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# Supporting Human Development: Triumphs and Challenges on the Continent

>> **ISSUE BRIEF** from the **AUTHORS**

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# Africa's Human Development Challenge in 2016 and Beyond

Kathleen G. Beegle and Luc Christiaensen

The 2015 World Bank report *Poverty in a Rising Africa* documents substantial improvements in well-being in Africa.<sup>1</sup> This progress resonates with the new perspective of “Africa rising” and an “African 21st century.” But the report also shows that Africa’s human development challenge remains enormous, and that data systems need strengthening to tackle the challenge.

## Poverty rates are down, and other dimensions of human development also improved

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**The share of people in Africa living on less than \$1.90 a day fell from 56 percent in 1990 to 43 percent in 2012.**

The share of people in Africa living on less than \$1.90 a day fell from 56 percent in 1990 to 43 percent in 2012. But only 27 out of the 48 countries examined had two or more comparable surveys in this period with which to track poverty. Analysis that accounts for the lack of comparability and poor quality of some of the data suggests that the poverty rate may have come down even further.

Substantial progress is also recorded in other dimensions of human development, especially in health and personal security. Since the mid-1990s, life expectancy at birth has risen by 6.2 years, and the prevalence of chronic malnutrition among children under 5 fell 6 percentage points. Deaths from politically motivated violence has declined. Tolerance and the incidence of gender-based domestic violence declined, and scores on voice and accountability indicators have risen slightly.

Progress in the aggregate has come along with progress on the ground.

<sup>1</sup> Beegle, Kathleen, Christiaensen, Luc, Dabalen, Andrew, and Isis Gaddis. *Poverty in a Rising Africa*. Washington D.C.: World Bank, 2015.

## But more people are poor than in 1990, and low human development outcomes remain a challenge

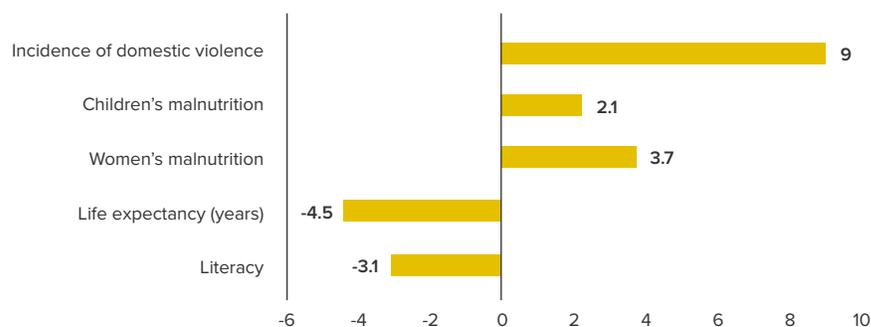
Despite the drop in the poverty rate, given Africa's rapid population growth, still many more people are poor today: Even under the most optimistic estimates of 2012 poverty, this number is about 330 million compared with 280 million in 1990. And projections also consistently show that the world's poor will be increasingly concentrated in Africa, keeping Africa at the forefront of the global poverty agenda.

The levels of achievement in human development also remain low across the different domains and the rate of progress is leveling off. More than two out of five adults are still unable to read or write. About three-quarters of sixth graders in Malawi and Zambia cannot read for meaning—one example of the school quality challenge. Likewise, health outcomes remain the worst in the world. Since 2010, the number of violent events against civilians (including political unrest, terrorism, and civil conflict) has been on the rise. Tolerance of domestic violence (at 30 percent of the population) is twice as high as in the rest of the developing world. Despite a decline in domestic violence overall, a generational shift in mindset is still to come in terms of not tolerating it.

Overall, three patterns stand out. First, and unsurprisingly, fragile countries tend to perform worse. Second, there is a worrisome human development penalty to residing in a resource-rich country (Figure 3.1). Finally, better-educated women and their children do decisively better.

### FIGURE 3.1. A HUMAN DEVELOPMENT PENALTY TO RESIDING IN A RESOURCE-RICH COUNTRY

Despite the wealth offered by the available natural resources in resource-rich countries, those countries' citizens often experience a lower quality of life, especially when it comes to malnutrition and life expectancy. These countries should take 2016 to address gaps in social policy, though with commodity prices low this task could be even tougher than usual.



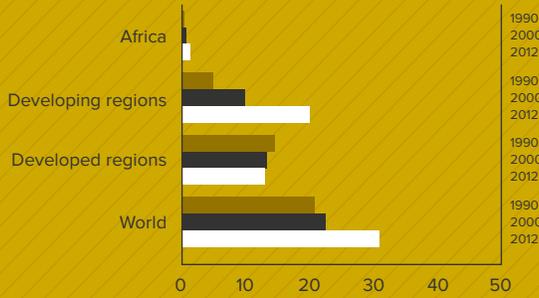
Source: Beegle, Kathleen, Christiaensen, Luc, Dabalen, Andrew, and Isis Gaddis. *Poverty in a Rising Africa*. Washington D.C.: World Bank, 2015.

Note: All measures are in percentage points except life expectancy. Percentage point gap between resource and non-resource-rich countries, conditional on income level, residence, and other household characteristics.



