By Fautine Ngila

Something curious happened at the annual shindig of billionaires and powerbrokers in the Swiss Alps village of Davos this time around. It is not clear, however, that enough members of the global elite fully registered its significance.

Presidents and Vice Presidents of African countries – including Ghana, Egypt, and Nigeria – arrived as usual to hobnob with those who control the vast wealth and power that shapes the world. But this time they seem to have left the begging bowls and timid voices at home. It was as if they had come to stake a claim, to plant a flag. It soon became clear that they had formed alliances with leaders from other continents, in Southeast Asia, the Indian subcontinent, Latin America, and even the Pacific Islands. One phrase explains the jarring break with tradition: Accra Reset.

In a world where globalization is fraying, supply chains are under strain, and traditional development models are faltering, this unusual and dazzling display of Global South power, with Africa at the forefront, presented a vision so glaring that no one who watched it could have missed how brazenly it defied the typical place Davos places African leaders. In the official program and in the round-the-clock coverage on the international networks, Africa was barely a footnote. Rwanda contributed its perspectives on economic sovereignty, innovation, and sustainable development as part of the Accra Reset dialogue.

The Accra Reset Initiative cut through the overcrowded Davos mist with a proclamation that Africa will no longer wait for a global system that no longer works as promised. Instead, the crew of continental leaders leading this movement are insisting that Africa must define its own economic sovereignty, harness its resources, and mobilize its domestic capital to drive growth on its own terms.

African Presidents are not known for cutting to the chase and tossing aside the polite diplomatic finesse about “partnerships” and “solidarity” and how the world owes Africa fairness etc. in their international outings. This time, they were pulling all the stops.

There was the perennial talk of exporting minerals in their raw form in markets designed to ensure that Africa captures just enough of the barest scraps to keep shipping the stuff, but never enough to break the cycle and start internalising serious value.

What was different is that this time, the African leaders connected this directly to Africa's geopolitical posture and recognised the need to make the ambition of correcting such age-old marginalisation the basis of both their regional and international economic diplomacy.

It was also heart-warming to hear Mahama explain clearly that his government saw Ghana's ongoing economic turnaround and the drivers of that recovery story – fiscal discipline, accountability in public financial management, bureaucratic efficiency, strategic management of external debt, public sector transformation through technology etc. – as anchors around which to engage other African leaders about substantive regional reforms. Even though the African Peer Review Mechanism was envisaged to promote something along these lines, it has over the years been denied the high-level political support necessary. Quite possibly because it was crafted as a technocratic process rather than an instrument of Africa's regional and international political economy. The Accra Reset seems keen to find a path back towards that kind of policy peer pressure.

The senior bankers and financiers representing Africa's main development finance institutions talked about trillions of dollars locked in institutional inertia – across pension trusts, sovereign wealth funds, and similar capital pools – that could be unlocked and coordinated across the continent to back some of the Accra Reset's more audacious programs, such as the *Sovereign Prosperity Spheres*. The clarity of these plans seem refreshing in a way that was quite rare in continental plan-making.

The other thing that was intriguing is the sheer number of high-calibre former Heads of State and Government willing to engage practically with the Accra Reset. Assembling under the banner of the *Guardians' Circle,* these world leaders – including Olusegun Obasanjo, Ameenah Gurib-Fakim, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, Helen Clark, Gro Brundtland Harlem, James Patterson, Nkosazana Zuma, and several others – have all found common cause to throw their weight behind the Accra Reset. They must certainly have sensed an inflection point and convinced themselves that the initiative has the weight to shift the direction of something major in the current global order. And, hopefully, towards real change that benefit real people in Africa and the Global South.

In a world where old guarantees are fading, and a scramble for all appears to define what remains of geopolitics, why shouldn't an initiative that has come so far so quickly since its origins in a conference hosted by Mahama in August 2025 be given

a chance?

The answer of course is in the practical vision the Accra Reset lays out and the steps it takes to execute and vindicate that vision. From what was showcased and explained at Davos, quite a bit of that duty was discharged. Rwanda's national policies and regional leadership in AfCFTA engagement, regional integration, digital economy, AI adoption, sustainable development initiatives, and youth employment programs are a step towards the right direction.

Mahama's direct order to his finance mandarins to work with others to explore the repatriation of a portion of Africa's reserves held in Western capitals due to mistrust of continental alternatives was bold and concrete. The announcement by the Accra Reset Presidential Council of the creation of a kind of credentialed Sovereign Negotiators' Club to bolster Africa's dealmaking capacity was likewise tangible and forthright. The panel of eminent global health leaders, such as Peter Piot and Nisia Trindade, set up to advise the Accra Reset leaders on how to push for specific, high-value, changes to the global health institutions was anything if not clear and lucid. As also are the upcoming policy-exchanges with Indonesia, Singapore, and South Korea on critical minerals and artificial intelligence.

No one could have listened to such thoughtful and methodical action-roadmaps and left with the impression that Accra Reset is another talk shop. Action, of course, is not guaranteed to succeed. But God knows Africa has heard enough talk and will act, especially presidential action, any day.

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