

Special report Nairobi 2026

AXIS in Africa's infrastructure sovereignties



Long version

Foreword — Nairobi 2026 and Africa's Infrastructural Sovereignties

A summit revealing a changing era — On May 11 and 12, 2026, the Africa Forward Summit, organized in Nairobi by France and Kenya, revealed a profound transformation in the relationship between Africa, Europe, and the new power infrastructures of the 21st century. Behind the investment announcements, discussions on energy, digital payments, artificial intelligence, data, sports infrastructure, and African value chains, a common logic is gradually emerging: sovereignty through networks.

Six analyses to understand a continental transformation — This dossier brings together six analyses published around the summit to offer a coherent interpretation of this transformation. Each text explores a particular dimension of Africa's emerging infrastructural landscape: the end of the aid paradigm, new architectures of influence, the battle for digital payments, technological pan-Africanism, human infrastructure, and the emergence of integrated sovereign systems.

AXIS as a strategic guiding principle — Through this analysis, AXIS emerges as a potential guiding principle. Although not officially presented in Nairobi, the Congolese program reveals several of the dynamics visible during the summit: governance of flows, transactional infrastructures, resource tokenization, digital certification, data oversight, and sovereign African architectures.

A reflection on 21st-century Africa's infrastructure — These texts are therefore not simply a commentary on the Africa Forward summit. They offer a broader reflection on Africa's gradual entry into the age of platforms, integrated systems, and contemporary infrastructural sovereignties. Through the themes addressed—digital payments, data governance, resource tokenization, climate infrastructure, connectivity, and transactional architectures—the way in which certain emerging African programs, including AXIS in the Democratic Republic of Congo, are already seeking to experiment with future continental architectures of digital and economic sovereignty also becomes apparent.

Table of contents

Foreword — Nairobi 2026 and Africa's Infrastructural Sovereignties	2
Forward AXIS 1 — Nairobi 2026: When Africa ceases to be a matter of aid	4
Introduction — The African infrastructure shift	4
1. The software has changed	4
2. Sovereignty becomes infrastructure.....	5
3. AXIS in the Nairobi landscape	6
Forward AXIS 2 — From the old sphere of influence to the platform continent	7
Introduction — From presence to infrastructure	7
1. The official end of the "reserve sphere"	7
2. The new influence through networks	8
3. AXIS as a prototype	8
Forward AXIS 3 — Nairobi and the invisible war of African payments	10
Introduction — Nairobi and the battle of the flows.....	10
1. Kenya as a laboratory	10
2. The battle for financial infrastructure	11
3. AXIS and the transactional layer	11
Forward AXIS 4 — The new Pan-Africanism is technological	13
Introduction — Pan-Africanism is changing its language.....	13
1. The end of old stories	13
2. The continent of networks	14
3. AXIS as a continental tool	15
Forward AXIS 5 — Sport, infrastructure and sovereignty: what Nairobi really reveals.....	16
Introduction — Sport as a mirror of African sovereignties	16
1. Sport as public policy	16
2. The hidden economy of sport	17
3. AXIS and human infrastructures.....	17
Forward AXIS 6 — AXIS and the new age of African infrastructure	19
Introduction — Nairobi and the Africa of sovereign systems	19
1. Building the continent's networks.....	20
2. The invisible infrastructures of sovereignty	21
3. Resources, tokenization and programmable Africa	23
Conclusion — Infrastructural Africa.....	25

Forward AXIS 1 — Nairobi 2026: When Africa ceases to be a matter of aid

Introduction — The African infrastructure shift

Nairobi as a signal of a paradigm shift — The Africa Forward Summit, organized in Nairobi on May 11 and 12, 2026, by France and Kenya, likely marks much more than just another diplomatic meeting between Europe and Africa. In speeches, panels, and public interventions, the traditional vocabulary of development aid seems to be gradually giving way to that of investment, infrastructure, value chains, digital sovereignty, and African strategic capabilities.

The gradual end of the aid paradigm — Emmanuel Macron himself affirmed this to young African entrepreneurs gathered at the University of Nairobi: “Africa no longer needs to be told what is good for it.” This statement encapsulates the general spirit of the summit. Africa is no longer portrayed as a region dependent on permanent external aid but as a young, innovative, and strategic continent now seeking partnerships in investment, technology, and sovereignty.

Infrastructure is becoming the new language of power — Energy, mining, connectivity, artificial intelligence, digital payments, university infrastructure, data, and transport networks: in Nairobi, infrastructure is emerging as the heart of new African sovereignties. Emmanuel Macron goes so far as to say that “when we talk about infrastructure, we are really talking about sovereignty.” This statement sums up a major geopolitical shift: power is now measured by the ability to govern the networks that organize contemporary economic, technological, and financial flows.

AXIS in the new African grammar — In this context, the AXIS program no longer appears as a strictly Congolese or purely technical initiative. Governance of flows, digital payments, certification, traceability, data infrastructure, and operational sovereignty: the project now seems to fit into a much broader continental interpretation of new African power infrastructures. Nairobi thus provides the political and strategic vocabulary for reinterpreting AXIS as one of the symptoms of an Africa that has entered the age of infrastructural sovereignties.

1. The software has changed

The end of humanitarian lexicon — One of the most striking elements of the Africa Forward summit lies in the transformation of the vocabulary used to discuss the African continent. Words traditionally associated with international cooperation — aid, support, assistance, or development — are giving way to expressions like cross-investment, innovation, competitiveness, infrastructure, or sovereignty. This lexical shift is not merely rhetorical. It reflects a profound change in how France and several African states now seek to define their political and economic relations.

The vocabulary has changed, and so have the investments — PROPARCO, a subsidiary of the French Development Agency (AFD) Group dedicated to financing the private sector, now occupies a central place in France's economic strategy in Africa. Created to support businesses, infrastructure, and high-impact investments in emerging economies, the institution now operates in sectors that have become strategic: agriculture, energy, transport, finance, digital technology, and health. In Nairobi, its activities reveal a significant shift in French policy: the Africa-France relationship is gradually moving from financing traditional development projects to

structuring continental economic infrastructures capable of sustainably organizing flows, value chains, and African sovereignty.

