
A NOTE FROM THE EDITORS

Dear readers,

We are proud to welcome you to the inaugural edition of the *Africa Policy Journal*, published by students at the Kennedy School of Government, Harvard. We not only hope that the contents are informative, but that they can be of practical use to you in your work and discussions.

The backdrop to this inaugural issue is a renewed momentum around efforts to spur Africa's development. 2005 was a remarkable year in this regard. In September 2005, the Millennium Development Goals were reaffirmed by over 100 world heads of state at the UN World Summit. At their Gleneagles summit in July 2005, leaders of the G8 - the world's leading industrialised countries - pledged to double aid to Africa to approximately US\$50 billion by 2010. Rich nations also agreed a proposal to cancel the debts of up to 14 eligible African countries to the IMF, the World Bank, and the African Development Fund. 'The Make Poverty History Campaign' brought sell-out pop concerts to many of the world's major cities in July 2005.

However, policymakers, activists and analysts in Africa and in the international development organisations still bear an enormous responsibility to take this momentum forward and help make the 21st century Africa's century. The challenge for African nations is to achieve sustained, broad-based economic growth, and transform African living standards so the next generation of Africans is not preoccupied with extreme poverty, but can secure longevity, literacy, economic security and prosperity.

Achieving this prosperity will require, among other things, leadership, ambitious growth strategies and results-oriented policies. Moreover, these strategies and policies need to be informed by the best available evidence on what works and what does not. The *Africa Policy Journal* positions itself as a voice calling for more enlightened, coherent and context-specific policies in Africa.

Leadership is paramount. Professor Robert Rotberg starts with a comment on the central role leadership plays in different countries' development, highlighting how Botswana's phenomenal, sustained economic success was largely due to inspired political leadership. The need for leadership is of course not confined to government or official positions. On *The Frontier* (OTF) director, Eric Kacou, showcases the leadership role that small-scale entrepreneurs have played in building successful new export-focused industries in Rwanda.

Still on the theme of leadership, we have the privilege of sharing with you interviews with two African leaders. First, we are proud to publish our interview of Kenyan 2004 Nobel Peace Laureate Wangari Maathai. Her leadership role in campaigning for environmental protection, democracy and human rights is an inspiration to us all. Secondly, we share an interview with one of the continent's pre-eminent youth leaders, Cedza Dlamini. A Swazi prince and an emissary for the UN Millennium Development Goals, Cedza is a tireless advocate for the role youth can play in the continent's development.

In our inaugural issue, we have not shied away from some of the most intractable policy challenges facing African countries. We are publishing an article by Todd Moss and Stewart Patrick presenting an ambitious strategy on how Zimbabwe might recover following what has been, over the last 6 years, one of the worst economic collapses in the world. Also, with Kennedy School alumnus, Madam Ellen Sirleaf Johnson, inaugurated as Liberia and Africa's first democratically elected female president, we are proud to publish Varney Yengbeh's article which presents practical policy recommendations on how to sustain the peace and promise Liberia now enjoys.

Near the top of any list of intractable African policy challenges is HIV, whose prevalence rates remain stubbornly high across vast swathes of the continent. HIV is an area where whether policies are results-oriented and effectively implemented can be the difference between life and death for thousands, if not millions. Eileen Stillwaggon's article advocates a novel and more holistic approach to stemming the spread of the pandemic. Our fourth and final article by Tim Reid, concerns the war in the Democratic Republic of Congo between 1996 and 2002, which it is estimated cost upwards of 3 million lives. The article analyses whether greater conditionality of donor country's aid may have averted the worst of Rwanda and Uganda's involvement in that war.

On a lighter note, we are particularly pleased to share with you a sterling arts review section. Beyond the newspaper headlines and research findings, a rich and distinctive artistic tradition opens windows onto aspects of life in Africa. Some reaches the mainstream international stage to be celebrated – as with Oscar award winning South African film *Tsotsi* – or mourned – like the passing of Malian music legend Ali Farka Touré. But many of the films, books, and songs from Africa do not receive their due recognition and analysis. In this section of our inaugural issue, we hope in a small way to reverse this. Covering themes from coffee trade and civil war to Elvis, this year's book and film reviews feature Angola, Ethiopia, South Africa, and Nigeria.

Harvard is far from Africa yet close to it in many ways. Harvard's podiums and conference rooms are regularly graced by African presidents, African CEOs, African Nobel Prize Laureates and other African leaders from all corners of the continent. The inaugural issue carries an article highlighting some of these events – we encourage you to let it bring 'Africa at Harvard' alive for you.

As chief editors there are many people we cannot thank enough. We have had the pleasure of working with 20 of the most inspiring, talented and hard-working staff. Not only have they made the work fun, but without their enthusiasm and sustained efforts the journal would not have been possible. We are also immensely indebted to our contributors and interviewees who have worked so hard with us, and allowed us the privilege of publishing their work and words. Thanks also go to our board members and the administration at the Kennedy School for their support and co-operation.

Finally thanks to you, our readers, for visiting our pages. We hope you enjoy the inaugural issue, and visit the *Africa Policy Journal* again and again. Happy reading!

Yours sincerely,

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