



story

Africa: Turn Up the Volume

July 24, 2006—From entertainers U2 and Snoop Dogg, to businessmen Bill Gates and Bob Geldof, to international organizations like the United Nations and the World Bank, Africa seems to be on everyone's lips.

Youthink! wants to know: What's all the fuss? Why Africa? Why now?

Activist and U2 frontman Bono makes a compelling case on his DATA website (www.data.org) for taking a hard look at the numbers associated with Africa. So, we did just that, and we found some things to shout about and some things to sing about.

Numbers That Don't Add Up

More than 314 million Africans live on less than \$1 a day—nearly twice as many as in 1981. The continent is home to 34 of the world's 48 poorest countries and 24 of the 32 countries ranked lowest in human development.

Agriculture accounts for 70% of its labor force and 40% of its exports, but Africa's share of world trade has shrunk by about \$70 billion annually over the last 40 years as the result of trade barriers and farming subsidies in developed nations.

One out of every four African countries currently suffers the effects of armed conflict. Some 15 million Africans in conflict affected countries have been displaced within their own borders and another 4.5 million were forced to flee to neighboring countries.

Sub-Saharan Africa has just over 10% of the world's population but is home to more than 60% of all people living with HIV—25.8 million. There are currently 12 million AIDS orphans, and the United Nations predicts the number will skyrocket to 18.4 million in four short years. That means AIDS orphans will make up 15 to 20% of the population in some African countries.

Malaria is an equally daunting and devastating disease. Sometimes referred to as the silent tsunami, this mosquito born infection claims some 2,800 Africans per day. That's more than a million people dying each year from a treatable disease!

So, if the talk about Africa is getting louder, it's because there is a lot to shout about!

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Building Momentum, Bridging Hope

Not all the news is bad news, though. We see a lot of promise in how many people are joining the talk about Africa and how many people are listening—including you.

We've also found evidence that tremendous gains are being made, and it's worth singing about!

Debt Relief

Twenty years after Live Aid (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Live_Aid) rocked 1.5 million people awake to the famine in Ethiopia, Live 8 (www.live8live.com) concerts took place globally in 10 venues, featuring 150 bands and 1,250 musicians, to raise awareness about several crises on the continent. The July 2005 concerts were heard by more than 3 million people over 182 television networks and 2,000 radio networks. Organizer Bob Geldof described the concert as "... the starting point for The Long Walk To Justice; the one way we can all make our voices heard in unison."

Simultaneously, at the 2005 G8 conference at Gleneagles, world leaders pledged to cancel 100% of the debts of some of the world's poorest countries, as well as double aid to Africa by 2010.

The World Bank, International Monetary Fund, African Union, New Partnership for Africa's Development, African Development Bank, African Partnership Forum and other partners are working hard to fulfill those promises as well as other significant initiatives as part of a larger Africa Action Plan.

Economic Changes

Sub-Saharan Africa—long tagged a high-cost, high-risk place to do business—is becoming a more hospitable destination for investors. It attracted about \$12 billion in direct foreign private investment in 2004, about 3% percent of the global total, with investments rising in 40 of the 53 countries in the region.

Local businesses are also benefiting from changes in government regulations. Many countries, including Kenya, Madagascar, Mozambique, Mali and Burkino Faso, have made tremendous progress in reducing the number of licenses, fees and days needed to start a business. For example, Burkina Faso has created a

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IT'S A FACT

Many of Africa's agricultural exporters are landlocked or far from the coast. Typically, a land-locked country in Africa has 50% higher transport costs and 60% lower trade volumes than a coastal economy. Customs delays, roadblocks and arbitrary costs at the borders all tax trade within Africa.

THINK ABOUT IT

Imagine that for every 10 friends you have, 2 will lose their parents to AIDS. Now imagine that these 2 friends don't have any living relative to take them in. Where will they live? How will they eat? Who will care for them?

LEARN MORE

Check out these sites to learn more about Africa and the challenges it faces.

