

African Politics and Policy

Newsletter
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Editorial

Earlier last year we noted that pandemics, political instability and falling oil prices represented a major threat to African economies. Nearly twelve months later has not changed much and certainly not for the better. Fortunately the Ebola pandemics has ended, but various parts of the African continent continue to suffer the costs of political instability, violence and human rights.

Several of the oil-producing/oil-exporting countries have started to experience the costs of falling oil prices.

Nigeria is a prime example in this respect.

Because of the fall in the oil price, Nigeria's economy grew by just 3 per cent in 2015. A 3 per cent increase in the GDP is a reasonably good performance for a developed country, but not so for a country like Nigeria where high rates of growth are needed to reduce poverty.

Analysts believe that economic growth in 2016 will not be much better than what it was last year-in large part because oil exports represent the main driver of the Nigerian economy and if the oil sector fails to contribute to the economy, it is very hard for the country to experience the economic dynamics it enjoyed when oil prices were higher.

Slow economic growth is not the only, negative, correlate of falling oil price.

Because of low oil price, the government revenue has decreased, and inflation has started to rise. Analysts expected Nigeria to have a inflation rate of between 6 and 9 per cent in 2016, but it is now clear that inflation will be much higher and well above 10 per cent.

In spite of the government's efforts to sustain the naira -Nigeria's national currency- the price of imports is increasing, the price of food is increasing and in January 2016 Nigeria recorded an inflation rate of 9.6 per cent.

If oil price does not bounce back, it will be a difficult year for Nigeria. It will be difficult for the country, for the citizens, and for the government.

Riccardo Pelizzo

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Sudan

According to the Dams Opponents Committee, the construction of dams - al-Sharik, Kajbar and the Dal in the northern part of Sudan will destroy 170 villages and over 500 archaeological sites, and will force the displacement of over 100,000 families.

Cameroon

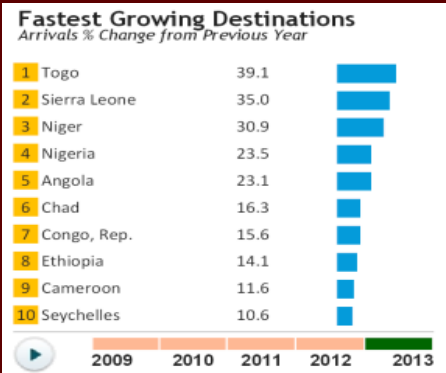
From December 2015 to January 2016, the export of cocoa dropped more than 40 per cent from 38748 tons in December to only 21564 tons a month later. The drop in exports froze the price. Producers, however expect to price to rise along with the volume of exports and the quality of the cocoa beans.

Cultural and Creative Industries in Africa

By Kristina Bekenova

Generating US\$4.2bln and 547,500 jobs, the rapidly growing sector of cultural and creative industries (CCI) in Africa is believed to be on the verge of becoming one of the major drivers of the sustainable development and economic growth in the continent. The 11 main sectors of the CCI – performing arts, visual arts, books, music, movies, architecture, gaming, newspapers and magazines, advertising, television and radio – offer a huge potential for Africa, which development is of a particular interest for the continent. CCI help to diversify the economies, which is especially important in current situation, when “the oil sector fails to contribute to the economy”. They help to decrease the level of unemployment and eliminate the fears about the future among the young people. They help to attract cultural tourists, who travel in searching of cultural sights, seeing the lifestyle of indigenous people, and participate in different festivals and traditional activities. Moreover, CCI are not an egalitarian scope of activity: they engage wide sections of populations: government agencies, entrepreneurs, artisans, media, curators, and becoming a mouthpiece of various communities, including the disadvantaged groups. African countries have been gradually recognizing the significance and importance of the CCI as an instrument of achieving broader development goals. They did so in two ways: 1) by holding different conferences, summits, workshops; and 2) by integrating the development of the CCI and their Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers – Ghana with her focus on the development and promotion of the music and film industries, Mali with the idea to link culture with religion, social harmony and security, Nigeria by providing a home to the film industry and Senegal with the promotion of local crafts as an essential element in reducing poverty. In spite of the sharp increase of African export of creative goods from \$740 mln (2002) to \$2.2 bln (2008), African creative products are still under-represented in world markets: they are only 0.36% and 0.54% respec-