PROPARCO and the end of the aid paradigm — The announcements made in Nairobi by PROPARCO concretely illustrate this doctrinal shift. Agriculture, rail infrastructure, energy, mining, fintech, health, and supply chains: the subsidiary of the French Development Agency no longer presents itself as a simple development funder but as an operator of continental economic structuring. Portfolio guarantees, risk sharing, value chain financing, and infrastructure support are becoming the new instruments of an Africa-France relationship now centered on investment rather than aid.

Financing African architectures — The partnership established with Ecobank around African agricultural value chains particularly highlights this transformation. It is no longer simply a matter of supporting isolated projects but of financing systems: logistics corridors, transportation infrastructure, transactional capacities, economic platforms, and regional networks. This logic directly aligns with the intellectual environment described in Nairobi, where African sovereignty increasingly depends on the ability to build interconnected economic architectures capable of organizing the continent's flows.

Nairobi as a symbolic stage — The choice of Kenya to host Africa Forward has strong political implications. The first summit of its kind co-organized with an Anglophone country, the event symbolically marks a departure from the old Franco-African framework historically centered on former Francophone colonies. Nairobi thus becomes the stage for a more continental relationship, focused on the major African balances rather than solely on the networks inherited from *Françafrique*. The Kenyan co-presidency fully participates in this desire for French strategic repositioning.

The return of the builder state — Behind the debates on innovation or growth, what emerges above all is a new vision of the role of the African state. Energy, fiber optics, artificial intelligence, digital payments, universities, and connectivity infrastructure: the idea that future sovereignty will depend on states' ability to build and govern their own critical networks is a recurring theme. Emmanuel Macron himself states that "when we talk about infrastructure, we are really talking about sovereignty," thus giving infrastructure a directly geopolitical dimension.

2. Sovereignty becomes infrastructure

"Infrastructure is sovereignty" — When Emmanuel Macron stated in Nairobi that "when we talk about infrastructure, we are really talking about sovereignty," he was likely articulating the central idea of the Africa Forward summit. Power is no longer measured solely in military bases, diplomatic alliances, or traditional institutional capabilities. It now depends on control of the energy, digital, logistical, and transactional networks that organize the contemporary flows of data, capital, energy, and information on a global scale.

The energy obsession — The discussions in Nairobi also revealed that energy is becoming the matrix for all other African ambitions. Emmanuel Macron himself emphasized that "no infrastructure is possible without energy." Digital technology, artificial intelligence, industry, universities, payments, and connectivity all require a stable and massive energy capacity. Nuclear power, renewables, the electrification of

territories, and production infrastructure are thus becoming prerequisites for any technological or economic sovereignty in Africa in the coming decades.

Payment systems as a strategic issue — Nairobi also devotes considerable attention to the question of digital payments. Emmanuel Macron explicitly praised Kenya's progress in this area, stating: "You are the leaders in payments." Behind this recognition lies a much broader issue: that of controlling African financial flows. Payment systems are becoming sovereign infrastructures comparable to electricity grids or port infrastructure. Controlling payments now means governing a crucial part of contemporary economic activity.

3. AXIS in the Nairobi landscape

AXIS is no longer an isolated case — In the intellectual environment fostered by Africa Forward, AXIS is gradually ceasing to appear as an exclusively Congolese initiative or simply a technical program for administrative modernization. The debates in Nairobi on payments, digital infrastructure, data, energy, and value chains now allow us to reinterpret AXIS as one element of an emerging African architecture of technological sovereignty. The Congolese project thus seems to be part of a much broader continental transformation of contemporary African public policies.

From administrative software to a sovereign system — What is emerging around AXIS goes far beyond the traditional digitization of public administrations. The questions now being raised concern data control, transaction governance, the certification of flows, digital identity, and critical infrastructures for the circulation of value. In Nairobi, Emmanuel Macron himself emphasized the link between infrastructure and sovereignty. AXIS can therefore be interpreted as an attempt to build a truly sovereign system adapted to the new global digital economies.

Nairobi, or the birth of a doctrine — The Africa Forward summit produced neither a founding treaty nor a formally codified doctrine. Yet, through presidential speeches and discussions on energy, payments, artificial intelligence, and infrastructure, a coherent continental narrative gradually emerged: that of an Africa seeking to control its own strategic networks. Nairobi thus provided less a detailed program than a new geopolitical vision where sovereignty, infrastructure, and technology became the primary languages of contemporary African power.

Forward AXIS 2 — From the old sphere of influence to the platform continent

Introduction — From presence to infrastructure

The gradual end of the French postcolonial model — The Africa Forward summit in Nairobi gives the impression that France is now seeking to profoundly transform the nature of its presence in Africa. For several decades, French influence rested primarily on political networks, military agreements, security arrangements, and a historical closeness to the former colonies of its "sphere of influence." In Nairobi, the language is changing: the focus is now on infrastructure, energy, digital payments, artificial intelligence, connectivity, and strategic investments rather than political protection or traditional aid.

From the sphere of influence to the platform continent — This transformation goes far beyond a simple diplomatic evolution. It reflects a new geopolitical understanding of Africa. The continent is no longer perceived solely as a space of historical influence but as a global strategic platform where digital infrastructure, energy value chains, payment systems, data, connectivity, and technological transitions intersect. Emmanuel Macron himself insists that "infrastructure" is now a matter of "sovereignty," thus revealing a profound shift in the categories of French power in Africa.

An influence now focused on infrastructure — France thus seems to be shifting its African presence toward less directly political and military domains: universities, energy, digital technology, artificial intelligence, cultural industries, sports infrastructure, and payment systems. This approach relies less on traditional territorial control than on integration into the continent's technical and economic networks. Influence is no longer primarily exerted through military bases or bilateral agreements, but rather through participation in the major infrastructure projects that organize contemporary African flows.

AXIS in the new strategic geography — In this context, AXIS emerges as a particularly interesting indicator of this transformation. Governance of flows, digital payments, data, certification, and sovereign infrastructure: the Congolese program appears to correspond precisely to the new intellectual environment described in Nairobi. AXIS is therefore ceasing to be a simple national administrative project and becoming one of the possible manifestations of an Africa gradually entering the age of sovereign platforms and powerful infrastructural architectures.

