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Thierry de Montbrial

I also think that, with Nathalie, we're going to take a closer look at governance issues, not in the sense of international or regional governance, but of the governance of each African country taken one by one. That's one of the tasks before us. Perhaps you could say a few words about the Mo Ibrahim Foundation for those who are unfamiliar with it.

Nathalie Delapalme

Thank you very much Thierry. Every year, the Mo Ibrahim Foundation publishes a report on the state of public governance in each of Africa's 54 countries. This means governance in the broadest sense, not just the state of democracy and human rights or the fight against corruption, but, more widely, the ability of states to deliver the basket of public goods and services that any 21st-century citizen is entitled to expect from his or her government. The report is based on a set of 95 indicators from 33 different sources. I stress that figure because the report is not the foundation's value judgement but based on information from 33 institutions. The indicators fall into four main categories. Two are more political — *Security and the Rule of Law* and *Participation and Human Rights* — and two more economic: *Sustainable Economic Opportunities* and *Human Development*. This year's study focused on the development of governance on the African continent during the 2006-2015 period. Many of our findings overlap with what my friend Tidiane Gadio just said.

The first finding is that Africa must not be written off too quickly. In the past decade, the overall state of governance on the African continent rose by an average of one point. In more specific terms, today 70% of the African continent's population lives in a country where the average level of governance is higher than it was 10 years ago.

The second point is that the average conceals wide gaps. Africa is 54 countries with 54 geographies, 54 different histories, 54 often-divergent trajectories. There is an 80-point gap (on a scale of 100) between the rankings' first and last countries, Maurice and Somalia, which is significant. In the past 10 years, a majority of countries, 37 to be exact, have advanced and 16 receded, some considerably. Ten of the countries that made progress, including Côte d'Ivoire, Togo and Zimbabwe, moved up by over five points. Four declined by over five points, especially Libya and Madagascar.

The third conclusion is that no situation is either irremediable or can be taken for granted, in one direction or the other. For example, although South Africa and Ghana still rank ninth and tenth, respectively, they also had the eighth and ninth worst deterioration of the decade, which means they will probably leave the Top Ten next year. That is worrying. Libya fell from 29th to 51st place in 10 years. On the other hand, Côte d'Ivoire and Zimbabwe, which were in crisis at the beginning of the decade, are among the three countries that have made the greatest strides in 10 years.

The fourth finding is the diverging development of the components of governance, with some red flags showing up. That bears out what Tidiane just said. Three of the governance index's four main components — *Democratic Participation and Human Rights*, *Human Development* and *Sustainable Economic Opportunities* — undeniably advanced during the decade. On the other hand, the *Security and Rule of Law* component declined by an average of slightly over three points, which, in more specific terms, means that today nearly two-thirds of the continent's



population (64%) live in a country where the situation seriously deteriorated in 10 years. Of the 54 countries, 33 declined, 15 by over five points and six by over 10 points.

What was found is not so much the deterioration of the *State of Law* dimension, which remains marginal, as the severe deterioration of the *Security* component, both national and personal. This trend underscores a fundamental shift in the components of crises. Although some conflicts persist or have even become resurgent, the decline of interstate conflicts that appeared in the late 20th century continues. But a two-pronged movement is taking place: the simultaneous rise of domestic tensions and shared, transversal threats. Tidiane already mentioned two of them, terrorism and drugs. Today, Africa is a source not only of drug trafficking but also consumption and production, which is something new. Terrorism primarily affects East Africa and the Sahel, but has spread to countries like Nigeria and Cameroon in recent years, which is also new. The vice is closing.

Truth be told, even the other three dimensions' overall upward trend glosses over issues deserving our attention. For example, the *Participation and Human Rights* index rose slightly over two points in the decade, which means nearly 80% of the continent's population lives in a country where the situation is improving. There have been a number of free, transparent democratic elections in Africa and that is what the indicators take into account.

But there are two problems here. First, the indicators we have to assess the state of democratic participation are insufficient. Democracy cannot be reduced to holding elections every five years that international observers deem free and transparent. Today, and you mentioned this in your introductory talk this morning, Thierry, there is disenchantment in the best of cases, complete rejection in the worst, of the Western democratic model. Casting doubt on both the values and the tools of democracy in a continent where most of the population is under 25 and increasingly uses social media is a serious issue worthy of attention. Second, indicators relating to civil society are deteriorating in a number of countries.

The same mixed results were found for the *Sustainable Economic Opportunity* dimension. In this area, 38 countries have advanced, some remarkably. They account for 70% of Africa's population and nearly 75% of its GDP. Some countries have made noteworthy strides: Morocco, leading the way with over 13 points, Rwanda, Egypt, Togo and Niger, which obviously start from a much lower baseline. If they keep up that pace, in the long term Morocco, Egypt and Rwanda, already relatively high in the standings, could replace the countries leaving the Top Ten. The significant rise of indicators involving the rural and agricultural sector is also key for Africa. In a world where demand for food is up and agricultural supply is down, the continent certainly has significant potential. But, here again, there is reason to be circumspect. Infrastructure has undeniably improved thanks to the steadfast commitment of the international community, the continent's partners, major international financial institutions, governments and Africa's private sector, but there's still a major dark spot, no pun intended: electricity distribution. That indicator has fallen for 40% of the continent's population in the past 10 years. It is a major impediment to economic progress. The second is the situation of the 14 oil-producing countries that benefited from rising oil prices in the 10 years examined. But for the same 14 countries, three key indicators are flat: economic diversification, autonomous budget resources and access to electricity. They have not only missed opportunities, but also been incapable of effectively offsetting falling oil prices.

The last dimension, *Human Development*, advanced the most: nearly three points over the decade. Here again, that reflects the international community's commitment to the MDGs, but the picture is not completely rosy. The most worrisome problem involves education. Nobody can deny that the education level in Africa has risen. But not job prospects. The growing gap between education level and job prospects does not bode well for such a young continent. If the disenchantment with democracy mentioned earlier is added into the mix, you have all the ingredients for a major crisis, and one that does not threaten Africa alone.



In conclusion, the pendulum is swinging the other way. Over 10 years ago, we were too downbeat about Africa. Then, we probably went too far in the opposite direction. The truth lies somewhere in between and we must be realistic. Furthermore, the days of talking about Africa in general terms, the way Asia was talked about, for example, are over. Africa's crises can no longer be considered specific to that continent. It can no longer be said that Africa is doomed to particular, circumscribed conflicts or crises: epidemics, famines, postcolonial conflicts.

These are exactly the same crises and challenges the whole world faces: youth unemployment, questioning of democratic values, lack of leadership, terrorism, climate change. All these issues, discussed on other continents, are shared issues that are piling up on the African continent, which is confronting all of them at once, with a very young majority. There's a double triangulation between security and development. There can be no security in Africa without economic development and vice versa. But nor can there be security for Africa's next-door neighbours — North and East — without stability on the African continent, or steady growth for the Northern and Eastern neighbours without fair, sustainable and shared development on the African continent.

Thierry de Montbrial

Thank you very much Nathalie.