

# Silverlining Africa - From Images Of Doom And Gloom To Glimmers Of Hope



## 1. Changing images of the Dark Continent

### *Inaugural address*

At a recent African Studies Association conference in San Francisco, I presented a paper on the findings of a research project that I was involved in over the last few years on Ghanaians in Amsterdam and their *'good work back home'*.**[i]**

The theme of the conference was *'African Diaspora and Diasporas in Africa'* and our panel was entitled *'Development from Abroad'*. Panel members presented numerous success stories from many parts of the continent and the general reaction at the conference was one of surprise at the many positive stories coming out of Africa. One of the participants in my panel talked about *'silverlining Africa'* - stories that challenge past images of doom and gloom.**[ii]**

Just before going to the US, I chaired a session at the annual meeting of the Netherlands-African Business Council in a beautiful conference centre in Wassenaar where close to two hundred Dutch entrepreneurs shared enthusiastic accounts of their activities in Africa. The overall impression was that Africa is taking off and is the newest group of emerging economies to be knocking on the door of the global market. There is a political and business confidence in Africa today that reminds older observers of the euphoria during Africa's Independence Era fifty years ago. Africa is now the place to be and certainly not a place to avoid. The organizer of the event**[iii]** more or less suggested that Dutch entrepreneurs would be crazy *not* to invest in and trade with Africa. Discussing

the changes in the current Dutch development landscape, there was an almost triumphant attitude among the participants: *'now it is our turn to eat'*.**[iv]** But they also tried to be honest and straightforward: the new business opportunities need to be used in socially responsible, fair and sustainable ways. For some, Africa may appear to be a place where quick and dirty money can be made. For most entrepreneurs, the idea is that there are major opportunities here but that these can only be harvested with long-term commitment and involvement.

A month earlier when I was in China giving a lecture, my hosts arranged for me to visit the EXPO grounds in Shanghai.**[v]** I was particularly interested in the way Africa presented itself there. With a few exceptions,**[vi]** the African countries were housed under one roof in a huge exotic building bustling with chaotic activity. The sensual African dances and the loud drumming attracted many Chinese visitors, who were amazed by so much public indecency. The African market stalls were popular although there were Chinese-language banners strictly warning customers not to buy illegal fare and English-language signs with warnings about not taking pictures. EXPO's title was *'Better City, Better Life'*, but a Chinese advisor who had been involved in the early support for the African pavilion told me that the Africans were not very keen on sticking to the general theme. Many of the African pavilion organizers had instead decided to show rural Africa as a paradise for tourists and investors with traditional scenes of Africa's exotic nature and people, and as a continent full of resources to exploit. It was amusing to see that the Chinese positioned Africa as *'the hottest place under sunlight'*, even suggesting that this was the origin of the name *'Africa'*.**[vii]**

Of course, the positioning of Africa as the *'hottest place under sunlight'* takes on a more contemporary meaning if *'hot'* means *'the place to be'*, and not only the Chinese have realized this. Not long ago, the continent was seen as lagging behind, a sick place full of violence, hunger and disease, and either a threat to world stability or a disposable place to avoid. Now its image has shifted to one of hope, which is making Africa a hotspot in the new geo-political reality of a multi-polar world. The recent experiences of a world audience of football fans have also played a role in changing people's image of Africa. Not only did South Africa impeccably organize a world event but visitors and journalists went home with stories of amazement and success. Could this violent and sick continent really be such a fascinating and welcoming host? Was it really possible for crazy Dutch orange invaders to connect so well with the many black football supporters in

South Africa's shanty towns? Have these black, coloured and Indian former victims of Apartheid really embraced their white Afrikaner compatriots to the point that they could share in this sporting euphoria? Did they really cheer with the orange crowd and throw oranges and blow *vuvuzelas* together? Has Africa really changed so much?

In this address, I will first give an impression of how Africans themselves perceive change and development, based on recent research in Ghana and Burkina Faso, and will then present some positive statistical evidence about Africa as a whole. After this, I will sketch my current ideas for the future of the African Studies Centre in this era of an emerging Africa, and will end with some words of praise and thanks.