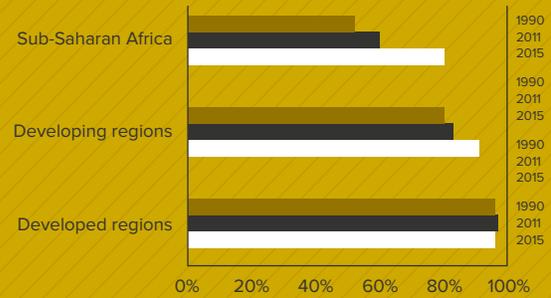
### To ensure environmental sustainability

Emissions of carbon dioxide, 1990, 2000, and 2012\* (billions of metric tons)



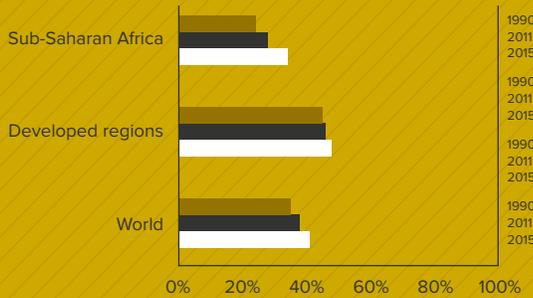
### To achieve universal primary education

Adjusted net enrollment rate in primary education, 1990, 2000, and 2015



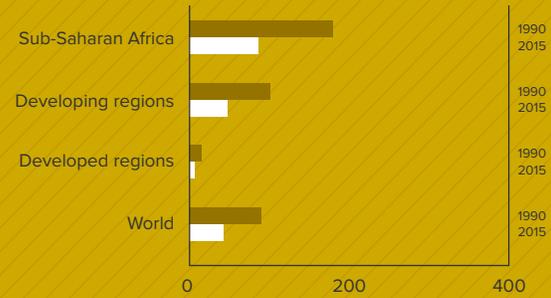
### To promote gender equality

Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector, 1990, 2000, and 2015



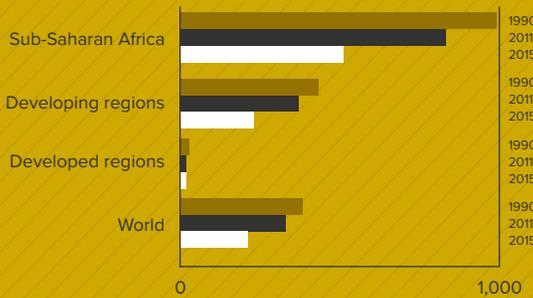
### To reduce child mortality

Under-five mortality rate, 1990 and 2015 (deaths per 1,000 live births)



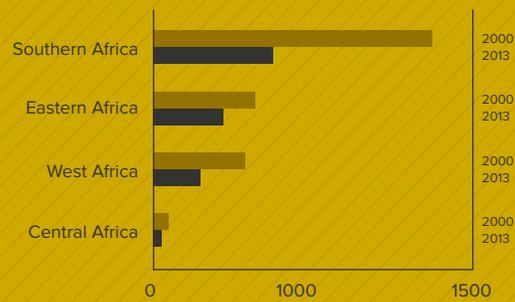
### To improve maternal health

Maternal mortality ratio, 1990, 2000, and 2013 (maternal deaths per 100,000 live births, women aged 15-49)



### To combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases

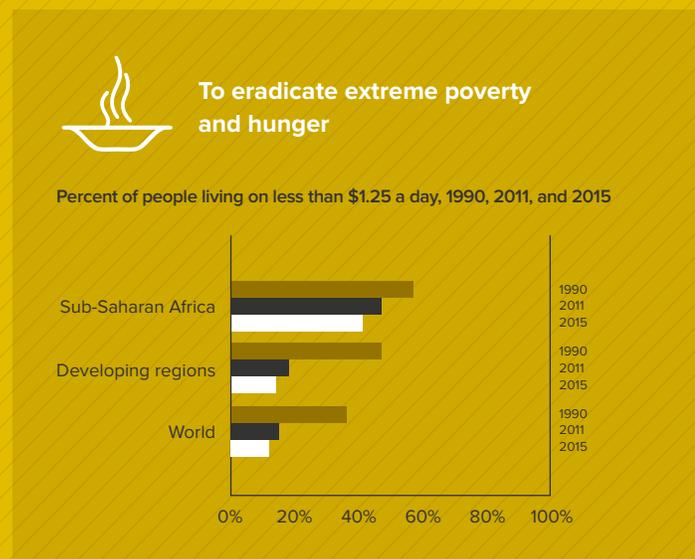
Estimated number of new HIV infections, 2000 and 2013 (thousands)



# MDGs report card

## Starting the SDGs on the right foot

2016 marks the first year of the Sustainable Development Goals, which Africa helped shape through its Common African Position. The SDGs highlight new challenges for the world to face and fight, all of which continue to pertain to the region. This brief look back on the region's accomplishments from the Millennium Development Goals shows that Africa showed significant strength in many of the health indicators—especially when it came to slowing the spread of HIV/AIDS—but left room for improvement in others. 2016 and the SDGs offer the next opportunity for the region to tackle its (and the world's) most pressing challenges. Starting strong in 2016 is a great jumping off point for the long road ahead.



Source: The United Nations, The Millennium Development Goals Report, 2015.

## VIEWPOINT

# AT THE HEART OF CHANGE: THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT

Winnie Byanyima  
Executive Director, Oxfam International

Women's rights are at the center of Oxfam's work, and this is something we see as necessary for development. Without gender equality, the African continent will not fulfill its remarkable potential for its people.

2015 saw gender equality enshrined in the Sustainable Development Goals as well as the review of agreements seminal to women's rights—including the Beijing Platform for Action and United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325.

Action is yet needed to protect and further African women's rights. 2016 calls upon the political courage of the continent's leaders to rethink economic inclusivity and reinvigorate efforts on human rights. Oxfam in particular is pleased to see the African Union declare 2016 as "The Year of Human Rights with a Special Focus on Women's Human Rights."

