



**DIPLOMACY
TECH+SOCIETY
INFRASTRUCTURE
GLOBAL BUSINESS**

info@strahlcomposite.org
strahlcomposite.org
Nairobi, Kenya



COLLECTIVE MEASUREMENT

An Essay on the United Nations' "Correct the Map" Resolution

Raymond B. Kaniu



ESSAY

September 5, 2026

DIPLOMACY

COLLECTIVE MEASUREMENT

An Essay on the United Nations' "Correct the Map" Resolution

Raymond B. Kaniu

Africa's land size has been relatively the same, long before the Mercator map was created over four centuries ago (457 years). Africa covers a total land area of approximately 30.3 million to 30.4 million square kilometers (11.7 million square miles). The core pieces of the African landmass are among the oldest on Earth, formed as ancient crust blocks between 3.6 and 2 billion years ago, while Africa as an independent, recognizable standalone continent took shape roughly 140 million years ago during the breakup of the supercontinent Gondwana. Africa and South America tore apart from one another, opening up the South Atlantic Ocean, leaving Africa bounded by water as a distinct, independent continental landmass at roughly the same time the other modern southern continents separated.

The Mercator projection was introduced in 1569 by the Flemish geographer and cartographer Gerardus Mercator. It was built to aid sailors in navigating the oceans by turning compass directions (rhumb lines) into straight lines. The projection enlarges landmasses as they get further from the equator. This flaw made North America and Europe appear much bigger, and shrunk Africa and South America. This has been the standard map until the equal earth projection intervention on August 2018 by cartographers Bojan Šavrič, Bernhard Jenny, and Tom Patterson. On September 4, 2026, the United Nations General Assembly voted overwhelmingly to adopt the "Correct the Map" resolution, a historic initiative aimed at transitioning away from the traditional Mercator projection in favor of world maps that accurately reflect the true relative size of the world's regions, particularly Africa. The last time the world made a decision on Africa was at the Berlin Conference of 1884–1885, where the rules by which European powers partitioned, colonized, and exploited Africa without a single African representative present, were formalized.

The resolution—spearheaded by Togo on behalf of the African Group and backed by the African Union—passed at the UN headquarters in New York: 164 votes in favor, including co-sponsors like France and the UK. One vote against, cast by the United States, which dismissed the initiative as a "radical ideological project" and "superfluous". Six abstentions, from Estonia, Georgia, Lithuania, Moldova/Morocco, Serbia, and Ukraine. The resolution is non-binding, meaning it does not legally ban the 16th-century Mercator projection (which remains fully suited and permitted for maritime and aerial navigation). Instead, it officially encourages governments, schools, newsrooms, international institutions, and digital tech platforms to implement equal-area projections—specifically highlighting the Equal Earth projection created in 2018.

What else might history have recorded erroneously, intentionally or accidentally, that impacted human thinking and action? How much of it is taught in classrooms, lecture halls, and in homes around the world? How much of it is being absorbed into AI? How much of it is unfairly and disproportionately affecting marginalized groups in society? How much of this is you? How much of this is me?

Having the wrong information leads to distorted decisions and actions. Implied and explicit. When I first saw the map in primary school over three decades ago, the size of the continents on the Mercator projection was not that of the sailors and navigators whom the map was made for plotting straight-line courses across the oceans. Projections are like perceptions, they involve filtering external reality through our internal states, beliefs, and concealed biases. Both processes rely on the mind using prior experiences, emotions, and expectations to interpret the outside world rather than recording the facts objectively.

There's no conscious argument here, it is merely a factual one. Like how the Swedish vessel 'Vasa' applied two different measuring units, the Amsterdam foot (11.14 inches), and the Swedish foot (11.70 inches), leading to one side being heavier than the other. The ship sank twenty minutes after being launched on August 10, 1628. It took only two massive gusts of wind to bring it down according to historians.

Any argument that can be compelled to change by factual measurement after four centuries and six decades must have found buoyancy in different waters. This was a strong gust by collective measurement.



All Rights Reserved