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DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA

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The purpose of this article is to analyze Africa's progress along the developmental path in the past few decades, to understand what factors were responsible for such success and to identify the risk factors that may compromise further development in the region in the years to come. We advance three basic claims: that Africa has experienced an almost unprecedented (by its standards) level of economic success in the first 15 years of the new millennium, that this success was made possible by a combination of domestic and supranational conditions, and that some of the enabling conditions that supported Africa's growth and development in the new millennium may be disappearing. The study also suggests that while African countries may not be able to influence the global conditions on which their economic success depends, they do have the ability to influence the domestic conditions. This is why, we suggest, in addition to ensuring longer and healthier lives for their citizens, African countries should consolidate democracy and promote good governance.

Keywords: Development, Africa, Economic Success, Domestic Conditions, Global Conditions, Global Influence, Democratization in Africa, Democratic Consolidation, Governance, The African Crisis.

El desarrollo en África

El propósito de este documento es analizar el progreso de África en el trayecto del desarrollo en las últimas décadas para comprender qué factores fueron responsables de este éxito y para identificar los factores de riesgo que podrían comprometer el desarrollo futuro de la región en los próximos años. El documento presenta tres afirmaciones básicas: que África ha experimentado un nivel de éxito económico casi sin precedentes (para sus estándares) en los primeros quince años del nuevo milenio; que este éxito fue posible gracias a una combinación de condiciones domésticas y supranacionales; y que algunas de las condiciones favorables que respaldaron el crecimiento y el desarrollo de África en el nuevo milenio pueden estar desapareciendo. El documento también sugiere que, si bien los países africanos pueden no ser capaces de influir en las condiciones globales de las que depende su éxito económico, sí tienen la capacidad de influir en las condiciones internas. Es por eso que el documento sugiere que además de asegurar vidas más largas y saludables para sus ciudadanos, los países africanos deberían consolidar la democracia y promover la buena gobernanza.

Palabras clave: desarrollo, África, éxito económico, condiciones domésticas, condiciones globales, influencia global, democratización en África, consolidación democrática, gobernanza.

非洲的发展

摘要：本文目的是分析非洲在过去几十年间在发展道路上的进程，进而理解哪些因素促成了经济成功，同时识别出可能损害未来发展的风险因素。本文提出三个主张：1. 非洲在新千禧年的前15年中取得了前所未有的经济成功（与过去的非洲相比）；2. 这项成功可能是由国内形势和超国家形势二者共同决定的；3. 支持非洲发展的一些有利条件可能会消失。本文还认为，尽管非洲国家可能不能够对其经济成功所依赖的全球形势产生影响，但它们有能力影响自己国内的形势。这也是为何本文认为，除去保证国民更长久、更健康的生活之外，非洲国家应该加强民主并推动良好治理的原因。

关键词：发展，非洲，经济成功，国内形势，全球形势，全球影响，非洲民主化，民主加强，治理

From the mid-1980s to the beginning of the new millennium, scholars have almost unanimously underlined Africa's economic woes: economic recession (Shaw 1986), mass poverty (Onimode 1988), economic stagnation or decline (Ake 2001), an absence of sustained

growth in real export earnings (Svedberg 1993), and rapidly escalating foreign debt (*Business Daily* 2018; Jackson 1984). Even those scholars who were willing to acknowledge that the African situation was not, and should not be reduced to, a "uniform developmental disaster" often ended up suggesting that Africa, after independence, had experienced more spells of crisis than anything else (see, for example, Nzomo 1996; Van de Walle 2001).

Building on the work of Arrighi (2002), in the present article we plan to show that actually the African reality is more complex than the uniform or unconditional disaster discussed by the literature (see, for example, Arrighi, Aschoff, and Scully 2010). Africa, as Arrighi (2002) pointed out, had its fair share of success stories in the 1960s and in the early 1970s, and, after the crisis that plagued it in the 1980s and in the 1990s, experienced a new wave of developmental successes.

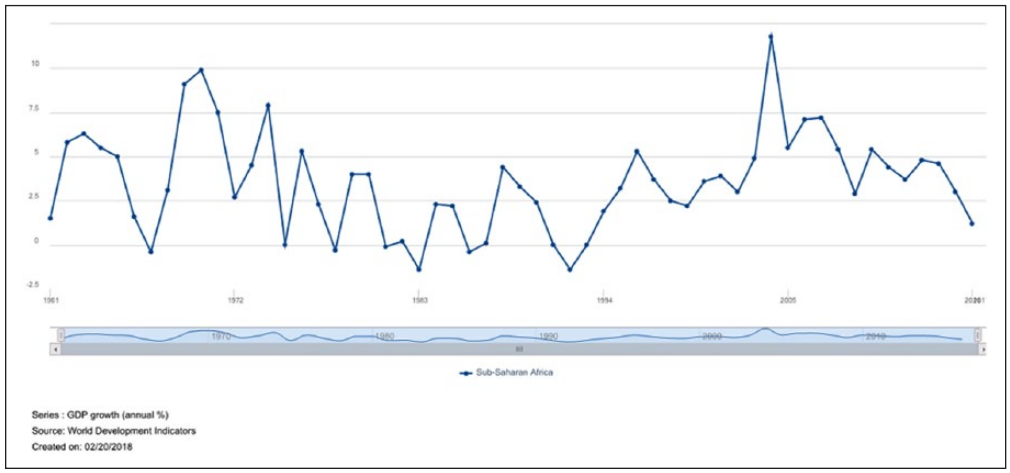
The purpose of the study is to analyze Africa's economic successes in the past half-century, to understand not only what made these successes possible but also—and more importantly—what risk factors may compromise them (or have already done so). With that objective in mind, we aim to identify and discuss the main drivers of growth across the region.

The article is divided into four sections. The first section presents some historical information on the performance of Africa's economy. This section advances three basic claims: (1) that Africa's economy intermixed years of economic growth with years of stagnation or contraction; (2) that there is significant cross-national variation as to how well the economy has performed in the Sub-Saharan region; and (3) that from 1991 onward, Africa has had more success stories than in the 1960s and 1970s. The second section explores the conditions, domestic and external, that have facilitated Africa's successful economic performance. Building on this analysis, the third section discusses whether Africa will be able to sustain its recent growth in the years to come, or whether changes in domestic, regional, and global arenas may derail the progress made so far. The fourth and final section draws together our conclusions and formulates some recommendations as to what could be done to secure strong economic growth and development in Africa.

Africa's Success Stories

In his analysis of the African crisis, Arrighi (2002) observed that Africa has had its fair share of success stories. Building on the work of Berthélemy and Söderling (2001), Arrighi (2002) argued that an economic success story could be equated to a "strong sustained growth

Figure 1.
GDP Growth in Sub-Saharan Africa, 1961–2016.



Source. The World Bank (n.d.).
Note. GDP = gross domestic product; GNI = gross national income.

experience," which "is defined as 'an uninterrupted period of 10 years or more, during which time the five-year moving average of annual GDP growth exceeds 3.5 per cent'" (Arrighi 2002, 12). Figure 1 and Table 1 show that African economies experienced strong growth for most of the 1960s, as well as how they slowed down in the 1980s and in the 1990s, experienced strong growth in the first five years of the new millennium, peaked in 2004, and went on to record slower economic growth from 2005 onward. This conclusion is supported by the analysis of the gross national income (GNI) of the region (see Figure 2). Although gross domestic product (GDP) captures the output produced by a country's residents, GNI captures the value of the output produced by its citizens.