But it is a painful reality that there are 11 current armed conflicts in the African continent, according to the International Institute for Strategic Studies. Within this context, violence against women and girls only escalates. At Oxfam in particular we continue to challenge this sobering reality through our multi-country and Pan-African initiatives

that leverage empirical evidence and advocate to influence legislative change.

In 2016, governments mediating or supporting these discussions on peace, security, and development must insist on the meaningful participation of women as a condition of their involvement—this is a right, and a means to conflict resolution. The

United Nations found that less than 4 percent of signatories to peace talks from 1992 to 2011 have been women; many peace negotiations in Africa are testament to this statistic.

**Income inequality  
is strongly linked to  
gender inequality—as a  
cause, consequence,  
and solution.**

In the medium term, progress on gender equality requires Africa's economic growth to be shared by its women and girls. While GDP growth is expected to pick up to an average of 4.25 percent in 2016, the continent faces rising and extreme economic inequality.

This is more concerning since, as recently found by the IMF, income inequality is strongly linked to gender inequality—as a cause, consequence, and solution.

Government investment in public services that enable gender equality such as good quality and free education and health care is therefore essential, as is ensuring that economic policies are assessed for their impact on women and girls.

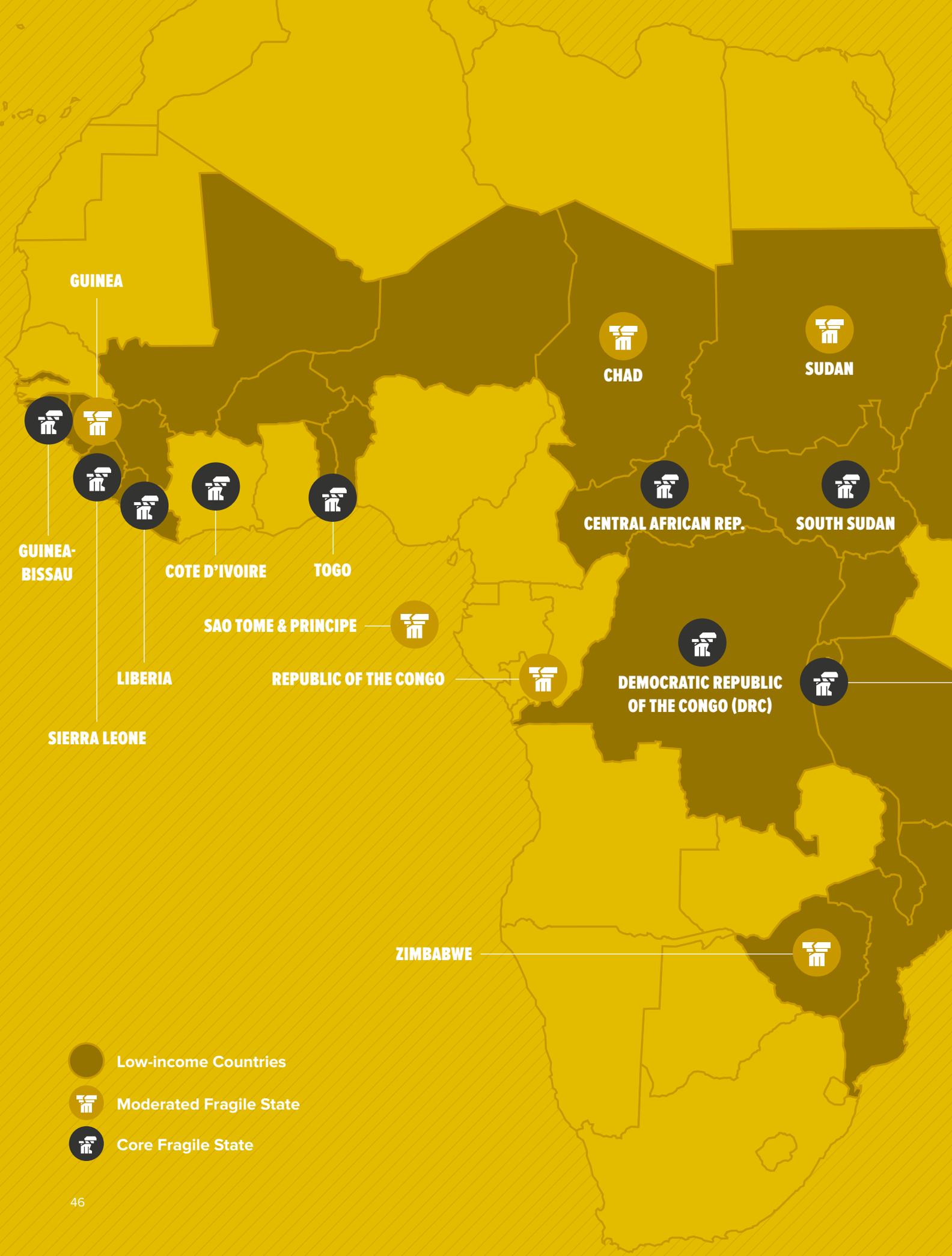
When schooling, for example, comes with a price, and families face tough choices, too often Africa's girls lose out from boy-preference.

Crucially, the disproportionate responsibility that women bear for unpaid care work requires attention: Recent Oxfam research, which was inclusive of three African countries, found that women on average spent nearly five more hours than men on care work per day. This issue must be addressed through investing in child and elderly care, public transportation, and other infrastructure that is gender sensitive as well as challenges the social norms that delegate this work predominantly to women.

Governments and private companies must also address gendered economic inequality through

eliminating the gender pay gap and economic inequalities that accrue over women's lifetimes, for example by introducing policies and legislation that promote equal pay, decent work, parental leave, and flexible work access to credit, equal inheritance, and land rights. And, of course, women's economic equality will only be achieved when we address inequalities in all areas of women's lives.

