

EDITORIAL



2008 does not close on an upbeat note for Africa. Five plus years of strong growth risks being derailed by the impact of the global economic crisis, contraction in demand for commodities, reduced trade and investment levels. Improvements in governance performance in 31 out of 48 countries, as assessed by the Ibrahim Index, are being overshadowed by conflicts and humanitarian tragedies, including in the Central African Republic, Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, DRC, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Niger, Somalia, Sudan and Zimbabwe.

The challenge facing African leaders is formidable. How to maintain income, public services and jobs, particularly for young people (see chart) as economies shrink, as well as strengthen measures to sustain growth and reduce vulnerability to external shocks, whether food and fuel prices or climate change. Investment in infrastructure, energy and human resources have to be at the top of the list.

2008 highlighted the scope for more concerted action. The upcoming G20 meeting in London in April provides an opportunity that must be grasped for some clear, strong messages about managing the impact of the global crisis, and the support Africa expects from its trading and donor partners.

Africa's self respect, let alone its international reputation, is undermined by inadequate action to contain conflict and to sanction abuse of power. A litmus test remains implementation of commitments in the AU's Constitutive Act, in numerous Charters and Conventions to peace, security, transparency and accountability, and of actions identified through the APRM.

Africa's human and natural resource potential is huge, and its future remains bright. We hope that 2009 will see purposeful and decisive cooperation to bring that future forward.

APP Activities

Addressing a ceremony to mark the 25th anniversary of the Clingendael Institute at The Hague in the Netherlands **Kofi Annan** called for a new, long-term and coherent approach to tackling fragile states ◊ Commenting on the agreement between Kenyan President Mwai Kibaki and Prime Minister Raila Odinga that will pave the way for an election violence tribunal, **Kofi Annan** said: "The implementation of CIPEV's proposals will go a long way towards ending the culture of impunity and spearheading much-needed institutional reforms in the country" ◊ **Michel Camdessus** has commended the [AfDB](#) for Expanding Access to Water in Africa ◊

News Overview

The 14th Conference of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol - COP 14 - held in Poznan, Poland, from 1 to 12 December, was attended by over 10,000 delegates. The conference concluded with an agreement from governments to shift into full negotiating mode next year in order to shape an international response to climate change, to be agreed in Copenhagen at the end of 2009. Parties agreed that the first draft of a concrete negotiating text would be available at a UNFCCC gathering in Bonn in June of 2009.

Meanwhile the **EU's** attention was on the final negotiations in Brussels, for its own **climate and energy package**, to deliver the ambitious objectives of slashing greenhouse-gas emissions and boosting renewable energies by 20% by 2020.

The World Trade Organisation dropped plans to convene ministers on 13-15 December to push for an outline deal in the troubled global trade talks. Pascal Lamy, director general of the World Trade Organisation, said that the risk of a failed meeting was too high to make it worth summoning ministers to Geneva to push for a deal.

Ghana's presidential election must be decided in a second-round vote. Neither candidate reached the 50% threshold needed for an outright win and a run-off will be held on 28 December. Both local and international observers have praised Ghana for setting a good example on how to conduct an election.

Robert Mugabe addressed a Zanu-PF party conference last week stating "Zimbabwe is mine", and reiterating that he had no intention of stepping down. Meanwhile the spread of cholera in **Zimbabwe** has now claimed over 1,000 lives.

A report to the **UN Security Council** has "found evidence that the Rwandan authorities have been complicit in the recruitment of soldiers, including children, have facilitated the supply of military equipment, and have sent officers and units from the Rwandan Defense Forces" to the DRC.

