

African Politics and Policy

Newsletter
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Editorial

In 2002, Johns Hopkins professor Giovanni Arrighi published in the *New Left Review* an article entitled *The African Crisis* in which he suggested that the transformation of the African crisis into an African tragedy in the 1980s was mainly caused by the uneven impact that the transformation of the global economy had on various parts of the developing world. In 1999, Arrighi noted, the GNP per capita was 10.5 per cent of the world per capita GNP, life expectancy at birth stood at 49 years, infant mortality rate was a staggering 107 per 1000 and adult literacy rate was of just 54 per cent. In the years that followed, in spite of the fact that the inflow of foreign direct investments remained lower than in other parts of the developing world, many African countries managed to experience several consecutive years of sustained economic growth. As a result, countries from South-Saharan Africa were able to make considerable progress along the developmental path. In the 1999-2012 period life expectancy at birth increased from 49 to 56 years, literacy rate increased from 54 to 70 per cent and GNI per capita literally tripled from 509 US dollars in 1999 to 1,615 in 2012. The success that Sub-Saharan Africa experienced in the first decade of the 21st century is undeniable, the question is whether and how long it can be sustained. The sustainability of growth in Sub-Saharan Africa is now confronted with at least three major threats. The outbreak of Ebola epidemics that has been plaguing Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone and that hit, though in a remarkably less significant way Mali and Nigeria, will in all likelihood take a toll on the economies of Sub-Saharan Africa. The collapse of oil price will also have a detrimental impact on several economies in the region. Equatorial Guinea, the Republic of Congo, Angola, Nigeria, Gabon, Chad, Sudan, Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana and Ivory Coast are all net exporters of oil and while some economies, such as Cameroon, are more diversified and thus more insulated from fluctuations in the oil price, there is little doubt that they will not be able to grow with an oil price of 50 dollars per barrel as much as they would have when the price of oil was twice as high. Finally the instability that has plagued several countries in the region, by preventing governments from effectively implementing their policies and by deterring foreign investors, may also slow down economic growth. Political stability, economic diversification and health are the essential conditions for securing sustainable economic growth and development in the region. How to achieve each of these objectives is the challenge that Sub-Saharan Africa has to meet.

Riccardo Pelizzo

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IN THE NEWS

The government of Mali and some armed groups from northern Mali have signed an agreement to transfer some powers from Bamako to Azawad. Algerian mediators believe that Tuareg forces will also sign an agreement which is regarded by the northern armed forces themselves as “an essential docu-

HEALTH

While the number of victims of the Ebola epidemics keeps growing in Western Africa, the WHO warned that Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) undermine economic growth, development and the quality of life in most African countries. The WHO report indicates that 1.5 billion people are affected by such diseases and the majority of them lives in Africa. In spite of the fact that Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda outperform several other countries in developmental terms, they are among the 10 countries most affected by NTDs. Dengue fever is endemic and nearly 30 million people require treatment against schistosomiasis. Securing healthier life is a necessary condition for securing growth and development.

Growth in Sub-Saharan Africa: finally on track?

By Omer F. Baris

Has economic growth finally arrived in the black continent? The World Bank reports that economic growth has improved in Sub-Saharan in the last two years, and further acceleration projected in the near term (Global Economic Prospects, Chapter 2, January 2015, World Bank). The critical question is whether the growth performance on the back of investment spending on infrastructure and fuelled farming can be sustained for a longer term. Investment inflow (both FDI and portfolio) to the region from outside –that is from the rich world– has decreased in 2014. Add to that, the adverse impact of the Ebola epidemic, and the drop in commodity prices.

Civil unrest, droughts, corruption, bad governance and reluctance to reform efforts in the public sector in order to maintain economic and financial stability rather draw a bleak outlook for the long-term growth, than the projected 5% real growth rate per year. Even then, it is uncertain that economic growth in the region will remain resilient to external shocks, as the region is more vulnerable to vulnerable to domestic shocks.

The region still dominates the bottom half of Transparency International's corruption measures, majority of them still having a score of less than 50 per cent, indicating endemic corruption. Comparing the results of the 2014 corruption survey rather indicates the failure of efforts to

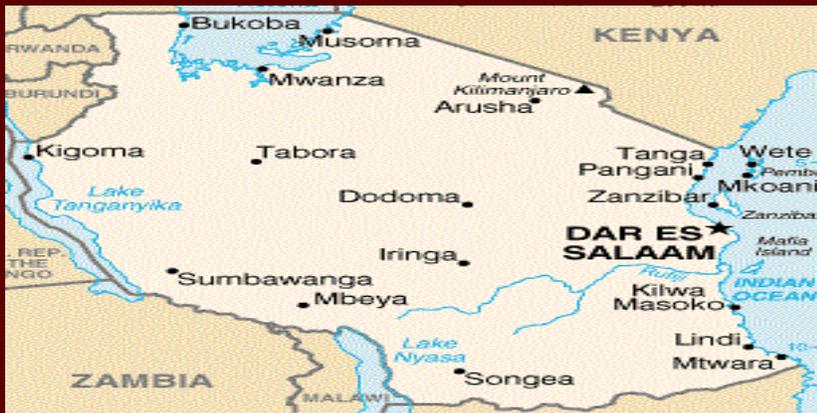
curb corruption, increase transparency, and provide an institutional boost to long term economic growth and prosperity. The governments in the region also need to restrain their budgets – fiscal balance has deteriorated in almost all countries in the region according to the World Bank report (2015), but in a way that would not interrupt the improvements and investments on infrastructure.