Finally, women's organizations in Africa require increased financial support to drive change. They sit on the front line of efforts to represent women, tackle gender-based violence, as well as prevent and resolve conflicts, but too often they are not listened to. It is their voice that needs to be heard loudest, and their leadership that will reclaim their rights.



-  Low-income Countries
-  Moderated Fragile State
-  Core Fragile State

# Where are the African fragile states?



The African Development Bank defines fragile states as those that are facing “a condition of elevated risk of institutional breakdown, societal collapse or violent conflict. Fragility is an imbalance between the strains and challenges (internal and external) faced by a state and society and their ability to manage them.” Interestingly, out of the 17 fragile states in the region only four of them (São Tomé and Príncipe, the Republic of the Congo, Sudan, and Côte d’Ivoire) are not low-income countries.

Country	Core Fragile State	Moderated Fragile State
Algeria		
Angola		
Benin		
Botswana		
Burkina Faso		
Burundi	✓	
Cameroon		
Cabo Verde		
Central African Rep.	✓	
Chad		✓
Comoros	✓	
Congo, Rep.		✓
DRC	✓	
Côte d'Ivoire	✓	
Djibouti		✓
Egypt		
Equatorial Guinea		
Eritrea		
Ethiopia		
Gabon		
The Gambia		
Ghana		
Guinea		✓
Guinea-Bissau	✓	
Kenya		
Lesotho		
Liberia	✓	

Country	Core Fragile State	Moderated Fragile State
Libya		
Madagascar		
Malawi		
Mali		
Mauritania		
Mauritius		
Morocco		
Mozambique		
Namibia		
Niger		
Nigeria		
Rwanda		
São Tomé & Príncipe		✓
Senegal		
Seychelles		
Sierra Leone	✓	
Somalia		✓
South Africa		
South Sudan	✓	
Sudan		✓
Swaziland		
Tanzania		
Togo	✓	
Tunisia		
Uganda		
Zambia		
Zimbabwe		✓

Source: African Development Bank, Fragile States Facility Digest, Available online: <http://www.afdb.org/en/topics-and-sectors/initiatives-partnerships/fragile-states-facility/fragile-states-facility-digest/> (Accessed October 2015). Income classification from World Bank databank.

## VIEWPOINT

# THE FUTURE OF AGRICULTURE IN AFRICA

Geoffrey Gertz

Pre-Doctoral Research Fellow, Global Economy and Development, Brookings Institution

Homi Kharas

Senior Fellow and Deputy Director, Global Economy and Development, Brookings Institution

Strong agricultural systems are a crucial component of Africa's future development. Agricultural productivity is important not only for the priorities of ending hunger and achieving food security, but more broadly for progress on economic growth and poverty reduction, as many of those living in poverty depend on agriculture for their income.

Yet agricultural systems in many African countries face daunting challenges. In the *Ending Rural Hunger* (2015) report, we analyze the scale of needs in food and nutrition security (FNS) for 116 developing countries across four critical dimensions: access to food, malnutrition, agricultural productivity gaps, and vulnerability. We find that the five countries in the world with the greatest FNS needs are all found in sub-Saharan Africa: Eritrea, Chad, Zambia, Liberia, and the Central African Republic. Overall, of the 20 countries with the greatest FNS needs, 19 are in sub-Saharan Africa.

While the FNS challenge is multifaceted, and specific priorities vary country by country,

we find that in general many sub-Saharan African countries face particular difficulties in agricultural productivity. Cereal yields are a basic if crude measure of the productivity levels of agricultural systems. According to the FAO, in 1965 yields in sub-Saharan Africa were about 30 percent of those in North America; by 2000, this figure had actually fallen to just 20 percent. Through the end of the 20th century, no mainland sub-Saharan African country (excluding temperate South Africa) had ever achieved sustained cereal yields above 2 tons per hectare—a key threshold, as this is approximately the point at which productivity is high enough to allow farmers to save and invest for the future and for society to encourage labor to shift away from agriculture into manufacturing and services.

There is some evidence, however, that African agriculture has reached a turning point, and the continent may be headed toward its own "Green Revolution." In recent years yields in many countries have begun to rise, and today a number of countries have broken through the 2 tons per hectare threshold, including Côte

**Of the 20 countries with the greatest food and nutrition security needs, 19 are in sub-Saharan Africa.**

d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Malawi, Uganda, and Zambia. Progress has been driven by a number of factors, including investments in rural infrastructure, improved policies to facilitate trade in both local and international markets, and training and extension programs to boost individual farmer's productivity. The lesson from these African countries' recent successes—echoing the experience of many Asian countries decades earlier—is that, though there is no single “silver bullet” intervention, a package of complementary public investments and policy reforms can deliver transformational change.

Underpinning this shift has been a high-level political commitment to agriculture on the part of African leaders, as evidenced by promises

at African Union summits in Maputo (2003) and Malabo (2014). These commitments are both about devoting a greater share of national budgets to agriculture and about finding the political will to take difficult but necessary decisions, such as removing trade barriers that distort markets. Sustaining the progress of recent years in 2016 and beyond will demand continued leadership, including through strengthening rural business climates to attract sustainable private investment, domestic and foreign, in agriculture. But with strong national leadership, matched with support from bilateral donors and multilateral institutions, African countries have the potential to overcome the agricultural productivity gaps that historically have held back the continent's development.

**Today a number of countries have broken through the 2 tons per hectare threshold, including Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Malawi, Uganda, and Zambia.**

## The prospects for 2016

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**Better data can lead to better decisions and better lives.**

Poverty and human development outcomes do not change quickly. So, what can we expect to see in 2016?

