

African leaders are descending on Washington, D.C. for the U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit, a key moment for the United States to try to reset its relationship with African countries.

The three-day summit begins on Tuesday and will aim to demonstrate the commitment of President Biden's administration to the continent, according to organisers.

The summit's agenda is "The US-Africa Leaders Summit will build on our shared values to better foster new economic engagement; reinforce the US-Africa commitment to democracy and human rights; mitigate the impact of covid-19 and of future pandemics; work collaboratively to strengthen regional and global health; promote food security; advance peace and security; respond to the climate crisis; and amplify diaspora ties," Biden said in a July statement.

A total of 49 heads of state and African Union Commission Chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat have been invited to the summit.

Mali, Guinea, Sudan and Burkina Faso - which are suspended by the African Union - were not invited. Eritrea was also excluded.

The first US-Africa summit was hosted in 2014 by then-president Barack Obama a year after he and the first lady traveled to Senegal, South Africa, and Tanzania, to meet with heads of states and businesspeople. But since then, the US put this diplomatic exercise on the backburner.

Donald Trump did not host the summit during his time at the White House, and pandemic considerations would have complicated hosting the event during Biden's first year in office.

The US has an interest in fostering a stronger relationship with the 54-country continent, which will make up a quarter of the world's population by 2050.

Since June 2019, the US government has helped close more than 800 two-way trade and investment deals across 45 African countries, worth an estimated \$50 billion in exports and investments.

On the humanitarian aid side, the US pledged \$1.3 billion to the Horn of Africa, where 22 million people face a starvation warning.