The economic growth in the region remains higher than the average of emerging economies excluding China. However, absent these reforms in the public sector, the growth performance will hardly be transformed into substantial improvement in standards of living, curbing poverty and reaching prosperity in the region.



Tourism and Employment: the case of Togo

In the first issue of *African Politics and Policy* Abel Kyondo and Riccardo Pelizzo analysed the relationship between the development of the tourism industry and of employment opportunities in Togo. The results of their analyses show that the development of tourism in Togo has created both business and employment opportunities and that the expansion of the workforce in the tourism sector has been instrumental in reducing the unemployment rate in the country. In the light of these findings the authors suggest that Togolese government should pay more attention to tourism and make a greater effort to promote Togo as a tourism destination for, the analysis reveals, the development of the tourism industry could be one of the main drivers of socio-economic development in Togo



The road to the 2015 Tanzanian Elections

2015 is Tanzania's election year; issues surrounding the elections are the most prominent ones as expected. But to fill up the already busy year, a vote for the new constitution is also planned to take place in the same year around April.

By October 2015, Tanzania will have a new President. The Prime Minister Mizengo Pinda; Minister of Foreign Affairs, Bernard Membe; Lazaro Nyalandu, Mwigulu Nchemba and Stephen Wasira together with Edward Lowasa and January Makamba are some of the aspirants from the ruling party. While the opposition coalition, of three parties (CHADEMA, CUF and NCCR- Mageuzi) intending to be represented by one candidate for the presidential seat. This is a revolution by itself, as to whether it will materialize, we all wait and see.

The official campaign is set for August but in all spheres several names are being tossed around from the ruling party. Informal campaigns commenced since 2014. With the likes of front runners Edward Lowasa with more resource muscles appearing in different forums with followers branding themselves *team Lowasa*. Of the younger aspirants January

Makamba came out of a new way by releasing a book authored by a priest. Karugendo titled *40 Questions 40 Answers: A Conversation with January Makamba*. This is a bold initiative for the public that rarely reads.

Biometric Vote Registration (BVR) is underway with notable challenges on the slowness of the process and some unrecognizable fingerprints. These challenges of the BVR make the coming voting of the constitution in April doubtful

Blandina Kilana, REPOA

In the Press

Party system literature over the years has extensively debated the political consequences of party system attributes. From the publication of Lowell's work at the end of the 19th century to the beginning of the 21st century, party system attributes were believed to have a profound impact on, among other things, government stability, government effectiveness, fiscal responsibility, and the stability of the constitutional order. Building on an extensive body of scholarly work, The article by Umar Aminu and Ufiem Maurice Ogbonnaya published in the first issue of *African Politics and Policy* reveals that the proliferation of political parties and the (hyper)fragmentation of the party system ultimately is more an obstacle than a facilitating condition for national integration

Growth Forecasts for East Africa

Investments in infrastructure boost growth in Eastern Africa

East Africa is expected to experience strong economic growth in 2015. Investments in infrastructures are expected to make the economy grow by 5.3 per cent in **Uganda**. The economic outlook looks even brighter in **Kenya**, where investments in road, rail and power plans are expected to stimulate the economy, economic growth is estimated to be in the 6.9-7.0% range for 2015. In **Tanzania** the government has revised upward its growth estimates. Strong performance in the agricultural, construction and manufacturing sector are expected to lead to a 7.4% economic growth in 2015.



Collaborators

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Conference Call

**Call for 2015 MENA Workshop Fellows
May 17-21 in Qatar; December in Kuwait
“The Resource Curse in MENA”**

APSA is seeking applications from PhD students and early-career scholars who would like to participate in the 2015 MENA Workshops program on "The Resource Curse in the Middle East and North Africa. This two-part workshop program is a unique opportunity to network with colleagues from across the MENA region and develop discreet research findings related to the impact of rent wealth on democracy, state-building, political stability, and state-society relations.

Job Openings

The GIGA German Institute of Global and Area Studies / Leibniz-Institut für Globale und Regionale Studien plans to appoint a research fellow to work on all China-related research questions within the research project West African Traders as Translators between Chinese and African Urban Modernities, Job reference: GIGA-15-01

Stellenbosch University is seeking applications for a Marie Curie early stage researcher position in the field of Regional Powers in World Politics

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