

## Not. "It's the Economy, Stupid"

More than ten African countries will hold presidential or legislative elections by the end of 2009, and 22 during 2010. The global financial and economic crisis has clearly had a major impact on Africa in terms of growth, poverty, projects postponed and cancelled and increase in social stress. But is it affecting political outcomes?

One might expect that the impact of the crisis, as jobs and incomes drop, would be to put the economic vision and management credentials of African leaders under the spotlight. "It's the economy, stupid" is used successfully elsewhere to contest elections, including famously by Bill Clinton to deprive George Bush senior of his second Presidential term.

While economic competence is no doubt a factor in electoral campaigns in Africa, with a few exceptions, it does not seem to be that important in determining tenure on power. Peaceful transfer tends to be the result of personal and statesmanlike decisions by leaders to step down.

Nor can recent coup d'états in Africa be unequivocally attributed to economic downturn. The picture is mixed. In Madagascar, economic realities and fears were more important than in Guinea or Guinea-Bissau.

More familiar is the spectacle of leaders doing whatever they can to hang on to power, whether through legal, power sharing or other means, with Niger being the most recent example. A growing trend is of leaders finding ways to adjust constitutions to give them a basis for extending their tenure indefinitely.

The result is that Africa leads the world in terms of length of leaders' tenure, with the north African region on top (see chart). It may be some time before economics really does drive the politics, and leaders are elected or deposed on the basis of their ability to create jobs and grow the economy.

## News Overview

People are going hungry, malnutrition is preying on more and more young children, cattle are dying - [The United Nations food agency sounds alarm on dire food situation in Kenya](#) and is appealing for \$230 million to feed nearly 4 million Kenyans - nearly one-tenth of the nation's population - over the next six months.

The International Atomic Energy Agency and the African Union [announced that the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone \(NWFZ\) Treaty has come into force](#), officially declaring Africa the world's largest zone free of nuclear weapons; which means denuclearization of one of the richest uranium producing regions.

On Monday, 17 August, Frederick Chiluba, [former President of Zambia was cleared of corruption charges after a six year effort to convict him](#). The leader of the anti-corruption task force pursuing the case declined to condemn the ruling and stated that the trial remains a landmark case because it is the first time a head of state is being held to account by its own judicial system. The interpretation of the outcome remains questionable.

On 5 August, [Secretary of State, Hilary Rodham Clinton began a seven nation trip to Africa](#) with stops in Angola, Cape Verde, DRC, Kenya, Liberia, Nigeria and South Africa. In each nation she underlined America's commitment to collaborate with governments, the private sector, NGOs and private citizens to build societies where individuals can realize their potential and to find solution to old challenges.

[Regional leaders condemn the political crisis in Niger](#) and have criticized President Mamadou Tandja's move to extend his term in office, calling his plan a setback for democracy in the region. ECOWAS will convene an emergency summit to discuss recent developments in the country. Amid unrest over the new constitution giving extra powers to President Mamadou Tandja, [Niger is scheduled to elect a new parliament on 20 October 2009](#).

[Fresh clashes between the regular army and alleged separatist troops \(Movement for the Democratic Forces\) in Senegal's Casamance region](#) will underscore the need for a sound peace agreement expected to bring permanent stability to the region, which has been the site of one of Africa's [longest-running](#) conflicts.



June 2009

## G20 Update

### CHINA

[The Chinese Government donates \\$400,000 to the African Union Commission in support of the AMISOM Mission in Somalia](#)

### GERMANY

[The German Government has agreed to grant a loan of €35 million to boost the energy sector in Namibia](#)

[The German Government pledges to grant an additional €14 million to the East African Community in support of the regional integration process in East Africa](#)

### EU

[The EU Commission has allocated €9 million to reinforce food security in Zimbabwe](#)

[The EU Commission has approved €385 million in assistance for budget support and infrastructure programmes for the United Republic of Tanzania](#)

### JAPAN

[The Kingdom of Swaziland received a grant of \\$2.57 million from the Japan Social Development Fund to be administered by the WB to improve health status in the country](#)