## *2. Perceptions of change and change agents: African voices*

How do Africans themselves perceive development, change and the impact of development initiatives? This is the core question in an ongoing research adventure of which I am the coordinator. The project, Participatory Assessment of Development (PADEV), **[viii]** is being conducted in northern Ghana and southern Burkina Faso at the request of three Dutch Christian NGOs - ICCO, Woord en Daad and Prisma - but with full academic freedom. The programme includes researchers from Tamale University for Development Studies and Expertise pour le Développement du Sahel in Ouagadougou, staff and Masters students in the International Development Studies programme at the University of Amsterdam and colleagues from the African Studies Centre and the Royal Tropical Institute. **[ix]** To date, we have organized intensive workshops in nine different districts, six in Ghana and three in Burkina Faso. I will present here a first impression of the main findings, based on our exciting methodology. In a recent debate, one of my gurus, Robert Chambers, called it a method that empowers local people to write their own development histories. **[x]**

Before I present an overview of our main preliminary findings though, let me add a few words about the background to this research. It will not be a secret to many in this audience that the sector that former Minister Bert Koenders called '*the development industry*' is in trouble. The current negative political atmosphere in the Netherlands with regard to continued development assistance is threatening for the sector and is difficult for many foreign observers to understand.

From the 1930s onwards, Catholic and Protestant missionaries from the Netherlands connected religious goals with those of betterment and emancipation in Africa. Dutch civil society was at the forefront of the global campaign against Apartheid and against the remains of colonialism, particularly in the Portuguese colonies in Africa in the 1960s. And since the 1970s the Netherlands has been one of the most prominent global players in development assistance and one of the few countries to spend at least 0.7% of its Gross Domestic Product on international development assistance. The Netherlands has been an important bilateral donor,**[xi]** a solid supporter of multilateral agencies, at the forefront in providing global public goods and one of the most important back donors of civil society and knowledge centres in many corners of the globe. And, more recently, several multinationals with Dutch roots have become successful pioneers of socially responsible entrepreneurship, particularly in Africa.**[xii]** The cosmopolitan and empathic outlook of many Dutch people connected to these initiatives is one of this country's intangible assets abroad. For many Africans, Asians and Americans, the positive profile of the Netherlands is connected to its development oriented activities abroad, of course in addition to the everlasting image created by footballers Johan Crujff, Ruud Gullit, Marco van Basten, and, during the last World Cup, Karate-kid Nigel de Jong. So why is this cultural capital suddenly being impaired?

For Europe, globalization and the current financial and economic crisis are creating major challenges related to maintaining the level of well-being for people at the lower ends of the labour market, and in other markets as well. The arrival of many immigrants, goods and images that are perceived as different is creating feelings of anxiety. Political mobilization against people, things and ideas regarded as a threat is also taking the form of opposition to spending public funds in Europe and on development assistance. Some political entrepreneurs are creating an atmosphere of fear and hatred against foreigners, and are successfully fuelling a mentality of Dutch parochialism, hiding behind the dikes.**[xiii]** Development assistance is one of the targets.

This negative sentiment is being fed by widespread doubts about the effectiveness and impact of development assistance provided in the past. And some of these doubts are also being voiced from within the sector itself.**[xiv]** In addition, many critical observers are linking development assistance to major governance and human-rights shortcomings in receiving countries, particularly in Africa. The

more benign observations are pointing to the dependency syndrome that the practice of development aid has often fed.

There is an outcry for evidence-based studies, and the development industry has become one of the most intensively evaluated sectors of public spending. Evaluations are taking many forms, although there is a tendency to push for hegemony with an approach called 'Randomized Controlled Trials'.**[xv]** I am not against this attempt but it can only be applied in a limited number of domains and, in practice, the research and social conditions needed for its success are often not present. Our approach in PADEV provides an alternative that could be applied in many other domains and is more holistic and participatory.

Of course Africa is huge and diverse. There are places about which completely different stories can be told, stories of violence and of despair. But let us see what we can learn from a relatively peaceful area in two countries that have experienced a decade of growth but are still poor, even when compared to other parts of their macro region. I regard this area as a *pars pro toto* for a major part of Africa today, knowing that generalizations should always be treated with caution.

