

Fragile but agile

'Fragile states' are in the spotlight at the moment, in part because of the tragedy in Haiti. By most counts, over half the world's fragile states are in Africa.

18 months ago, there was deep concern that the global financial crisis, coming on top of fuel and food price shocks, would result in widespread political instability and conflict. For tens perhaps hundreds of millions of people, particularly women and children, poverty has increased, lives and livelihoods been lost, and progress on the MDGs been undermined.

However, the worst fears have not been realized. This is not to say that events across the continent, whether in Niger, Guinea-Bissau or Cote d'Ivoire, Sudan, Kenya or Madagascar, cannot be attributed partly to recession-related unrest.

The proximate triggers of violence and instability have been local political disputes, often exacerbated by the behavior of elites, many displaying indifference to the welfare of their own people. Widening inequality and a sense of injustice makes economic hardship less tolerable.

While for some, things may be looking up - the AfDB foresees an early resumption of high economic growth rates (Read article here) chronic vulnerability to external shocks remains. It would be unwise not to expect more to come. Agility in crisis management and plans for disaster risk reduction are essential in a globalised world.

The starting point for managing fragility is appreciation of the changing nature of risks, including financial, economic (licit and illicit, such as trafficking in goods, resources, money, ideas or people), climatic or health related. Such understanding can highlight growth and poverty reduction pathways and opportunities – such as investment in low carbon growth and jobs.

Risk assessments should shape capacity development plans in and with fragile states. They should inform Africa's insistence at the G20 and other global fora on fair and supportive economic, trade, climate and security policies, as well as for the transfer of adequate financial and technical resources.

Back home, maybe the best way to prevent fragility from lapsing into violence remains the determination of leaders and politicians to promote equitable growth and the welfare of their citizens.

News Overview

Nigerian President Yar'Adua [returns discreetly to Nigeria after three months of medical treatment in Saudi Arabia, raising confusion amongst politicians](#). He is [unlikely to resume office immediately](#).

An [agreement was signed in Chad marking the possible improvement of relations between Chad and Sudan](#). Subsequently, the Sudanese Government and main Darfuri rebel group JEM, [signed a cease-fire with a framework for the implementation which is considered a promising first step towards a lasting peace](#) but needs the other Darfuri rebel factions to enter the agreement.

The [UN criticizes the US claiming](#) that its strict restrictions are hampering humanitarian assistance efforts in Somalia.

[Yvo de Boer's resignation](#) as the head of UNFCCC leaves less hope that a comprehensive treaty will be signed in Mexico next December. His successor will likely be from a developing country.

Eighteen people, all low-level employees, were arrested in Angola in a [\\$137m embezzlement probe](#). \$100m were recovered while the President has proclaimed a zero-tolerance policy to corruption for his government.

[Google extends its mapping services to 30 countries in Africa](#), including Ghana, providing not only [downloadable maps but also visibility to local businesses](#). [Ghana is likely to become an IT hub for Africa](#).

[After Niger's recent coup in which President Mamadou Tandja was deposed, self-acclaimed President Salou Djibo appoints a civilian Prime Minister](#).

Tension increased in Côte d'Ivoire after President Laurent Gbagbo dissolved the national unity government and the Independent Electoral Commission. A new [government including the opposition](#) has been formed with the hope of bringing the country from the brink.

Kenyan [President Kibaki and Prime Minister Odinga](#) met for the first time since the recent power struggle which threatened the national unity government to collapse.

In the blogs...

[ODI Blog: Donor support to the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme \(CAADP\)](#)

The author argues that now is the time for action and calls for the need to move the debate beyond the discussion about sound principles and root causes of failed policy coordination in agriculture. The case is made for CAADP as a good vehicle to improving Africa's agriculture initiatives on international, regional and national levels.

[Reuters Africa News Blog: Niger following Mauritania's blueprint for an African coup, 22 Feb. 2010](#)

A worrying trend of *coup d'états* is emerging once again in Africa – Mauritania, Guinea and now Niger. Neither coup resulted in the leaders being shot, but all resulted in a promise of democratic elections and political change.

