



Strengthening Africa's Economic Performance

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AFRICA IN 2020: THREE SCENARIOS FOR THE FUTURE

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Executive Summary

This paper identifies three scenarios for Africa in 2020: Where Africa takes charge, where it follows, and a 'patchwork quilt' where some countries lead and others fall behind.

There will not be one scenario for Africa in 2020. Rather, the continent's countries will be an increasingly confused set of extremes. Such a conclusion is hardly surprising. It would be impossible for all African countries, given their difficult material environments and fractured social settings, to be prosperous after only 60 years of independence.

Rather than provide simple 'low', 'medium' and 'high' road outcomes, the analysis focuses first on 'drivers': those forces that will propel change across Africa. The following drivers are identified: economic growth; demography; democracy; the external environment; the non-governmental sector; conflict; and the Diaspora.

Several factors are especially important.

Domestic reforms that decisively disrupt politics as usual will be a critical determinant of whether 'Africa takes charge'. Another possible determinant of which scenario is taken up is continental leadership. Excellent domestic leadership is, of course, an inescapable requirement for countries to succeed.

However, the 'Africa takes charge' scenario demands more: it suggests that there must be a movement across Africa that allows the continent on the domestic, regional, and international levels to move ahead on important matters of reform. The 'Africa takes charge' agenda will be more likely if Africa's big states become exemplars of success. One of the most noticeable aspects of Africa today is that the large countries, with the exception of South Africa, are not leading the continent. Another possible determinant of Africa's future is how well the continent manages its Diaspora.

Finally, the emergence of a dynamic private sector will be especially important to Africa taking charge. African governments need a continual stream of new ideas and dynamism if they are to drive the reform agenda. Twenty years of experience suggests that government alone cannot provide all of these ideas, much less the energy to drive them. A dynamic private sector is important for economic growth as a source of energy and innovation for many societies, and as an important link to the international economy.

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Introduction

Africa in 2020 will be a more diverse, more hopeful, and more dangerous place, depending on how individual African countries confront the period until that date.

The trend since independence in the 1960s has been for the continent to become more heterogeneous and there is no doubt that this tendency will continue in the next 14 years. More countries will collapse under the devastating burden of civil strife, economic bankruptcy, and disease. However, there is also the prospect that some other countries will begin to consolidate their political order, engage in the global economy, and develop a comprehensive set of governance practices that will allow their citizens to prosper. That these contrasting scenarios will play themselves out in different parts of the same continent seems inevitable. What remains to be seen is the balance between those who prosper and those who collapse and how many countries manage to do no more than muddle through.

There will thus not be one scenario for Africa.

Rather, the continent's countries will be an increasingly confused set of extremes. Such a conclusion is hardly surprising. It would be impossible for all African countries, given their difficult material environments and fractured social settings, to be prosperous after only 60 years of independence. European countries, and certainly the United States, took far longer before their future seemed to be more assured. At the same time, it is reasonable to believe that some African countries, by dint of effort and learning from other countries, and from the international community's continued focus on rewarding 'winners,' will be able to break out from their current trajectories and make substantial progress on economic growth and democratisation. It would hardly be unusual for Africa to house such extremes. The Europe of Germany and Romania, the Asia of South Korea and Burma, and the South America of Chile and Bolivia demonstrate that no continent has witnessed uniform development across a large number of different countries.

The following analysis focuses first on 'drivers': those forces that will propel change across Africa. Few of these drivers are inherently good or bad. Rather, they affect different African countries in different ways, depending, at least in part, on how the government of the day reacts.

The drivers are accumulated into scenarios on how Africa may develop over the next 14 years. In constructing these scenarios, we have sought to avoid the typical approach of 'bad case,' 'good case', and 'medium case' that characterises so many exercises that try to predict the future. Rather, we focus on how African countries might develop depending on the extent to which African leaders themselves seize the initiative and begin to focus on important problems of the day. The scenarios therefore focus maximum attention on how African initiatives will interpret and affect the drivers affecting the continent.

Drivers

A multitude of forces will affect Africa in the next 14 years. Our purpose here is not to describe every influence on the continent, but instead to inventory the most important dynamics, suggest how they might affect African countries, and estimate how much space governments have in responding to these influences.