1. The official end of the "reserve sphere"

A deliberate break — In Nairobi, Emmanuel Macron is increasingly and explicitly acknowledging France's desire to move beyond the old logic of its African "sphere of influence." For several years now, the French president has stated his intention to break with the mechanisms inherited from *Françafrique*, based on privileged political networks, implicit security guarantees, and historical dependencies. This shift is aimed as much at African public opinion, increasingly critical of the French presence, as at French public opinion itself, which is now more reluctant to commit to costly and permanent foreign engagements.

The Sahelian trauma — The successive crises in Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger have profoundly weakened the French security model in Africa. Military coups, the forced

withdrawal of French troops, and the rise of sovereignty rhetoric have revealed the limitations of a presence based primarily on military structures inherited from previous decades. Visible bases, long presented as instruments of regional stabilization, are gradually becoming politically sensitive symbols in several contemporary African contexts.

A less military presence — Faced with this transformation, France now seems to favor a more discreet and structured presence based on technical partnerships, investments, and infrastructure. Regional academies, university cooperation, energy, artificial intelligence, digital technology, connectivity, and sports are gradually replacing the old logic of permanent military projection. French influence is thus seeking to redeploy itself toward economic, technological, and educational networks capable of permanently integrating France into the transformations of 21st-century Africa.

2. The new influence through networks

Ports, fiber optics, and digital hubs — In Nairobi, announcements and discussions largely focus on the technical infrastructure destined to shape future African economies. Energy, fiber optics, artificial intelligence, digital hubs, universities, connectivity, and logistics investments are becoming the new vectors of international influence. Power is no longer measured solely by diplomatic or military presence but by the capacity to participate in building the networks that will organize the economic, technological, and informational flows of the African continent in the coming decades.

Digital Africa and talent — The summit also emphasizes the crucial issue of skills and human capital. Emmanuel Macron himself mentions the need to train more young Africans in digital, technological, and entrepreneurial fields. Announcements regarding Orange's digital hubs, university partnerships, and Digital Africa reflect this new priority. Training, retaining, and structuring talent is becoming a major geopolitical challenge in a world where artificial intelligence, data, and technology now determine economic sovereignty.

The "stack" logic — An integrated vision of African sovereignty infrastructure is gradually emerging in Nairobi. Energy, connectivity, payments, data, artificial intelligence, platforms, and computing power are no longer conceived separately but as interdependent layers of a single strategic system. This "stack" logic is profoundly transforming contemporary African policies. The focus is no longer on investing sector by sector but on building comprehensive architectures capable of simultaneously managing the continent's economic, digital, and energy flows.

3. AXIS as a prototype

A circulation architecture — Within the intellectual framework established in Nairobi, AXIS emerges as a true circulation architecture designed to organize flows, identities, data, and transactions on the scale of a modern state. The program is not limited to isolated administrative tools. It seeks to structure sovereign layers capable of governing payments, certification, traceability, and critical digital infrastructure. As such, AXIS precisely aligns with the logic presented at the summit: building the technical networks that will shape future African sovereignties.

The return of large systems — After several decades marked by administrative fragmentation, ad hoc projects, and dispersed platforms, states appear to be returning to integrated architectures capable of organizing their essential functions. AXIS reflects

this evolution. Data, payments, digital identity, resource governance, and flow monitoring are now conceived as components of a single strategic system. The contemporary state is thus seeking to regain a capacity for comprehensive organization adapted to the new global digital and transactional economies.

The continent as a platform — With Africa Forward, a continental vision far more ambitious than simple bilateral France-Africa cooperation is gradually emerging. The implicit objective seems to be the construction of an interconnected Africa capable of controlling its own critical infrastructure: energy, data, payments, artificial intelligence, connectivity, and strategic value chains. From this perspective, sovereign platforms become instruments of power comparable to the railway or energy networks of previous centuries. AXIS can then be interpreted as one of the first prototypes of this emerging infrastructural Africa.

Forward AXIS 3 — Nairobi and the invisible war of African payments

Introduction — Nairobi and the battle of the flows

Payment as a new space of sovereignty — Among the many themes addressed at the Africa Forward Summit in Nairobi, the issue of payment systems quietly emerged as one of the most important strategic challenges. Behind the discussions on digital technology, artificial intelligence, and infrastructure, a much deeper battle is taking shape: the battle for control of African financial flows. Mobile payments, transactional platforms, digital currencies, and interoperability are now becoming major instruments of economic and technological sovereignty.

Kenya as an African laboratory — The choice of Nairobi carries strong symbolic weight. Kenya has become one of the world's leading laboratories for mobile payments thanks to the development of M-Pesa and its digital ecosystem. Emmanuel Macron himself acknowledged this lead when he declared to African entrepreneurs: "You are the leaders in payments." Behind this tribute lies a broader geopolitical reality: certain African states are now gaining a strategic advantage in contemporary digital financial infrastructure.

Invisible but decisive infrastructure — Payment systems are often perceived as secondary technical tools. Yet, today they constitute infrastructures as strategic as ports, power grids, or highways. Controlling payments means controlling a crucial part of a country's economic transactions, commercial data, fiscal capacity, and value flows. Digital sovereignty now largely depends on mastering contemporary transactional architectures.

AXIS in the silent war of payments — In this context, AXIS can be interpreted as much more than a Congolese administrative or digital program. With MACC Pay, WorldKYC, FraudTrack, and Trust Signal as payment, certification, traceability, and flow governance mechanisms, AXIS directly positions itself in this global battle over transactional infrastructures. Nairobi thus provides a new intellectual framework for reinterpreting AXIS as an African attempt to build sovereign layers of financial circulation adapted to the programmable economies of the 21st century.

1. Kenya as a laboratory

M-Pesa as a silent revolution — Kenya has profoundly transformed the global digital payments landscape with the development of M-Pesa and its associated mobile money infrastructure. By bypassing traditional Western banking systems, the country has demonstrated that a mobile financial infrastructure can structure the daily transactions, savings, transfers, and economic activities of a large segment of the population. This silent revolution has made Kenya a strategic laboratory now being observed far beyond the African continent.

Payment becomes sovereignty — Behind the technological innovations lies a much broader issue: that of contemporary economic sovereignty. Controlling payment systems means controlling a significant portion of financial flows, transactional data, taxation, and national economic activity. Payment infrastructures are thus becoming comparable to energy networks or port infrastructure: they organize the fundamental flows that now structure the economic power of modern states.