Poor data systems have long plagued proper tracking of poverty in Africa. The year 2016 could mark the beginning of a turnaround. A number of initiatives for a data revolution are being launched.<sup>2</sup> Building off the strong data messages in *Poverty in a Rising Africa*, in October 2015 the World Bank committed to help the poorest countries conduct one consumption survey every three years. Better data can lead to better decisions and better lives.

Renewed momentum is seen in addressing the education challenges. A Framework for Action has already been adopted by UNESCO. In September 2016, the International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunities will report on how to fill the \$39 billion a year external financing gap to meet Sustainable Development Goal 4.

Fragile states, those in post-conflict situations and experiencing on-going conflict will continue to demand attention across the region and challenge the development agenda.

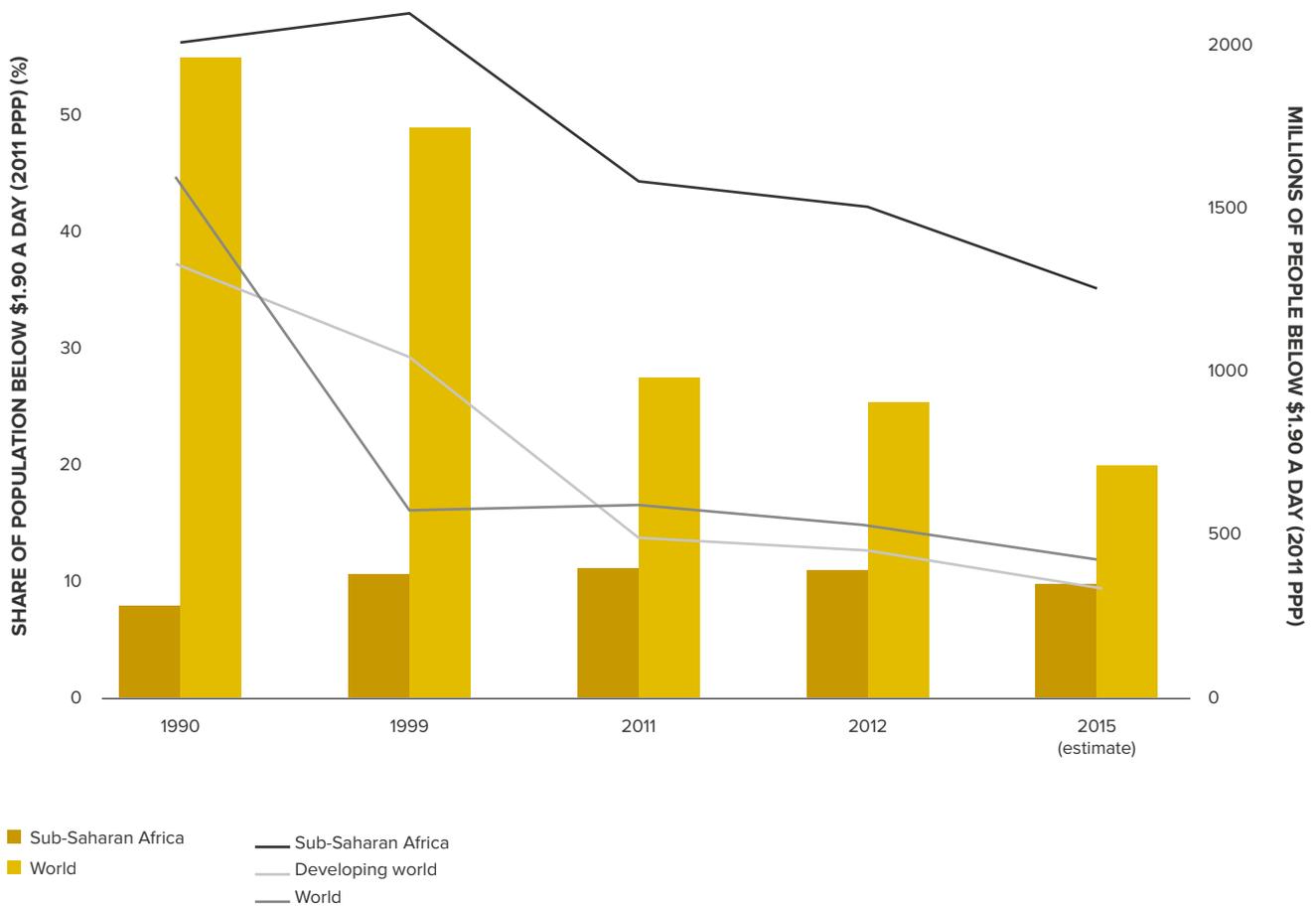
Finally, with commodity prices predicted to remain low, incipient attention to better translate natural resource wealth into human development may wane.<sup>3</sup> Nonetheless, it is important that this agenda be developed further.

<sup>2</sup> "Initiatives on the data revolution for post-2015." Data Revolution Group. <http://www.undatarevolution.org/catalog/2/>.

<sup>3</sup> De la Briere, Benedicte, Filmer, Deon, Ringold, Dena, Rohner, Dominic, Samuda, Karelle, and Anastasiya Denisova. *From Mines to Minds: Turning Sub-Saharan's Mineral Wealth into Human Capital*. Washington D.C.: World Bank, forthcoming in 2016.

### FIGURE 3.2. SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA'S POVERTY RATE IS DROPPING, BUT ITS NUMBER OF POOR PEOPLE IS RISING

The data here shows encouraging information about the decline of poverty in sub-Saharan Africa, the developing world, and the world at large, though the total numbers in sub-Saharan Africa are more than they were in 1990 due to increasing population levels. At the same time, the World Bank also notes that while poverty is declining in all regions, it is also becoming more entrenched in some. In 2016 policymakers and development actors could not only look to enact policies for ending poverty but also utilize the population shift to stop the growth in absolute poverty, curb inequality, and create a productive workforce to propel future economic growth.



