

Yes Africa Can

Yes Africa Can

SUCCESS STORIES FROM A DYNAMIC
CONTINENT

EDITORS
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FOREWORD

In April 2011, a study entitled “Hiding the Real Africa” documented how easily Africa makes the evening newscasts and newspaper headlines in the West when a major famine, pandemic, or violent crisis breaks. For example, over a five-month period from May 2010, more than 245 articles on Africa published by the 10 most-read US newspapers focused on poverty. Only five of them mentioned wealth and growth.

The tendency to dwell on Africa’s challenges, long-standing problems, and failures rather than on its opportunities and successes is one of the continent’s most enduring stereotypes. Despite an acceleration of economic growth over the past 10 years and a growing army of African middle-class consumers, the narrative about Africa has remained one of poverty, disease, and conflict.

This suggests that changing the narrative on Africa requires not only sustained economic progress in the continent, but also a collaborative platform for telling the story in a compelling way.

Economic growth has sputtered, averaging 5 percent a year from 1998 to 2008. Despite a sharp slowdown in the wake of the recent global financial crisis, growth has rebounded and is back on track. Africa’s private sector is showing signs of dynamism, attracting growing amounts of investment from domestic and foreign investors. Africa’s poverty rate declined by about 1 percentage point a year, from 59 percent in 1995 to 51 percent in 2005. Primary completion rates are rising faster in Africa than anywhere else. More girls are in school, as educational opportunities for girls have expanded across the region. The death of children aged five or younger continues to decline.

Undeniably, much remains to be done: nearly 400 million people still live in extreme poverty; human capital is

low; the production structure of African economies is largely undiversified, heavily concentrated in primary commodities; and governance remains weak.

To harness the recent growth and dynamism in the continent to address these long-term challenges, we need to understand what was behind Africa’s resurgence. This book documents some of the success stories in Africa. The 26 case studies, which have been prepared by local and international academics, analysts, and practitioners, take an in-depth look at economic and social development achievements across countries, themes, and sectors. Some of these are well known, such as Mauritius’s economic growth experience and the information, communications, and technology revolution in Africa. But others are not: the transformation of Rwanda’s coffee sector and the shift to high-quality coffee production; Lesotho’s success in boosting apparel exports; Mozambique’s rapid economic growth (averaging more than 8 percent a year from 1993–2009); and the progress in combating malaria. In addition to documenting the nature of the successes, the case studies identify the reasons and draw lessons for other countries on the continent and elsewhere.

I expect *Yes Africa Can: Success Stories from a Dynamic Continent* to stimulate the interest of both the media and filmmakers to seek out and tell more of Africa’s many success stories; to help put Africa’s positive achievements on the map; and to inspire a vigorous discussion on how Africans can do more to unleash the full economic potential that is needed to transform one of the world’s fastest growing regions.

Obiageli Katryn Ezekwesili
Vice President, Africa Region
The World Bank

FOREWORD

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Manka Angwafo
Editors

ABBREVIATIONS

ACT	artemisinin-based combination therapy
BPO	business process outsourcing
CPR	contraceptive prevalence rate
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FMOH	Federal Ministry of Health
GDP	gross domestic product
GSM	Global System for Mobile Communications
HEP	Health Extension Program
ICT	information and communications technology
IDA	International Development Association
IT/ITES	information technology/information technology–enabled service
MOES	Ministry of Education and Sports
NERICA	New Rice for Africa
NGO	nongovernmental organization
PC	personal computer
PIN	personal identification number
PMA	Plan for the Modernization of Agriculture
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
SMS	short messaging system
TFR	total fertility rate
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
WAEMU	West African Economic and Monetary Union
WHO	World Health Organization

(all dollar figures are U.S. dollars)