An unrecognized African lead — The Africa Forward summit also revealed a reality often underestimated in traditional interpretations of North-South relations: in several segments of digital payments, Africa is no longer playing catch-up but is at the forefront of innovation. Emmanuel Macron himself acknowledged this dynamic, praising Kenya's leadership in payment systems. Some African solutions are now anticipating transformations that many developed economies are only now beginning to integrate into their own digital financial infrastructures.

2. The battle for financial infrastructure

The new rails of power — Digital payment systems are gradually occupying a place in contemporary economies comparable to that once held by railways, power grids, or port infrastructure. They organize value flows, commercial transactions, fiscal capacity, and a growing share of daily economic activities. Controlling these infrastructures now means possessing a major lever of economic sovereignty and strategic power in a world where financial flows are becoming increasingly dematerialized and instantaneous.

Between Washington, Beijing, and the platforms — Africa now finds itself at the center of a global competition surrounding digital financial architectures. The United States, China, major technology groups, and global platforms are seeking to structure the continent's future payment networks, transactional data, and monetary circulation infrastructures. Behind the technical debates on fintechs or mobile payments lies a much broader geopolitical battle for control of future African economic flows and their integration into global systems.

Interoperability and dependency — The development of African financial infrastructures raises a crucial question: how can continental payment systems be connected without creating new technological or financial dependencies? Interoperability is essential for integrating African economies, but it can also reinforce the dominance of external actors controlling standards, platforms, or transactional data. The challenge now lies in building open architectures capable of cooperating with the world without relinquishing the sovereignty of critical African infrastructures.

3. AXIS and the transactional layer

AXIS as a circulation infrastructure — In the context of the debates held in Nairobi, AXIS can be interpreted as an attempt to structure the Congolese state and public services transactionally. Payments, certification, traceability, digital identity, and the governance of flows are conceived as components of a single circulation architecture. The project does not simply seek to modernize administrative procedures. It aims to build infrastructures capable of organizing economic exchanges and public oversight capacities in a globalized digital environment.

Data becomes strategic — Behind every payment, every transaction, or every certification mechanism now lie data, economic behaviors, and strategic management capabilities. Transactional infrastructures produce detailed knowledge of financial flows, economic activities, and value circulation networks. Data thus ceases to be a mere technical by-product; it becomes a strategic resource essential to contemporary economic governance and the concrete exercise of public sovereignty.

Sovereignty through flows — Nairobi and the debates surrounding AXIS may be foreshadowing an even deeper transformation of contemporary African sovereignties. Power will depend less and less on physical borders alone and more and more on the ability to control the digital, financial, and informational flows traversing African economies. States capable of governing payments, data, platforms, and transactional infrastructures will then possess a major strategic advantage in the new programmable economies of the 21st century.

Forward AXIS 4 — The new Pan-Africanism is technological

Introduction — Pan-Africanism is changing its language

New words for a new generation — The Africa Forward Summit in Nairobi reveals a profound transformation in contemporary Pan-African discourse. For decades, Pan-Africanism was primarily structured around anti-colonial struggles, African political solidarity, and critiques of Western domination. In Nairobi, the vocabulary is changing significantly. Discussions now focus on artificial intelligence, digital payments, infrastructure, data, investment, talent, platforms, and strategic value chains. The language of sovereignty is gradually becoming technological, infrastructural, and entrepreneurial.

A generation focused on building — Emmanuel Macron himself spoke to young African entrepreneurs about the emergence of a “positive Pan-Africanism” driven by a generation that now wants to “build its continent” rather than confine itself to rhetoric of historical revenge. This evolution is clearly evident in the discussions in Nairobi, where young developers, innovators, students, startups, incubators, and women entrepreneurs are talking more about solutions, jobs, training, connectivity, energy, and digital sovereignty than about dependence or external aid. The new Pan-Africanism thus also becomes a social promise: that of an African youth seeking in infrastructure and technology the conditions for its economic autonomy.

The continent as a network space — This new Pan-Africanism seems less concerned with the abstract political unity of the continent than with its concrete interconnection. The stakes now lie in the infrastructure capable of linking African economies: fiber optics, payments, energy, universities, digital platforms, logistics corridors, and data markets. But this circulation also concerns skills, talent, entrepreneurs, and new African digital professions. The continent is conceived as a space of circulation, connectivity, and economic integration capable of offering new professional opportunities to a massively connected African generation.

AXIS in African digital continentalization — In this context, AXIS can be interpreted as one of the manifestations of this new Pan-African infrastructural generation. Governance of flows, data, payments, certification, and transactional architectures naturally transcend national borders. The Congolese program then becomes visible as a potential building block of a future interconnected African space where sovereignty will no longer depend solely on individual states but also on their capacity to jointly build continental digital infrastructures capable of supporting jobs, innovation, entrepreneurship, and the economic mobility of African youth.

1. The end of old stories

A defensive Pan-Africanism — For several decades, Pan-Africanism was largely constructed in a confrontational relationship with the outside world. Colonialism, economic domination, political interference, and post-colonial dependencies constituted the main references around which discourses of African unity were organized. This history remains present in the political memory of the continent. But in Nairobi, a shift seems to be taking place: discussions are less about denouncing the past and more about the continent's capacity to build its own infrastructure, its own power networks, and its own economic opportunities for African youth.

The generational shift — The young entrepreneurs, developers, innovators, and leaders present at Africa Forward speak more about platforms, artificial intelligence, digital payments, investments, startups, and connectivity than about historical revenge. This evolution reflects a profound generational change. The center of gravity of African discourse is gradually shifting toward issues of jobs, training, professionalization, and technological development. The dominant ambition is no longer simply to resist external influences but to build African capabilities that can offer millions of young people economic opportunities in the continent's emerging digital industries.

Narrative as power — Emmanuel Macron himself emphasized in Nairobi the strategic importance of narratives and storytelling. According to him, "there is no chance that this story will be the right one" if it is not told by "Africans." This remark goes far beyond purely cultural issues. Producing one's own narratives is becoming an essential dimension of contemporary sovereignty. But these narratives also concern the continent's social future: women's entrepreneurship, local innovation, African talent, professional mobility, and technological success are gradually becoming the new imaginaries of power capable of attracting investment, trust, and international recognition.

