

Fasten your safety belts!

Positive trends over the last decade are being severely challenged in Africa. Economic contraction is affecting growth and poverty reduction, investment and aid levels. But there are worrisome signs on the political front too.

The last decade has seen remarkable examples of recovery from conflict and democratic consolidation. Angola, Liberia, Mozambique, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and Tanzania spring to mind, among others.

But 2009 has already witnessed four coups: Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Madagascar and Mauritania. Somalia remains chaotic. There are growing concerns about the political situation in many other countries, including Kenya, once considered a bastion of continental stability.

Drivers of instability include growing unemployment, reduced household income, food insecurity, gross disparities in wealth, displacement, and a sense of injustice among minorities and youth. Even when elections are well managed and conducted, they can serve as a flashpoint, and there are many in the 2009 pipeline, including Chad, Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Malawi, Mozambique and Niger, to name just a few.

There are no off-the-peg formulae for maintaining stability and preventing conflict, but necessary ingredients include leadership truly committed to improving the populations' standard of living, adequate financial resources, and robust systems of accountability to citizens for their use.

Countries under stress need help. The role of Africa's regional bodies -political, financial and economic- and of her international donor and trading partners, including the private sector, will be tested in the coming year, and has never been more important.

News Overview

[South Africa's ruling ANC won a sweeping election victory on Saturday](#) and party leader Jacob Zuma, who is due to be sworn in as president on 9 May pledged that as president he would work with unions and business to ensure stability amid global turmoil. The success of much of Zuma's campaigning is said to have rested on his ability to exploit the core rich-poor dichotomy framing the election for his own benefit. His cabinet is yet to be announced although it is said that much horse-trading for posts is underway.

[The great rift in Kenya's coalition government widens.](#) With each side critiquing the other, the coalition has been lambasted for bickering instead of bringing about promised reforms. There are fears that a collapse of the coalition could spark a repeat of the ethnic violence that saw thousands killed and displaced after the December 2007's presidential elections.

On Wednesday, 22 April, [Lesotho's Prime Minister Bethuel Pakalitha Mosisili survived unhurt in unapparent assassination attempt](#) in the capital Maseru. Communications Minister Mothetjoa Metsing claims that the incidents were politically driven.

[Supporters of Madagascar's ousted President Marc Ravalomanana have recently announced a new government.](#) With two parallel governments in the country there is now confusion as to who is in control in Madagascar. However, it was said that the move is likely to increase tensions in the increasingly bloody political standoff.

[African Finance Ministers met in Washington](#) over the weekend to discuss Africa's response to the crisis and the risk that millions will be thrown back into poverty.

On the blogs

[World Bank Shanta Devarajan's Blog: Africa Least integrated but worst hit by the crisis, 20 April 2009](#)

Shanta Devarajan, the Chief Economist of the Africa Region at the World Bank outlines four channels through which the crisis affecting Africa has a particularly nefarious impact.

[Reuters Africa Blog: Can Zuma live up to unity pledge, 26 April 2009](#)

Matthew Tostevin highlights some challenges that will face Zuma when he takes up office and questions his ability to unite South Africa.

[GEG Blog: One-World Elasticities, 27 April 2009](#)

George Gray Molina argues that the bailout debate is about different things in the developed and developing worlds, making the global stimulus question one of politics, not technical detail.

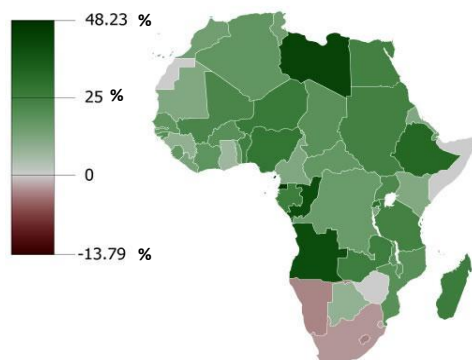


Zapiro as featured in the [Mail & Guardian](#)

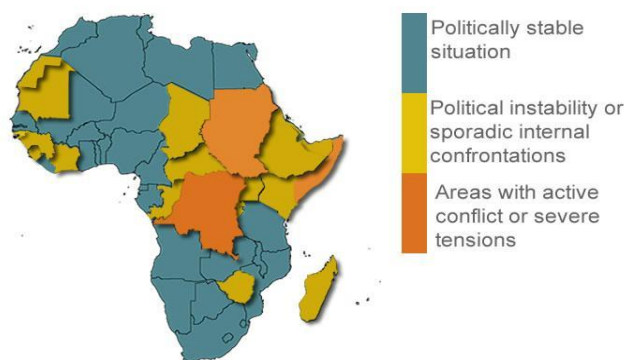
APP Activities

On Thursday 23 April, [Kofi Annan delivered the 2009 Adam Smith Lecture in Kirkcaldy, Scotland](#). In his speech, entitled 'Africa and the Global Economic Crisis', Mr Annan urged the international community to ensure that its response to the current economic crisis is underpinned by the universal values of justice, generosity and public spiritedness outlined by Adam Smith in his 'Theory of Moral Sentiments' ♦ Speaking at a press conference before the IMF-WB Spring Meetings, [Bob Geldof urged the IMF to set aside more of the proceeds of a planned sale of its gold reserves to help Africa](#) ♦ On Wednesday, 23 April, [Tidjane Thiam](#) hosted the meeting of the APP's Business Advisory Group for its forthcoming publication on the role of business in achieving MDGs in Africa ♦ [Tony Blair gave a speech to the Chicago Council on Foreign Affairs](#), justifying the speech he made there 10 years ago that argued for an interventionist foreign policy ♦ At an international symposium on "Deepening democracy in Africa" organized in Kumasi last Friday as part of the 10th anniversary celebration of the enstoolment of Otumfuo Osei Tutu II, as the Asantehene, [Olusegun Obasanjo outlines some basic ingredients for deepening democracy in Africa](#).