Featured Quote

" There is now an irreversible movement towards personal accountability "

[Louise Arbour](#), former Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, commenting on the conviction of Theoneste Bagosora

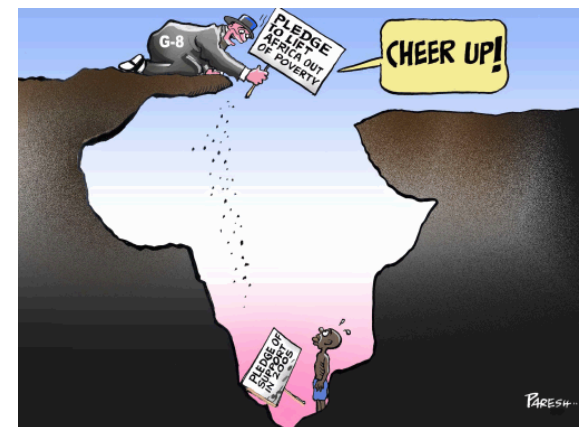
On the blogs

[On The Ground - Women, front and centre, 17 December 2008](#)

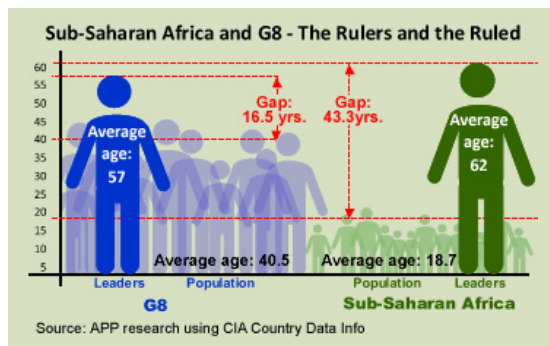
New York Times columnist Nicholas Kristof writes that 'one of the lessons of aid work in the last 20 years is that foreign assistance often won't work unless women are front and centre'. He states that 'educating girls and training them or giving them capital tends to encourage them to participate in the economy in ways that bring real benefits to the household and to the entire economy'.

[Mail and Guardian's Thought Leader Blog - UN motion to censure Zimbabwe blocked by South Africa, 16 December 2008](#)

Political commentator Mike Trapido writes that 'at present South Africa's "strategy" in Zimbabwe seems to be to frustrate any efforts by the international community to intervene'. He states that 'Robert Mugabe's rule is underpinned by South Africa who started with a ridiculous policy of quiet diplomacy, which has been elevated to outright complicity in this crime against humanity'. He makes the plea that 'It is time to make Zimbabwe one of our priorities when assessing the merits of political parties for election 2009'.



[The Moderate Voice](#), December 2008



Multilateral and Policy

IMF

- [SPEECH: "The IMF and Its Future", Dominique Strauss-Kahn, Speech at the Banco de España, Madrid](#)

UN

- [UN Security Council Report on the DRC](#)
- [UNDP's Human Development Report for the DRC states that nearly half the population of the country may not live to 40 years of age](#)
- [Ben Affleck and Sir Mick Jagger have launched a short film for UNHCR's new Gimme Shelter campaign to help raise funds and awareness about the crisis in the eastern DRC](#)
- [Israel and UNDP sign agreement in support of African development](#)
- [FAO Conference - Water for Agriculture and Energy in Africa: the Challenges of Climate Change, pledged to promote water development throughout the continent to fully exploit Africa's agricultural and hydroenergy potential](#)

World Bank

- [The Education for All Fast Track Initiative announced that \\$233 million will be granted to Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, The Gambia, Timor Leste and Zambia](#)
- [New \\$2 billion fast-track facility to speed up grants and long-term, interest-free loans to help the world's poorest countries cope with the impact of the global financial crisis](#)

ICC

- [REPORT: Ending Zimbabwe's Nightmare: A Possible Way Forward](#)

AfDB

- [ADEA calls for the reinforcement of partnerships for quality education for all in Africa](#)
- [\\$37 million AfDB Loan in Support of Technical, Industrial, Vocational and Entrepreneurship Training in Kenya](#)
- [Bank Group Approves €70 Million Loan to Finance Medical Coverage Reforms in Morocco](#)

Opinions

The last fortnight has seen comment on the crisis in the eastern Congo, the failed Doha talks, the food crisis, the climate change conference in Poznan and Robert Mugabe. Paul Collier commented on how the bonus culture that ruined the City is also ruining Africa. In addition Mary Robinson wrote in the Independent to mark the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

[New York Times - Can Africa Trade Its Way to Peace?, 16 December 2008](#)

Herman J. Cohen, assistant US secretary of state for Africa from 1989 to 1993, writes that 'there is a natural economic synergy between eastern Congo and the nations of East Africa'.

