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## THE MEANING OF GOVERNANCE: RANKING AFRICA

*The Index of African Governance (together with its book-length report, Strengthening African Governance) has been published annually since 2007.<sup>1</sup> The 2007 and 2008 editions were generously supported by a grant from the Mo Ibrahim Foundation and are known as the Ibrahim Indexes of African Governance. The introductory essay to the first edition of Strengthening African Governance set out the Index's basic framework and theory of governance, building on earlier work by Rotberg.<sup>2</sup> Since then, the authors have revised the rankings and report annually to reflect continuing work on the topic, discussions and collaborations with other experts (especially in Africa), and the release of new, better data. The 2009 edition of the introductory essay (below) is thus freshly updated. The authors invite all constructive comments and collaborations as they begin work on the 2010 Index of African Governance.*

All citizens of all countries desire to be governed well. That is what citizens want from the nation-states in which they live. Thus, nation-states in the modern world are responsible for the delivery of essential political goods to their inhabitants. That is their purpose, and has been their central legitimate justification since at least the seventeenth century. These essential political goods can be summarized and gathered under five categories: Safety and Security; Rule of Law, Transparency, and Corruption; Participation and Human Rights; Sustainable Economic Opportunity; and Human Development. Together, these five categories of political goods epitomize the performance of any government, at any level. No one, whether looking to her village, municipality, province, state, or nation willingly wants to be victimized by crime or to live in a society without laws, freedom, a chance to prosper, or access to decent schools, well-run hospitals, and carefully-maintained roads.

This 2009 Index of African Governance measures the degree to which each of these five categories of political goods is provided within Africa's fifty-three (forty-eight in prior Indexes) countries. By comprehensively measuring the performance of government in this manner, that is, by measuring governance, the Index is able to offer a report card on the accomplishments of each government for the years being investigated—2000 and 2002 (for baseline indications) and 2005, 2006, and 2007 (the last years with reasonably complete available data for nearly all African nation-states). For those analysts who would like separately to explore the performance of countries on various aspects of governance, the Index includes scores in each of the five categories.

Prior editions of the Index assessed governance in the forty-eight countries of sub-Saharan Africa. This year, we have expanded our coverage to include North Africa (Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, and Tunisia) based on comments from our readers who highlighted the importance of assessing governance in all countries on the continent and all members of the African Union. This year's Index assesses all African Union countries except Western Sahara. Because Western Sahara is not recognized by many countries outside of the African Union, there is insufficient information on its governance available at this time. In addition, the 2009 Index provides a new assessment of Morocco, the only country on the continent that is not a member of the African Union.

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1 The research for this edition's first four months was also supported by the Mo Ibrahim Foundation.

2 See, for instance, Robert I. Rotberg, "Strengthening African Governance: Ranking Countries Would Help," *The Washington Quarterly*, XXIV (2004), 71–81; Robert I. Rotberg, "Improving Governance in the World: Creating a Measuring and Ranking System," in Rotberg and Deborah West, *The Good Governance Problem: Doing Something About It*, WPF Report 29 (Cambridge, MA, 2004), 3–30; Robert I. Rotberg, "On Improving Nation-State Governance," *Daedalus* (Winter 2007).

The Index is updated annually. This includes updating the sources of information for the indicators in our Index in order to use the best data currently available. Unlike many other projects, we also update the Index backward in each year; all data for all years are presented using the latest available sources. This allows the Index to be used to demonstrate comparatively how each of the fifty-three countries has shown progress or has retrogressed over time.

In focusing on its five categories, the Index takes a broader view of governance than some other projects that treat governance as relating only to the rule of law, democracy, and human rights. This narrow definition of governance is essentially what is called “political governance” in the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM).<sup>3</sup> Defining “good governance” as equivalent to good political governance, we argue, is too narrow. It ignores the central responsibilities of state governments to provide safety and security, as well as to provide for a basic level of well-being for their citizens. Moreover, our African advisors insist that the broader categories reflect African governmental performance more accurately and fully.

