

Stop talking and start tweeting!

There are over 12,000 African blogs. At least this is what was revealed in last week's Pan Africa Media Conference held in Nairobi. This increasing number of African bloggers is testimony to how new media and technology are a force for change in Africa.

And what is to be changed by this force? For starters, Africa's self-perception and its image across the globe. There was a lot of debate on the western media's traditional portrayal of Africa that has tended to focus on the negative stories that come from Africa and the African media's inability to tell better ones.

It is clear that media plays an important role in social development of a country and of a region. Progress goes hand in hand with a strong and free media that helps preserve stability and drive democracy, fight corruption and educate the general public. To fix the image of Africa, the reality is going to need fixing as well. At the summit Paul Kagame said Africans should stop talking and get down to concrete actions. Ironically, many concrete actions that can lead to positive change in Africa are in fact virtual.

The digital revolution in broadband and mobile phones together with the new media such as Twitter, Facebook and Blogs are already evidencing the potential they hold for Africa's development on many fronts. [Safaricom](#) has revolutionized access to finance for millions of Africans enabling them to perform quick and safe transactions through mobile telephony. [Ushahidi](#) is a platform used to map out crises with information sent by mobile phones. It has already been adopted for humanitarian emergency situations and in Nairobi, it is being used to submit reports about crime and corruption in the city.

At the conference, Uganda's Minister for Information and National Guidance, Kabakumba Labwoni Masiko, was asked a question about Uganda's proposed media regulations and the moderator did not let the Minister take the question and ensured the session stayed on topic. The discussion immediately shifted online as attendees began to tweet about the incident. It is clear that a lot of what Africa has to say about herself from now on is going to be online.

News Overview

[Opposition fears constitutional amendment could undermine Djibouti's peace and security](#) as president, [Ismail Omar Guelleh, hinted in an interview that he was prepared to run for a third six-year term](#) if lawmakers amend the nation's constitution.

[Nigeria's senate approved 33 ministerial nominees submitted by acting leader Goodluck Jonathan](#) a week after he sacked the cabinet—a move that sends a message that he is in charge. Mr Jonathan's choices have to balance the interests of 36 states and a wide range of interest groups as the debate over the changes the new cabinet will bring continues.

[Fighting between Somali insurgents and pro-government troops have intensified](#) days before the fragile Transitional Federal Government (TFG) was to launch a new offensive against the Islamic insurgents, waging war to implement a stricter form of Islamic law in the war torn city. Somalia is considered not to have had a functioning government since the overthrow of their socialist dictator in 1991.

Despite facing security problems itself, [Rwanda is preparing to send 140 peacekeepers to Haiti](#) in order to be involved in promoting peace in other countries.

Last week in Nairobi, participants of the [Pan African media conference examined the role of a free press in Africa](#), debated the path to regional integration and spoke about the continents' quality of leadership.

Following the experimental reforestation pilot program implemented between 2004 and 2009, [Angola is intending to launch a national reforestation program to produce bio-energy](#). This plan would bring the whole experimental area to 253 hectares.

Map of Press Freedom 2009



Source: Freedom House 2009

G20 Update

AUSTRALIA

[The Australian government pledges additional assistance of \\$13m to improve access to clean water, sanitation services and food security in Zimbabwe](#)

[PM Stephen Smith announces that Australia's development assistance to Africa will increase by 40% this year](#)

CHINA

[China pledges to provide Zimbabwe with a \\$2,9m grant to finance development projects](#)

FRANCE

[The French government pledges €10m in support for the Mozambican state budget from 2010-2014](#)

GERMANY

[Germany commits nearly €80m to help boost Kenya's development agenda](#)

[The German government commits to provide access to drinking water and sanitation for around 30 million people in sub-Saharan Africa by 2015](#)

JAPAN

[Japan will provide Egypt with a \\$430m loan to fund a 220-megawatt wind farm intended to boost the country's renewable energy output](#)

INDIA

[India will boost cooperation in agricultural technologies for smallholder farmers in sub-Saharan Africa, with a view to achieving food security by 2015](#)

ITALY

[Italy will provide €12m to support the Mozambican state budget from 2010-12](#)

PARIS CLUB GROUP

[The Paris Club of sovereign creditors and Brazil have agreed to cancel all of the Congo Republic's debt](#)

UNITED KINGDOM

[DFID will provide £25m to fund a five-year project to help deal with the problem of waterborne diseases in Nigeria](#)

[UK calls on world leaders to agree to an ambitious action plan to get the MDGs back on track to be achieved by 2015](#)

[UK pledges £38m to support a social protection programme in Zambia that aims to tackle extreme poverty over the next 10 years](#)