Malaria in Africa

youthink.worldbank.org/issues/health/malariainafrica.php

Story: Personal Accounts of AIDS Orphans

youthink.worldbank.org/issues/aids/orphans.php

Story: Reducing Debt in Africa

youthink.worldbank.org/issues/debt/africareducing.php

African Union

www.africa-union.org

Commission for Africa

www.commissionforafrica.org

New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)

www.nepad.org

World Bank: Sub-Saharan Africa

www.worldbank.org/afr

Building Momentum, Bridging Hope (continued)

one-stop shopping concept for new businesses that reduces the registration cost by 60% and the amount of time involved by a third and Madagascar has reduced the time required to register a firm from 38 days to 8.

The push to encourage home grown businesses is paying off—both locally and globally. Several African countries are able to produce at a global level and compete on world markets. Both Kenya and Ethiopia sell their flowers in Europe and Senegalese vegetables are offered in the Parisian grocery stores.

All of these changes do add up to a positive impact. Fifteen countries, including Uganda, Ethiopia, and Burkina Faso, have been growing economically on an average of more than 5% per year since the mid-1990s.

Conflict

Skilled political leadership, international support, and Africans' desire for peace have led to real progress in addressing conflicts—Uganda, Rwanda, and Mozambique are examples of countries that have made turnarounds.

The Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Program (MDRP, www.mdrp.org), a collaboration of more than 40 partners, including regional governments, donors, the World Bank, the United Nations, regional organizations and international financial institutions, is actively supporting the demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants in the greater Great Lakes region of Central Africa. The largest program of its kind in the world, MDRP currently assists an estimated 450,000 ex-combatants, including about 18,000 children—some as young as 6—in seven countries: Angola, Burundi, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Republic of Congo, Rwanda and Uganda.

HIV/AIDS

Among 25 low-income countries in sub-Saharan Africa, domestic government spending on AIDS increased by 130% since 2001, reaching a total allocation of US\$ 640 million in 2005. The increase among upper middle-income countries outside sub-Saharan Africa in the same period was approximately 10%.

In addition, the World Bank's Multi-Country HIV/AIDS Program (MAP) program has committed \$1.12 billion to 29 countries and to four regional (cross border) projects. As part of the program, MAP has funded nearly 50,000 NGO and faith- and community-based grassroots projects.

Malaria

The Roll Back Malaria initiative, which was launched in 1998 by the World Health Organization, UNICEF, the World Bank, and UNDP, was given a further boost in 2005 when the Bank launched the Global Strategy and Booster Program. One year into the first three-year phase of the project, \$405 million has been committed to 20 of the world's hardest hit countries.

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Building Momentum, Bridging Hope (continued)

"It's a 10-year fight," says Gobind Nankani, Vice President of the World Bank's Africa Region. "Our goal is both to prevent the disease and to ensure the population at risk has access to timely medical help."

Additionally, resources are being provided by the Gates Foundation (www.gatesfoundation.org), which announced new funding in October 2005 for Malaria Research and Development (R&D). Through the foundation, Microsoft founder Bill Gates and his wife Melissa increased their commitment by \$258.3 million to find a malaria vaccine, new drugs, and improved mosquito control methods.


Numbers That Don't Add Up

When you are the business owner, teacher, pilot, council chair, Premier, Chancellor or President, what type of world do you want to inherit? It's probably the same one you want right now: one in which all people enjoy the opportunity and choices to create healthy and creative lives.

Right now the convergence of financial and social resources has placed Africa in the spotlight but it's up to all of us—individuals, institutions and governments—to keep it center stage. So, keep talking with your friends, families and teachers about the challenges and progress in Africa. A brighter future for Africa is a brighter future for us all!

MULTIMEDIA

 Video: **Africa: Open for Business.** Ten African entrepreneurs from 10 nations share their paths to success in this groundbreaking film. www.africaopenforbusiness.com

 Slideshow: **An Introduction to MDRP** digitalmedia.worldbank.org/slideshow/AFR/English/mdrp_slideshow/

 Slideshow: **Fighting Malaria in Africa** youthink.worldbank.org/multimedia/gallery/malaria-06/slideshow_malaria.php

 Interactive Map: **Sub-Saharan Africa** youthink.worldbank.org/multimedia/interaction/africamap/

TAKE ACTION

Write to your government officials, and sign up at the Live 8 site to join the **online petition** to let the people in charge know that you believe in a brighter future for Africa!

www.live8live.com
Click on "JOIN US"