One clear driver will be **economic growth** — a necessary if insufficient condition for African stability and prosperity. There is a general consensus that Africa must implement economic reforms and improve governance in order to grow at a rate of at least 6% annually, the minimum that most countries will require to reduce poverty. Growth at 6% or higher will not solve all problems, but will allow African countries considerable leeway in addressing the other problems that they confront. A country growing at 6% or more will inevitably have a well-functioning private sector that will take some of the pressure off government, not least because ambitious men and women will join companies to become rich instead of trying to prosper by stealing from the state. African countries growing relatively quickly will also have resources to pay for education, to address AIDS, and to fund police and military units that promote security. On the other hand, if African countries continue to stagnate with 3% or lower growth (essentially zero per capita growth, because of equivalent population growth), they will not be able to address any of the pressing social problems that so severely limit the life chances of their citizens. Indeed, without growth, it is hard to see how African countries can address the complex political, social, and epidemiological agendas that they face. African countries must grow or they will die.

The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) calls for very high levels of growth that cannot be financed by government or official development assistance alone. Only the private sector will be able to provide the necessary funds to reach the justifiably ambitious NEPAD targets. Yet individual African countries still do not act with the urgency that is justified by their dire economic states. While there is a nodding affirmation of the 'Washington consensus' at official meetings, reform in countries is often episodic, with old allegiances to statist ideologies interfering with efforts to promote the market. As a result, the cost of doing business in Africa is still very high and many companies do not perceive Africa as an important economic frontier.

A critical question for the future will be if African countries can develop *public-private partnerships* that promote development. Such partnerships are unusually important in Africa because investors lack confidence in the overall business environment and seek out the direct involvement of the state. At the same time, private sector initiative, energy, and finance are critical if such ventures are going to develop. Robust public-private partnerships would demonstrate that African governments no longer suspect the private sector and that they are, in fact, anxious to promote market forces.

Of course, the most important private sector in Africa is the *peasantry*. If Africa is to develop, economic growth must be funnelled toward the very large populations (a majority in many countries) that still reside in the rural areas. If the large number of Africans who live in the rural sector do not become wealthier, it is hard to see how African countries overall will become more prosperous. This will demand extensive policy focus on agriculture reform. In addition, food insecurity caused by poorly functioning agrarian sectors is an economic and political threat to many countries. There have been repeated calls for investment in agriculture for more than 20 years. However, African elites have not demonstrated either the willingness or the ability to promote large-scale economic growth outside of the capital cities, where they themselves are unlikely to benefit.

During the last 20 years, international financial institutions have driven the African economic debate. These Washington-based organisations were willing to make the initial critique of why African countries were performing so poorly and to provide the funding to help promote reform. *In the next 14 years, African countries themselves must drive economic thinking* if the continent is to move from crisis management to sustained development. Only locally developed economic plans that are supported by

important political constituencies will be able to generate the growth that African countries require. Foreign economic plans, no matter how well designed from a purely technical viewpoint, will inevitably invite backlash. Agency will be as important as policy orthodoxy in finding the right terms for African economic growth.

Equally important will be local efforts to both regulate and encourage *multinational corporations*. For the first time in a decade or more, Africa is receiving significant foreign investment, albeit concentrated in the hydrocarbon sector. There is the possibility of other companies investing if the investment climate becomes more attractive. Instead of viewing these multinational corporations as either enemies or saviours, African countries must develop their own means of regulating them for the benefit of their citizens. In doing so, they will demonstrate to their citizens that market forces can be harnessed for the common good. Without such indigenous efforts at regulation, foreign investors will continue to be viewed with suspicion and the effort to garner the necessary funds for high-level growth will falter.

Another important driver for Africa over the next 14 years will be **demography**. The *high population growths* that many African countries have experienced over the last 30 years must be reduced. Such growth rates place tremendous strain on the ability of governments to deliver social services. In addition, these youth bulges produce chronic instability, as large populations of young men often provide ready recruits for those who seek to challenge governments violently. At the same time, Africa is faced with a series of health scourges, most notably AIDS, that may force the population growth rates of some countries to become negative. Such a development would be extraordinary and would represent a tremendous loss of many millions of human beings. Because AIDS hits the most economically productive members of the population (notably, school teachers and trained workers in the private sector), its ravages go well beyond those immediately affected and have ramifications for the entire population. It is very difficult to imagine how an African country could be successful in 14 years without addressing the problem of high population growth and managing the AIDS crisis. On the other hand, it is quite easy to imagine that those countries that suffer from high population growth or that allow AIDS to rampage through their populations will face outright collapse.