The importance of socio-economic rights, in addition to civil and political rights, is highlighted in the African context. Indeed, the African (Banjul) Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights notes that “civil and political rights cannot be dissociated from economic, social and cultural rights in their conception as well as universality and that the satisfaction of economic, social and cultural rights is a guarantee for the enjoyment of civil and political rights.”<sup>4</sup> Similarly, the APRM includes socio-economic development and economic and corporate governance, in addition to political governance, among its four focus areas.<sup>5</sup> In the 1995 *Cairo Agenda for Action*, Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) highlighted the close relationship between “peace, democracy, and development,” noting that “democracy, good governance, peace, security and justice are among the most essential factors in African socio-economic development.”<sup>6</sup>

As the *Cairo Agenda* highlights, the term “governance” is sometimes used in the African context in the narrow sense; the broad definition employed in our Index of African Governance, however, is also widely and strongly in use on the continent. (In order to satisfy both user preferences, we do provide rankings using both governance approaches.)

The rest of this essay summarizes the Index’s structure, uses, and underlying epistemology. It concludes with a summary of what is new in this year’s Index. A more in-depth discussion of methodological choices is presented in the third essay, “Measurement, Methods, and More.” In addition, this year’s Index report includes the “Executive Summary” and “Conclusions” of an independent statistical evaluation of the Index methodology by Michaela Saisana, Paola Annoni, and Michela Nardo, of the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission. The study finds that the 2008 Ibrahim Index “can reliably be used to identify weaknesses and possible remedial actions, to make easy spatial and temporal comparisons (benchmarking), to prioritize African countries with relatively low levels of governance, and ultimately to monitor and evaluate policy effectiveness.”<sup>7</sup> The full publication, entitled *A Robust Model to Measure Governance in African Countries*, is available on our website. Finally, for a comparison of the Index of African Governance and other related indices and assessments, readers may refer to our essay, “Indices and Governance,” published in the 2008 Ibrahim Index and available on our website.

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3 The APRM also discusses economic governance and corporate governance. It includes a fourth focus area on socio-economic development.

4 African (Banjul) Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights Preamble, paragraph 7 (adopted 27 June 1981, OAU Doc. CAB/LEG/67/3 rev.5, 21 I.L.M. 58, 1982; entered into force 21 October 1986).

5 See also Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja, “MAP Draft Programme of Action: Creating Preconditions for Sustainable Development,” presented in Abuja, Nigeria, 28 May 2001.

6 Organization of African Unity, *Relaunching Africa’s Economic and Social Development: The Cairo Agenda for Action* (Addis Ababa, 1995), 6, as cited in Nzongola-Ntalaja, 4.

7 See *A Robust Model to Measure Governance in African Countries*, 5.

## Categories and Sub-Categories

The Index of African Governance provides more than an overall ranking of countries. Within each of its five broad categories, separate evaluations and report cards concerning the attainments of each of the fifty-three countries are offered. Further, within each category there are sub-categories, which can again be compared, country against country. Under each sub-category are additional sub-sub-categories or indicators. The Index is, therefore, comprised of fifty-seven separate markers capturing the performance of individual countries.

For example, Security is divided into two sub-categories. One is National Security—the degree to which a national government holds an internal monopoly on the use of force and no insurgent groups threaten that monopoly. All fifty-three countries can be compared, for example, according to National Security by showing their casualty numbers in civil wars. Kilometers of paved roads per 1,000 people is another example of a result that is capable of being arrayed across all nation-states, this time as one of the measurement areas (a sub-sub-category) within Arteries of Commerce, a sub-category under Sustainable Economic Opportunity.

The structure of the Index categories and sub-categories is summarized in Table 1 below. In the calculation of the Index, categories are each weighted equally within the overall Index, and sub-categories are each weighted equally within each category, with the one exception of Safety and Security. In the category of Safety and Security, the two sub-categories, National Security and Public Safety, are weighted two-thirds and one-third, respectively.

Table 1. BASIC STRUCTURE OF THE INDEX OF AFRICAN GOVERNANCE	
Category	Sub-Category
I. SAFETY AND SECURITY	1. National Security ( <i>2/3rds of the Safety and Security Category</i> )
	2. Public Safety ( <i>1/3rd of the Safety and Security Category</i> )
II. RULE OF LAW, TRANSPARENCY, AND CORRUPTION	1. Ratification of Critical Legal Norms
	2. Judicial Independence and Efficiency
	3. Corruption
III. PARTICIPATION AND HUMAN RIGHTS	1. Participation in Elections
	2. Respect for Civil and Political Rights
IV. SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY	1. Wealth Creation
	2. Macroeconomic Stability and Financial Integrity
	3. The Arteries of Commerce
V. HUMAN DEVELOPMENT	1. Poverty
	2. Health and Sanitation
	3. Education

The detailed structure of Index indicators, sub-categories, and categories is summarized in Table 2 at the end of this essay. Each of the Index indicators (sub-sub-categories) is also weighted equally within each sub-category, with one exception. In the category of Participation and Human Rights (in the sub-category of Respect for Civil and Political Rights), the Women's Rights indicator is made up of three separate indicators, Women's Economic Rights, Women's Political Rights, and Women's Social Rights.

