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**UNU Africa Research Observer**

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This biannual email newsletter brings you the latest United Nations University (UNU) research on human security and development in Africa. It contains short abstracts with links to detailed reports on the UNU "Priority Africa" website.

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**Major Events**

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**Nigerian President Speaks at Africa Day Symposium**

Nigerian President Chief Olusegun Obasanjo gave the keynote lecture at this year's Africa Day symposium held at UNU Centre, Tokyo, on May 22. The theme of the symposium was the Millennium Africa Recovery Plan (MAP), the development strategy for the continent being promoted by President Obasanjo, President Mbeki of South Africa and President Bouteflika of Algeria. The other presentations and discussion at the conference highlighted a number of important issues related to the MAP in particular and African development in general. In particular, the meeting highlighted: (i) the need for the MAP to put "the peoples of Africa" front and center in any strategy; (ii) the importance of greater commitments in the area of education, (iii) the great potential for African countries to promote regional interaction and markets, (iv) the need for massive infrastructure investments in the coming years, particularly in information and communications technologies, and (v) the importance of increasing resource flows and reducing the debt burden.

Conference Summary < <http://www.unu.edu/africa/africa-day/message-e.htm> >

MAP document < <http://www.unu.edu/africa/africa-day/map.htm> >

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**Eminent Africans Back Campaign to Revitalize Universities, Research Institutions**

Several of Africa's most noted academics and scientists assembled in Accra May 28–29 to launch a campaign to revive the continent's research and higher education systems. Prof. Ali Mazrui, Africa's foremost historian, and Prof. Albert Tevoedjre, former Minister of Planning and Economic Development of Benin, were among 45 African leaders, scientists and academics convening in Accra for the conference, *Bridging The Knowledge Gap*, organized by the UNU and The Independent Commission on Africa and the Challenges of the Third Millennium. At the conference, leading experts discussed ways to enable and challenge Africans to: (i) advance food security through basic research; (ii) add value to Africa's primary products through applied science and technology; (iii) link scientific knowledge on natural resources to policy, problem-solving, and long-term planning processes; and (iv) educate and train young scientists in cutting-edge science.

< [http://update.unu.edu/archive/issue9\\_7.htm](http://update.unu.edu/archive/issue9_7.htm) >

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**New Reports Online**  
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**Economic and Institutional Reforms in French-speaking West Africa**

Author(s): Anders Danielson

This paper examines some outcomes of two decades of market-oriented reforms in the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU). In general, economic performance, measured by growth of per capita incomes, has not been encouraging. This is despite far-reaching reforms, including privatization, liberalization and deep regional integration. Social indicators suggest that poverty reduction has not been achieved through reforms. Several indicators on access to primary health care, and inputs and outcomes in primary education show deteriorating trends in the majority of countries. However, social indicators in the WAEMU are better than those in other countries in sub-Saharan Africa. Finally, the paper attempts to test the extent to which institutional quality in WAEMU differs from that in other parts of the world. The general results from this exercise are that (i) indicators of institutional quality in sub-Saharan Africa are significantly lower than in non-African parts of the world, (ii) this explains much of the growth difference, and (iii) institutional quality in WAEMU does not differ from that in other parts of Africa, despite more centralized institutions.

< <http://www.wider.unu.edu/publications/dps/dp2001-28.pdf> >

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**Botswana and Zimbabwe: Relative Success and Comparative Failure**

Author(s): Guy Mhone and Patrick Bond

Botswana and Zimbabwe represent two cases of differential access to the world economy. Notwithstanding its lack of diversification and its reliance on a primary mineral export, Botswana has prospered while Zimbabwe has fallen into a deep crisis. Historical and comparative evidence allows us to transcend the superficial presumption common to much policy discourse, namely that the basis for success depends upon adherence to the "Washington Consensus" export-oriented strategy, or to good governance, or even to geographical considerations. The authors argue instead that there are much deeper problems and possibilities that the Botswana and Zimbabwe cases indicate. These relate largely to developmental linkages and aspects of agency.

