by President Kagame, and the secretariat, headed by Koné, organized various projects and events to enable the Alliance to achieve its digital transformation goals. In addition, the board strengthened its institutional presence by participating in online and in-person meetings, conferences, workshops and summits held by international organizations.

Alongside hosting *the Council of African IT Agencies* meeting in early2024 and participating in events such as *African Prosperity Dialogues 2024*, SAA took important decisions regarding the digital development of the Continent at the 18th Steering Committee Meeting held in March 2024. This meeting, organized as part of *Mobile World Congress 2024*, was attended by 15 member countries and 11 strategic partners, hosting discussions on new collaborations and projects that will shape the digital future of the Continent. In addition, during the congress, Koné held one-on-one meetings with key stakeholders such as ZTE, HPE and Kenya's Minister of Information, Communications and The Digital Economy, with the engagements aiming to accelerate regional digital integration.[6]

As part of efforts to develop digital skills on the Continent, *Smart Africa Digital Academy* (SADA), supported by the AU, started implementing comprehensive training programs in artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, big data analytics, cloud computing and blockchain for young entrepreneurs, policy makers, public servants, educators and technology professionals. With a $20 million grant from the World Bank, the academy expanded digital skills training across Africa. The establishment of the *SADA National Academy* in Djibouti and the *SADA Youth Chapter* in Gambia were considered important

2 The SAA has defined five membership categories (*Platinum, Gold, Silver, SME and Startups*) that offer different privileges and levels of participation. The highest level, Platinum membership ($200,000/year), provides maximum privileges such as access to the management structure, meetings with Heads of State, a special account manager and access to confidential reports. Gold membership ($100,000/year) and Silver membership ($50,000/year) entitle you to attend steering committee meetings and make presentations at council meetings respectively. SME membership ($25,000/year) provides access to confidential reports and project partnerships, while Startups membership ($5,000/year) provides basic organizational and participation rights. For further information. "Become a Member", *Smart Africa*, (n.d.),

https://smartafrica.org/become-a-member/, Access Date: 25.01.2025.

3 "The Board", *Smart Africa*, (n.d.),

https://smartafrica.org/the-board-2/, Access Date: 25.01.2025.

4 "Executive Leadership", *Smart Africa*, (n.d.), https://smartafrica.org/the-board-2/, Access Date: 25.01.2025.

5 Lacina Koné, "Best Wishes", *Smart Africa Secreteriat*, 01.01.2025,

https://us6.campaign-archive.com/ https://l24.im/a1ONMg, Access Date: 30.01.2025.

6 "Newsletter/March, 2024", *Smart Africa Secreteriat*, 04.03.2024,

https://us6.campaign-archive.com/ https://l24.im/cLO3K, Access Date: 01.02.2025.

steps in increasing digital competencies and integrating young people into the digital economy.[7]

Significant developments occurred in the field of cybersecurity as well. Speaking at the *Cybersecurity Conference* in Rabat, Morocco, Koné highlighted the success of the first *Cybersecurity Innovation Center* established in Côte d'Ivoire and invited stakeholders to collaborate to create similar centers across the Continent. Meanwhile, SAA initiated capacity-building activities for policy-makers and decision-makers on digital transformation, regulatory frameworks and innovative policies through a three-year cooperation agreement with *United States Telecommunications Training Institute*.[8]

Regional cooperation on cross-border data management and regulatory clarity was strengthened with *Data Center and Cloud Regulatory Framework Validation Workshops* held in Ghana and Djibouti in March. At the *Artificial Intelligence for Sustainable and Inclusive Futures Conference* in Paris in April 2024, Koné highlighted the transformative potential and job creation opportunities that artificial intelligence offers for Africa. In addition, Koné participated in a panel and gave talks discussing digital inclusion and the impact of artificial intelligence on global prosperity at *the Global Digital Summit* in Washington.[9]