Each category of the Index is presented in a separate section of this report. A table at the beginning of each section provides a more detailed summary of the structure and sources of each indicator in that category. Scores and rankings by category, sub-category, and indicator are also displayed and discussed.

## Diagnostic Utility

The broader method of measuring performance, as expressed meticulously in the Index, is explicitly diagnostic. It permits citizens (and civil society), country by country, to appreciate how the attainments of their governments compare to neighboring and other African governments. It permits governing authorities to make the same comparisons. In each, the numbers enable citizens, government, donors, and international organizations to visualize the areas that need improvement or at least more attention. If crime rates, for example, reduce a nation-state's score on the Security category, then enhancing Public Safety would be wise.

The makers of this Index, now in its third iteration, also note the lack of timely information available for assessing some important areas of governance—information that is either not collected regularly internationally, or locally at all, or, for some reason, is not made available to the public by the nation-states themselves.

## Objectivity and Outcomes

In selecting measures of governance, the Index strives for transparency and simplicity. Thus, unlike other such indexes, it is not based exclusively on perceptions or the judgments of experts. Such data are often difficult to verify against any standard metric, and people may differ markedly in their perceptions and judgments. Instead, insofar as possible, the Index reflects objective data—the hard numbers available on each country. In the absence of such numbers, it seeks to use “objectively measured” data—systematically derived figures that could be replicated by other researchers following the same approach. Moreover, the Index measures outcomes, not inputs. That is, it asks under each heading: What has a government achieved? How well has it performed? It does not measure good intentions or official financial budgetary promises—both inputs that may or may not result in appropriate performance. In other words, it does not concern the Index if a nation is spending high or low levels of budgeted outlays on, say, health services. The Index prefers to know what has come from those expenditures. Have citizens benefited? Have their health outcomes improved, as measured by maternal mortality rates or by, say, access to clean water?

The makers of the Index realize that factors beyond government action in a specific year may affect the outcomes measured. That is why the Index provides more than single indicator assessments of the performance of African countries. That is why the Index is updated annually, to track changes over time. Conceivably, national resource endowments and baseline GDP compilations could be used to disaggregate our fifty-three African cases for purposes of ranking, in addition to the overall ranking method that we have adopted since the 2007 Ibrahim Index of African Governance. However, we still need first to compare the attainments of all countries in Africa against their peers, irrespective of their wealth or size, or irrespective of other factors that might arguably affect the performance of their governments.

## Underlying Epistemology

Methodologically, we are aware that our definition of governance plows new and controversial ground. Many economists prefer to limit governance to the rule of law, efficient management, and participation (broadly conceived), and argue against using all of our five categories to measure governmental delivery of services (political goods) and to equate that delivery with governance. They argue, further, that the causal relationship between the actions of governments in power and all of the indicators that we include is problematic; outcomes may be caused by the actions of previous governments, underlying resource endowments, levels of wealth, ethnic heterogeneity, and so on.

We argue, however, that our attention must be focused on *citizens*, and citizens tend to measure governmental performance in the manner that we do. A variety of factors in addition to governmental policy may contribute to governance outcomes, but citizens nevertheless have a right to expect their governments to adjust accordingly, to provide at least a minimum level of political goods in their countries. They can and should hold their governments to account for providing security, rule of law, economic opportunity, educational opportunities, health care, and social safety nets.

They can and should expect to participate in government and to have their basic rights respected by their governments. Thus, to decide whether governments in Africa are fulfilling their responsibilities, we need to extend our measurement of outputs to include all five of our categories, and the sub-sub-categories (indicators) that compose those five categories.

We are aware that governmental actors do not constitute the only determination of some of our outputs. In the human development area, in particular, other factors in addition to governmental attention and action clearly influence literacy, school persistence, child mortality, and so on. But governments do play a major role and have an influence that we attempt to capture. We see our Index as a useful guideline that other scholars might employ to examine these factors further. Indeed, as many scholars know, there are complex processes behind each and every indicator, in each and every country, in each and every year.