The economic growth that Sub-Saharan Africa experienced for so many years, in the new millennium, increased the region's wealth. The GNI per capita increased from $503.8 in 2000 to $1,516.4 in 2016 (see Figure 3).

The data in Table 2 shows that, while we talk of Africa as a single entity, there are significant differences in the growth patterns of the various parts of the continents and also within each of these regions.

The analysis reveals, first, that in Sub-Saharan Africa, there are what Arrighi (2002) called "success stories" and that they have been more frequent in recent years than they had been in the past (see Table 3). In fact, of the 49 countries of Sub-Saharan Africa, 34 have enjoyed at least

Table 1.

GDP Growth, Five-Year Average, 1991–2015.

Country	1991–1995	1996–2000	2001–2005	2006–2010	2011–2015
Angola	–3.78	6.43	6.33	12.59	4.74
Burundi	–2.40	–1.34	2.20	4.49	2.71
Benin	4.22	5.04	3.91	3.85	4.68
Burkina Faso	3.96	6.77	6.38	6.12	4.79
Botswana	4.59	5.25	3.64	4.76	4.86
Central African Republic	1.09	1.42	1.92	3.24	–4.69
Cote d'Ivoire	1.51	3.19	0.01	2.22	6.63
Cameroon	–1.73	4.67	3.71	2.91	5.20
Congo	0.50	2.48	4.09	5.29	4.02
Democratic Republic of Congo	–7.12	–3.89	3.86	5.55	7.78
Comoros	0.89	3.36	2.30	1.60	2.44
Cape Verde	10.89	12.10	5.75	6.00	1.51
Djibouti	–3.07	–0.43	2.97	4.84	5.36
Eritrea	12.51	3.16	2.63	–0.65	8.68
Ethiopia	1.33	4.67	6.61	10.89	10.21
Gabon	3.13	0.41	1.74	1.19	5.24
Ghana	4.28	4.32	5.04	6.53	7.71
Guinea	3.90	3.92	3.08	2.17	2.13
Gambia	2.11	4.50	3.11	4.69	2.38
Guinea-Bissau	3.18	–0.71	1.76	3.29	3.14
Equatorial Guinea	15.78	56.84	30.31	6.64	0.18
Kenya	1.61	2.16	3.65	5.05	5.52
Liberia	–21.66	39.79	–3.11	7.23	5.12
Lesotho	5.34	3.04	2.80	4.88	4.52
Madagascar	–0.28	3.84	2.60	2.93	2.62
Mali	3.28	5.02	7.14	4.60	3.54
Mozambique	3.37	11.81	8.91	7.44	7.10
Mauritania	3.26	2.37	4.67	5.30	4.71
Mauritius	4.89	5.80	3.07	5.47	3.63
Malawi	3.52	3.92	2.22	7.43	4.09
Namibia	3.88	3.51	5.00	4.54	5.51
Niger	0.81	2.92	4.00	5.24	6.01

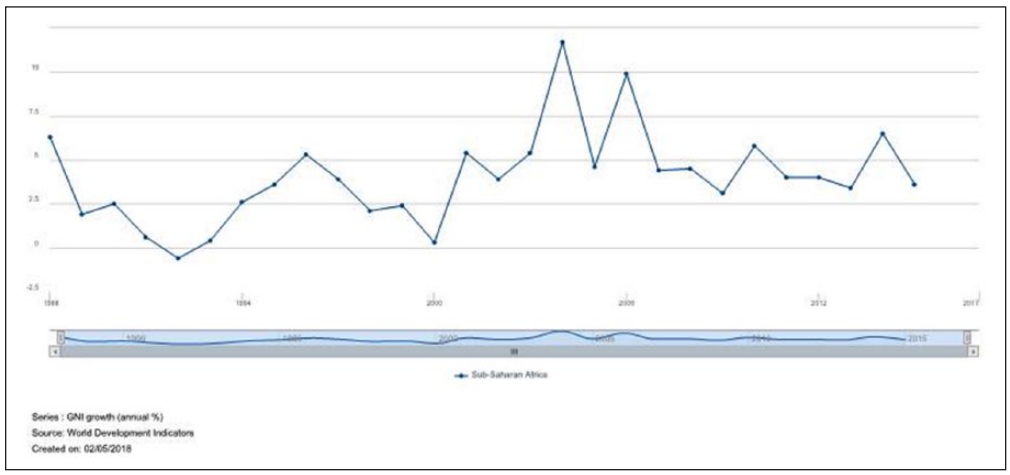
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Table 1. (continued)

Country	1991–1995	1996–2000	2001–2005	2006–2010	2011–2015
Nigeria	0.50	3.26	11.15	7.22	4.70
Rwanda	–3.95	9.62	8.14	8.33	7.56
Sao Tome and Principe			4.61	5.93	4.51
Sudan	5.13	6.05	6.41	7.22	2.11
Senegal	2.09	4.12	4.68	3.54	4.09
Sierra Leone	–5.05	0.47	7.85	5.80	4.95
Somalia					
South Sudan				5.27	–8.11
Swaziland	3.06	2.85	3.79	3.32	3.91
Seychelles	2.90	5.73	–0.16	4.51	5.47
Chad	2.44	2.65	17.17	4.95	4.67
Togo	0.61	4.52	1.14	3.21	4.98
Tanzania	1.80	4.31	7.21	6.09	6.85
Uganda	7.05	6.05	6.71	8.06	5.42
South Africa	0.89	2.80	3.84	3.13	2.20
Zambia	–0.14	3.64	6.21	8.71	5.17
Zimbabwe	1.39	2.41	–7.19	–0.13	7.88

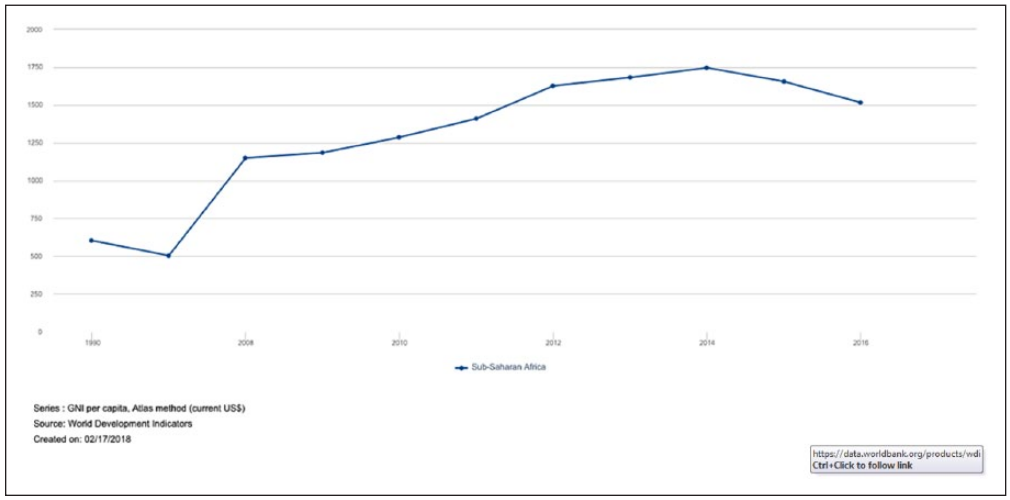
Note. GDP = gross domestic product.