APP Publication

[From Adaptation to Climate-Resilient Development](#)

The paper co-published by the Africa Progress Panel and Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment argues that Africa should receive urgent funding for adaptation to climate change impacts. An additional \$30 billion per year in external funding will be needed to 'climate-proof' measures to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.



Cartoon by Gado Mwampembwa

Calendar

- 25 Feb** Second African Diaspora Open House, World Bank, Washington, DC
- 26 Feb** Principles and Business Models for SME's Development in the Business Sector in Africa, Italian Trade Commission, Nairobi, Kenya
- 1-2 Mar** Informal Meeting on Further Actions against Climate Change, Tokyo, Japan
- 1-12 Mar** U.N. 54th Commission on the Status of Women, New York, USA
- 3-5 Mar** [Second All-Africa Carbon Forum](#), Nairobi, Kenya
- 7-10 Mar** African Ministerial Conference on Science and Technology, Cairo, Egypt
- 8 Mar** International Women's Day
- 11 Mar** [DFID's Agenda 2010, The Turning Point of Poverty Conference](#), London, England
- 12 Mar** Committee of 10 (C10) to meet with Gordon Brown

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Multilateral Organizations

AfDB

[Regional central bank governors unanimously endorse an AfDB general capital increase proposal of 200%.](#)

[AfDB expects to grant loans totaling \\$6 billion this year, with proposals to fund mining projects in Mauritania and Guinea, a port in Morocco and transport projects in South Africa.](#)

[AfDB estimates it will finance up to \\$10 billion in infrastructure projects over the next three years, with the energy sector key.](#)

[AfDB opens a national office in Algeria.](#) (Article in French)

ECOWAS

[ECOWAS suspends Niger until constitutional order is re-established.](#)

IMF

[IMF's Executive Board decides to restore Zimbabwe's voting and related rights and its eligibility to apply for resources from the IMF's General Resources Account.](#)

[IMF Executive Board approves a 3-year \\$79.4m extended credit facility arrangement for Malawi.](#)

OECD

[A latest review shows that although a majority of countries will meet their aid commitments, there will be a significant shortfall due to the underperformance of several large donors. Africa is likely to get only about \\$12 billion of the \\$25 billion increase promised at Gleneagles.](#)

IOM

[Greater efforts needed to tackle environmental migration, says IOM on International Migrants' Day.](#)

UN

[Following a global governance meeting in Dakar, Senegal, the UNDP pledges \\$25 million towards strengthening governance in Africa.](#)

WORLD BANK

[WB doubles loans to Morocco to assist the country's efforts in reducing mass poverty and spurring growth.](#)

[World Bank acknowledged it needs to speed up funding for rebuilding war-torn South Sudan but said it also had to ensure the aid was not wasted through corruption or mismanagement.](#)

Opinions

[Daily Nation \(Kenya\): We must slay the monster of tribalism, 20 Feb. 2010](#)

The author argues that in order to fight corruption and make the necessary institutional changes in Kenya, the issues of tribalism and ethnicity must be addressed.

[Pambazuka News: Tear down the stone wall of secrecy, 18 Feb. 2010](#)

Africa's natural resources are both a blessing and a curse. The article suggests that dealing in an open, transparent and accountable manner may help avert this curse drawing on two examples- Ghana and Ethiopia.

[The New Times \(Rwanda\): Africa must produce or perish, 23 Feb. 2010](#)

The author argues that Africa will perish if it continues to consume what it does not produce, and produce what it does not consume. Poverty alleviation requires creative and intellectual abilities to be cultivated, including how to use raw materials by adding value through production and refinement.