[The Government of Japan has announced its efforts to strengthen the capability of peacekeeping operation centers in Africa with a view of maintaining the stability of countries on the continent](#)

### ITALY

[Minister for Foreign Affairs, Franco Frattini confirmed Italy's full support and collaboration to help strengthen Somali institutions and security forces](#)

### UK

[DFID is to provide £20 million as part of a new UK-funded project to set up a nationwide land registration programme in Rwanda](#)

### USA

[The Government of the Republic of Angola and the US Government have signed a partnership framework in the fight to combat HIV/AIDS for 2009 – 2013](#)

[The US announced its intention to launch Investment Treaty Negotiations aimed at strengthening investor protections and encourage the continuation of market-oriented economic reforms in Mauritius](#)

**“ Africa is not poor. Africa is just poorly managed. ”**

Liberian President Johnson-Sirleaf while on the BBC World Service-Mark Doyle's programme: Why is Africa poor? on 24 August, 2009

**Multilateral Organizations**

**AU**

[Representatives of the Conference of Heads of State and Government of the AU on Climate Change \(CAHOSCC\) and lead experts agree on an African common position on climate change](#)

**AfDB**

[The AfDB commits \\$30 million to Shelter Afrique \(a pan-African housing finance and development institution\) in support of sustainable housing solutions in Africa](#)

[The AfDB Group and the Seychelles have signed a €15 million loan agreement to finance the country's Economic Governance Reforms Program \(EGRP\)](#)

**AWEPA**

[African-European parliamentary recommendations to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change – Conference of Parties 15 issued at the African-EU parliamentary dialogue on climate, food security and development](#)

**ECOWAS**

[Women in the ECOWAS region commit themselves to the promotion of peace and security in West Africa](#)

**IMF**

[The IMF has pledged to help 22 sub-Saharan African countries improve the quality, coverage, and dissemination of key statistics](#)

**UN**

[UNICEF has pledged nearly \\$2 million to help fight malnutrition in Nigeria](#)

[African Union-UN mission in Darfur \(UNAMID\) present funding for construction projects in the violence-ridden region of Sudan](#)

**WB**

[The IFC boosts lending commitment to Africa to \\$1.8 billion](#)

[The WB pledged support for African post- conflict recovery to foster good governance and transparency](#)

[The Water and Sanitation Program \(WSP\), a multi-donor partnership administered by the WB has issued a new report that identifies barriers, offers solutions to water and sanitation service delivery to poor people living in urban areas](#)

**Opinions**

[Business Day \(South Africa\): Africa has water resources to face climate change, 27 August 2009](#)

Former president of Mozambique, Joaquim Chissano states that despite Africa being blessed with abundant natural water resources, its unique natural heritage is under threat. He urges African policy makers to move “environment” to the top of their policy agendas with water sustainability being accorded the highest priority.

[All Africa: Congo-Kinshasa: Bemba Free, But Where to Go? 26 August 2009](#)

In an analysis by the Institute for War and Peace Reporting, Eugène Bakama Bope comments on the conditional release granted to Jean-Pierre Bembe Gombo, the former vice-president of the DRC. The news of his release is likely to reinforce the widespread speculation in the DRC that Bemba's detention was no more than a cynical move by Kabila to get rid of a dangerous political adversary; and has given a “tremendous morale boost to party members with fresh ammunition against Kabila.”

