

The conditions for success

*Dr Alexander Ressos, TEP
Attorney-at-Law (Switzerland), Solicitor (Hong Kong),
Solicitor (England & Wales)*

The new bridges between Geneva and Africa will bear fruit only under certain conditions.

The first is consistency. A financial centre that hosts the forums of the African private sector, that invests in impact finance and that returns illicit assets cannot, without contradiction, tolerate corrupt practices in commodity trading or insufficient vigilance in wealth management. The affairs described in Parts H and I destroy the credibility of such commitments.

The second is reciprocity. Lasting relations presuppose that Africa benefits from them: local processing of raw materials, investment that creates jobs, transfer of skills, a fair sharing of value. The partner model, described in Chapter II, must prevail over the buyer model.

The third is knowledge. Africa is a continent of fifty-four states, with diverse histories, institutions, languages and economies. The federal strategies insist on this diversity. Geneva's operators must understand it, country by country, which requires skills, networks and a presence on the ground.

The fourth is patience. Investment in Africa demands long horizons, a tolerance for uncertainty and the capacity to weather crises. Geneva's tradition of the long term, described in connection with private banking, finds an application here.

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The fifth, finally, is openness to African players. African companies, banks, funds and entrepreneurs are partners, competitors and clients. Geneva must welcome them as it welcomed, over the centuries, the Italian merchants, the Huguenot refugees and the international organisations.

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