2. The continent of networks

Connecting rather than aligning — The new pan-Africanism emerging in Nairobi seems less concerned with the political uniformity of African states than with their capacity to connect their infrastructures and economies. The primary focus is no longer the institutional or ideological fusion of the continent, but rather the interconnection of energy, digital, financial, and logistical networks. Pan-Africanism is gradually becoming a question of circulation: the circulation of data, payments, talent, investments, skills, and technological capabilities between the various contemporary African spaces.

African digital corridors — Through debates on digital payments, fiber optics, energy, and technological platforms, the continent is beginning to consider its technological continuities on a regional and continental scale. Infrastructures are no longer conceived solely within a national framework, but as corridors capable of linking African economies. This approach also opens up new spaces for professional mobility for young African developers, engineers, entrepreneurs, and startups seeking access to larger and more integrated continental markets.

Youth as a driving force — African demographics are presented in Nairobi from a perspective profoundly different from older approaches focused on migration risks or social vulnerabilities. Emmanuel Macron, on the contrary, speaks of African youth as a historical force for creation, innovation, and economic transformation. This connected, entrepreneurial, and technological generation appears as the main driver of new African infrastructure. Training, incubators, fintechs, digital platforms, data professions, and women's entrepreneurship thus become major strategic issues. The continent's future sovereignty will largely depend on its ability to transform this demographic power into organized economic, technological, and professional power.

3. AXIS as a continental tool

A logic that transcends borders — Contemporary digital infrastructures possess a natural dynamic of regional expansion. Payments, certification, digital identity, data governance, and transactional platforms function all the more effectively when they transcend strictly national boundaries. From this perspective, AXIS can hardly be considered an exclusively Congolese initiative. The technical approaches it mobilizes, the jobs it can create for young people, and the new professions it structures naturally lead to forms of regional interconnection adapted to emerging African digital economies.

The emergence of an African data space — The idea of an organized continental circulation of data, digital services, and African transactional infrastructures, as well as skills and human capital, is gradually emerging in Nairobi. Interoperable payments, regional platforms, energy connectivity, and digital corridors all contribute to the same dynamic of technical integration across the continent. This evolution could also open new African markets for startups, developers, incubators, and women entrepreneurs seeking to overcome the often narrow confines of fragmented national markets.

Nairobi and 21st-Century Africa — The Africa Forward summit ultimately reveals perhaps less of a simple diplomatic event than a deeper shift in African political civilization. The Africa emerging in Nairobi now speaks the language of infrastructure, networks, data, platforms, and technological sovereignty. But behind these technological transformations also lies a vast social question: that of the economic and professional integration of a young, connected, and overwhelmingly urban generation of Africans. In this new political landscape, AXIS becomes one of the harbingers of an Africa fully entering the strategic infrastructures and digital economies of the 21st century.

Forward AXIS 5 — Sport, infrastructure and sovereignty: what Nairobi really reveals

Introduction — Sport as a mirror of African sovereignties

Sport, a secondary theme only in appearance — Among the many sessions of the Africa Forward summit in Nairobi, discussions devoted to sport might seem marginal compared to the major geopolitical, energy, and digital issues addressed during the forum. Yet, on closer inspection, sport emerges as a particularly powerful indicator of contemporary African transformations. Infrastructure, youth, investment, training, platforms, data, cultural industries, and value capture intersect in an almost exemplary way. Sport thus becomes a microcosm of new African questions of sovereignty.

The continent of exported talent — Africa has long been one of the world's great reservoirs of sporting talent. Football, athletics, basketball, and combat sports regularly reveal exceptional generations of African athletes whose economic value is, however, largely captured outside the continent. In Nairobi, this issue implicitly appears as a much broader metaphor: how to prevent African human, cultural, and economic resources from continuing to generate their wealth primarily outside African economies themselves?

Sports infrastructure as political infrastructure — Emmanuel Macron himself emphasizes the need to sustainably structure African sports sectors around infrastructure, training, and investment. Behind stadiums, academies, and major sporting events lies a much deeper logic: that of building national and continental capacities capable of organizing talent, funding, data, and cultural industries. Sport thus becomes a political infrastructure in the broadest sense, that is, an instrument for the economic, social, and symbolic structuring of contemporary societies.

From raw resource to value capture — Through sport, Nairobi ultimately encounters an issue already present in debates on critical minerals, data, and digital payments: that of controlling value chains. Training talent is no longer enough; it is also necessary to retain a portion of the economic, cultural, and technological value they produce. Sport then becomes an almost perfect metaphor for new African sovereignties: building the infrastructure capable of preventing the raw extraction of value from the continent.

1. Sport as public policy

Education, health, discipline — In Nairobi, sport is not presented as mere entertainment or a peripheral sector of public policy. On the contrary, it appears as an instrument of social emancipation, training, and structuring for African youth. Emmanuel Macron himself emphasizes the educational, health, and civic dimensions of sports policies. Sport thus becomes a tool for collective discipline, social cohesion, and economic integration in African societies marked by very strong contemporary demographic growth.

The return of local infrastructure — Sport also has a particular characteristic: it requires visible, localized investments that are directly perceptible to the population. Fields, stadiums, training centers, facilities, and sports academies constitute concrete infrastructure capable of sustainably transforming urban and local spaces. Through

these investments, a central logic of the Africa Forward summit reappears: future African sovereignty will largely depend on the capacity of states to build infrastructure that organizes territories and national collective capacities.

The continent of major events — Africa now occupies an increasingly prominent place in the global sporting landscape. From the Youth Olympic Games in Dakar and the 2028 Africa Cup of Nations to Morocco's bid for the 2030 World Cup, the continent is gradually becoming a major hub for hosting large-scale international events. This evolution extends far beyond the realm of sports. It reflects Africa's growing geopolitical visibility and its increasing capacity to host complex infrastructure, international flows, and globalized cultural industries.

2. The hidden economy of sport

Sport as a sector — In Nairobi, Emmanuel Macron emphasized the need to consider sport not as a marginal activity but as a genuine strategic economic sector. Training, facilities, competitions, cultural industries, media, sponsorship, tourism, and the digital economy now form a complex ecosystem capable of generating jobs, investment, and growth. Sport thus joins the other sectors discussed during the summit: it is becoming an economic infrastructure directly contributing to the sovereignty and development of contemporary African states.