In order to solve the demographic and health challenges that they face, African countries must *empower women*. Educated women delay marriage and tend to have lower fertility than those who are not. Gender empowerment can spur greater competitiveness and productivity. In addition, if AIDS is going to be eradicated, women must be empowered so that they can convince their partners to use protection and so that they can avoid unsafe relationships. It is particularly critical to empower women because the effort to develop an AIDS vaccine that Africa can afford will be fraught and may well fail. There is no guarantee that there will be a solely medical solution to the problem of AIDS in Africa.

Another critical driver for Africa will be **democracy**. The first ten years of the new democratic movements in Africa have justifiably been devoted to overthrowing the old autocratic regimes. With a few exceptions, notably Zimbabwe, democracy has now won the intellectual argument in Africa. Unlike the 1960s, there are no serious arguments against democracy and most countries pay at least lip service to implementing greater liberalisation. However, it is noticeable that the African imprint on these democratic experiments has yet to be that significant. The democracies that African countries are trying to develop are not noticeably different from those of Western countries or, for that matter, what failed 30 years ago. If democracy in Africa is going to succeed, *African countries must develop distinctive democratic practices and institutions that are appropriate for their own social, historical, and political*

milieus. These practices and institutions will have to be assessed on their merits by the external community.

Incorporation of traditional leaders is just one of the tasks that African democracies will have to face in the next 14 years. Such leaders have significant local legitimacy, but, given that they themselves are inherently non-democratic, these chiefs, kings, sultans, and *obas* fit uneasily into traditional Western forms of democracy.

While promoting democracy domestically, *it will be critical for African countries to develop conflict management techniques and practices so that initiatives to end civil wars come from African countries themselves*. **Conflict** must not be allowed to be a driver on the continent. The bloody 1990s taught African countries two lessons. Firstly, conflict in countries takes a devastating toll on those immediately affected by combat and countries in the surrounding region. Countries such as Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Côte d'Ivoire that suffered significant combat saw a generation or more of social and economic progress destroyed. At the same time, conflict in any one African country tends to be exported to the region. Thus, the civil war in Liberia has gradually spread throughout West Africa, while the war in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) drew in countries from throughout the region. Secondly, African countries can only rely on themselves to end wars. The international community is fickle when deciding to get involved in African conflicts and not committed enough to see these difficult political questions through to satisfactory conclusions. Western countries, in particular, are simply not severely enough affected by conflict in Africa to be motivated to solve its conflicts if the resolution is long and costly.

For Africa to be peaceful over the next 14 years, African countries *must first ensure that they have properly functioning police and military*. The basic forces of order in many African countries have atrophied to such an extent that the state does not even attempt to rule over large parts of its territory. There is simply no substitute for a reinvigoration of the security sector in Africa. Given Western sensibilities, the initiatives in this area must come from African countries themselves. Western countries and international financial institutions seem very comfortable making recommendations about the education sectors of individual African countries, but do not appear to want to approach reform of the domestic security apparatus in a sustained manner.

African countries *must also develop the ideas and initiatives to address civil conflict across the continent*. It is clear that there is only a very limited international tolerance for intervention in Africa and that peacekeeping efforts will increasingly have to originate inside the continent. An Africa that can take the initiative on peacekeeping and conflict resolution over the next 14 years will be in a position to ensure that the continent is relatively peaceful by 2020. External assistance will still be required, but Africa cannot afford to be the junior partner during attempts to promote peace across the continent. Indeed, if Africa is still waiting for the international community to initiate conflict resolution and peacekeeping initiatives in 2020, it is highly likely that war will continue to ravage the continent.

Key to African stability will be the success of African reforms *improving governance and establishing a social contract between citizens and state*. Trust building, sound leadership, and democracy go hand-in-hand, requiring — in a logic of stability — peace, solid administration, and law and order. This depends on an environment where citizens are able to achieve and go about their lives without fear or favour.

The **external environment** will, of course, be critical to Africa. There is little reason to believe that the West will feel compelled to be involved in large parts the continent.