tively (UNCTAD 2010). These modest results, on the global stage, could be explained by the weaknesses and challenges that CCI face in Africa: they lack governmental funding, have limited infrastructure, experience low priority of the CCI in the national development agenda, don't have enough skilled and professionally trained people; the copyright law is not adequately enforced; and fail to provide high-quality products. Given huge sociocultural significance, the aesthetic and symbolic meaning to the products, one of the serious challenges the CCI in Africa faces, in the years of globalization is not only how to meet technical problems mentioned, but also how to appropriately preserve a rich traditional culture and represent national identity through contemporary art. With regard to the impact of globalization, research studies offer three scenarios: homogenization, polarization, and hybridization (either glocalization or interculturalism). Notwithstanding which scenario would be chosen by the African countries in the development of their CCIs, the actors should, on the one hand, take into account the changing patterns of cultural environment which is no more developing as a close system but is influenced by a diverse range of transnational actors and by the desire to have an ability to successfully export their creative goods. On the other hand, they should keep their unique ways to tell the story of their nation, nationalities and ethnicities, i.e. to introduce African soul to the international audience. The richness of its own culture in CCI will provide great long-term returns. In this regard, proper policy should be implemented, which prevents the commodification and the commercialization of the artworks and the degradation of the culture itself, while creating an artist-friendly environment where there is a place for creativity, phantasy, ideas, for both mainstream as well for new small-scale initiatives.



Tourism in Africa

Tourism in Africa has steadily increased over time. In 2014 more than 65 million tourists came to Africa. Tourism represents an important driver of economic development and poverty reduction. It creates employment opportunities especially for low skilled workers and contributes to countries' GDP. But while tourism has been increasingly successful, data reveal that while in some countries, such as Togo (+39.1 per cent in 2013), the tourism sector grew very rapidly, in other countries it suffered instead a significant contraction. According to Tourism Data for Africa, in 2013, the number of tourist arrivals declined by 10.7 per cent in Mozambique, by 11.4 per cent in Kenya, by 18.1 per cent in Egypt, by 23.4 per cent in Madagascar and by 41.7 per cent in Guinea.



Tanzania: compulsory registration for artists

The National Arts Council of Tanzania (BASATA) has recently made a decision of compulsory registration for local artists and art communities: “it’s compulsory for every artist to register with the Council, before they can be lawfully permitted to work”. The decision was announced during the bi-monthly Art Forums (Jukwaa la Sanaa), which is becoming an important platform for all stakeholders to discuss the issues within the cultural and creative industries. This decision has created a huge debates in Tanzania. Iman Mani in the article “Tanzania: Spotlights Focus Once Again On Formalising Local Art” presents several stands taken by various artists and officials in that context. Ndambwe Nassibu, the Tanzania Film Directors’ Association (TAFIDA), believes that this decision will be ineffective because it was made without a proper discussion with artists. In this regard, Nassibu offers four measures which could establish closer relationship between official organizations and local artists: to establish a court for artists; to get an explanation with the policy of using South African experts; to know the role of four federations created earlier in the industry; and to discuss the role of the art, which is in the talent rather than in politics. In its turn, Agnes Lukanga, the President of the Performing Arts Federation, and Francis Magare, the Arts Council’s Legal Officer support this decision, but note that the implementation will face the

opposition from the artists’ side because of the existing inadequate policy of coordination, and of artists’ practice to copy western-oriented style in their works, without valuing local norms. But whatever the position toward the policy will take by the stakeholders, the BASATA is glad that this decision was able to attract so much attention: “artists should make more noise with the formalization policy started by the government with the film and music industry in 2013”, because “it will help to find out the better way for the government to connect legally with the Art federations”. Thus, the step taken during the Forum requires a lot effort for coordination and cooperation between different agencies and artists.

Rwanda: slowing down

World Bank estimates that economic growth in Rwanda will be slower than previously anticipated.

The Rwandese economy, after growing by 7.1 per cent in 2015, is expected to grow by 6.8 per cent in 2016.

The economic slowdown is due to the fact that the value and the volume of mineral exports has dropped and is not expected to bounce back anytime soon.

The drop in the price of minerals led to a widening deficit. The government should increase agricultural production. A thriving agriculture could create employment opportunities for the poor.

Somalia

Somalia has a population of 10.8 million people. According to a recent report 4.7 million people in Somalia -roughly 38 per cent of the population- are food insecure. The report indicates that 931000 people are expected to be shortly in food crisis and that an additional 22000 people are expected to be in a food emergency. The majority of people in food crisis/emergency are Internally Displaced People (IDPs).



Job Openings

REPOA is seeking applications for a position of researcher

<http://www.repoa.or.tz/repoa/careers>

EUPADRA will host scholars and practitioners as visiting professors in each of the three partners universities.

<http://eupadra.eu/index.php/2016/02/02/call-for-20162017-eupadra-visiting-professors/>

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African Art Exhibition

Namibia: “An Artistic Position”

From February 4 to March 12, the National Art Gallery of Namibia, Windhoek, presents an exhibition entitled “1884-1915, An Artistic Position” to reveal the German colonial era in Namibia.

<http://www.nagn.org.na/index.php/component/k2/item/40-1984-1915>

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