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What is the state of Africa in the world? Broadly, the continent is still taxiing. Its members have never really gotten to take-off since their independence (with the momentary exception of South Africa) and some of the flights that got their wheels off the ground have crashed.[1] It is the latter phenomenon that is most disturbing: Ivory Coast, Kenya, and Zimbabwe have run off the runway and Nigeria and South Africa have undergone serious pilot error. This picture is lightened but not basically changed by the top-listed states across the board (on political, economic, security, and social indicators) of Ghana, Namibia, Benin, Senegal, Gabon, Tanzania, and the sempiternal Botswana.

If the two main axes of conditions since independence can be considered to be self-government and self-development, Africa has done better on the former than on the latter. Until the 2000s, African economic welfare has not improved since independence, and although in recent years there has been some steady improvement, the current world economic crisis threatens to damage that new trend, as did similar events in the 1980s. Production increases have at least kep pace with population the serious population growth, but that is merely to say that welfare has stood still. Meanwhile, Malthusian solutions plague the continent, headed by murderous internal conflicts and epidemic disease Climate change in the future will affect Africa badly and northern and southern Africa dangerously. Some indicators have improved since independence, to be sure. The population per physician has dropped by one-third and per nurse by one-half. Primary school enrolment has increased by 40% (doubled in low-income countries) so that ne enrolment is now 65%, and in secondary education it has increased five-fold to 30% gross enrolment of its age group. Again, these figures and other vary considerably by country, but the trends are evident.

In the matter of self-government, Africa has taken a giant half-step toward realization of the dream of independence. Africa militated for independence—that is, self-government or government of one's self by one's self for one's self—when it shook loose colonial rule beginning half a century ago. Independence typically brought to power a nationalist movement turned single party, a political organization that claimed to incarnate the nation and ruled it in its name. The party was necessarily an elite organization; the masses were at best in an instrumental position, slogging foot soldiers never in charge. With the end of the Cold War and the negotiated change in South Africa, this situation called for a response and the introduction of the second phase of democratization. By the turn of the millennium many African states had elected governments. Freedom House lists 17 "electoral democracies," 8 of them (Senegal, Mali, Ghana, Benin, Namibia, Botswana, South Africa, Lesotho) classified as "free" and the rest joining 22 other states as "partially free;" 14 states were classified as "not free." In many of these cases, elections hide a "democratic autocracy" of dominant party systems, multiparty for show, and even in the half dozen cases where alternance has occurred (not the ultimate test of democracy, to be sure) the newcomer adopts the same characteristics of corruption and kleptocracy, and unaccountability have occurred. Yet at least Africa has got itself the habit of regular contested elections, limited presidential terms, and functioning parties. In sum, Africa has actually made more progress on the road of democratization than on development.

Where is Africa going? Nowhere fast, but somewhere slowly, and, after a repeated, hopeful insistence in the importance of the goals, the next most important trait to be espoused by Africa-watchers, including nearly a billion Africans, is patience. The African state and African societies are sorely burdened by the challenges of going modern in an encroaching globalized world. The full promise of responsible, accountable, public-service-oriented governance will take time to be attained and the road to the goal is bumpy; competing in the current economy of globalization is difficult when Africa's two products of comparative advantage—raw materials and unskilled labor—are undervalued. African states have learned to live with themselves, so that territorial conquest and border disputes are no???? longer

[1] For a fuller development of these remarks, see I William Zartman, "Sub-Saharan Africa: Implosion or Take-Off?" *Politique étrangère* special issue 2008, 93-108.

current problems, but they have not yet learned to live within themselves, since the characteristic form of conflict and violence is internal and greedy, not even revolutionary. Africa's growing export of importance is labor, not brain-drain of high-level categories but "trained-drain" of partially-educated lower class youth who find no place for the meagre skills they have managed to garner and seek flight abroad. Finding a place at home in economy and society is part of the challenge of governance, lest this category of an alienated carve a place for itself in politics. Implosion and state collapse are not common futures on the continent, but a long runway is needed for eventual take-off.

What can be done to improve governance? Governance begins at home, so Africa's own first challenge is to develop norms of good governance, in which the ethos of survival is replaced by an ethos of responsibility. This can be encourage and supported by external measures—as through the Millennium Challenge Account, the NEPAD African Peer-Review Mechanism, or, earlier, the Sullivan Principles—when there is something to support.

Governance means institutions; Africa is not bereft of institutions but modern state organizations and practices, including the rule of law and the separation of powers, are needed as part of a state-building effort, not just in the capital but at the local level where basic roots of good governance are often to be found for the digging and cultivating.

Africa also needs an agricultural revolution. A continent that once fed Europe can come again to feed itself and its growing population only with the development of new strains of food plants such as was provided for Asia by the Green Revolution. This can only come from outside, but with cooperation from the research institutes that do exist in the continent and for whom collaboration would mark both contribution and training.

In dealing with internal conflict (as with other problems), subsidiarity is an important principle. External pressures, legitimized by AU expressions of proper conduct, against offending governments and rebel movements alike, need to be clear and forthcoming. Mediators are needed, from within Africa or from outside, more often working together, as in the joint efforts that produced the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement in Sudan, the 1999 Lusaka Agreement in Congo, and the 1992 Mozambique agreement. But a signed peace agreement is only the first step, not simply a measure to lift the burden of the conflict without going on to resolve the underlying issues and implementing that resolution over subsequent years.[i] States that need outside interference to mediate their conflicts probably also need outside interference to implement their resolution, even if they do not welcome it.

African countries are far from take-off. At best, they may be able to get into a higher gear and move a bit faster into a transition toward greater development and democracy. Undeniably, some of the machinery is working, and one may hope that the time of total breakdowns is past. For the dignity of humanity and the security of states, the outside world needs to respond to the needs where it can, giving Africans an example of responsibility that will both help and inspire. At the moment, the outsiders too are falling short of the challenge.

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[i] I William Zartman, *Cowardly Lions: Missed Opportunities to Prevent Deadly Conflict and State Collapse* (Lynne Rienner 2005.)