There are resources, especially hydrocarbons, that the industrialised world needs from Africa, but bilateral treaties can garner these and it is not even clear if countries have to be stable, much less developing (witness Angola), in order for the oil to keep flowing. The West will also have security concerns in parts of Africa, perhaps especially related to terrorism, but this also can be dealt with on an ad hoc basis and largely militarily, rather than on a developmental basis. Finally, the West will be haltingly engaged in various humanitarian emergencies, but providing food aid and short-term relief should not be equated with long-term engagement. It is also likely that the West's technology will eventually enable it to insulate itself from whatever diseases emerge from Africa. *Overall, for the West to be engaged in Africa, there must be a compelling set of opportunities provided by African countries.*

In addition, there is much else about the external environment that Africa cannot affect: the path of commodity prices, the level of development assistance, and the attraction of other parts of the world. Indeed, the rise of China as an especially tough competitor in precisely the low-wage sectors that Africa should prosper in is a particularly threatening development. However, in spite of its weak position, *African countries must do a much better job of managing the external environment if they are to succeed.* For instance, the boom-bust pattern of commodity prices is now so well understood that African countries should be able to develop political structures that allow them to spend conservatively during the bad times and save appropriately in the good times.

Similarly, *African countries must do a much better job of managing foreign aid and donors.* The failure of the large amounts of aid that Africa has received to have an appreciable impact on the development prospects of many countries is one of the great disappointments of the post-independence period. While there is more than enough blame to go around, it is critical that African countries stop simply being supplicants and devise ways that donors and aid can be most useful to their development prospects. Western countries will not continually dump funds into Africa if foreign aid continues to achieve such a low rate of return. On the other hand, if these countries see that foreign aid is being used productively, it is likely that far more foreign assistance will be directed to at least those African countries that have shown that they can use the assistance wisely.

NEPAD is an important example of African initiative. While it is unlikely that in 14 years the exact details will be remembered, the willingness of African countries to begin a peer review process is laudable and a demonstration of the type of creative thinking that Africa must generate if it is to succeed. The conditionalities currently used by the international financial institutions are flawed instruments of public policy, because African governance cannot really be gauged from afar and because such direct oversight generates local opposition. NEPAD solves these problems, in theory, by asking African countries to take up the burden of enforcing conditionality, with the hope that the demands of fellow African countries will generate less of a backlash to reform. The success of NEPAD will depend largely on the willingness of African countries to reject notions of African political solidarity in favour of African state performance, and on the international community to reward African governance success stories. This process may or may not work immediately, but this is the kind of creative thinking that Africa requires over the next 14 years in order to manage the external environment.

Another related area where African initiative is important would be the *governance-debt nexus*. While Africans have continually demanded debt relief, they have generally not provided Western countries with a persuasive framework that would allow donors to believe that additional money will be used in a productive manner. If debt is not

going to continue to be a drag for the next 14 years, African countries must improve governance and reduce corruption so that it will be obvious that money foregone by donors will be used productively. Otherwise, debt will continue to throttle development for years to come.

Finally, African countries must work hard to *create their own comparative advantages*. Companies can be based in Africa and compete, but only if basic infrastructure works well, government economic policy is consistent and credible, and there is a pool of trained labour. Those African countries that succeed in creating such conditions will attract foreign investment by showing investors that there is profit to be made. In turn, once companies start going to African countries to invest, the herd mentality that is never far from the surface of capital markets will work in favour of those countries that attract even modest levels of initial investment.

One of the most important developments of the past 15 years has been the emergence of a significant **non-governmental organisation** (NGO) sector. This sector has demonstrated tremendous dynamism, but its overall contribution to African countries is extremely uneven. *A clear vision of how NGOs relate to overall development goals has yet to be developed in most countries.* Such a vision is absolutely necessary if the comparative advantages of NGOs — dynamism, flexibility, and organic ties to the population — are to be exploited. Without a sustained focus to integrate NGOs into overall development efforts, they will remain scattered and only episodically effective.

Relations with the **Diaspora** will become even more significant for African countries in the next 14 years. Those countries that perform poorly will lose even more of their precious human resources, as trained professionals seek better lives for themselves and their children. Only by prospering will countries be able to stem the loss of their very best people. At the same time, the already existing Diasporas of African countries are a potentially important source of remittances and investment. Already, funds sent from Africans abroad are among the most important foreign exchange earners for many countries, a trend that will only continue. *However, this 'export' must be managed correctly, as the charitable component of remittances is likely to decrease.* Especially as the Diaspora becomes less immediately connected to African countries, states will have to demonstrate that the money being sent by former citizens is being used wisely and that the rate of return is high.