The leakage of value — Like critical minerals or certain agricultural resources, African sporting talent often generates the majority of its economic value outside the continent. Major European leagues, international media platforms, and global entertainment industries capture a large share of the revenue generated by African athletes. Nairobi thus reveals a deeper problem: how to prevent Africa's main assets—human, cultural, or natural—from continuing to primarily enrich external economies rather than the continent's own structures?

Formalizing the sports economy — One of the central challenges then becomes the economic and institutional structuring of the African sports sector. Training centers, competition governance, audiovisual rights, sports data, infrastructure, and taxation require a much greater public organizational capacity than before. Transforming often informal practices into a genuine continental industry appears as a major strategic objective. Here, sport intersects with the broader Nairobi debates on economic sovereignty: controlling not only resources, but also the value chains that organize them.

3. AXIS and human infrastructures

Human capital as a critical resource — In Nairobi, African youth are consistently presented as the continent's primary strategic asset. Emmanuel Macron himself speaks of an African generation capable of profoundly transforming global economic, technological, and cultural balances. This approach shifts the traditional view of African demographics. The young population is no longer perceived primarily as a social challenge. It is becoming a critical geopolitical resource comparable to strategic minerals, energy infrastructure, or contemporary digital capabilities.

Data, mobility, and platforms — Future African systems will need to progressively organize not only financial and energy flows but also human mobility, skills, and training pathways. Talented athletes, students, entrepreneurs, creators, and skilled workers require infrastructures capable of managing mobility, certification, data, and

economic integration. From this perspective, digital platforms and governance architectures for these flows become essential tools for structuring new African human economies and preventing the uncontrolled dispersal of the value generated by the continent's talent.

Nairobi beyond sport — Sport ultimately emerges at Africa Forward as much more than a mere sectoral theme. It becomes a general metaphor for Africa's new challenges to sovereignty. Talent development, infrastructure, data, mobility, financing, platforms, and value capture all point to the same questions as those posed by critical minerals, digital payments, or energy networks. Nairobi thus reveals an Africa gradually seeking to build the infrastructure capable of transforming its human and material resources into sustainable economic power.

Forward AXIS 6 — AXIS and the new age of African infrastructure

Introduction — Nairobi and the Africa of sovereign systems

Behind the announcements, a continental architecture — The €23 billion in investments announced at the Africa Forward summit might give the impression of a classic juxtaposition of sectoral projects: ports, energy, agriculture, health, digital technology, and transport. However, a careful reading of the partnerships published by the French presidency reveals a much deeper coherence. Fiber optics, data centers, port infrastructure, payment systems, artificial intelligence, energy networks, and digital platforms are gradually forming a veritable African architecture for contemporary flows.

From development to sovereign infrastructure — The summit's official document itself emphasizes the transition from a logic of "development aid" to one of "solidarity and sustainable investments" designed to strengthen the sovereignty of African countries. This shift is essential. It is no longer simply a matter of financing one-off projects but of building systems capable of sustainably organizing the flow of data, payments, energy, connectivity, certification, and strategic African value chains.

Africa Enters the Age of Integrated Architectures — The partnerships announced in Nairobi reveal an even deeper transformation: Africa is gradually beginning to think of its infrastructure as interconnected systems. Ports linked to logistics corridors, fiber optics connected to data centers, payments linked to digital platforms, energy essential for artificial intelligence: sectors once separate now appear as interdependent layers of a single emerging infrastructural sovereignty.

AXIS as a silent interpretation of the summit — In this new intellectual environment, AXIS becomes particularly legible. While not officially announced in the summit's public deliverables, the Congolese program nevertheless seems compatible with several of the dynamics visible in Nairobi: governance of flows, transactional infrastructures, digital payments, certification, data oversight, and sovereign platforms. AXIS thus ceases to appear as a mere national administrative program and becomes one of the possible African models for an integrated architecture of digital sovereignty.

From platforms to sovereign systems — Building blocks like MACC Pay, WorldKYC, FraudTrack, and Trust Signal take on new significance in this context. The Nairobi discussions show that future power dynamics will increasingly depend on states' ability to organize payments, digital identity, resource traceability, economic data, and certification mechanisms. Invisible infrastructure is gradually becoming as strategic as ports, dams, or power grids.

Toward a programmable Africa — With the announcements regarding artificial intelligence, data centers, digital platforms, and critical resources, another major transformation is emerging: Africa is gradually entering the age of programmable economies. Payments, data, mineral resources, carbon credits, agriculture, and energy infrastructure are now tending to be integrated into digital architectures capable of orchestrating circulation, certification, and value creation. In this new geography of power, systems like AXIS become conceivable not as exceptions but as the possible precursors of a sovereign, infrastructural Africa in the 21st century.

1. Building the continent's networks

Ports, corridors and transport infrastructure

Ports as instruments of sovereignty — The investments announced in Nairobi in the hubs of Mombasa, Pointe-Noire, Lekki, and Sokhna demonstrate that African port infrastructure is ceasing to be mere commercial facilities. It is now becoming an instrument of regional sovereignty capable of organizing the continent's major logistics corridors. Ports, shipping lanes, industrial zones, and energy platforms are gradually forming an African geopolitics of flows, where control of these flows is becoming a major strategic challenge for 21st-century Africa.

PROPARCO and the financing of continental architectures — The agreements announced in Nairobi by PROPARCO show that development finance itself is changing. Ports, agricultural corridors, energy infrastructure, logistics networks, and economic platforms are no longer financed as isolated projects but as interconnected systems capable of sustainably organizing African flows. Through guarantees, risk sharing, and support for regional value chains, the subsidiary of the French Development Agency is now emerging as one of the financial instruments of this emerging infrastructural Africa.

AXIS's potential contribution to African corridors — In this new continental logistics architecture, AXIS could provide a strategic layer of flow governance. Traceability of goods, transaction certification, digital oversight of commercial operations, and interconnection of public platforms are becoming essential for the smooth operation of emerging African corridors. An architecture like AXIS would then make it possible to link physical and transactional infrastructures within a single sovereign environment for continental economic and commercial circulation.