< <http://www.wider.unu.edu/publications/dps/dp2001-38.pdf> >

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**Government and Innovation Policy: An Analysis of the South African Experience**

Author(s): Sunil Mani

South Africa used to follow a policy of import substitution, necessitated by subscription to apartheid. However, following the democratic elections of 1994, the country abandoned this policy and put in place a whole host of measures to increase its industrial competitiveness. Policy makers gave specific attention to achieving this goal through technological development. The country has shown considerable sophistication in framing the necessary policies and institutions to hasten this process of domestic technology development coupled with a better absorption of imported technologies. However, South Africa has not shown as much sophistication in implementing and evaluating these otherwise laudable policies. The provision of a significant number of research grants has not resulted in desirable results. An analysis shows that the country suffers from a severe shortage of scientists and engineers who can engage in R&D. The reason for this is a near-stagnant enrolment in science and engineering subjects and possibly migration abroad. The South African case once again confirms the hypothesis that countries may not be successful in stimulating R&D in their enterprise sectors by merely fine-tuning financial instruments such as research grants and tax incentives. For financial instruments to be very effective, there has to be a critical mass of research scientists and engineers.

< <http://www.intech.unu.edu/publications/discussion-papers/2001-2.pdf> >

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### **Firm Size, Technological Capabilities and Market-Oriented Policies in Mauritius**

Author(s): Ganeshan Wignaraja

Mauritius is an exception in Sub-Saharan Africa for its impressive manufactured export performance based on garments since the adoption of market-oriented policies in the early 1980s. Little, however, is known about the role played by internal technological factors on the exporting behaviour of enterprises of different size classes in the Mauritian garment industry. Using recent methodological developments in the literature on industrial technological capabilities, this paper explores this issue by constructing a technology index and conducting econometric analysis on factors affecting enterprise-level technological development and export performance in a sample of Mauritian garment enterprises. The econometric results show that firm size, technical manpower, training expenditures and external technical assistance are positively related to the technology index. This confirms that investments in human capital and seeking information, both facilitated by size, improve technological performance. This is strengthened by the fact that the technology index and foreign ownership have positive and statistically significant effects on export performance of each firm. The technology index is a robust tool of empirical research and can be used to analyse the technological record of enterprises in adjusting developing countries.

< <http://www.intech.unu.edu/publications/discussion-papers/2001-1.pdf> >

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### **Reconstruction from War in Africa: Communities, Entrepreneurs, and States**

Author(s): Tony Addison

Africa has become synonymous with conflict. There were armed conflicts in 16 of Africa's 54 countries in 1999. For Africa to recover, communities must reconstruct, private sectors must revitalize, and states must transform themselves. Aid donors, NGOs, and international business can do much to help (or hinder). However, the movement from conflict to reconstruction and then onto sustained development largely depends on the three national actors. Thus, unless communities rebuild and strengthen their livelihoods, neither reconstruction nor growth will be poverty reducing. But communities cannot prosper unless private investment recreates markets and generates more employment. And neither communities nor entrepreneurs can realize their potential without a development state — one that is democratically accountable and dedicated to poverty-reducing development. The international community can do much to assist — through more aid, debt relief, and peacekeeping — but ultimately the future lies in the hands of Africans themselves.

< <http://www.wider.unu.edu/publications/dps/dp2001-18.pdf> >

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### **Displaced Communities and the Reconstruction of Livelihoods in Eritrea**

Author(s): Gaim Kibreab

Since large-scale programmes of post-war resettlement and reintegration are costly, it is important to learn the lessons of the resettlement programme started after the end of Eritrea's liberation war in 1991. Eritrea's system of land tenure largely facilitated resettlement, social capital built during the war was a positive resource, and the state's legitimacy was another positive factor despite the shortage of skills and fragmented help from donors. Those who self-settled generally did better than those who settled under government schemes: this implies

that helping self-settlement is more cost-effective than direct government help — an important lesson for the future. The success of returnees in reconstructing their livelihoods depends upon the resumption of sustainable development activities in settlement areas. Assistance is most effective and equitable when provided on a community-wide basis, bringing benefits to the entire population of areas where returnees settle.

< <http://www.wider.unu.edu/publications/dps/dp2001-23.pdf> >

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### **From Humanitarian Assistance to Poverty Reduction in Angola**

Author(s): Mario Adauta de Sousa, Tony Addison, Bjorn Ekman and Asa Stenman

The list of illnesses afflicting Angolan society is a long one: political instability, civil war, macroeconomic mismanagement and the desperation born of poverty. A profound sense of uncertainty afflicts all levels of society — the government (and its opponents), entrepreneurs, and rural and urban communities. Ordinary citizens are deeply sceptical of the country's political, economic, and social institutions, and regard high inequality as a sign that economic policy is largely run for the benefit of the wealthy. Uncertainty undermines government institutions, discourages long-term investment by entrepreneurs, and hinders community development. Therefore both uncertainty and high and rising inequality create low levels of trust in social institutions. The resulting loss of social capital undermines both economic performance and the effectiveness of national, sectoral, and community-level interventions in poverty reduction. Restoring confidence in social institutions will take considerable time. But some war-torn societies — Mozambique in particular — have shown that it is at least possible to make a start.