Because this Index represents a methodological departure from other attempts to measure governance, especially for Africa, and because it contains many entries and embodies such conceptual complexity, the Index represents a work in progress. The makers of the Index, hence, welcome all suggestions and constructive criticisms. The ultimate goal of the Index is to bring governance out of the closet—to strengthen governance in Africa in order to improve the lives of Africans everywhere.

## **Index Contents**

This 2009 Index has two main sections. The first section gives the overall 2007 country rankings and scores for each of Africa's fifty-three countries, along with an essay describing those rankings. Those scores are equal to the average sum of the scores of the five categories by which governance is measured, on a 0–100 scale. Category scores are, in turn, averages of sub-category scores, and sub-category scores are averages of indicator scores.

Index rankings follow straightforwardly from Index scores; the country ranked first has the highest score, and the country ranked last has the lowest score. Rankings are provided for ease of comparison, but should always be read together with country scores, which provide important information about the magnitude of differences in performance between countries, some of which may be tiny.

The overall scores for 2000, 2002, 2005, 2006, and 2007 are also presented and described in this first section of the report. Category scores for 2007 are presented here as well. In addition, this first section includes several essays regarding the Index's methodology.

The second section of the 2009 report, divided into five sub-sections, gives the rankings for the same years across each of the five categories in turn. Each category is explained in a detailed introduction, which is followed by a display of the results for each category, listed in ranked order and alphabetically for the years 2000, 2002, 2005, 2006, and 2007.

In each category section, following the summary tables, for each indicator, there is a descriptive note and table providing comprehensive statistics and scores for 2000, 2005, 2006, and 2007. Data for 2002 are not listed in this year due to space constraints; however, the full dataset including all Index years is available online through our project website. Descriptive notes range from one to eleven pages, and provide detailed information and discussion about the sources of our data, methods, and results. Our aim is to be fully transparent.

In the 2007 and 2008 Ibrahim Indexes of African Governance, we included selected “researcher's reports,” which are descriptive notes prepared by our researchers as background material for the Index. These previous researcher's reports include discussions of legal indicators of small arms reduction, the measurement of corruption, the measurement of income inequality, and higher education (2008 Ibrahim Index), and of the measurement of crime, elections indicators, and data sources on gender (2007 Ibrahim Index). In the 2009 Index of African Governance, we include a researcher's report on the measurement of gender-based violence.

## What is New in this Year's Index

The Index team continues to work with scholars and other experts to analyze and build on Index results. As the result of this continuing work, the 2009 Index of African Governance includes five new components:

1. For the first time, we include the North African countries. Previously, only sub-Saharan countries were included in the Index. Because the North African countries are part of Africa, we include them now, despite great differences in human development, infrastructure, economic growth, and participatory outcomes, north and south.
2. A “country response” from Rwanda, which critically analyzes the 2008 Ibrahim Index results for Rwanda and explores comparisons with local studies. The Index team invites other African scholars and local experts to submit other country responses.
3. A summary of the detailed multivariate, uncertainty, and sensitivity analysis and evaluation of the 2008 Ibrahim Index of African Governance, authored by Michaela Saisana, Paola Annoni, and Michela Nardo of the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission. The full report is available through our website.
4. A brief summary of results for “political governance” or “traditional governance”—the categories of Rule of Law, Transparency, and Corruption; and of Participation and Human Rights—as distinct from the three other Index categories. This summary allows readers easily to compare our results with those of other studies of governance that employ a more narrow definition of governance.

Additional working papers and longer studies will be published throughout the year on our project website. We invite scholars and experts to discuss research projects with us.

5. New ways of displaying the Index results: Thanks to the cooperation of a number of colleagues, Index of African Governance data can now be accessed and analyzed using several different methods. The following analysis tools are available through our website and at the links below:

- *Index of African Governance “Dashboard of Sustainability:”* The Dashboard is a free, non-commercial software package that allows users to study complex relationships among indicators. The Index of African Governance Dashboard provides the latest Index data ready for analysis, with several different display options. The package was developed by the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) and the European Commission’s Joint Research Centre (JRC) to study economic, social, and environmental issues in order to contribute to an informed debate about development policy options.
- *Index of African Governance in “AfricaMap:”* AfricaMap is a platform for displaying and analyzing spatial data on Africa. The incorporation of Index results into AfricaMap allows users to display and analyze results along with other data available through the project. AfricaMap is based on the Harvard University Geospatial Infrastructure (HUG) platform, and was developed by the Harvard Center for Geographic Analysis.
- *Index of African Governance “Dataverse:”* Index datasets are now available in Stata and Excel formats through the Institute for Quantitative Social Science (IQSS)’s Dataverse Network Project: <http://dvn.iq.harvard.edu/dvn/dv/governance>.
- *National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) listing:* Index datasets are also available through the NBER’s Data Collection at [www.nber.org/data/iag.html](http://www.nber.org/data/iag.html).