Three Scenarios for Africa in 2020

Combining this diverse group of drivers inevitably produces a complex set of scenarios. In the following three scenarios, we describe how Africa may look depending on the extent to which the continent 'takes charge' or allows others to determine the agenda for its development. We do so by examining what African responses might be in seven different areas drawn from our discussion of the 'drivers' above. While the reality in any given African country is likely to be more complicated, the scenarios do have the advantage of starkly describing how different tendencies might accumulate over the next 14 years.

We have deliberately focused on the ability and willingness of African countries to 'take charge', even though they are among the weakest in the world and the ones whose destiny is seemingly out of their own hands. However, much can change in 14 years. Botswana, for instance, was an extremely poor country when it achieved independence in the late 1960s, but it still managed to negotiate an advantageous mineral deal with De Beers, perhaps the stereotype of the large, powerful corporation.

The arrangement that then poor Botswana designed paid off handsomely. Today the country is among the richest in Africa.

Indeed, one of the major obstacles to Africa realising a positive future is the pervasive feeling across the continent that the continent's elites do not care about development enough to take the initiative, that African countries are too poor to control their futures, or that global forces are so monumental that there is nothing that Africa can do to manage them. By stressing that African initiative is the most fundamental 'driver' of them all, we reject the notion that there is nothing to be done about Africa's problems. Indeed, we posit in the scenarios below that African initiative can be exceedingly important in how countries fare in different areas.

Africa takes charge

The scenarios suggest that Africa could be a radically different place depending on how far countries and leaders go in seizing the agenda. In the '**Africa takes charge**' scenario, African countries will provide the political ideas and leadership to address their problems. Critical issues regarding economic policy, democracy, governance, and security will be driven by African ideas and initiatives.

Africa Takes Charge	
The Growth Agenda	African countries develop pro-growth, pro-market, politically popular strategies. Africa is able to gain access to the global economy and to create the domestic conditions for long-term benefit. New technologies are adapted and there is African innovation.
The Democracy Agenda	Africa develops its own democracy models that are appropriate and accepted. Constitutions are designed to create national identity and inclusive systems of government.
The Governance Agenda	African standards of governance are internationally accepted, corruption is reduced to acceptable levels, and local and foreign investment is successfully encouraged.
The Social Agenda	Africa's solutions for HIV/AIDS, gender relations, and education are supported and effective.
The Security Agenda	Africa's conflict resolution and interventionist strategies prevent violent revolts.
The International Economic Agenda	Africa plays a part in setting an international economic architecture allowing for greater trade access, rules-based trade, receipt of foreign direct investment and aid, and debt relief.
The International Political Agenda	Africa lobbies successfully for greater recognition and representation in international institutions, and international intervention in Africa is always managed by African regional and/or continental organisations.

This is not to argue that Africa will not require outside assistance. Rather, it is to suggest that positive developments will depend, finally, on Africans developing 'African solutions to African problems'. Indeed, we believe that the only way that there can be positive outcomes in Africa is if African countries are no longer the junior partners on issues that most directly affect them. There is the real possibility of the continent growing faster and becoming more democratic and more secure while addressing critical social issues, especially the empowerment of women. Indeed, to a certain extent, success will breed success, as investors are attracted to growing economies, which will in turn cause them to grow even faster, thus attracting even more investment, in an ever-increasing upward spiral. Political stability will reassure those

who lose elections that they need not go back to the bush to win political power, and the enrichment of the rural areas will bind countries together after decades when the minorities in the urban areas benefited disproportionately.

While the power asymmetries in world politics are obvious and will remain extremely pertinent in the next two decades, African countries, if they take the initiative, can also influence international economic and political outcomes. The West, exhausted from repeated failures in Africa, is waiting for new ideas. In addition, most Western interests will be advanced by an Africa that is growing quickly and becoming more secure, causing industrialised countries to want African countries to succeed. Charity is not going to become an important part of international relations in the next 14 years. However, the value of goodwill toward a growing and more democratic Africa cannot be underestimated.