Source: World Bank Group. 2016. Global Monitoring Report 2015/2016: Development Goals in an Era of Demographic Change. Overview booklet. World Bank, Washington, DC. License: Creative Commons Attribution CC BY 3.0 IGO Available online: <http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/pubdocs/publicdoc/2015/10/31141444230135479/GMR-Over-and-Exec-Summary-English.pdf>.

## VIEWPOINT

# INEQUALITY, GROWTH, AND POVERTY DYNAMICS SHAPING HUMAN DEVELOPMENT IN 2016

Haroon Borat

Nonresident Senior Fellow, Africa Growth Initiative, Global Economy and Development, Brookings Institution  
Professor of Economics and Director of the Development Policy Research Unit (DPRU), University of Cape Town

The interaction between inequality, economic growth, and poverty will continue to be one of the most important determinants of human development in Africa in 2016. A clear understanding of these relationships is thus crucial. Sub-Saharan Africa is, on average, more unequal relative to the rest of the developing world: Africa's mean Gini coefficient, which measures the distribution of within-country income inequality, stands at 0.43 (on a scale of 0 to 1, where 1 is the highest measure of inequality) whereas for other non-African developing countries the average Gini coefficient is lower, at 0.39. However, there remains a key statistical caveat: Seven economies—Angola, Botswana, the Central African Republic, Comoros, Namibia, South Africa, and Zambia—have much higher inequality than the rest of the region, serving to increase the overall result for Africa. Put differently, once these seven outlier economies are removed, the difference between sub-Saharan Africa and other developing countries disappears (see Figure 3.3).

**Economic growth is essentially less poverty-reducing in sub-Saharan Africa relative to the rest of the developing world.**

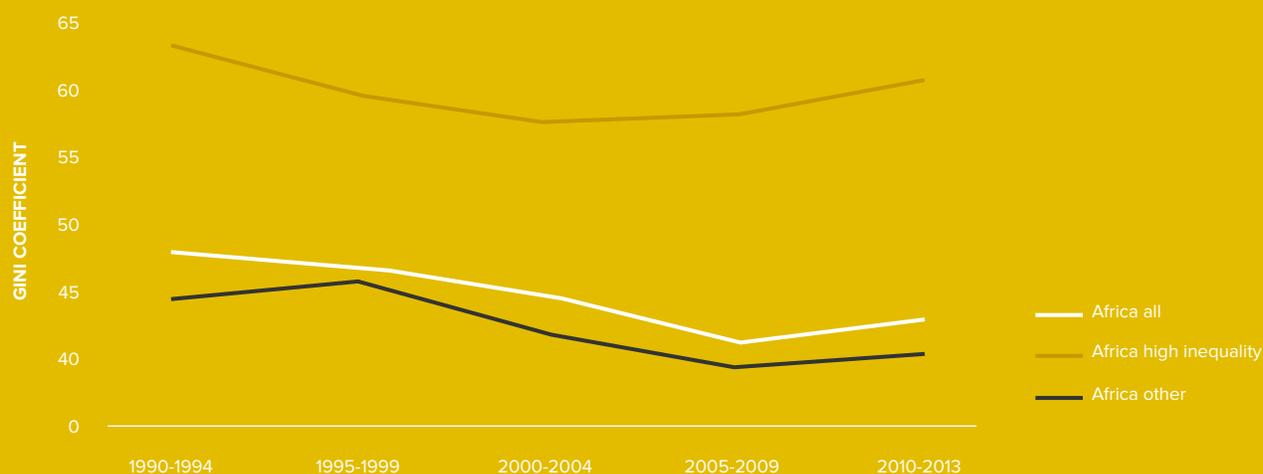
When thinking about poverty and growth though, the region itself is an outlier. In most of the developing world, for every 1 percent increase in growth, poverty falls by about 4 percentage points. However, in sub-Saharan Africa, this growth-poverty elasticity stands at about 3 percent. Hence, economic growth is essentially less poverty-reducing in sub-Saharan Africa relative to the rest of the developing world. Ultimately, this result suggests that the nature of the growth trajectory in the region is, on average, less welfare-enhancing than elsewhere in the developing world. One possible reason could be that many of the recent high-growth episodes in African economies have been sustained on the back of resource-commodity booms. These resource booms potentially generate significant fiscal revenues, but the nature of this growth path is intrinsically capital intensive and thus insufficiently employment generating. Effectively, the resource-intensive growth path found in many African economies provides relatively higher returns on capital

relative to labor—replicating a pattern of low poverty reduction with a possible rise in income inequality. A more generalized experience in much of sub-Saharan Africa is that economic growth through a commodities boom has been combined with a stagnation in manufacturing output. In effect, sub-Saharan Africa has, in a sense, experienced a slow process of deindustrialization as the boom in resources has been combined with a deterioration in manufacturing production. An alternative way to think about this trend is that most of the growth in employment that Africa has experienced in recent years seems to be in the low-

productivity services sector. I remain concerned about this trend and do not think it's a viable growth strategy for Africa. Somewhere in every country's economic growth story, manufacturing (and some would argue light manufacturing in particular) has been key. Ultimately, for the average African economy, the share of GDP accounted for by manufacturing needs to expand. This expansion in manufacturing will provide the building blocks for a more diversified and dynamic local economy—in the pursuit of structural transformation and an improvement in living standards in Africa.