< <http://www.wider.unu.edu/publications/dps/dp2001-22.pdf> >

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### **The Agrarian Question in Mozambique's Transition and Reconstruction**

Author(s): Marc Wuyts

The economic policies of transition and reconstruction in Mozambique, like the policies of central planning beforehand, were based on an inappropriate model of the inherited rural economy. Under central planning, the peasantry was looked upon as a mass of subsistence producers; with the economic reforms came the vision of the peasantry as a mass of smallholder producers. Both of these views ignored the extent to which peasant livelihoods depended on the complex and varied linkages between wage labour and household production. Under the impulse of the reforms, both the social and regional differentiation of the countryside have become far more pronounced. The processes at work involved a partial regression to past patterns of accumulation and labour use. Although this process can undoubtedly lead to the recovery and growth of agricultural production, it is unlikely to provide a basis for broad-based development due to the persistent and continued exclusion of the poorer peasantry from the benefits of economic growth.

< <http://www.wider.unu.edu/publications/dps/dp2001-14.pdf> >

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## **Overcoming the Fiscal Crisis of the African State**

Author(s): Tony Addison and Leonce Ndikumana

A critical task is to construct a development state – a set of democratically-accountable institutions capable of effective policy design and implementation. The new state agenda is ambitious and resource intensive. It cannot therefore be achieved unless the fiscal crisis of the African state is resolved, especially low and distorted spending on pro-poor services, weak budgetary institutions, distortions in civil-service expenditure, and the weakness of customs and taxation institutions in raising much-needed revenue. These problems are common across SSA but they are severe in the conflict/post-conflict country group. Reform is therefore urgent, and this issue illustrates how reform — if it is well designed — can support reconstruction. Furthermore, reduced military spending, more grant aid, and more debt relief all release or add resources for core spending.

< <http://www.wider.unu.edu/publications/dps/dp2001-12.pdf> >

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### **Other News**

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#### **Conference on Growth and Poverty**

Helsinki, 25–26 May 2001

Building on some of the themes covered in the World Development Report 2000-2001, the conference reviewed what is currently known about the relationship between poverty and growth. It also provided an opportunity to share views on the direction of future research, including the issues that require attention, the methods of analysis that need to be developed, and new data sets that would facilitate research in this area.

< <http://www.wider.unu.edu/conference/conference-2001-1/conference1.htm> >

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#### **Conference on Debt**

Helsinki, 17-18 August 2001

In December 2000, the IMF and the World Bank announced that 22 countries (18 of them in Africa) had qualified for debt relief under the HIPC initiative, the debt relief being worth some US\$ 34 billion. But the HIPC initiative — and debt relief more generally — remains highly controversial. The UNU/WIDER conference reviewed what is presently known about the relationship between debt, development and poverty reduction, and assessed the state of progress on debt relief, and its implications for the relationship between aid donors and recipient countries. Some 64 papers of 73 papers from the Conference are available online, and many relate directly to sub-Saharan Africa.

< <http://www.wider.unu.edu/conference/conference-2001-2/conference2001-2.htm> >

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**Do the Least Developed Countries need Science and Technology for Sustainable Development?**

A paper prepared by Lynn Mytelka for the Third UN Conference on Least Developed Countries Round Table on "Education for All and Sustainable Development in LDCs" that was held on 16 May 2001.

< <http://www.intech.unu.edu/publications/conference-workshop-reports/LDC%20paper.pdf> >

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**Call for Papers on "Spatial Inequality and Development"**

Amidst a growing concern about increasing inequality, the spatial dimensions of inequality have begun to attract considerable policy interest. On 27—29 June 2002, Cornell University – LSE – UNU/WIDER will organize a conference on "Spatial Inequality and Development."

<<http://www.wider.unu.edu/conference/conference-2002-1/conference-2002-1-call-for-papers.pdf>>

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Notes:

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