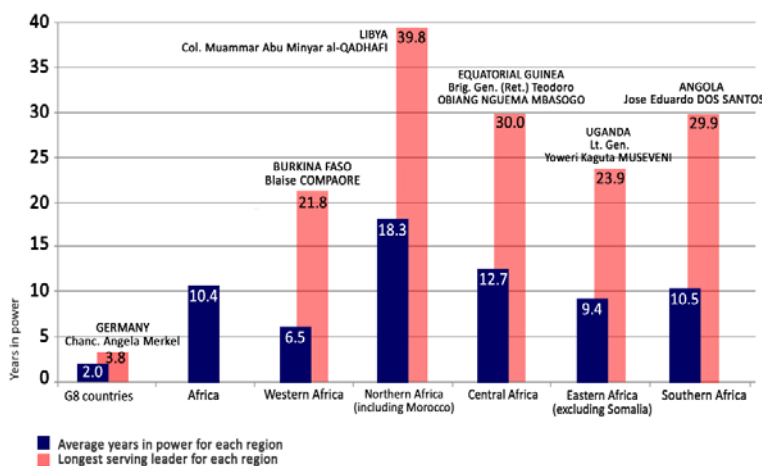
[Times of Zambia \(Zambia\) Africa: Continent's economic boom depends on nations' integration, 22 August 2009](#)

Zambia's Minister for Commerce, Trade and Industry, Felix Mutai, argues that economic prosperity of Africa depends on integration and competitiveness among the continent's nations and that regional integration is needed for Africa to rescue itself from economic doldrums including the effects of the global economic recession.

[Associated Press \(Global\): Oil is no gift for Africa's poor, 11 August 2009](#)

Katherine Houreld, a freelance journalist who specializes in African Affairs points out that despite Nigeria and Angola being Africa's top two oil producers, most of their people live in wretched poverty. The recent visit of the U.S Secretary of State to both countries, urging oil producers to rule wisely and spread the oil wealth called for greater accountability and transparency.

**African and G8 Leaders' Power Tenure per Region**



*Note: The graph follows the official regional grouping from the African Union. Data compiled by the APP - Last updated on 27/08/09*

**APP Activities**

While speaking at the launch of a [report by The Climate Group](#) in Beijing on 20 August, **Tony Blair** said “to beat climate change, we all can and must do more.” As well as extending already existing technologies, speeding up the development of new technology is crucial ◇ **Graça Machel** convened a panel aimed to identify possible scenarios for a road to happy South Africa in an environment weakened by a grave economic recession ◇ From 28-30 August, both **Bob Geldof** and **Graça Machel** are participating in the Back2Black Festival (a three day festival promoting African culture) in Rio ◇ On Wednesday, 12 August, **Muhammad Yunus** was honored by President Barack Obama with the Presidential Medal of Freedom for his work, as an “agent of change” ◇ While speaking at the Global Cancer summit in Dublin last week, **Olusegun Obasanjo** urged governments to seek collaborative efforts in the fight against cancer as he feels the issue is not receiving the attention it deserves ◇ At the annual dinner of Botswana's Institute of Bankers last Thursday, **Linah Mohohlo** raised concern over the pattern of saving and borrowing in the country and urged households to shift from consumerism to saving ◇

**Calendar**

- 30 August Gabonese Presidential Elections
- 31 August Special Session on the Consideration and Resolution of Conflicts Africa: Tripoli, Libya
- 31 Aug- 3 Sept World Climate Conference 3: “Better Climate Information for a Better Future:” Geneva, Switzerland
- 3 Sept Special Session of the Africa Partnership Forum on Climate Change: Addis-Ababa, Ethiopia
- 7 Sept Launch of UNCTAD'S trade and development report: Geneva, Switzerland
- 8 Sept International Literacy Day
- 8-9 Sept Conference on “Promoting Financial Capability and Consumer Protection - A Step Forward towards Financial Inclusion in Africa:” Accra, Ghana
- 8-10 Sept World Seed Conference: Rome, Italy
- 9 Sept African Union Day
- 9-11 Sept 62<sup>nd</sup> Annual DPI/NGO conference titled: “For Peace and Development- Disarm Now:” Mexico City, Mexico
- 10-11 Sept Workshop on Policy Coherence in the Application Information and Communication Technologies for Development: Paris, France

**For more information, contact:**

**Temitayo Omotola**

Africa Progress Panel

9-11 rue de Varembe, 1202 Geneva, Switzerland

Tel + 41 22 919 7520;

E: [Info@africaprogresspanel.org](mailto:Info@africaprogresspanel.org)