Figure 2.
GNI, Growth, 1982–2015.



Source. The World Bank (n.d.).
Note. GNI = gross national income.

Figure 3.
GNI Per Capita, 1990–2016.



Source. The World Bank (n.d.).
Note. GNI = gross national income.

Table 2.

Average GDP Growth, 1991–2015.

Country	Number of years observed	Average growth rate (%)	Minimum growth rate (%)	Maximum growth rate (%)
Angola	25	5.26	–24.70	22.59
Burundi	25	1.13	–8.00	5.38
Benin	25	4.34	1.71	7.19
Burkina Faso	25	5.61	0.23	11.01
Botswana	25	4.62	–7.65	11.34
Central African Republic	25	0.60	–36.70	7.20
Cote d'Ivoire	25	2.71	–4.39	10.71
Cameroon	25	2.95	–7.93	5.93
Congo	25	1.24	–13.47	9.51
Democratic Republic of Congo	25	3.28	–5.49	8.75
Comoros	25	2.12	–5.40	10.85
Cape Verde	25	7.25	–1.27	19.18
Djibouti	25	1.94	–6.62	6.50
Eritrea	19	3.78	–9.78	21.22

(continued)

Table 2. (continued)

Country	Number of years observed	Average growth rate (%)	Minimum growth rate (%)	Maximum growth rate (%)
Ethiopia	25	6.74	–8.67	13.57
Gabon	25	2.34	–8.93	7.09
Ghana	25	5.58	3.30	14.05
Guinea	25	3.04	–0.28	5.18
Gambia	25	3.36	–4.33	7.05
Guinea-Bissau	25	2.13	–28.10	11.60
Equatorial Guinea	25	21.95	–9.13	149.97
Kenya	25	3.60	–0.80	8.40
Liberia	25	5.47	–35.09	106.28
Lesotho	25	4.11	0.48	6.97
Madagascar	25	2.34	–12.67	9.78
Mali	25	4.72	–3.22	15.38
Mozambique	25	7.73	–5.23	26.85
Mauritania	25	4.06	–4.04	18.87
Mauritius	25	4.57	1.24	9.03
Malawi	25	4.24	–10.24	16.73
Namibia	25	4.49	–1.58	12.27
Niger	25	3.80	–6.52	11.81
Nigeria	25	5.37	–0.62	33.74
Rwanda	25	5.94	–50.25	35.22
Sao Tome	15	5.02	2.38	9.12
Sudan	25	5.38	–1.97	11.52
Senegal	25	3.70	–0.02	6.68
Sierra Leone	25	2.81	–20.49	26.27
Somalia	No observations			
South Sudan	7	–4.29	–46.08	13.13
Swaziland	25	3.39	0.82	6.86
Seychelles	25	3.69	–5.89	11.96
Chad	25	6.38	–15.71	33.63
Togo	25	2.89	–15.10	14.98
Tanzania	25	5.25	0.58	8.46
Uganda	25	6.66	3.14	11.52
South Africa	25	2.57	–2.14	5.60
Zambia	25	4.72	–8.63	10.30
Zimbabwe	25	0.87	–17.67	16.33

Source. The World Bank (n.d.).
Note. GDP = gross domestic product.

Table 3.

Periods of Sustained Growth in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Start of GDP growth period	End of GDP growth period			
	2001–2005	2006–2010	2011–2015	Ongoing GDP growth period
1991–1995	Guinea, Malawi (1)		Cape Verde, Equatorial Guinea, Sudan	Benin, Burkina Faso, Botswana, Ghana, Mauritius, Namibia, Senegal. Uganda
1996–2000		Cameroon		Angola, Ethiopia, Mali, Mozambique, Rwanda, Tanzania, Zambia
2001–2005				Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Sao Tome and Principe, Sierra Leone, Chad
2006–2010				Djibuti, Liberia, Lesotho, Malawi (2)

Note. GDP = gross domestic product.

one "sustained strong growth experience," which, as we noted above, corresponds to a 3.5 percent five-year moving average GDP growth for ten years.

Only Burundi, Central African Republic, Ivory Coast, Comoros, Eritrea, Gabon, Gambia and Guinea-Bissau, Madagascar, Somalia, South Sudan, Swaziland, Togo, South Africa, and Zimbabwe failed to have at least one sustained strong growth experience. Malawi had two such experiences, as shown in Table 3 (and in Table 1).

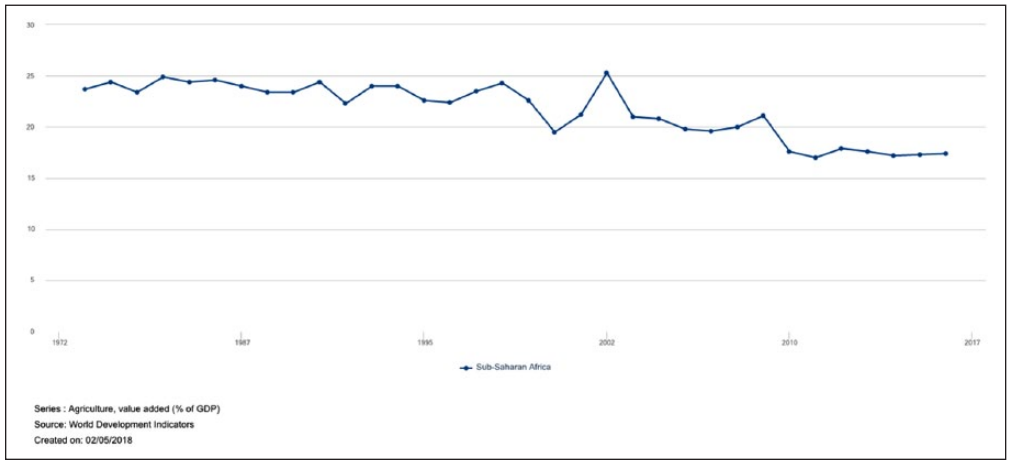
This "sustained strong GDP growth experience" started at different points in time. In some countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Botswana, etc.) it started in the 1991–1995 period, in other countries (Angola, Ethiopia, Mali, etc.) it started in the 1996–2000 period, in a third group of countries (Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, etc.) it began in the 2001–2005 period, and in a fourth group of countries (Djibouti. Liberia, Lesotho) it started in the 2006–2010 period. The reasons behind the timing of growth also varied across countries. For instance, while growth in Botswana was the result of a resource (diamond) boom, in Liberia, Somalia, and Djibouti growth was mainly a consequence of a peace and stability dividends. Meanwhile, in countries like

Kenya, improved manufacturing and horticulture export earnings were responsible for growth. This "sustained strong GDP growth experience" also varied in terms of how strong it was (see Table 2).