Western Africa Regional Digital Integration Program was officially launched in May 2024. Led by the World Bank and to be implemented by SADA, the program aims to accelerate regional digital market integration and train more than 30,000 public administrators, information technology experts and decision-makers within five years. SAA also organized the summit on *Shaping Africa's Artificial Intelligence (AI) Future* and contributed to the harmonization of digital policies on a continental scale through the *Smart Africa Trust Alliance* initiatives. Again in 2024, discussions were held at the Giga Connectivity Forum in Geneva on expanding internet access across the Continent and SAA's bulk purchasing and cost reduction strategies.[10]

Later in the same year, Koné participated in the *Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development Annual Fall Meeting*, highlighting the strategic needs to increase Africa's competitiveness in the data economy and artificial intelligence. Meanwhile, at the *China-Africa Cooperation Summit*, cooperation opportunities to accelerate the Continent's digital transformation were evaluated. In November 2024, a *Harmonizing Country Code Top-Level Domain* training and experience sharing session was held in Istanbul, where important steps were taken to strengthen digital governance in Africa. SAA was also recognised at the *Cybersecurity Awards Night* for its leadership in promoting cybersecurity cooperation on the Continent through the establis-

7 Yvan Guéhi, "Smart Africa Digital Academy Receives a $20mn Grant from the World Bank to Expand across Africa", *Smart Africa*, 29.02.2025,

https://smartafrica.org/ https://l24.im/9Vrfzm, Access Date: 02.02.2025.

8 "Newsletter/March, 2024", *Smart Africa Secreteriat*, 04.03.2024,

https://us6.campaign-archive.com/ https://l24.im/LCrb, Access Date: 01.02.2025.

9 "Newsletter/April, 2024", *Smart Africa Secreteriat*, 05.04.2024,

https://us6.campaign-archive.com/ https://l24.im/4kCR, Access Date: 02.02.2025.

10 "Newsletter/May, 2024", *Smart Africa Secreteriat*, 13.05.2024,

https://us6.campaign-archive.com/ https://l24.im/lAgi9eR, Access Date: 04.02.2025.

hment of *the Africa Network of Cybersecurity Authorities*. In addition, within the scope of the *One Africa Network (OAN)* initiative, a two-day hybrid workshop was held in Kigali to review the feasibility studies and implementation roadmap led by Gabon. The workshop also helped identify the next steps towards the goals of creating a single digital market on the Continent and eliminating mobile roaming charges. Another significant collaboration in November was the strategic *Memorandum of Understanding* signed between SAA and the African Federation of Digital Businesses at the *Francotech* event in Paris. This agreement reinforced the shared commitment to developing the Continent's digital economy ecosystem, improving the business environment and increasing technological inclusion.[11]

In the last quarter of 2024, SAA signed several cooperation agreements with key international organizations such as the European Union, BMZ/GIZ and ICANN with the aim of accelerating Africa's digital transformation, developing policies and strategies in data governance and strengthening the internet infrastructure. During the same period, SATA members participated in a study visit to Bangalore, India, and exchanged information on digital solutions and data use in public services. A major event held during this period was the *13th Digital Transformation Conference in Africa*. In the *CGE-CI Academy 2024* panel, Koné emphasized the need for digital services to go beyond traditional infrastructure requirements to reach a wider audience, noting the digital economy's greater potential for the Continent than agricultural development.[12]

4. Conclusion

2024 was a period in which the SAA made considerable progress towards its goal of accelerating the Continent's digital transformation. The alliance, through the effective coordination of the board and the secretariat, pursued a significant agenda in the areas of developing digital skills, strengthening cybersecurity and ensuring regional digital integration.

The expansion of SADA, the progress of the OAN initiative and strategic partnerships with international organizations represent concrete steps towards achieving the 2030 vision of SAA. However, more comprehensive international collaborations and investments are needed to overcome the challenges the Continent faces in digital transformation.

11 "Newsletter/October, 2024", *Smart Africa Secreteriat*, 10.10.2024,

https://us6.campaign-archive.com/ https://l24.im/oz2S3Q1, Access Date: 05.02.2025.

12 "Global Gateway: EU and Smart Africa Strengthen Partnership for Africa's Digital Transformation", *European Commission*, 03.12.2024,

https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/ https://l24.im/NKJB08a, Access Date: 06.02.2025.;

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https://smartafrica.org/ https://l24.im/vX9Hr, Access Date: 12.02.2025.