[Financial Times - The broken promise of Doha, 16 December 2008](#)

An editorial in the Financial Times, on the WTO's decision to drop plans to convene ministers to push for an outline deal in the global trade talks, states that this episode 'marks a bad start for the claim that the Group of Twenty leading economies will remake the governance of the global economy as we know it'.

[IPS - Can Foreign-Owned Farms Solve Food Crisis?, 13 December 2008](#)

Michael Chebsi discusses the food crisis in Ethiopia. He describes how 'the Ethiopian agriculture ministry is identifying available land for foreign investors; so far close to two million hectares of land have been identified'.

[Spiegel Online - Hype Won't Solve Climate Problem, 12 December 2008](#)

Louise O. Fresco, a professor at the University of Amsterdam, believes there are two reasons why the Poznan conference; 'there is still no undisputed package of steps that need to be taken and the problem is clearly not considered urgent enough, despite all the testimonies, to bridge the opposing interests and mobilize funding'.

[The Namibian - High time for Mugabe to exit, 12 December 2008](#)

An editorial in The Namibian states that 'Africa deserves better than a Robert Mugabe. He has effectively destroyed any respect that he had as a liberation leader and we in Africa cannot continue to support people who have been absolutely corrupted by power'.

[The Guardian - A bonus culture that ruined the City is also ruining Africa, 11 December 2008](#)

Paul Collier, Director of the Centre of African Economies at Oxford University, argues that the financial crisis in the developed world and the long, slow crisis of African governance have one feature in common: what economists term "high-powered incentives".

[The Independent - Climate change is an issue of human rights, 10 December 2008](#)

Marking the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Mary Robinson argues that the declaration, and the legal documents that have stemmed from it, have helped us to combat torture, discrimination and hunger. Now, the document should guide us in the fight against climate change.

G8 Update

Social Sectors

[UK - DfID have proposed a £37 million land tenure reform programme, to help hundreds of thousands of small farmers across Rwanda climb out of poverty](#)

[FRANCE - Secretariat of State for Cooperation and Francophonie and Agence Française de Développement to support Diambars' new "education-through-football" center in South Africa](#)

[JAPAN - Japan invests US\\$92 million to help 22 African countries to weather climate change](#)

Financial Flows

[UK - DFID Minister Ivan Lewis states that the UK will provide a new package of humanitarian support in the New Year to support the people of DRC](#)

[USA - USAID Provides Additional \\$6.2M for Zimbabwe Cholera Outbreak](#)

[GERMANY - Federal Foreign Office increased humanitarian aid for Zimbabwe by 1 million euros](#)

Governance and accountability

[USA - Secretary Rice has announced that the United States intends to work with partners to create a Contact Group on Somali piracy](#)

[EU - Commissioner Louis Michel undertook a humanitarian mission to North Kivu, to address the crisis in the Eastern Congo](#)

Economic growth

[EU - GEEREF clean energy fund decides on first investment of €22 million to support projects in Africa and Asia](#)

Calendar

28 Dec	Ghana: Run-off Presidential Elections
26 Jan- 3rd Feb	12 th African Union Summit of Heads of States and Governments: Addis-Ababa, Ethiopia
27 Jan-1st Feb	World Social Forum 2009: Belém-Pará, Brazil
28 Jan-1st Feb	World Economic Forum Annual Meeting 2009: Davos-Klosters, Switzerland

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