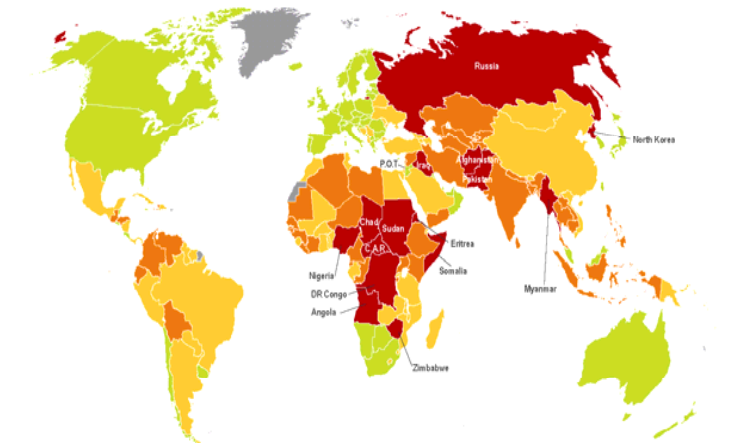
[Sokwanele \(Zimbabwe\): First steps taken to restore working relationship with the IMF, 24 Feb. 2010](#)

Zimbabwe's relationship with the IMF is improving, having recently had their voting rights restored after a seven-year suspension. The author argues that little progress has been made in the past years regarding reform, and points out that the IMF decision comes a after the EU has renewed its economic sanctions regime against the country's political elite.

[L'Observateur Paalga \(Burkina Faso\): Avis de tempête sur les Tripatouilleurs, 22 Feb. 2010](#)

The author refers to how the military junta served the country by overthrowing President Tandja and argues that tasting power often results in the temptation to keep it – he gives examples of seven African countries where this has happened. (Article in French)

Dynamic Political Risk Index 2010



| Rank | Country | Category | Rank | Country | Category | Rank | Country | Category |
|------|-------------|----------|------|----------|----------|------|-------------|----------|
| 1 | Somalia | extreme | 6 | Sudan | extreme | 11 | Pakistan | extreme |
| 2 | DR Congo | extreme | 7 | C.A.R | extreme | 12 | Angola | extreme |
| 3 | Iraq | extreme | 8 | Chad | extreme | 13 | North Korea | extreme |
| 4 | Myanmar | extreme | 9 | Zimbabwe | extreme | 14 | Entrea | extreme |
| 5 | Afghanistan | extreme | 10 | Nigeria | extreme | 15 | Russia | extreme |

" Africa has the potential, if the proper investments take place... to become a new centre of demand. "

Pravin Gordhan, South African Finance Minister,
Chair of the African Development Bank's Committee of 10.

G20 Update

BRAZIL

[Brazil invests \\$1.3 billion in Mozambique to exploit cool mines.](#) (Article in French)

CANADA

[Canada announces that the G8 Development Ministers will meet in Halifax, Nova Scotia on April 26-28 2010](#)

China

[The government is considering proposals on how to reduce the country's carbon intensity by 40 to 45%.](#)

EU

[The Foreign Affairs Council renewed for another year its targeted sanctions against Zimbabwe claiming that insufficient progress had been made.](#)

FRANCE

[A loan of €225m is finalized with Morocco for the Casablanca transport system.](#) (Article in French)

[France is to shut its military base in Senegal.](#) (Article in French)

GERMANY

[Germany grants Rwanda €38.5m for development and financial cooperation.](#)

JAPAN

[Japan extends a soft loan of \\$375m to Kenya for geothermal power generation, drought responses and re-forestation.](#)

[The Japan International Cooperation Agency \(JICA\) signs an agreement with Tanzania to provide approximately \\$22m for the Seventh Poverty Reduction Support Credit.](#)

[Japan extends the environmental program grant aid](#) totaling \$7.4m to Malawi. It will extend it to [Egypt](#) as well.

UNITED STATES

[Trade with sub-Saharan Africa has more than doubled in eight years thanks to the implementation of AGOA.](#)

South Africa

[The government has asked to join the BRIC group of nations comprised of Brazil, Russia, India and China.](#)