



Africa: Neither Hopeless Nor Rising

Africa: Neither Hopeless Nor Rising Most of the 49 countries in sub-Saharan Africa have registered positive economic growth in recent years. Gross domestic product (GDP) growth rates as well as export growth rates have been quite high, and the flow of foreign direct investment (FDI) is rising. However, scholarly analyses have also clearly shown which factors are impeding the economic advancement of particular sub-Saharan countries. Above all, it is structural change that has failed to make headway. Economic growth varies greatly from country to country in sub-Saharan Africa. The more fragile states (approximately 25 percent of all African countries) are recording growth rates of less than 4 percent, and only the countries who export natural resources top 6 percent. Large sections of the sub-Saharan population have experienced an improvement in their quality of life over the past ten years; some of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were even reached (school enrollment rate, life expectancy, health care). But the main goal, to decrease the number of people living in poverty by 50 percent, has not been met. A small middle class is developing in sub-Saharan Africa. Africa is often referred to as the "continent of the future because the share of young people relative to the entire population is quite high. But the continents youth will have a future only if enough jobs are created to support them.

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