### FIGURE 3.3. MOVEMENTS IN THE GINI COEFFICIENT IN AFRICA OVER TIME

While Africa does experience higher levels of inequality than the rest of the developing world, its overall inequality has decreased since 1990. One of the most interesting trends, though, is that the huge gap between Africa's inequality and the rest of the developing world might be explained by just seven outlier economies—Angola, the Central African Republic, Botswana, Zambia, Namibia, Comoros, and South Africa, which have Gini coefficients above 0.55. If you remove those seven countries, Africa's inequality mirrors the rest of the developing world's much more closely.



Source: WIID, 2014; World Development Indicators, 2014; Bhorat, 2015.

Notes: 1. For the Africa average, the sample sizes per period are as follows: 27 (1990-1994), 24 (1995-1999), 38 (2000-2004), 28 (2005-2009), 25 (2010-2013).  
2. The High Inequality countries are: Angola, Botswana, Comoros, Central African Republic, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia. The sample sizes per period are as follows: 5 (1990-1994), 2 (1995-1999), 7 (2000-2004), 3 (2005-2009), 3 (2010-2013).

## VIEWPOINT

# PLANNING AHEAD: NEW AFRICAN APPROACHES TO MITIGATING CLIMATE CHANGE

Richard Wilcox

Founding Director-General of the African Risk Capacity Agency (2013-2015)

For African farmers and pastoralists, whose livelihoods are subject to the vagaries of the weather, a sudden environmental shock can have a devastating impact. Families and communities can find themselves pulled in a downward spiral from which it may be impossible to escape.

Droughts, floods, and cyclones are often not the reason why millions in Africa and many other regions are in poverty. But they can be the final blow that takes away their opportunities for progress. Extreme weather is, of course, damaging wherever it hits. But in developing regions and for the most vulnerable, it can be the difference between hope and despair.

With the increasing frequency and intensity of extreme weather events driven by climate change, Africa cannot afford to wait. The continent is bringing solutions to the table, addressing the issue of climate change head on. The recently concluded UNFCCC COP21 meeting in Paris affirmed the United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's, President Obama's, and other G-7 leaders' commitments to the bold and innovative proposal

to scale up climate risk insurance globally, following Africa's and the Caribbean's lead.

In 2012, 26 African Union member states came together to establish the African Risk Capacity (ARC)

Agency and its financial affiliate, a mutual insurer—ARC Insurance Company Limited (ARC Ltd)—with the

purpose of transferring some of the burden of climate risk away from governments and the farmers and pastoralists they protect to the international financial markets. The agency builds the capacity of participating governments to model their own risk, respond early to vulnerable populations in the case of a disaster and select the appropriate coverage for their level of risk. Its Conference of the

Parties—or signatories to its treaty—sets and enforces continental standards for disaster response. With a premium payment, countries then become members of the mutual and active participants in its governance, able to leverage additional coverage from the reinsurance industry. This unique institutional structure, which allows ARC to leverage limited public resources to attract private capital, can be replicated across sectors and regions.

**We may not be  
able to prevent bad  
weather, but together  
we can protect the most  
vulnerable and  
provide the tools to  
help them.**

In its first year of operation, three of the four countries that formed ARC's inaugural risk pool— Senegal, Mauritania, and Niger—paid a combined premium of \$8 million and received pay-outs of over \$26 million, triggered by drought in the Sahel. The money was in government accounts even as the international U.N. appeal was still being formulated. Governments used the insurance payouts to purchase livestock fodder and staples primarily from local producers, reaching over half a million livestock and 1.3 million people who may have otherwise been forced to cut down on meals, take children out of school, or leave their land.

ARC is far more than just a regional variation on a traditional insurance scheme. It uses insurance to provide the incentives for holistic risk management systems, investments in risk reduction, and response capacities to build resilience over time. And more, by putting African countries in charge, ARC cuts duplication and delays, leading to faster and better results. Oxford University experts estimate that a dollar spent on ARC saves four and a half dollars in traditional humanitarian aid.

More countries are getting on board. In May 2015, the ARC Ltd pool further expanded, bringing its total membership to nine: Burkina Faso, the Gambia, Kenya, Mali, Malawi, Mauritania, Niger,