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

[USAID and Coca-Cola Company will support new multi-year projects aimed at finding sustainable solutions to global water challenges throughout sub-Saharan Africa](#)

Multilateral Organizations

AfDB

[AfDB commits to support women's economic empowerment and promote their inclusiveness in the financial sector](#)

AU

[The AU has imposed sanctions against the Madagascar government after the country's leadership failed to implement the AU-backed peace proposal](#)

[The AUC and UN partners agree on developing a strategy for the effective promotion and protection of human rights in Africa](#)

EAC

[The East African Community resolves to address food insecurity within the region](#)

ECOWAS

[ECOWAS adopts a framework to reduce the West African region's vulnerability to climate change](#)

EU

[The EU and African, Caribbean and Pacific Group revises the "Cotonu Partnership Agreement" and renews their impetus to fight against poverty](#)

IMF

[IMF to help 16 African nations trying to stop their gold and diamond sectors from being misused to fund terrorism](#)

UN

[UN MDG report calls for accelerated progress towards development targets](#)

[UN dialogue on "Water" highlights that sustainable management of water resources is vital to achieving anti-poverty goals](#)

[UNDP global conference calls on countries to invest in strong institutions](#)

[WHO and UNDP launch new project for health adaptation to climate change](#)

[UNDP report provides a summary of tools and good practices to guide development practitioners in their climate change mainstreaming efforts](#)

[UNECA launches a report that highlights the effects of climate change on food security in East Africa](#)

WB

[Africa Development Indicators 2010 report says "quiet corruption," although smaller than big dollar graft and high-corruption in monetary terms has short and long term effects on Africa's development](#)

Opinions

[The Ghanaian Chronicle: Africa, Exploitation- Stumbling Block to Global Development, 17 March 2010](#)

Leaders, governments, organizations, heads of companies and institutions are said to be the culprits of exploitation and as long as it exist, economic hardship might never come to end.

[All Africa: Africa- Restoring Continent's Innate Self-Confidence, 17 March 2010](#)

The author argues that Africans need to build self-confidence to fight for social justice in the world economic order, build African solutions that work for them and assure the poor of their right to human dignity and poverty-free life.

[Jeune Afrique \(France\): Suivez le "Guide," 22 March 2010](#)

The author writes that Muammar Gadhafi's self-claimed role as "Guide" suggesting that Nigeria be divided into two entities might not be too wise as this fails to take into consideration the deep roots of the conflict.

[Huffington Post \(USA\) Drinking Water Filthy but Big Money Goes To Build New Stadium, 22 March 2010](#)

Former reporter for the New York Times laments about water and injustice. While excitement about the SA's forthcoming World Cup continues to build, many people struggle without reliable supply of clean drinking water.

[Foreign Policy \(USA\): Africa's Forever Wars, March 2010](#)

Jeffrey Gettleman analyses the changing nature of conflicts in Africa and argues that internal conflicts in Africa have spread from political violence against repressive governments to "opportunistic heavily armed banditry" carried out by rebel groups lacking political ideology. He further recommends that the only way to stop today's rebels is to "capture and kill their leaders."



GADO as featured in Daily Nation (Kenya): 22 March 2010

" African media must never be the enemy of its people.... "

Amadou Mahtar Ba, Chief Executive Officer of the African Media Initiative while addressing the first Pan African Media Conference, 18-19 March 2010 in Nairobi, Kenya.

Calendar

- 24-26 Mar** [High Level Event on South- South Cooperation and Capacity Development](#): Bogota, Colombia
- 25-26 Mar** AfDB Seminar on "China's increasing engagement in Africa in the aftermath of the financial crisis:" Tunis, Tunisia
- 25-28 Mar** [International Conference on ICT for Africa](#): Yaounde, Cameroon
- 25-30 Mar** [Joint Annual Meeting of AU Finance Ministers & ECA Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development](#) on "Promoting high level sustainable growth to reduce unemployment in Africa:" Lilongwe, Malawi
- 28-30 Mar** [3rd East Africa Investment Conference: Kampala, Uganda](#)
- 28-31 Mar** Global Conference on Agricultural Research for Development (GCARD): Montpellier, France
- 31 Mar** IFC-WB International Education Conference 2010: "Investing in People- Scaling up Education for Health Professionals in Africa:" Washington, D.C. U.S.A.
- 4 April** Senegal: 50 years of Independence
- 4-12 April** Sudan: Presidential and Parliamentary Elections
- 7 April** World Health Day
- 7-10 April** Africa-Middle East Microcredit Summit: Nairobi, Kenya
- 12-13 April** [3rd COMESA Investment Forum](#): Sharm El Sheik, Egypt
- 12-16 April** [WMO African Ministerial Conference on Weather, Climate and Water Information](#): Nairobi, Kenya

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