The method that we have developed is enabling us to obtain a good idea about perceptions of development and change over a thirty-year period. It shows how local people value development initiatives, external interventions and 'projects', and gives an idea of their assessment of the impact of these development initiatives on people's capabilities and on poverty and inequality. Each workshop is a bottom-up, local-level assessment by fifty opinion leaders from a variety of local backgrounds. We have included fifteen local leaders and are involving ordinary people too, a cross-section of society to represent men and women, the old and young, Christians, Muslims and so-called traditionalists, and people from the central areas of a district and from more remote villages and hamlets. The groups are made up of a few people with many years of education but also people who have never attended school, and represent people who are (locally) regarded as rich, middle-income and poor.**[xvi]**

I will refrain from a lengthy exposé of our method and research design here but would refer you to a guidebook that is available on the project's website.**[xvii]** It is more interesting now, I think, to present an overview of our main findings. And to do this, I will follow the six domains of our capability approach.**[xviii]**

In the domain of the *natural environment*, workshop participants reported improvements in agricultural production and yield in most areas but a deteriorating environment: 'the expansion of crops, livestock, and demands for firewood and charcoal "eats" our forests, and threatens our wildlife and biodiversity'. If we look at the agencies that are trying to improve agriculture and mitigate environmental destruction, we mainly see Christian and secular NGOs that are operating on a modest scale and hear complaints about inactive and ineffective government agencies. As far as government agencies are concerned, there are a lot of government initiatives that local people characterize as 'bad projects' in this domain. In areas without a history of dedicated NGO involvement in assisting farmers, our impression is that people are not only reporting major environmental problems but also decreasing agricultural productivity. This is all the more depressing because the area as a whole has generally experienced improved rainfall conditions since the Sahelian droughts that ended in 1987.

In the domain of the *physical environment*, people are reporting a major expansion and improvement in the road network and modern buildings. Almost all transport improvements rely on the government, assisted by foreign aid.

The European Union and the World Bank play an important role in Africa by providing loans and expertise in public-works projects but China is rapidly taking over as the largest donor in this domain. A lot of the building expansion is government driven but remittances from the south of Ghana and from Côte d'Ivoire are increasingly playing a role too. The electricity system is gradually expanding, funded by the government, and is offering an alternative to other environmentally damaging forms of energy provision. In our research area, the last two decades have witnessed a major expansion of the public water system thanks to funding from government agencies and Christian NGOs. As a result, water quality has improved, there are fewer water-borne diseases and the burden on women has dropped dramatically. Finally, as everywhere in Africa, there has been a rapid expansion in private-sector-initiated telecom facilities by companies using the image of socially committed businesses as part of their marketing strategies to survive the fierce competition.

In the domain of *human capabilities*, all the workshop participants reported improvements in healthcare facilities due to efforts by Christian NGOs and increased government health spending. Some of these are supported by foreign aid, including assistance from Cuba. The new health insurance system in Ghana

has enjoyed the support of donors like the Netherlands, and has spread surprisingly fast even to the most remote parts of the country. There has been a rapid growth in primary-education facilities and some increase in the number attending secondary school and in the happy few who manage to obtain tertiary education. The expansion of primary education is mainly thanks to government funding and so-called sector support by major development donors to the 'Education for All' programme that is coordinated by UNESCO. Funds provided by remittances and private money flows have started playing a major role in enabling children to continue their education through to higher education. However despite this support, primary-school coverage is still not 100% and secondary and tertiary education is the privilege of a minority.

In the domain of *economic activities*, people in our research areas reported some growth in the private sector, with more shops, wholesalers, markets and mobile traders, not least because of increased numbers of female traders. These small-scale entrepreneurs are generating a host of jobs in the informal sector. However, the number of medium and large-scale firms is still limited, industry is virtually non-existent and the number of regular, formally paid jobs has not increased significantly. There are complaints about the very limited role of government agencies in providing or facilitating employment and it is generally considered an illusion to think that the private sector will provide any real breakthrough in remote areas. As a result, many young, relatively well-educated people are not working in regular paid jobs or in their own companies. Most enterprising young men and women are trying to leave the area, which is fuelling a major outmigration and resulting in a very mobile, floating population.

This is feeding a culture of migration and a strong growth in remittances and small-scale investments by current and former migrants in their villages of origin, but also in the regional and district centres. Mainly thanks to the secular NGOs and the charity-driven parts of the private sector, there has been some growth in micro-credit facilities and a few large-scale banks have started some activities as well, including the Grameen Bank from South Asia.