The continent as a space of circulation — Nairobi is gradually revealing an Africa conceived not as a juxtaposition of fragmented national markets but as an integrated space of circulation. Data, goods, payments, energy, and digital services are beginning to be conceived as the interdependent elements of a single continental system. This logic is profoundly transforming contemporary African politics: sovereignty now depends as much on the ability to connect flows as on the ability to control traditional physical borders.

Fiber, data and new strategic networks

Fiber as a geopolitical infrastructure — The Orange submarine cable project linking France to the African Atlantic coast, as well as the expansion of Kenya's Digital Super Highway, demonstrate that connectivity is becoming a critical geopolitical infrastructure. Sovereignty no longer depends solely on ports or energy networks, but also on the ability to control data flows crossing the African continent. Fiber optics is gradually becoming one of the new structuring networks of contemporary power.

AXIS and secure data flow — An architecture like AXIS takes on its full strategic coherence here. Data governance, interoperability of public platforms, secure transaction flow, and digital certification all require robust connectivity infrastructures. AXIS could thus contribute to the creation of an African environment of sovereign digital flow where payments, economic data, and public services would be organized around standards of trust and continental oversight.

Data centers as critical infrastructure — Announcements concerning cloud centers, HPC capabilities, and storage infrastructures show that data itself is becoming a strategic resource. Data centers, sovereign cloud computing, and digital processing capabilities now determine the technological autonomy of African states in the fields of artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, and the digital economy. Data centers are gradually assuming a role comparable to that of dams or ports in traditional industrial economies.

The return of public digital infrastructure

States return to network architecture — One of the most striking phenomena visible in Nairobi is the return of African states as architects of critical infrastructure. Digital networks, energy systems, data platforms, and transactional infrastructures are no longer considered mere private markets. States are now seeking to regain a public capacity to organize strategic networks capable of structuring their digital, economic, and administrative sovereignty in a highly competitive global environment.

AXIS as an integrated public infrastructure — AXIS is becoming particularly relevant within this framework of the infrastructural state. The program aims not only at traditional administrative modernization but also at the creation of an integrated public architecture linking payments, data, certification, platforms, and transactional oversight. Building blocks such as MACC Pay, WorldKYC, FraudTrack, and Trust Signal could precisely enable the development of public governance capacities adapted to the new African digital economies and the contemporary requirements for traceability of flows.

Nairobi and the African infrastructural state — The Africa Forward summit ultimately reveals the return of a much more systemic vision of African public action. After several decades of administrative fragmentation and dispersed sectoral policies, several states appear to be returning to integrated architectures capable of simultaneously organizing economic flows, data, strategic resources, and digital capabilities. Nairobi thus reveals the outlines of a new African infrastructural state based on the governance of networks, platforms, and 21st-century operational sovereignties.

2. The invisible infrastructures of sovereignty

The battle of African payments

Payments are becoming the new rails of power — In Nairobi, discussions about fintechs, transactional platforms, and payment systems reveal a profound transformation of contemporary sovereignties. Payment infrastructures now occupy a place comparable to that once held by railways or power grids in industrialized economies. M-Pesa in Kenya has demonstrated that a mobile transactional architecture can restructure an entire national economy. Controlling payments is gradually becoming synonymous with governing a crucial part of contemporary African economic flows.

MACC Pay and the sovereign transactional architecture — In this environment, a building block like MACC Pay becomes particularly relevant. The challenge is no longer simply to digitize public payments but to build a sovereign infrastructure capable of integrating economic circulation, digital taxation, public transactions, and the interconnection of national financial flows. Such an architecture could allow

African states to better oversee their transactional economies while reducing their dependence on external financial infrastructures that have become central to contemporary digital globalization.

Interoperability or dependence? — The rise of digital payments in Africa nevertheless raises a major strategic question: how to connect African systems without creating new technological dependencies? Major global platforms, international financial standards, and global transaction infrastructures are already seeking to structure the continent's future economic flows. The challenge for African states now lies in building interoperable architectures capable of cooperating with global networks while preserving their sovereignty over data and transactions.

Digital identity, certification and governance of data flows

Identity becomes strategic infrastructure — Behind digital payments, the question of identity and economic certification immediately arises. KYC, compliance, transaction monitoring, and digital governance are now becoming critical infrastructures comparable to energy or logistics networks. Contemporary digital economies rely on the ability to identify, authenticate, and certify the actors participating in economic flows. Identity is thus ceasing to be a simple administrative attribute and becoming a central instrument of transactional sovereignty.

WorldKYC and African identity architectures — An architecture like WorldKYC could precisely meet this new requirement for continental digital trust. Verification of economic identities, operator certification, transactional compliance, and secure data flow are becoming essential elements for the emergence of an interconnected African space for payments and digital platforms. From this perspective, digital identity infrastructures appear as the invisible foundations of future contemporary African economic sovereignties.

FraudTrack and intelligent flow monitoring — The rapid development of digital payments and African transaction platforms also creates new risks: fraud, smuggling, money laundering, corruption, and the opaque flow of strategic resources. A component like FraudTrack then becomes particularly important. Artificial intelligence applied to flow monitoring could enable African states to strengthen their economic governance capacities in increasingly complex and massively digitized transactional environments.

TrustSignal and digital regulatory sovereignty — As African economies become more digital and interconnected, another question becomes central: who decides whether a transaction is authorized? TrustSignal introduces precisely this layer of policy and compliance into emerging African transactional infrastructures. Regulatory verification, jurisdictional control, asset compliance, oversight of issuer-defined rules, and identity protection through cryptographic proofs: the challenge is no longer simply to move data or payments, but to build systems capable of directly integrating sovereignty rules into the digital architectures themselves. TrustSignal then becomes readable as a trusted infrastructure designed to make public blockchain, regulatory compliance, and sovereign governance of African flows compatible.

Artificial intelligence as a public capacity

Nairobi and algorithmic sovereignty — Announcements concerning Digital Africa, the Orange Digital Centers, and African cybersecurity capabilities demonstrate that

artificial intelligence is gradually ceasing to be perceived as a mere technological innovation. Nairobi reveals a much broader ambition: to build African algorithmic sovereignty capabilities to support the continent's future digital economies. Training, cybersecurity, AI, and data processing are now becoming essential elements of contemporary public power.