There is also variation as to how long the growth period lasted: it lasted about a decade in Guinea, Malawi, and Cameroon; for about 20 years in Cape Verde, Equatorial Guinea, and Sudan; while the growth in Benin, Burkina Faso, Botswana, Ghana, Mauritius, Namibia, Senegal, and Uganda is still ongoing. This is the third interesting aspect of this new wave of success stories: from 1991 onward, 29 of the 34 success stories are still ongoing. Sustainability is a cause for concern as Africa's growth has been mainly driven by either resource booms—oil in Nigeria, Angola, Congo, Sudan and South Sudan, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Chad, Ghana, and Cameroon; aluminum in South Africa; bauxite in Guinea; chromium in South Africa; cobalt in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Madagascar, South Africa, and Zambia; iron ore in South Africa; lead in South Africa; lithium in Zimbabwe; manganese in Gabon; nickel in South Africa and Madagascar; platinum in South Africa and Zimbabwe; silicon in South Africa; titanium in South Africa, Kenya, Madagascar, and Mozambique (The World Bank 2017)—and/or the services sector (telecommunications, tourism). The former is exhaustible and susceptible to price fluctuations. The latter is not inclusive as the services employ relatively few, highly educated people, especially compared with agriculture which, in the wake of the previous limited and generally unsuccessful industrialization (Bates 2014), employs the majority of Africans—namely, two-thirds of the working population—and yet makes an increasingly smaller contribution to the GDP (see Figure 4).

The countries where the "sustained strong growth experience" has not ended can be subdivided into four groups. The first group includes those countries in which the economic growth in 2016 has been higher than 3.5 percent. This group includes Benin, Burkina Faso, Rwanda, and so on. There is a second group of countries where economic growth, though strong, was below the 3.5-percent level. The countries in this category include Botswana, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Lesotho, and Namibia. In a third group of countries (e.g., South Arica and Zimbabwe), economies failed to grow, and finally there is the group of countries where the economy suffered a severe setback and where it will be very hard to sustain the "strong growth experience." In 2016, the economy decreased by 1.54 percent in Nigeria, it decreased by 1.86 percent in the Republic of Congo and in Chad it dropped by 7 percent (World Development Indicators). So, while there are many ongoing success stories, the evidence above clearly indicates that some of them may be soon coming to an end.

Figure 4.
Agriculture, Value Added (percentage of GDP).



Source. The World Bank (n.d.).
Note. GDP = gross domestic product.

It is not entirely clear whether the structure of these economies, that is the composition of their GDP, sheds any light as to why they perform as well as they do (see Table 4). In the countries of the first group, agriculture still represented a large portion of the GDP and larger than industry, while the service sector represented less than three-fifths of the GDP. In the countries of the second group, agriculture made a smaller contribution than industry to their respective GDP, and the service sector made a larger contribution to the GDP than it had done in the countries of the first group. In South Africa and Zimbabwe, which belong to the third group, the service sector represents more than two-thirds of the GDP, industry less than one-third, and agriculture is fairly negligible. The countries in the fourth group have little in common in terms of economic structure, but much in common in terms of problems. Chad and Nigeria are the two countries in the Chad basin that are most affected by the terrorist activities of Boko Haram, which, in addition to displacing millions of people and millions of children, has also contributed to the disruption of the local economies.[1]

However, there is no doubt that Africa had more success stories from 1991 onward than it had from the early 1960s to the mid-1970s. To understand whether these success stories may continue in the future or

[1]See UNICEF (2016).

Table 4.
Composition of GDP.

Country	Agriculture	Service	Industry
Benin	25.6	51.1	23.4
Burkina Faso	30.8	43	26.1
Rwanda	31.5	50.8	17.6
Botswana	2.2	63.1	34.7
Democratic Republic of Congo	21.9	44.6	33.5
Lesotho	5.8	57.4	36.8
Namibia	6.9	61.8	31.3
South Africa	2.4	68.6	28.9
Zimbabwe	11	66.3	22.8
Nigeria	21.2	60.4	18.4
Republic of Congo	8.7	41.1	50.2
Chad	51.1	35.1	14.8

Source. The World Bank (n.d.).

not, we need to understand what made this success possible and what may prevent some African countries from remaining as successful as they have been in the recent past. The next two sections of this article will try to answer these questions.

Explaining African Success

The International Factors

Africa's success was the result of the interaction of several factors. At the international level, well before the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals (Sachs and McArthur 2005), which placed a considerable emphasis on promoting development and reducing poverty, the international community had changed its approach to development, developing countries, and, subordinately, to Africa.

The international community abandoned the traditional notion of development and the reductionist view that equated development with economic growth, and realized that development is a multifaceted phenomenon—which includes a human, social, and participative component, and should be sustainable. Thus, it began to see that development is the product not only of economic factors but also of political and institutional ones. Hence, a whole debate emerged about the dividends of good governance (Kaufmann, Kraay, and Zoido-Lobatón 2000) and the

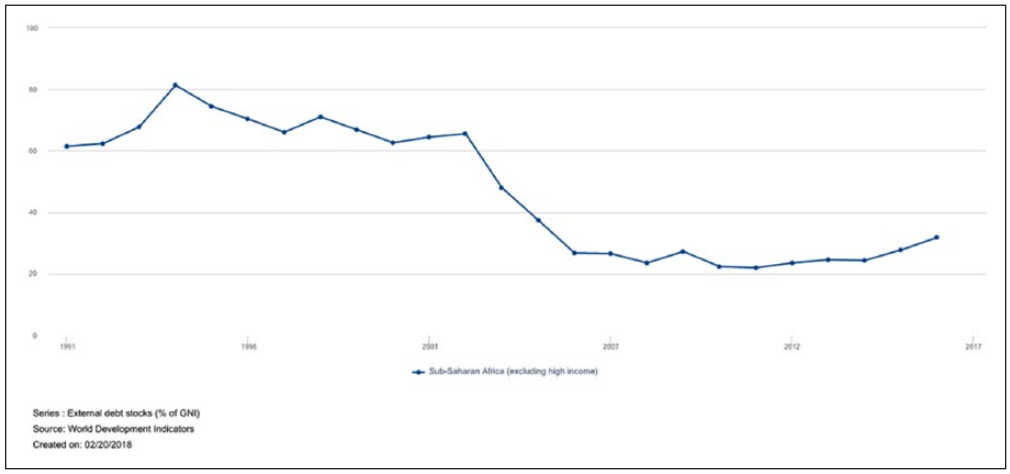
international community adopted a new approach to lending—as evidenced by the launch of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP; Craig and Porter 2003).