In the domain of *social-political capabilities*, people everywhere in our research areas in Ghana and Burkina Faso are talking about participating in much wider social networks than their parents. Their orientation is no longer local but national, or even global as a result of the explosion in communication possibilities, mainly due to small-scale private investments and corporate capital. As a result of

massive exposure to what is perceived as a '*better life elsewhere*', expectations have been raised and there is growing anger among the youth, particularly among young men, about the lack of improvement in their position. Economic or political entrepreneurs promising heaven on earth can quite easily mobilize them for whatever goals. It is mainly thanks to Christian and secular NGOs that the prospects for young women seem to be better compared to those of many of their male age-mates, and certainly compared to their mothers and grandmothers. Women have a much stronger and more visible role nowadays and if I compare my visits to remote villages ten years ago with my recent experiences, there is a very different attitude among women. In terms of political change, people note the change to multiparty democracy and the much freer expression of opinions. This is linked to the activities of mainly secular NGOs, and those in our research population who follow the more macro-level debates connect it to demands by foreign donors, which they do not appreciate. Western style democracy is creating double feelings. On the one hand, people are applauding the increased possibilities for local involvement in decision-making but they also see the risks of more instability and in-fighting or political quarrels, and they regret the more visible local corruption. Local democracy around elected district councils with increased powers and more money is also creating tensions with the system of local chiefs/*chefs*, a system that is still very much alive. Government leaders are much better educated now than they were thirty years ago and many of the local-level state agents see their role as representatives of a 'developmental state'.

In the domain of *cultural change*, one can see a rapid growth in Christianity and Islam, and a plethora of Christian and Islamic organizations and NGOs. However, there are tensions between those who adhere to the orthodox versions of established creeds and those who mix orthodox with local elements. A hybridization of religion is happening everywhere, alongside a mixing of other elements of local and global cultures. **[xix]** In some places, tensions may suddenly erupt but the different versions of faith, truth and expected behaviour mostly co-exist peacefully. Exposure to different cultures is generating a growth in language and psychological abilities, and people generally welcome this. One can also see a change in dress styles, in preferred house styles and in food habits.

And there are many, and often confusing, changes in the relationships between men and women and between old and young. One hears regrets about the 'youth forgetting our age-old customs'. And some of these regrets are constructed as



forms of resistance to globalization and to 'western' education, films and music, particularly in Islamic and Orthodox Christian circles, and among traditional chiefs/*chefs*.

Looking at the overall evidence in our research area, most of the change agents are still NGOs and government units, certainly not the corporate private sector, unless one takes the growth of a remittance culture as proof of a buoyant private sector. Our respondents have no doubt whatsoever that aid has played an important role as a driver of change but they note that this was only the case if aid was embedded in agencies rooted in their local environment. Looking back, people appreciate most of the externally funded initiatives that have improved their lives but during our work it became obvious that people not only judge initiatives by the outcome or their practical success but also by the quality of the process. Then they talk about respect, decent relationships, trust and dependability as characteristics in an 'appreciated' relationship.

Participants in each of the nine workshop areas reported a minority of '*bad projects*', initiatives they did not like. People talk about '*bad aid*' being forms of assistance that are disrespectful, top-down, without consultation and that create trouble without taking responsibility for solving conflicts. People know that some desired changes do not come about without conflict, and some of these conflicts can make life difficult, or even violent. However, they suggest that agencies creating such conflicts should also play a role in mitigating the effects. '*Bad aid*' is too quick, is of a hit-and-run nature and looks for fast and visible success, which is often not sustainable.

This type of aid can be found among NGOs and in projects initiated by multilateral donors and by the private sector. But if I look at the distribution of external initiatives that are regarded as '*bad*' (and included amongst the '*worst projects*'), I fear that government agencies in Africa, with or without external back donors, are more often perceived as being involved in '*bad aid*' than NGOs or the private sector. Please don't misinterpret me here: I am not saying that government agencies are always bad or that their initiatives are always bad projects. I am saying that, in relative terms, in the box of (relatively few) projects that are indicated as '*bad*' projects, government projects have a higher likelihood of appearing so.