AXIS and intelligent flow orchestration — An architecture like AXIS could precisely leverage these new African artificial intelligence capabilities. Transaction monitoring, fraud detection, automated certification, economic flow governance, and the management of public platforms now require advanced digital analysis and orchestration capabilities. AXIS thus ceases to appear as a simple administrative system; it becomes a potential sovereign automation infrastructure adapted to the programmable economies of 21st-century Africa.

Data as a new strategic resource — Through the debates in Nairobi, an even deeper transformation emerges: data is becoming one of the main contemporary strategic resources. Economic, transactional, logistical, public, and environmental data now determine the ability of states to manage their economic policies and critical infrastructure. Digital sovereignty therefore depends less on the mere possession of physical infrastructure than on the capacity to govern, process, and secure the massive data flows produced by the new interconnected African economies.

3. Resources, tokenization and programmable Africa

Strategic resources are becoming digital

Critical minerals and the new global economy — Nairobi confirms that critical African minerals now occupy a central place in global industrial balances. Congolese cobalt, copper, lithium, manganese, and rare earth elements are becoming essential for the energy transition, batteries, digital infrastructure, and the technologies of tomorrow. The African continent is gradually ceasing to be considered a mere extractive reserve; it is now emerging as a key strategic player in the new global value chains linked to energy and digital technologies.

Tokenizing African resources — An even deeper transformation is beginning to emerge: strategic resources are gradually becoming governable digital assets. Mines, agriculture, forests, carbon credits, and supply chains can now be integrated into architectures for certification, traceability, and programmable value circulation. Tokenization thus opens the possibility of digitally representing physical resources, economic rights, and transaction flows within next-generation sovereign African platforms.

AXIS as a sovereign tokenization infrastructure — AXIS now transcends the simple framework of a traditional transactional system. Through traceability, certification, blockchain compliance, and digital asset governance mechanisms, the architecture already organizes the tokenization of strategic African assets via tokens and NFTs linked to the value chains of gold, carbon, agriculture, and, progressively, other critical minerals. Resources are thus no longer solely exported as raw materials. They become sovereign digital assets integrated into systems capable of ensuring transparency, oversight, programmable value flow, and transactional compliance on a continental scale.

The Congo Basin and Climate Infrastructure

Climate is becoming an economic infrastructure — The Nairobi discussions also show that climate is gradually ceasing to be treated solely as an environmental issue. Carbon credits, climate finance, forest conservation, and environmental markets are now becoming strategic economic infrastructures. Large African forest basins are acquiring new geopolitical importance in a world seeking to organize its energy transition and carbon offsetting mechanisms on a global scale.

MACC and African climate architectures — In this context, an architecture like MACC could play a central role in emerging African climate governance. Environmental certification, carbon traceability, the financial circulation of climate credits, and the oversight of forest assets require digital infrastructures capable of organizing data, transactions, and trust mechanisms. The Congo Basin could then become not only a global ecological resource but also a strategic space for African climate sovereignty.

From the Congo Basin to global geopolitics — The Congo Basin forest is gradually ceasing to be perceived as simply a regional natural heritage. It is becoming a global environmental infrastructure, producing climate data, carbon regulation, and strategic assets linked to the planetary ecological transition. In this new geography of power, African states possessing critical forest resources potentially acquire a much greater capacity for influence in contemporary energy, climate, and financial negotiations.

AXIS and Africa's Sovereign Systems

AXIS as a continental orchestration system — In light of the partnerships announced in Nairobi, AXIS is gradually emerging as an orchestration architecture capable of integrating payments, data, strategic resources, transactional platforms, and the monitoring of economic flows. The program is thus becoming clear not as a mere collection of technical tools but as an attempt to build a truly sovereign African system adapted to the new digital, energy, and programmable economies of the 21st century.

Nairobi and the birth of an African doctrine — The Africa Forward summit did not produce a formally codified doctrine. Yet, through announcements concerning ports, energy, artificial intelligence, data, payments, and critical infrastructure, a coherent vision of contemporary African sovereignty is gradually taking shape. Africa is no longer conceived as a space of aid but as a continent of networks, platforms, and systems capable of organizing their own strategic flows.

21st-Century programmable Africa — Nairobi ultimately reveals an even deeper transformation: Africa is gradually entering the age of programmable economies. Digital payments, data, tokenized resources, invisible infrastructures, sovereign platforms, and transactional systems are becoming the new territories of power. In this emerging geography, sovereignty will depend less on physical borders alone than on the capacity of African states to govern the digital, energy, financial, and informational flows that now structure the contemporary global economy.

Conclusion — Infrastructural Africa

The platform continent — The Africa Forward Summit reveals a profound transformation in how Africa is beginning to envision its strategic future. The continent is no longer presented as a collection of fragmented national markets dependent on foreign aid, but as a progressively interconnected space of energy, logistics, digital, and transactional infrastructures. Ports, fiber optics, data centers, payment systems, and platforms now form the interdependent layers of an emerging continental architecture where circulation is becoming one of the new foundations of African sovereignty.

From visible to invisible infrastructure — Nairobi also demonstrates that critical 21st-century infrastructure is no longer solely visible. In addition to ports, dams, and logistics corridors, invisible infrastructures are now emerging: payment systems, data, artificial intelligence, digital certification, cloud computing, cybersecurity, and transactional platforms. Contemporary economic flows increasingly rely on these discrete architectures capable of organizing the circulation of value, monitoring transactions, and governing Africa's strategic resources.

AXIS in the new African doctrine — While not officially announced in the summit's public partnerships, AXIS nevertheless appears remarkably consistent with the intellectual framework developed in Nairobi. Governance of flows, digital payments, certification, resource tokenization, transactional oversight, and sovereign platforms correspond precisely to the new African infrastructure priorities evident in the summit announcements. AXIS thus ceases to appear as a mere national administrative program; it becomes legible as one of the possible African architectures for integrated digital sovereignty.

Sovereignty through flows — What Nairobi ultimately reveals is perhaps even more profound: African power in the 21st century will largely depend on states' ability to control flows rather than simply physical territories. Data, payments, platforms, tokenized resources, sovereign digital infrastructures, artificial intelligence, and transactional systems are becoming the new spaces of power. In this emerging programmable Africa, sovereignty will no longer be measured solely by the possession of natural resources but by the capacity to organize, certify, and govern the invisible architectures that now structure the contemporary global economy.