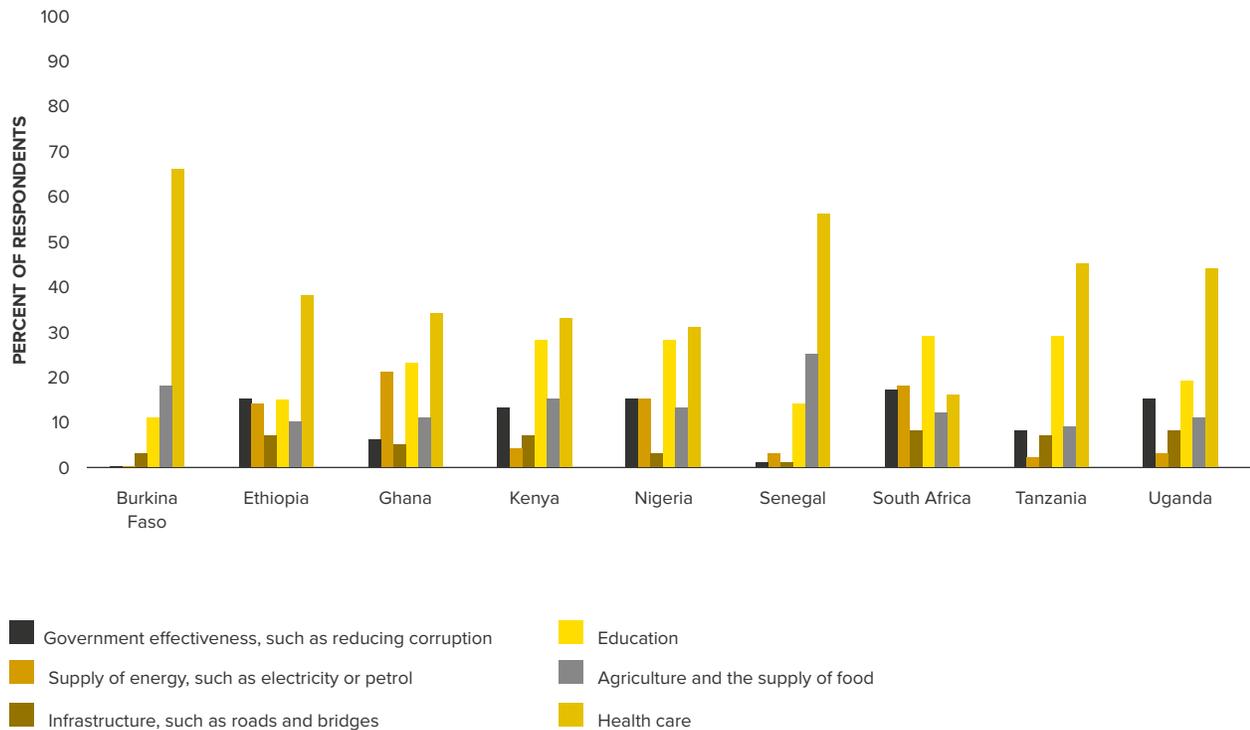
Senegal, and Zimbabwe. These countries paid a total premium of \$25 million for \$180 million in drought coverage. By 2020, the ARC aims to reach as many as 30 countries with nearly \$1.5 billion of coverage against drought, flood, and cyclones thereby making a significant contribution to the G-7 global target of 400 million people insured by 2020. Admittedly, achieving this goal will be a challenge given the current global fiscal climate and the African context where countries are now bracing for anticipated impacts from El Niño while also balancing responses to numerous other threats. But ARC's member states remain undeterred in their quest to move from managing crises to managing risks.

To protect member states' investments in risk management, ARC plans to offer in 2017 up to \$500 million in climate adaptation financing through the Extreme Climate Facility (XCF) to provide direct funds to those countries experiencing significant detrimental shifts in their weather patterns.

Africa is leading with innovative and sustainable financing mechanisms to address climate change. We may not be able to prevent bad weather, but together we can protect the most vulnerable and provide the tools to help them not only rebuild their lives and communities, but also their resilience over the long term.

### FIGURE 3.4. WORD FROM THE GROUND: WHAT DO YOU THINK SHOULD BE THE MOST IMPORTANT PRIORITY FOR YOUR COUNTRY?

As a recent Pew survey reveals, when looking to 2016, Africans across countries often share priorities. According to the survey, the top shared priority for 2016 continues to be health care, which was covered by three of the Millennium Development Goals and continues to be enshrined in the Sustainable Development Goals in SDG #3: “Good health and well-being.” Outside of health care and education, though, it is clear that Africans hold very different priorities, showing that progress in 2016 and beyond will need to be country-led.



Source: Pew Research Center Spring 2015 Global Attitudes survey. For more information, see <http://www.pewglobal.org>. Pew Research Center bears no responsibility for the interpretations presented or conclusions reached based on analysis of the data.  
 Note: Respondents were asked which of the six pressing issues above should be the most important priority for their country.

## EVENTS TO WATCH

# LAUNCH OF THE AFRICA CDC AND REGIONAL COLLABORATING CENTERS

## JANUARY

In 2015, African heads of state and government endorsed the creation of an African regional public health institute called the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC). Spearheaded by the African Union, and with funding from international donors including China and the United States, the Africa CDC seeks to improve African capacity to prevent, detect, and respond to public health crises across the continent. The official

launch of the Africa CDC is expected to take place in January 2016, with its headquarters located in Addis Ababa and its initial staff comprised of 10 epidemiology fellows. Following the launch, the AU will move forward with recruiting a director, governing board and advisory council, and additional staff for the headquarters, as well as opening five Regional Collaborating Centers—one in each region of the continent—in 2016.

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# WORLD HUMANITARIAN SUMMIT

## MAY 23-24

After a two-year, U.N.-led consultation process with international stakeholders, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) will host the first World Humanitarian Summit on May 23 and 24, 2016, in Istanbul. This forum will convene a wide array of global partners—including members of national governments, multilateral organizations, civil society and non-governmental organizations, the private sector, and conflict-affected communities—to devise a new agenda for addressing the

challenges presented by humanitarian crises. While the process leading up to the forum has been lauded for its inclusiveness—and for bringing voices from non-state actors into the conversation on the humanitarian system—some analysts have questioned whether the forum will be able to provide a robust framework for swift reform of the humanitarian system, especially considering that any major proposals to change country-level efforts will likely require political approval and implementation at the national levels.

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# THE IMPACT OF EL NIÑO THROUGHOUT AFRICA

In 2015, the El Niño climate phenomenon reached one of its strongest levels in recorded history, leading to intense changes in precipitation throughout the globe. East Africa experienced lower-than-average rainfall from June through September, which in turn, reduced agricultural and pastoral production and increased food insecurity across the region. The effects from El Niño are projected to continue through March 2016, suppressing rainfall in

Southern Africa and resulting in above-average rainfall in the Horn of Africa. In Southern Africa, the reduction in precipitation is expected to worsen already acute food insecurity and further curb crop production, which is already below the five-year average. Conversely, in the Horn of Africa, an increase in precipitation will be largely beneficial for agriculture although it may also increase the risk of flooding.