The new approach of the international community toward poverty and development is evidenced by several steps that International Organizations (IOs) have taken from 1990 onward. In 1990, the World Bank published "Making Adjustments Work for the Poor" (World Bank 1990) and its World Development Report was entirely devoted to poverty reduction. The Conference of Rio (1992) identified the requisites for achieving sustainable development (environmental protection constitutes an integral part of the development process; international actions should be taken to help developing countries; unsustainable patterns of production and consumption should be reduced or eliminated; clean technology and energy should be adopted; citizen participation leads to better policy making; environmental legislation should be implemented; and environmental impact assessment shall be undertaken for proposed activities that are likely to have a significant adverse impact on the environment, etc.). It also adopted Agenda 21, which detailed what individual countries should do to make development sustainable. The priorities were identified as the need to protect the atmosphere, combat deforestation, manage fragile ecosystems, promote sustainable agriculture, preserve biological diversity, protect the oceans, protect freshwater resources, and manage (urban, toxic, and radioactive) waste properly.[2] At the World Summit for Social Development held in Copenhagen in 1995, the United Nations (UN)—in collaboration with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP)—introduced the notion of social development, and in 1997 the UNDP proposed the notion of Sustainable Human Development (Anand and Sen 1996) which assesses development not in terms of overall wealth, but in terms of human development—the development of human capability—intergenerational equity and justice (Anand and Sen 2000).

This new understanding of, and approach to, development, poverty, aid, and cooperation changed how developing countries were financed. The new development approach was also reflected in the way that the so-

[2]As noted in the portal of the Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform, "Agenda 21 is a comprehensive plan of action to be taken globally, nationally and locally by organizations of the United Nations System, Governments, and Major Groups in every area in which human impacts on the environment." See https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/outcomedocuments/agenda21.

Figure 5.
External Debt as Percentage of GNI (Sub-Saharan Africa Excluding High Income).



Source. The World Bank (n.d.).
Note. GNI = gross national income.

called "developed world" treated the foreign debt that had had a devastating impact on African economies for most of the 1980s (Greene 1989).

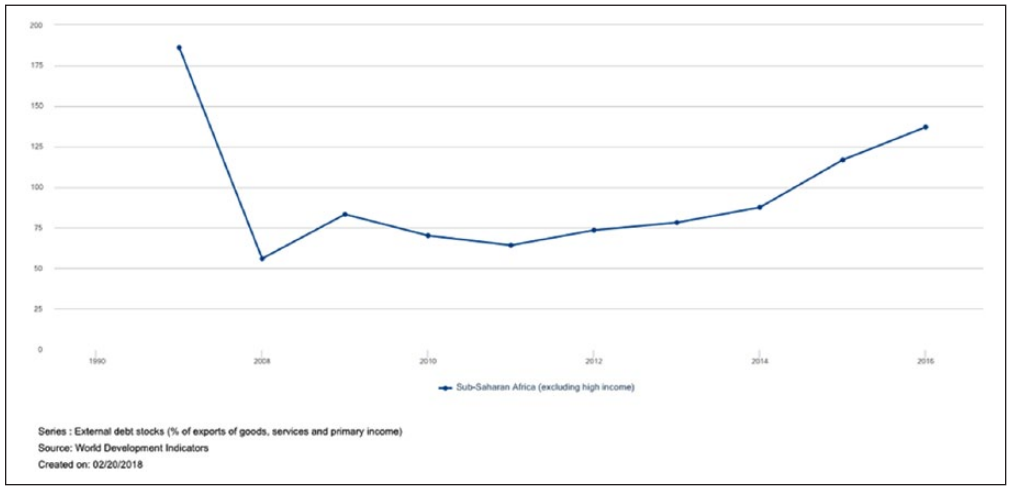
African countries were heavily indebted. The external debt represented a sizable portion of their GDP and of their exports of goods and services (see Figures 5 and 6).

The international community came to realize, as scholars had already made clear (Helleiner 1992), that debt relief was a necessary condition for securing sustainable growth and development in the developing world.

In the wake of the 1994 Naples's G7 summit, the Club of Paris, an informal group of officials from the major lending countries, deliberated a reduction of 67 percent of developing world foreign debt. In 1996, the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) launched the *Highly Indebted Poor Countries Initiative* (HIPCI) which was designed to bring developing countries' foreign debt to an acceptable level (see Figures 5 and 6).[3] In other words, the international community reduced the

[3]The Club of Paris defines itself as "an informal group of official creditors whose role is to find coordinated and sustainable solutions to the payment difficulties experienced by debtor countries" (see http://www.clubdeparis.org). There are 22 permanent members of the Paris Club, namely: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Korea, the Netherlands, Norway, Russia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, and the United States of America.

Figure 6.
External Debt as Percentage of Exports of Goods and Services (Sub-Saharan Africa Excluding High Income).



Source. The World Bank (n.d.).

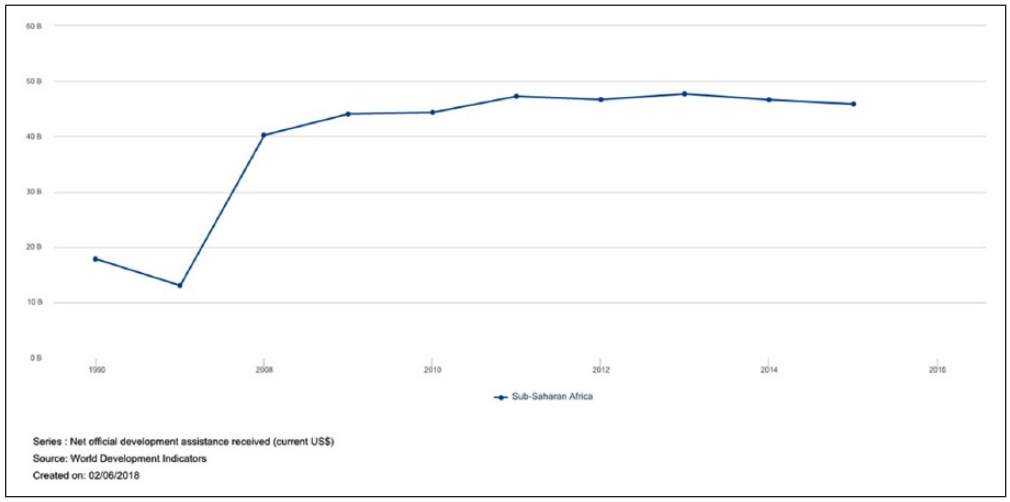
debt on one hand, and, on the other, provided more aid to Sub-Saharan Africa. The amount of aid money increased: Sub-Saharan Africa, which had received $17.8 billion in aid in 1990, received $47.7 billion in 2013, $46.6 billion in 2014, and $45.8 billion in 2015—which means that even if the amount of aid has started to decrease from its 2013 peak, it is still more than twice the amount disbursed in 1990 (see Figure 7).

So, the first reason why the economic fortunes of African economies started improving from the early 1990s onward is that the International Community's Approach to Development and Developing Countries had started to change as evidenced by the elimination of debt and the increase in international aid.

Globalization

Globalization also contributed to the economic success of Sub-Saharan Africa, though some have noted that globalization's contribution to development has not been matched by a corresponding contribution to poverty reduction (see, for example, Datta 2002; Stiglitz 2002). Capital seeks profit-making opportunities, and the economies of poor developing nations often have greater growth potential than the economies of already industrially advanced nations. The prospects of making higher returns in developing countries is a necessary, but in itself insufficient, condition for attracting capital. Capital also needs security as investors

Figure 7.
Net Official Development Assistance Received in Billion (Current U.S. Dollars).



Source. The World Bank (n.d.).

tend to discount the profit opportunities by the risk associated with a given investment.