% GDP growth 2007 - 2008



Political Stability



Source: APP - data from IMF World Economic Outlook Database, April 2009.



It is now time to put it all behind us. We must enter a period in which South Africa reclaims its position and image as a thriving nation.

[Jacob Zuma in his victory speech on Saturday 25 April, 2009](#)

Multilateral Organizations

AU

[Ministers of Agriculture agreed to carry on prioritizing agriculture for food security at the AU Ministers of Agriculture meeting in Addis on Thursday, 23 April](#)

[The African Union held a two day meeting of African experts on Agriculture, Land and Livestock on: "Tackling Agricultural Challenges in Africa" from 21- 22 April](#)

AfDB

[The President of the African Development Bank along with the French Secretary of State issued a common statement on creating an "Agricultural Investment Fund" in Africa](#)

EU

[The European Commission pledged to commit €72 million to assist with tackling the problem of security in Somalia at an EU-UN-AU International Donor Conference on Somalia security](#)

[The head of the EU delegation to Uganda, Ambassador Vincent De Visscher, states that the EU is exploring opportunities to increase funding to developing countries like Uganda](#)

IMF

[The IMF launched its bi-annual "Regional Economic Outlook: Sub-Saharan Africa"- on Friday 24 April, which highlights the critical impact of the financial crisis](#)

UN

[FAO and WFP have announced that they would bolster efforts to reduce the impact of the global financial crisis on the millions of hungry and poor in Ghana](#)

World Bank

[The Global Monitoring Report 2009: "A Development Emergency"- a World Bank-IMF report released on Friday, 24 April, discusses global poverty and the effects of the worldwide financial crisis](#)

[The World Bank Group has launched two multi-billion infrastructure investment initiatives to help developing countries withstand the global financial and economic crisis](#)

[The World Development Indicators \(WDI\) 2009, released by the WB on 22 April, tells the story through comprehensive data of how developing countries benefited from a long period of prosperity which may now be set back due to the current crisis](#)

Opinions

[Pambazuka News \(South Africa\): Breaking the resources curse, 22 April 2009](#)

Kato Lambrechts makes use of a report that was originally published by Southern Africa Resource Watch, TWN-Africa, Tax Justice Network for Africa, ActionAid and Christian Aid, to explain how transparent taxation and fair taxes can turn Africa's mineral wealth into development.

[Business Daily \(Kenya\): Somalia's problems need comprehensive solutions, 27 April 2009](#)

UN Secretary General outlines areas in which Somalia requires support and calls for an integrated strategy that will address the fundamental issue of lawlessness in Somalia., as well as, encouragement to help them succeed.

[El Watan \(Algeria\): Dans le style Bouteflika, 28 April 2009](#)

Ali Bahmane, a journalist for El Watan, concludes that there is little "new" in the Bouteflika government.

[This Day \(Nigeria\): South Africa: Zuma- The Tough Road to Presidency, 27 April 2009](#)

As ANC Leader, Jacob Zuma claims victory in South Africa's elections last week, Omololu Ogunmade, a journalist for This Day Newspaper compares the trend in SA with events in Nigeria with a conclusion that the country which has several cases of similar development, now seems to have a companion in South Africa.

[Le Figaro \(France\) Piracy: why France is helping Somalia, 22 April 2009](#)

In this article, Bernard Kouchner states that "France is now actively working on a political issue in which she was previously uninvolved." He makes use of the picture of French action in Somalia to remind critics of its Africa policy and how much their approach has changed in the past two years.

[The New York Times \(USA\): Not Aiding Africa, 23 April 2009](#)

In an op-ed, Greg Mills outlines arguments on Africa by two women: one an African-born economist (Dambisa Moyo) and the other a Western-born journalist, which are significant in understanding why the continent's progress has been so poor.

[Pambazuka News \(South Africa\): Erasing Congo at a stroke of a pen, 23 April 2009](#)

In a response to [There is no Congo](#), written by two academics, Greg Mills and Jeffrey Herbst which proposes changing the borders of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and splitting it among its surrounding countries to resolve the ongoing conflict.: "Just pretend that it does not exist." Jacques Depelchin is disturbed by this paper, and as such argues that a solution should generally be to "keep the country united."

G20 Update

CANADA- [The Government of Canada has announced its intention to provide additional funding to support the training of health care workers in Mozambique](#)

ITALY- [PM Berlusconi has announced plans to move the forthcoming G8 Summit from the Island of La Maddalena to earth-quake stricken town of L'Aquila](#)

UK- [DFID has announced an intention to increase funding for the Malawian health program by £9 million to help tackle the problem of maternal mortality in the country](#)

USA- [Through the President's Malaria Initiative the United States has helped 15 countries in Africa to scale up highly effective malaria prevention and treatment interventions](#)

AUSTRALIA- [The government of Australia has signaled its intention to change direction on Africa and pursue a much stronger engagement strategy](#)

RUSSIA- [Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman states that a task force from Russia's Pacific Fleet will resume anti-piracy operations off the Horn of Africa](#)

CHINA- [Chinese Ambassador Zhang Bolun announced China's intention to provide financial aid to Angola's housing and agricultural projects](#)

Calendar

29-30 April	WTO General Council, Geneva, Switzerland
30 April	AU- Trade Union Meeting, Accra, Ghana
1 May	May Day: International Worker's Day
3 May	World Press Freedom Day
4-8 May	4 th session of the African Union Conference of Ministers of Health, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
6-7 May	National Seminar on Trade policy and Development in Mali
4-15 May	17 th session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, United Nations Headquarters: New York, U.S.A.

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