On the other hand, good projects are generally seen to be initiated by '*good*

*agencies*'. These are agencies with a long history of commitment and ones that take their time and are flexible. They dare to experiment, and this also means that they dare to fail. As a result, some of the good agencies may have some bad projects, but people tend to applaud that: If you don't try, you won't learn. What people hate is dishonesty, also in the way agencies report their successes or failures. Good agencies are seen as honest and dependable. They often play broker roles: they commit themselves to networking and to knowledge exchange. And as has been said before, they commit themselves to solving conflicts and helping when there are major problems. And among the 'good agencies' there are relatively many NGOs, compared to the other types of agencies.

One conclusion that is overwhelmingly clear from all our research activities is that development initiatives are mainly improving the lives of people who are regarded locally as being in the rich and middle-income groups, not the lives of those who are locally seen as poor, and certainly not the lives of the very poor. In the discussion about development aid, this is a problematic conclusion, as the emphasis of so many aid agencies, in the Netherlands too, is on poverty alleviation. As a result of the current hegemony of the Millennium Development Goals, this means an emphasis on people with an income of less than US\$1 a day. These are indeed the people who are locally regarded as poor and very poor in our research areas, and in most of our research districts this is close to half the population. The people in the 'average' wealth category are just above that minimum and the locally rich can be considered as those earning between US\$2 and US\$5 a day. Only the few very rich have an income above this level, and often very much above it. So, at a world level, the overwhelming majority of our research population belongs to the so-called bottom of the pyramid if we define this group as earning less than US\$5 a day.

It seems that development agencies working in our research areas are most successful at directly improving the level of wellbeing of the upper part of the bottom of the pyramid, namely the people who are not ill or handicapped, who have a slightly better level of education, who are more entrepreneurial, who have easier access to land, water, and public services, and who are better connected to the rich and powerful both economically and politically. They are also the ones who are not addicted to alcohol or drugs, who do not have excessive debts, and who do not have a history of failure or '*bad luck*' in life. The current emphasis in aid agencies on 'visible success' (with key words like '*effectiveness*' and '*impact*')

increases the chance that development agencies will focus on the locally rich and already successful, and fail to commit themselves to the poor or the ultra poor. **[xx]** In addition to this micro-level conclusion, I should add that the current emphasis in the leading aid agencies, including those in the Netherlands, on budget and sector support to central governments in recipient countries is encouraging an emphasis on urban and central areas, and is tending to neglect the most needy and peripheral areas. One could fear that a shifting emphasis towards aid through the private sector will further increase this tendency. This is not to say that the distributional effects of aid through NGOs automatically produce better results. Dirk-Jan Koch's sobering study points at blind spots on the aid allocation map if we look at the geographical distribution of international NGOs. **[xxi]** Our counterargument is that we found activities of NGOs, be they of secular, Christian or Islamic background, everywhere in our relatively remote research areas. And in many places people were reporting the innovative activities of small-scale farmers and business (wo)men, who were often investing remittance money. The role of government agencies beyond the odd primary school, a water project or a minor health dispensary is often quite limited. This brings us to a more macro-level analysis of African dynamics.

### *3. A macro perspective on changes in Africa based on global statistics***[xxii]**

The perceptions that I have presented so far are based on on-going research in a small part of Africa. So what about Africa as a whole? I am now going to make use of perceptions derived from global statistics and will follow the same six domains used in the previous section after first presenting some data on Africa's *demography*.

In 1650, Africa and Europe had similar-sized populations, each having about 100 million inhabitants and each accounting for about 17% of the world's population at the time. By 1900, Europe's economic and scientific dominance had resulted in its population reaching 600 million or 25% of the world's population. Africa's population was still 100 million as a result of slavery, disease and economic subordination, and its demographic weight had dropped to only 4% of the world's population. Today Europe has 750 million people (11% of the world's population), while Africa now has more than a billion inhabitants or 15% of the world's population. **[xxiii]**

Africa's demographic recovery is truly remarkable, and its demographic weight is

still growing. Fears that disease, like HIV/AIDS, would result in its population contracting are no longer founded. UNAIDS recently celebrated the fact that annual AIDS deaths are decreasing now and that in the four most problematic African countries, the number of new cases is 25% lower than ten years ago.**[xxiv]**

So let us first look at Africa's *natural environment*. Africa has 19% of the world's land area and more than 10% of it enjoys some form of nature protection, for what that is worth.