Critically, this scenario posits that the continent as a whole will move ahead and takes the initiative. While not even under the most rosy scenario will every African country do well, it would be especially notable if large parts of the continent began to improve. This need not mean that continental organisations will become especially important in Africa in the next 14 years. The historical record suggests that such organisations become important only after individual nations strengthen themselves. Rather, we see African initiative emerging from a combination of domestic, regional, and continental reforms, with the common denominator being attempts to fashion local solutions to pressing problems. Such energy across a wide range of areas will have positive effects in individual countries and will help the continent as a whole, as Africa sheds its image of despair and becomes a place that demands global attention. Such a change is not inconceivable over the next 14 years. Indeed, only a generation ago, East Asia was perceived as being mired in economic stagnation and war, but is today one of the dynamos of the world economy.

Give and take

A decidedly second-best solution is the '**give-and-take**' – or '**patchwork**' – scenario, in which a varied country-by-country and issue-by-issue picture of external engagement and African success emerges.

In this future, some African countries will take the initiative on some issues. However, the efforts will be highly variable both within and between countries. Some countries will grow faster and become more democratic and secure, but they will be, to some extent, the exceptions. As is the case with Ghana and Uganda today, there can be high performers in this scenario, but their successes will not motivate other African leaders to take similar initiatives. Across the continent, there will be scattered attempts at important new reforms, but Western donors and the international financial institutions will still play a dominant role. As a result, the reform agenda will still be critically driven by interests outside Africa and therefore will never be fully accepted domestically and will be only partially successful.

Since Africans will not fully seize the agenda, international relations between Africa as a whole and the industrialised world will not change substantially. Rather, some individual African countries that develop economic and political momentum will make their own deals with Western countries and international financial institutions. This limited number of countries may actually do exceptionally well because they will have so little competition from their neighbours and because donors will be looking hard for African successes. However, because only a limited number will succeed in breaking

out of the current stagnation, the international perception of the continent as a whole will not change substantially.

Give and Take

The Growth Agenda	Africa achieves differentiated growth, with some countries developing their own models of success, but limited continent-wide learning. Patchy growth occurs within and across countries. Technology has a patchy impact.
The Democracy Agenda	There are sporadic successes with elections of variable quality and a combination of international and local observation. Democratic institutions of highly variable quality, legitimacy, and capacity exist. Some countries are able to develop formulas for national unity, but they are the exception.
The Governance Agenda	Some countries develop accepted standards of performance, which encourages investment, but many others opt out.
The Social Agenda	Some countries achieve isolated success in developing education, health, and gender strategies. AIDS strategies are hampered by a combination of local incapacity and a failure to develop universal policy and public-private partnerships. The international community supports some countries; and there is isolated success in extending generic solutions.
The Security Agenda	Limited external co-operation is achieved among selected countries and regional bodies determined by external security needs and foreign evaluation of local competencies and legitimacy.
The International Economic Agenda	Ad hoc co-operative and preferential strategies are determined by bilateral and historical relationships.
The International Political Agenda	The prominence of African countries is determined by individual country performance and external needs rather than continental inclination.

While this scenario posits scattered individual country outcomes that are superior to the status quo, the continent as a whole will only move forward haltingly. Critically, while there will be real successes, the number of failed states and those that will be doing extremely badly will continue to threaten continental stability by exporting the 'bads' of crime, refugees, and instability. In this scenario, Africa will not develop noticeably stronger regional and continental organisations, because its countries will be performing at radically different rates and because there will be no common agreement on the agenda for the future. Overall, 14 years from now, Africa will become extremely varied, with some real successes, but always with the danger that radical failure in some states will overturn hard-earned gains everywhere.

Africa follows

The '**Africa follows**' scenario posits a continuation of the status quo, where African countries do not drive the reform agenda. Rather, the external community will continue to set and dominate the African developmental stage.

This is not to say that there will not be continued — indeed incessant — attempts at reform. Citizens alienated by the poor records of their countries and by donors will demand change. However, as now, many of the reforms will flounder because African countries themselves will not lead the effort. As a result, many attempted changes will be inappropriate for local circumstances and will not be politically sustainable, because African leaders will not have taken ownership of the reform attempts. The Africa that follows in 2020 is likely to be a place of turmoil, with tremendous frustration that decades of political and economic reform have not added up to much in the way of

success. As failure builds upon itself, the poor economic and political record will invite increased civil strife that will threaten to further destabilise many countries. Finally, as Africa will not take control of the social agenda, there is the real possibility that AIDS will deal the continent a devastating blow from which it cannot recover.