The makers of the Index are very grateful in this year for the extensive feedback they have received from a number of African analysts, scholars, universities, and research organizations and from members of the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission, as well as the collaboration of numerous national statistical agencies and ministries across the continent, the National Bureau of Economic Research’s African Successes Project, the Institute for Quantitative Social Science’s Dataverse Network Project, the Harvard Center for Geographic Analysis’s AfricaMap project, the Cingranelli-Richards (CIRI) Human Rights Data Project, and the trustees of the World Peace Foundation. A full list of warm acknowledgments is included at the beginning of this report.

**Table 2. DETAILED STRUCTURE OF THE INDEX OF AFRICAN GOVERNANCE**

Category	Sub-Category	Sub-sub-Categories (Indicators)	
I. SAFETY AND SECURITY	1. National Security	Government Involvement in Armed Conflicts	
		Number of Battle Deaths	
		Number of Civilian Deaths Due to One-Sided Violence	
		Refugees and Asylum Seekers Originating From the Country	
		Internally-Displaced People	
	2. Public Safety	Ease of Access to Small Arms and Light Weapons	
II. RULE OF LAW, TRANSPARENCY, AND CORRUPTION	1. Ratification of Critical Legal Norms	Level of Violent Crime (Homicide Rate)	
		Ratification of Core International Human Rights Conventions	
		International Sanctions	
	2. Judicial Independence and Efficiency	Property Rights	
		Judicial Independence	
		Efficiency of the Courts, based on the Pre-Trial Detainees	
3. Corruption	Number of Days to Settle a Contract Dispute		
	Public Sector Corruption		
III. PARTICIPATION AND HUMAN RIGHTS	1. Participation in Elections	Free and Fair Executive Elections	
		Opposition Participation in Executive Elections	
		Free and Fair Legislative Elections	
		Opposition Participation in Legislative Elections	
	2. Respect for Civil and Political Rights	Respect for Physical Integrity Rights	
		Respect for Civil Rights	
		Press Freedom	
		Women’s Rights	Women’s Economic Rights
			Women’s Political Rights
Women’s Social Rights			

Table 2 (cont). DETAILED STRUCTURE OF THE INDEX OF AFRICAN GOVERNANCE

Category	Sub-Category	Sub-sub-Categories (Indicators)	
IV. SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY	1. Wealth Creation	GDP per Capita (PPP)	
		GDP per Capita Growth	
	2. Macroeconomic Stability and Financial Integrity	Inflation	
		Government Deficits/Surplus as a Percentage of GDP	
		Reliability of Financial Institutions (Contract Intensive Money)	
		Business Environment (Number of Days to Start a Business)	
	3. The Arteries of Commerce	Density of Paved Road Network	
		Electricity Installed Capacity per Capita	
		Phone Subscribers per 100 Inhabitants	
		Internet Usage per 100 Inhabitants	
	V. HUMAN DEVELOPMENT	1. Poverty	Poverty Rate at the National Poverty Line
			Poverty Rate at the International Poverty Line (\$1.25 per person per day, PPP)
Inequality (GINI Index)			
2. Health and Sanitation		Life Expectancy at Birth	
		Child Mortality	
		Maternal Mortality	
		Undernourishment	
		Immunization Rate for Measles	
		Immunization Rate for Diphtheria, Pertussis, and Tetanus (DPT)	
		HIV Prevalence	
		Incidence of Tuberculosis	
		Physicians per 1,000 People	
		Nursing and Midwifery Personnel per 1,000 People	
		Access to Improved Sanitation Facilities	
Access to Drinking Water			
3. Education		Adult Literacy Rate	
		Adult Literacy Rate, Female	
		Primary School Completion Rate	
		Primary School Completion Rate, Female	
		Progression to Secondary School	
		Ratio of Girls to Boys in Primary and Secondary Education	
		Pupil-Teacher Ratio	