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NEW DIMENSION OF DIPLOMACY: ROLE OF AFRICA IN UKRAINE’S GLOBAL STRATEGY

Keywords: African states, Ukraine’s global strategy, Grain from Ukraine, food security, international coalition of support, strategic partnership, innovative technologies.

With the beginning of the full-scale invasion, Ukraine faced a critical task: to form a broad international coalition of support, particularly within international organizations. African countries should be an important part of this coalition — exactly with this continent Ukraine has been actively developing a dialogue in recent years.

Africa accounts for about 25% of the votes in the UN General Assembly and has significant resource, human and economic potential, which creates wide opportunities for political and economic cooperation. Ukraine has a positive image in the region as a reliable partner, which tries to develop mutually beneficial cooperation. This is confirmed by initiatives such as Grain from Ukraine, which strengthens the food security of African countries, as well as the long-term participation of Ukrainian peacekeepers in UN missions in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, Côte d’Ivoire, South Sudan and Sudan.

Strengthening Ukraine’s global role, increasing international support, scaling Ukrainian business, advancing the national agenda, and promoting of Ukrainian culture are key prerequisites for the country’s successful recovery and long-term growth. Cooperation with African states is an important element in achieving these strategic goals.

There are a number of promising areas for bilateral cooperation between Ukraine and African countries. Among them are agriculture (from grain exports to supporting the modernization of the agricultural

sector and the introduction of innovative technologies), IT and digitalization, transport industry, medicine and pharmaceuticals. These areas are often mentioned in public discussions and have real potential to contribute to the development of African countries and the economic growth of Ukraine.

At the same time, it is worth paying special attention to areas that are still less developed, but have strategic importance: information, educational, scientific and cultural sectors. Their development can create a deeper foundation for a sustainable partnership, strengthen people-to-people contacts, increase the level of awareness of African societies about modern Ukraine, its history, culture, scientific and technological potential. This will also allow introducing a discourse beneficial to Ukraine in scientific, educational and expert circles, and promoting the Ukrainian position on key international issues, in particular in countries that currently adhere to a neutral position regarding the Russian-Ukrainian war.

Among steps already implemented here are the creation of Ukrainian studies studios at two universities in South Africa — the University of Pretoria and the University of the Witwatersrand, the participation of Ukrainian artists and writers in festivals in South Africa and Ghana, and the screening of Ukrainian films. Strategic actions, that will help to strengthen these areas, are: developing contacts, working with Africans who studied at Ukrainian universities, and involving African artists in festivals in Ukraine. Such countries as Ghana, Kenya, Mauritania, Morocco, Tunisia, and Zambia are already showing interest in such formats of interaction.

Particular attention should be paid to the educational sector, which has always attracted the attention of many students from African countries. In conditions of limited financial resources and the impossibility of providing full scholarships, relevant solutions may be the creation of joint academic structures and training centers of Ukrainian universities in partnership with African educational institutions, as well as the development of flexible online learning formats focused on students and graduates of African universities.

The information component is of crucial importance, particularly in the context of countering Russian propaganda and the spread of

disinformation on the continent. It is necessary to strengthen Ukraine's media presence, form long-term cooperation with African media interested in objective coverage of global events, and thus influence the general information background regarding Ukraine.

For many African countries, which have long remained on the periphery of international relations, strengthening their image and weight in the global context is a priority task. This is also relevant for Ukraine, which is currently actively advocating for those countries that have survived colonialism, occupation and the loss of statehood, and which are now fighting for their independence and role in the global system of international relations. Given these parallels, one of the potential areas of cooperation is the intensification of international efforts to maintain peace in the world, which meets the interests of both Ukraine and African states.

African diplomatic formats, including ECOWAS, the African Union (AU) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), have developed models of mediation, reconciliation and regional response to conflict. While some of these initiatives have not been entirely successful, their strength lies in their grassroots approach to peacebuilding. For example, effective participation of women in the peace process in Liberia, where women have become important initiators of peace negotiations and have actively contributed to stability in the country. At the same time, the role of regional organizations such as the African Union and IGAD has been crucial during the conflicts between Sudan and South Sudan and in Somalia, where these blocs have acted as important mediators in finding political solutions. This approach clearly demonstrates that for Africa, peace is not just a ceasefire, but a much more complex process that includes social integration and economic recovery at all levels.

At the same time, Ukraine, fighting for its own freedom and independence, is conducting a diplomatic campaign to restore respect for international law. The country has a unique experience in building international coalitions, which is an important element of its strategy, and no other country in the world has this experience.

In this context, Ukraine and African countries should focus their efforts on forming an alternative voice in global forums that would contribute to

solving the most important global problems. In addition, it is important to initiate humanitarian coalitions, in particular in such critical areas as education, food security and medicine, where Ukraine can make a significant contribution, using its experience. One of the promising areas of cooperation is also the development of the sustainable recovery sector, which includes reforms, digitalization and agro-technical innovations, where Ukraine is able to offer useful solutions for partners in Africa.

Our primary partners can be countries such as Ghana, Kenya, Zambia, Malawi, Mauritius, Mauritania, Botswana, Tunisia, Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria, which not only have experience of similar challenges in their history, but also stand on the side of international law and support for the principles of peaceful coexistence. These countries understand what Ukraine is going through and are ready to cooperate within the framework of such strategic initiatives.

Overall, cooperation between Ukraine and African countries has enormous potential to achieve long-term results in various areas, from humanitarian initiatives to economic development. While these results may not be immediate, only active work and strategic partnership will allow us to gain support and strengthen Ukraine's position on the international stage in the future.

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