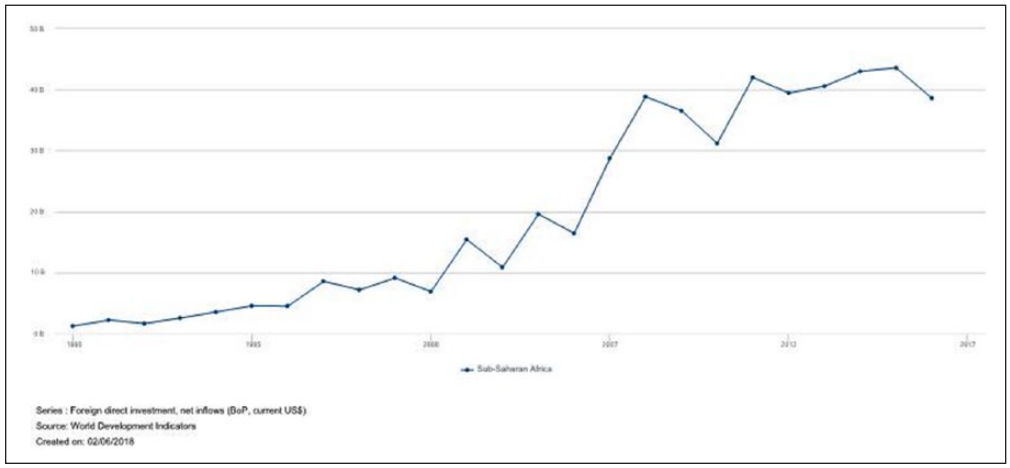
But as the international community started providing aid to developing countries, and as developing countries increased their level of good governance, the risk associated with investing in developing nations started to decline and Sub-Saharan Africa became increasingly more attractive for international capital than it had been in previous decades (Asiedu 2006; Morisset 1999). International aid, in terms of the Net Official Development Assistance,

> consists of disbursements of loans made on concessional terms (net of repayments of principal) and grants by official agencies of the members of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC), by multilateral institutions, and by non-DAC countries to promote economic development and welfare in countries and territories in the DAC list of ODA recipients.[4]

Although this international aid increased by roughly 268 percent between 1990 and 2013, when it reached its peak, the net inflow of foreign direct investment (FDI), which "is the sum of equity capital,

[4]Taken from https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/DT.ODA.ODAT.CD?locations=ZG/.

Figure 8.
Foreign Direct Investment, Net Inflows.



Source. The World Bank (n.d.).

reinvestment of earnings, and other capital" in the same period grew by more than 36 times from 1.22 billion in 1990 to 43.6 billion in 2014 (see Figure 8).

So, globalization, by liberalizing financial markets and by allowing the free movement of capital, was instrumental in helping Sub-Saharan Africa to attract much-needed foreign capital (Hanson and Ramachandran 2005). In this respect, Hanson and Ramachandran (1990, 210) noted that "African countries turned to financial liberalization in the 1990s, often in the context of stabilization and reform programs supported by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank." And, as the inflow of FDI increased, so did the growth of the African economy from 1990s onward (Adams 2009).

The Demise of the Old International Political Order

A third global factor played a role, and quite possibly a crucial one, in creating the conditions for Africa's economic success between 2000 and 2015: the end of the Cold War. With the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the bipolar order (West vs. Communist Bloc), Africa was freed from its previous incarnation as a proxy front in the Cold War. As Fage (1995, 531) explained,

> the Soviet Union and other eastern bloc regimes . . . could no longer afford to subsidize satellite states in Africa or to seek strategic allies

there. It followed that there was no practical advantage to be gained by an African government asserting that it governed according to Marxist principles. From 1989 onwards, Marxism ceased to be the official political philosophy of the rulers of such countries as Mozambique and Ethiopia.

At the same time, Western governments no longer felt compelled to support the unpopular dictatorship that had sided with them during the Cold War (Fage 1995, 531).

That is precisely when the "third wave" of democratization (Huntington 1993), that had already spread through Southern Europe, South America, and South East Asia, swept across the African continent in conjunction with the "good governance matters" message that the IOs were now preaching across the region. The "good governance matters" agenda served three different purposes.

First, as we have already mentioned, it was an essential feature of the PRSP. With the launch of the PRSP agenda, developing countries were no longer expected to implement structural adjustment programs (Easterly 2000), but could design and take ownership of their own development and poverty reduction programs. The Poverty Reduction Strategy Programs meant that developing countries had to identify their own needs, to draw a plan as to how those needs could be successfully addressed, and to request appropriate funds to implement the locally owned plan. The only condition—as there is no lending without at least some conditions—was that they [the countries receiving aid] made some progress in improving the quality of government or in the level the of good governance: better rule of law, better regulatory qualities, more stability, less corruption, more accountability, and more government effectiveness.

Second, the "good governance matters" agenda, by ensuring that countries had a genuinely good reason—money—to improve their level of good governance, signaled to international investors that the risks associated with investing in these countries were decreasing. This, in turn, created the conditions for a massive increase in foreign direct investments.

Third, the "good governance matters" agenda served, surreptitiously, another purpose: that of promoting the substance of democracy (voice and accountability) without having to use the "d-word," which remained rather unpalatable for those political leaderships that were not keen to forfeit the possibility of endless terms in office.

The third wave of democratization brought democracy to Cape Verde, Ghana, and Nigeria in Western Africa; it brought an end to apartheid

in South Africa; and Rwanda, in Central Africa, was converted to a thriving democracy in the wake of the genocide. Consequently, Africa found itself not only with more democracies but also with an improved quality of democracy. The improvements in the quality of democracy were associated with greater political stability: African countries in general, and Africa as a whole, were becoming more stable. Polity IV computes the State Fragility index for virtually all countries in the world, including 47 countries from Sub-Saharan Africa. The index is a composite variable, which includes indicators to capture state effectiveness, legitimacy, and resilience. In the 1995–2015 period, state fragility index scores increased in only three African countries: South Sudan, Central African Republic, and Ivory Coast. Index scores remained constant in Eritrea, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Zimbabwe. However, in the other 39 cases, state fragility decreased.[5]

Major episodes of armed conflict and adverse regime changes, which peaked in the 1990s, declined. With greater political stability, and with the higher democratic quality, Africa was able to capitalize on favorable international conditions. More aid arrived to support these changes, and all of this contributed to attracting more foreign direct investments.

A Changing World Economic System

The rise of the East was apparent from at least the late-1980s, when many believed that the Japanese economy could eventually outperform the American one. The rise of Asia was reaffirmed when over the past 15 years or so, China has established itself as the most economically dynamic place on the planet (Babones 2011). The numbers of China's economic success are staggering: in 1960, China's GDP amounted to roughly 4.4 percent of the global GDP, by 2016 China's GDP amounted to 14.8 percent. As China's economy grew, it established itself as a regional hegemon in Asia, became the world's second largest economy, and was instrumental in accelerating Africa's economic growth (Zafar 2007).