Africa Follows

The Growth Agenda	The conflict between international conditionalities and consensus on economic policy and African preferences permeates policy and planning. New technologies pose significant threats to African development prospects.
The Democracy Agenda	Electoral standards and norms are set outside the continent. Countries vote, but democratic institutions and standards are not viewed as legitimate. Elections are insensitive to local conditions and aggravate local ethnic and religious differences.
The Governance Agenda	African institutions lack capacity to meet internationally accepted standards developed by developed economies and international NGOs. Corruption continues to be a significant barrier to local and foreign investment.
The Social Agenda	Progress is led by international civil society, but is variable.
The Security Agenda	There is selective engagement by international actors, not necessarily with African support.
The International Economic Agenda	Trade access is determined by international organisations and bilateral arrangements. Developed countries take regionalist protectionist measures when this is politically convenient.
The International Political Agenda	Africa is under-represented.

At the international level, Western countries will continue to be sporadically involved in Africa. They will not feel a compelling interest to become systematically engaged in a continent where they have failed for so long, and other regions of the world that are succeeding will undoubtedly draw their attention. The Africans will not succeed in overcoming the asymmetries in the power relationships with Western countries because they, as a continent, will be weak and with relatively few proposals for change. Thus, it is likely that the international political and economic agendas will continue to be unfavourable to African countries.

This scenario implies that regional and continent organisations will continue to be weak. Indeed, because success may be so sporadic, those African countries that do develop some momentum may feel that they cannot invest time and energy in strengthening regional and continental organisations. Rather, the limited number of countries that achieve some success will spend a substantial amount of time explaining why they are not like other African countries. Far from leading Africa, these limited successes will try to escape their associations with the continent.

The scenario posits a series of outcomes that will be, overall, even worse than the status quo. The critical element in these outcomes is not that the problems that Africa seeks to overcome are simply difficult, although the hardships confronting the continent are not in dispute. Rather, the critical issue is that Africa, in this scenario, will be no closer to driving the agenda in 14 years than it is today. As a result, outright failure, frustration, and a pervasive feeling that the condition *is* permanent will abound across the continent.

Determinants of the Road Taken

Scenarios are, at best, vague roadmaps. They can never accurately describe how a place as complicated as the African continent will actually proceed. In addition, there will be economic, political, and technological surprises that we cannot account for. For instance, the probability of the development of artificial cocoa, the development of a cheap and effective AIDS vaccine, or the advent of a sustained global depression are not calculable, although each would have an important effect on developments across Africa. There is also the danger in this process that scenario planning removes responsibility from the real participants.

What we can do is to suggest what on the African continent might determine which of the scenarios becomes a better description of Africa's future. Several factors seem especially important.

Firstly, **domestic reforms that decisively disrupt politics as usual** will be a critical determinant of whether 'Africa takes charge'. There have been some countries, notably Uganda after 1986, Ghana after 1983, Ethiopia after 1994, and Rwanda after 1994, that have driven their reform agendas in a manner envisioned in the first scenario. Ghana and Uganda transformed themselves through drastic economic reform from failed states to two of the leading growth states in Africa; Ethiopia designed a new constitution that addressed in an extraordinarily innovative manner the problems of self-determination claims that threatened to tear the nation apart; and Rwanda orchestrated a series of domestic moves that at least allowed it stability in the aftermath of the genocide. This is not to say that development, democracy, and stability are guaranteed in any of these countries. However, they have shown that it is possible to take decisive action in critical areas and reverse years of stagnation and conflict. They did so in conjunction with Western donors and the international financial institutions, but it was clear in all four cases who was driving the agenda; indeed, the cases are notable because of the particularly appropriate measures the leaders adopted to address their political, economic, and social challenges. Also, in all four cases, students and intellectuals with important new ideas were allowed to come to the fore. The 'Africa takes charge' scenario basically posits that the reform attempts by these countries will spread across the continent in a systematic way.

It is noticeable that the reforming governments in all four of these states came to power after the violent overthrow of old regimes that epitomised the 'Africa follows' scenario. This is not to advocate the violent overthrow of governments across the continent. Highly successful leaders can come to the fore in other ways. South Africa demonstrates that it is possible to decisively change the direction of a country without violent revolution. However, these reforms also suggest that the normal way of doing business across the continent will not lead to the most positive scenario. Local elites are often too in-grown to have a dynamic reform agenda and the donors too inattentive to promote real change. Especially given that the empowerment of women and the rural sector — dramatic changes that will fundamentally transform significant aspects of many African societies — are critical to Africa's future, politics as usual cannot be expected to take the continent very far.