Between 1961 and 2009 African farmers succeeded in more than doubling the area under cultivation from 101 million hectares to 209 million,**[xxv]** which amounts to another 7% of Africa's land area. Most of Africa's land mass is unprotected and uncultivated nature, mainly tropical forests, savannas, deserts and semi-desert regions, and most of it is sparsely populated. Africa's cropping data dynamics mirror the eras of Afro-optimism and Afro-pessimism. In the 1960s, when most African countries had gained political independence, Africa's new governments were embarking on a trajectory of rapid economic expansion, dreaming of industrialization and development, and often neglecting their agricultural heritage and the well-being of their farmers. However, relatively benign weather conditions and path dependency on colonial modernization and agricultural commercialization schemes of the 1950s still allowed an expansion of the continent's cropping lands. The 1970s saw a decline in almost all crop lands due to adverse weather conditions and the harsh policies that created an atmosphere of rural despair, which is still feeding Afro-pessimism today. Findings from the African Studies Centre's Tracking Development project clearly show how bad these policies in Africa were. In the same decades, South-East Asia and China prepared the ground for their economic breakthrough based on state-led policies that favoured agriculture and their rural populations.**[xxvi]** The late 1980s saw a recovery in Africa which continued into the 1990s, including a rapid increase in the amount of crops sold on the world market as a result of increased global prospects for Africa's economy. The last decade has shown steady crop expansion, but one very much focused on producing food to feed Africa's own expanding urban populations. If we look at the last fifty-year period as a whole, the acreage of almost all African crops has increased considerably.**[xxvii]** Africa has almost doubled its cereal area and tripled its production of pulses and root and tuber crops. If we consider cereal crops in more detail, rice acreage has more than

tripled, sorghum more than doubled and maize has almost doubled. A rapid expansion can be seen in 'luxury' tree crops, fruit and vegetables that are being grown both for the world market and also for Africa's growing urban middle classes. That Africa has also more than doubled its livestock numbers and significantly increased the number of chickens kept (which are so important to its female farmers) is truly remarkable. Table 1 presents the details.

*Table 1: Africa's cropping area (million ha) and livestock numbers (in millions), 1961 - 2009*

Crop	1961	1970	1980	1990	2000	2009	Increase 1961-2009 (%)
Cereals	57	67	84	99	108	109	+ 81
Fibres	7	11	8	13	16	22	+ 214
Roots/tubers	8	11	11	14	25	24	+ 200
Fruits	4	5	4	4	4	4	-
Oil crops	17	20	18	20	27	31	+ 82
Other	7	10	10	15	16	19	+ 271
Total	101	124	117	143	172	209	+ 107
Livestock							
Chickens	274	305	356	608	1281	1471	+ 437
Goats	94	113	141	177	234	295	+ 214
Sheep	119	158	185	207	246	292	+ 148
Cattle	122	149	172	189	228	271	+ 122
Pigs	6	7	10	10	11	28	+ 367
Camels	6	12	14	15	18	22	+ 184

\* This includes melons, sugarcane, vegetables and tree nuts (including cocoa and coffee beans).  
Source: FAO FAOSTAT: Area harvested, Africa total. For livestock: FAOSTAT.fao.org/site/573

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Of course the success of agriculture should not only be judged by an expansion in the area under cultivation. Yields are important as well, and for yields too the overall picture is generally positive. Over the last fifty years, African farmers have succeeded in achieving a higher yield per hectare for all crops, with the exception of vegetables. The yield increases were most pronounced for fruit and cereals, with almost a doubling of average yields. Roots and tubers showed a 61% improvement in yield. Details are provided in Table 2.

*Table 2: African crop yields (kg/ha), 1961 - 2009*

Crop	1961	1970	1980	1990	2000	2009	Increase 1961-2009 (%)
Cereals	850	907	1111	1179	1270	1479	+ 82
Fibres	499	457	585	919	583	583	+ 19
Roots/tubers	5779	6235	6875	7858	8181	8280	+ 61
Fruits	284	327	347	388	374	569	+ 40
Oil crops	237	214	239	270	264	317	+ 34
Fruit	3526	7265	8264	8817	8585	10514	+ 90
Vegetables	6855	6877	6805	8245	8624	8885	+ 1
Tree nuts	302	343	384	317	742	799	+ 30

Indices indicate a lower yield than ten years earlier.