China's success contributed to Africa's economic performance in two ways. First, as China developed it required increasingly large amounts of resources, especially commodities, and demands for Africa's exports increased accordingly. Africa may not have exported sophisticated goods

[5]See http://www.systemicpeace.org/inscrdata.html. The global report on state fragility can be found at http://www.systemicpeace.org/globalreport.html.

with high value added, but exporting increasingly larger amounts of increasingly more expensive commodities greatly contributed to the region's rapid economic growth from 2000 to 2015. Second, as China developed, it started investing in the African continent: China invested in the construction of infrastructures and provided aid without the kind of conditions that, sometimes, make aid (and loans) from the West (or Western-dominated IOs) much less attractive.

Thus, trade with China and aid from China and Chinese investments were the fourth element that contributed to creating the conditions for Africa's economic success at the beginning of the new millennium.

The Domestic Factors

The end of the Cold War, the rise of China, a new understanding of development, more aid, and more investment all contributed to Africa's economic success. But while these were necessary for creating the conditions for sustained strong economic growth, they were in themselves insufficient. These favorable conditions at the global level were able to have a positive impact on Africa's fortunes because African countries were also undergoing significant changes for the better at the domestic level.

A factor that contributed to the economic success of Sub-Saharan Africa was the improvement in public health. According to the Atlas of African Health Statistics (World Health Organization [WHO] 2016, 17), Sub-Saharan Africa improved in nearly every respect: government health expenditures increased, utilization of health services increased, and fewer deaths were caused by factors such as HIV/AIDS, respiratory infections, diarrhea diseases, malaria, stroke, birth complications, ischemic heart disease, protein-energy malnutrition, and meningitis.

Sub-Saharan Africa started developing in socioeconomic terms (as evidenced by the fact that infant mortality dropped from 108.5 per thousand in 1990 to 56.3 per thousand in 2015), life expectancy at birth increased from 49.9 years to 58.9, while GDP per capita increased from $607.3 in 1990 to $1,592.2 in 2015 (The World Bank n.d.). Although Africa remains poor, it has developed and, in doing so, it has created wealth. At least some of this wealth has percolated through the society, which is why, regardless of how one measures development (life expectancy, GNI per capita, infant mortality, etc.), one can detect significant improvements. Unfortunately, however, and in large part because of the persistence of serious corruption, much of the wealth—both in

terms of GDP and wealth per capita that has been generated—has not been effectively redistributed or used in ways that are socially efficient.[6]

But precisely because Africa has not managed in the past to capitalize upon its success, it is worth investigating whether and to what extent Africa will be able to capitalize upon its current economic success in the near future. Thus, we might ask, "what are the main threats to sustaining strong growth in the years to come? And what solutions could be adopted to minimize such risks?"

Africa at a Crossroads

As explained previously, Africa's economic progress in the 2000–2015 period was facilitated by several favorable conditions at the global level. There are several reasons to believe that the situation may already be changing. The economic crisis that took such a heavy toll on the accounts of many advanced economies reduced the amount of money that these governments can commit to aid purposes, and the volume of aid money has already started to shrink.

This aid money, which we measure on the basis of net development assistance received, more than tripled between 2000 and 2013, but this amount has been shrinking ever since. Indeed, it declined to 46.6 billion in 2014 and to 45.8 billion in 2015 and given the new approach to Africa's development adopted by the new U.S. Administration, there is every reason to believe that aid money may decline even further in the next few years.[7] In two years, aid decreased by 1.9 billion, an amount greater than Cabo Verde's or Djibouti's GDP in 2016, more than three times the GDP of Comoros in 2016, more than seven times the GDP of Sao Tome and

[6]Wealth per capita is defined as "the private wealth held by all the individuals living in each country. It includes all their assets (property, cash, equities, business interests)" (AfrAsia Bank 2017, 10). A High Net Worth Individual is a person with a wealth (property, cash, equity, business interests minus liabilities) of at least $1 million. The number of High Net Worth Individuals (HNWIs) has increased by 19 percent from 2006 to 2016. Africa is home to 145,000 HNWI whose combined wealth was estimated in $800 billion (AfrAsia Bank 2017, 5–6).

[7]The U.S. government, at the moment, does not seem to have a strategy for Africa, but it has repeatedly indicated that aid is mostly a waste of money. The "America First" manifesto proposed cutting the amount of U.S. aid and eliminating several programs, initiatives, and foundations. As these proposed cuts were mostly rejected by Congress (see http://allafrica.com/stories/201703210483.html), the U.S. President has promised to push for more cuts to aid in the next budget (see http://allafrica.com/stories/201705030377.html).

Principe, and as large as the GDP of Comoros and Seychelles combined.

Insofar as aid money was instrumental in fostering and sustaining growth in Africa, the decline in the aid money represents an alarming development for the continent. Globalization allowed Africa to attract more FDI. Whether Africa will be able to attract such levels of FDI in the future remains to be seen, but what is clear is that the volume of foreign direct investment has declined since reaching its peak.[8]

Finally, the rise of China, with its appetite for commodities, favored Africa's integration into the world economic system and its economic improvement. But even in this respect some changes have occurred. The pace of China's economic growth, which had been rapidly growing since the late 1970s, reached its peak in 2007 and then its growth rate started decelerating. After recording a 14.2 percent growth rate in 2007, China's economy grew by 9.6 percent in 2008, 9.4 percent in 2009, 10.6 percent in 2010, 9.5 percent in 2011, 7.8 percent in 2012, 7.7 percent in 2013, 7.3 percent in 2014, 6.9 percent in 2015, and 6.7 percent in 2016 (The World Bank n.d.). Hence, insofar as the speed of China's economic growth is a determinant of Africa's commodity exports, the slowing down of China's economy suggests that Africa may not be able to export as much as it did when the pace of growth in China was faster and/or accelerating. Moreover, as the demand for commodities declines, their price declines accordingly—which means that instead of exporting more for a higher price, Africa may be exporting less for a lower price. This change may be rather detrimental. For countries where government expenditure is the single most important if not the only engine of growth, smaller revenue means either less expenditures (and thus less growth) or an expansion in the deficit or both.

Domestic factors were also crucial to secure Africa's progress along the developmental path: more political stability, more democracy, and better health conditions were all instrumental in securing that African economies would grow, but even in this regard the situation seems to be changing. There are signs that Africa's stability may not be as enduring as one might have hoped. In 2012, the State Fragility Index (see http://www.systemicpeace.org/globalreport.html) increased in Swaziland and South Africa, in 2013 state fragility increased in five countries (Benin, Central

[8]See Figures 7 and 8, data were taken from World Bank's the World Development Indicators (The World Bank n.d.).

African Republic, Eritrea, Gambia, and Senegal) and has not declined since; in 2014 state fragility increased in the Ivory Coast and Lesotho; and in 2015 state fragility increased in six countries (Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Ghana, Niger, and Tanzania).

African states are still, in the aggregate, less fragile than they had been in the mid-1990s, but the number of countries where state fragility is increasing, and as a result the ensuing risk of instability, is also on the rise. The increasing instability is due to quite different drivers. For example, Somalia and Northern Mali, along with parts of Cameroon, Nigeria, and Kenya, have been destabilized by terrorism; Kenya has also experienced instability as a result of the conduct of its presidential elections that were contested along bitter tribal lines; the Democratic Republic of Congo has been destabilized by the presence of refugees who came from Rwanda following the 1994 genocide and have since formed armed groups, as well as by the fact that the president is engaging in all kinds of tactics to remain in office—from postponing the elections scheduled for December 2016 to scaring off political opponents.