The 'Africa takes charge' scenario therefore demands some possibility for disruption of the old ways of doing things. Critically, democratisation may be such a mechanism. The removal of old leaders who have failed or who were only willing to implement reform in a halting manner is one of the most desirable aspects of democracy. The casting aside of the old, failed leadership in Kenya in exchange for a party that promised drastic change is only one example, albeit dramatic, of the promise that

democratisation holds in promoting the reform agenda across the continent. Thus democracy is valuable not only in its own right, but also for forcing the regular rotation of leaders who can help implement a dramatic reform agenda. The change of political leadership and party control through elections is an important signal of the maturation of some African democracies.

Another possible determinant of which scenario is taken up is **continental leadership**. Excellent domestic leadership is, of course, an inescapable requirement for countries to succeed. However, the 'Africa takes charge' scenario demands more: it suggests that there must be a movement across Africa that allows the continent on the domestic, regional, and international levels to move ahead on important matters of reform. Such a continental movement could come about because of excellent continental leadership from the African Union (AU). Yet it is doubtful whether the AU will be able to drive such a reform momentum, because, as an organisation based on consensus, it is inevitably slowed by those countries unwilling to adopt a speedy reform agenda. The AU's dithering on Zimbabwe in the early 2000s is a worrying indication that it will not be part of the process that leads to rapid reform across Africa. However, there is an important role for the AU in an Africa that is successful. The peer review mechanism currently proposed for NEPAD is an example of an important continental innovation that can help reinforce reformist tendencies across the continent.

The real impetus for reform must come from elsewhere. **The 'Africa takes charge' agenda will be more likely if Africa's big states become exemplars of success.** One of the most noticeable aspects of Africa today is that the large countries, with the exception of South Africa, are not leading the continent. Nigeria and the DRC have bordered on failure and chaos, while Ethiopia has stabilised, its ongoing political and economic uncertainty does not provide the leadership for other nations. Addis has also been continually distracted by its border conflict with Eritrea. Rather, the great African successes have been Botswana and Mauritius, both of which have populations under two million, and medium-sized countries like Ghana and Uganda, though the controversy surrounding President Yoweri Museveni's third-term threatens to undo some of the latter's accomplishments. Indeed, one of the reasons that success has not been infectious in Africa is because countries without much heft have done the best, while those who are the natural leaders have, in many cases, actually fallen further behind. 'Africa follows' will be much more likely if those countries that many people in Africa naturally look to for leadership continue to fail to drive the reform agenda.

Another possible determinant of Africa's future is **how well the continent manages its Diaspora**. The loss of a large number of Africa's most creative people, and their assets, is a fact that cannot be denied. However, if African countries devise ways in which the Diaspora can be tapped for ideas and some of their energy diverted to promoting reform across the continent, a whole new dynamic will be launched. Indeed, the Diaspora can be an important bridge between Africa and the West. Africans living in Western countries can forcefully advocate the positions of their home countries, while also explaining to African governments what the West is looking for. If the 'brain drain' were to become a profound intellectual resource for Africa, the probability of Africa taking charge would be much higher.

Finally, **the emergence of a dynamic private sector will be especially important to Africa taking charge.** African governments need a continual stream of new ideas and dynamism if they are to drive the reform agenda. Twenty years of experience suggests that government alone cannot provide all of these ideas, much less the energy to drive them. A dynamic private sector is important for economic growth. It is also important as a source of energy and innovation for many societies, and can be an

important link to the international economy, allowing African countries knowledge of the best practices being adopted across the world. Thus, the distrust that African leaders have instinctively felt toward the private sector must be replaced by a whole-hearted appreciation of the financial *and* intellectual resources that the private sector can bring to African countries.

There are undoubtedly many other factors that will propel individual countries and the continent toward one or another of the scenarios we have presented. In understanding Africa's future, **it is especially important to identify factors that promote dynamism, change, and radical departures from the status quo.** Calls for stability in Africa to some degree miss the point. Violent conflict, of course, must end. However, as some African countries have demonstrated, it is possible for a nation to be stable and decline precipitously for many years. Stability brought about by stagnation will result in eventual disaster for the continent, given the many challenges that it faces.