What's more, Africa is still grappling with severe corruption that continues to hold her back. According to a 2002 African Union study, the cost of corruption to the continent is roughly $150 billion (Hanson 2009). This number is huge especially when compared with the aid flow of $22.5 billion that the developed world provided to Sub-Saharan Africa in 2008 (Hanson 2009). The direct costs of corruption in the region include, but are not limited to, inaccessibility to public services by the poor and increased costs of doing business, both of which have a bearing on the ability of the continent to develop (Pring 2015).

In addition, Sub-Saharan Africa's ills are entrenched on the fact that the region has weak institutions (Van de Walle 2001). Following its colonial inheritance, postindependence Africa pursued institutions that centralized political and economic power, concentrating it within the connected few, usually of the same ethnicity, party affiliation, and class (Gumede 2012). This has undermined governance in the continent, leaving it prone to the corruption issues talked about earlier and managerial incompetence.

Another burning issue hampering economic development in the continent is the ever-swelling debt. Indeed, according to *Business Daily* (2018), lending to the continent has more than quadrupled since the

2008 global financial crisis.[9] For instance, the debt was increased in Kenya by 32 percent, by 57 percent in Uganda, by 63 percent in Tanzania, and by a massive 299 percent in Mozambique in the same period (*Business Daily* 2018).

Some African countries (for instance, Ethiopia) were able to experience authoritarian modernization (Joseph 2014) along the lines envisioned by Huntington (1968). But insofar as democracy had been instrumental in creating the conditions for sustained strong growth in the continent, by the middle of the second decade of the new millennium the situation was deteriorating, with democracy on the retreat (Joseph 2014). According to Freedom House (2017), in the course of the 2007–2017 period, six of the ten countries that experienced the worst decline in the level of democracy were African countries (Central African Republic, Gambia, Mali, Burundi, Mauritania, and Ethiopia). In 2016–2017, there was a net decline in the quality of democracy in 21 African countries and, Freedom House (2017, 11) noted, "some of the stronger democracies in Southern and East Africa exhibited worrying signs of dysfunction during the year." Signs, one fears, that are becoming even more worrying. Insofar as a democracy is good for development, the contraction of democracy across the continent may prevent further economic and developmental success in the years to come.

Improvement in the health of the region's population was the final factor that facilitated Africa's economic success in the first decade of the new millennium. However, from 2015 onward, some of the progress made in the 2002–2012 period, in terms of public health, is coming undone. Cholera seems to be on the rise: from January 2015 to July 21, 2017, there have been 44,415 cases of cholera in the Democratic Republic of Congo; from April 2015 to July 2017 there have been 30,231 cases of cholera in Tanzania; from October 2016 to July 2017 there were 1,206 cases of cholera in Kenya; and sharp rises in several other countries including Angola, Zambia, and Nigeria. There have been recent outbreaks of acute hepatitis E in Chad, Niger, and Nigeria; measles in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, and Kenya; dengue in Ivory

[9]This increase in debt initially came about as a result of quantitative easing and low interest rates in the West during the crisis. However, with the crisis arrested, interest rates have been on the rise (see *Business Daily* 2018), making these loans currently a lot more expensive. At the time of the transactions, Africa counted on a forecasted commodity boom only for the anticipated windfall to dissipate. The result has been brutal to most of African countries.

Coast, Kenya, Seychelles, and Togo; food insecurity in Kenya, Madagascar, and Uganda; humanitarian crises in Cameroon, Central African Republic, Ethiopia, Mali, Nigeria, and South Sudan; and of course, malaria which has infected more than 4.8 million people in Burundi alone since 2015.[10]

These diseases are not necessarily deadly, and, thanks to the improvement of the health sector, their deadliness has declined. But large-scale epidemics can have profound economic consequences (Sambo 2012). The Ebola outbreak that hit Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone, from 2014 to the end of 2015, had a devastating impact on these economies. The cholera outbreak in Zambia which started toward the end of last year not only claimed the lives of at least 70 people, it also forced the government to close restaurants in all major cities in the country indefinitely (Hond 2018). There is every reason to believe that the recent malaria epidemic in Burundi, which has affected nearly 50 percent of the population, may also have a hugely detrimental impact on the Burundian economy. Hence, the failure to prevent and possibly eradicate such diseases may continue to threaten African countries' ability to sustain and prolong their economic growth experience.

Conclusion

In the course of this article, we advanced three claims: that Africa has experienced an almost unprecedented (by its standards) level of economic success in the first 15 years of the new millennium; that this success was made possible by a combination of domestic and supranational conditions; and that some of the enabling conditions that supported Africa's growth and development in the new millennium may be disappearing.

Given Africa's position in the world system, it may not be able to create, in the international arena, the conditions that could favor its economic performance. But African countries do have the ability to prevent enabling conditions at the national level from disappearing. In this respect, they should be attempting to stabilize their political systems, to reduce corruption, to improve their regulatory frameworks, to adopt properly functioning institutions, and to create the conditions for the

[10]These data are taken from several issues of the WHO's Outbreaks and Emergencies Bulletin at http://www.afro.who.int/health-topics/disease-outbreaks/outbreaks-and-other-emergencies-updates.

emergence of better political leaders through the continent and for alternation in power.

Giovanni Sartori (1994) noted a curious paradox; namely, that in some countries government instability—that is, the frequency with which governments are voted in and out of office—was coupled with the fact that political leaders in such systems enjoyed remarkably long and stable careers in office. African states portray a rather similar paradox because, in spite of the fact that many African countries are, or are perceived to be, politically unstable, some African presidents remain in power for remarkably long periods of time. Political instability, coupled with long tenure in office, are both symptomatic of low levels of political development or institutionalization (Huntington 1968). Low levels of institutionalization are problematic; African countries should tackle this problem. And they should have the ability to do so. They may wish to debate whether to implement the good governance agenda, whether to adopt the prescriptions of the international community by adapting them to their contextual conditions, or whether to devise country-specific solutions for country-specific problems and needs. But while there may be some debate as to how higher levels of political development (or institutionalization) may be achieved, there is no doubt about the fact that this is what Africa needs.

Furthermore, African countries should do more and better to reduce the incidence of tropical diseases, including those that are generally neglected.[11] The so-called "Worm Index," which computes the number of infections, was devised to assess the impact of these Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs). The Worm Index is highly correlated with the Human Development Index; a strong correlation that is due to the fact that people in poorer countries are more likely to contract these infections but also because the incidence of these diseases is a cause of poverty (Balog 2015). Hence, by tackling these NTDs, in addition to tackling all those diseases that take a toll on the population of Sub-Saharan Africa, it would be possible to create or improve the conditions for socioeconomic development. Development may need more than a healthy population in a stable democracy, but these conditions should be considered among the most basic of requisites.

[11]According to WHO, the presence and the incidence of the so-called Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) provides a precise indication of the level of poverty a country experiences (see http://www.who.int/neglected_diseases/9789241564861/en/). The list of NTDs can be found here: http://www.who.int/neglected_diseases/diseases/en/.

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