Source: FAO FAOSTAT: Yield, Africa total

*Italics* indicate a lower yield than ten years earlier.

If yield and acreage data are combined, the aggregated results for all major food crops show that Africa is better able to feed its population today than it was in 1961, despite its huge population increase over these fifty years (see Table 3). Both now and then Africa produced, on average, a little more than the minimum food requirements for a healthy life, as outlined by the World Health Organization, although many Africans still do not get enough food every day.

*Table 3: Africa as a whole: population (in millions), crops (in millions of tons), livestock (in millions) and food energy value (1000 Cal) dynamics, 1961-2009*

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	1961	2009	Change 1961-2009
Population	289	1000	x 3.46
Cereal production	46	161	x 3.49
Pulses production	5	13	x 3.89
Roots and tuber production	48	225	x 4.82
Food energy value per capita per year*	843	959	x 1.12
Cattle, sheep, goats, pigs and chickens	366	968	x 2.43
Chickens	274	1471	x 5.37

\* For cereals and pulses, an average energy value of 3600 Cal/kg was used and for roots and tubers 1400 Cal/kg. Other sources of food (and the balance of food exports and imports) are not taken into account. The annual findings for cereals, pulses, roots and tubers would mean 2304 Cal/day in 1961 and 2573 Cal/day in 2009. Both are above the minimum average requirement according to WHO data.

Source: Population: [esa.un.org/unpp](http://esa.un.org/unpp); crop and livestock data: see Tables 1 and 2.

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Behind this silver lining, some dark clouds can be seen as well, for those who want to look. The expansion of Africa's population and agriculture and the concomitant growth of demand for farmland and wood energy have resulted in a major decrease in Africa's forest lands. Between 1990 and 2010, the world lost 135 million hectares of forest land, and Africa was responsible for more than half of this loss. **[xxviii]** The area of forest in Africa dropped from 691 million hectares to 616 million hectares in these two decades and its forest carbon storage capacity decreased from 60.9 Gigatons to 55.9 Gigatons over the same period. **[xxix]** And despite Nobel Peace Prize winner Wangari Maathai's pioneering work to promote reforestation in Africa, **[xxx]** it is still not yet a high priority. **[xxxi]**

Let us move on to the second domain of change: Africa's *physical infrastructure*. Here there is a real lack of historical data, which makes it impossible to assess the major changes in the last fifty years for the continent as a whole. Various sources suggest an overall growth in air transport facilities and far better

connectivity for major parts of the continent with outside destinations, but within Africa it is still a major problem to get direct flights from A to B. The road network is being rejuvenated in many parts of the continent, thanks to support from the World Bank and the European Union, and to generous and often remarkably fast-moving projects donated and managed by China. The number of vehicles in Africa is increasing too.**[xxxii]** Electricity provision has been slow in many countries but, here too, new targets have been set and new investments made. Northern and South Africa have reached electricity coverage of more than 80% but all other African countries are still below 50% (including even energy-rich Nigeria), and many countries are below 20%. Modern fuel sources are common in North Africa but are relatively rare elsewhere, with South Africa's households in the range of 50% modern fuel usage and most other African countries below 10%. And they are mostly using traditional wood fuel or charcoal, to the detriment of the natural environment.**[xxxiii]** On a positive note, investments in communication infrastructure are booming, and the explosive growth in mobile phones is rapidly changing people's connectivity.**[xxxiv]** Also on the positive side, Africans have much better access to safe drinking water than fifty years ago.

If we look at the changes in the physical domain, the most fascinating developments have taken place in the urban environment. In 1960, Africa's population was predominantly rural, with only 20% of people living in cities. Today its urbanization level is beyond 40% and will be approaching 50% soon. Already one in eight Africans were living in an urban agglomeration of more than one million inhabitants in 2007. Four of Africa's mega-cities now belong in the world's top fifty most populous centres: Cairo, Lagos, Kinshasa and Johannesburg/the Rand.**[xxxv]** More will join the list. These figures showing Africa's urban explosion (see Table 4) become even more telling if we remind ourselves that African cities had to provide buildings and living space for only 65 million people in 1960 and that this figure has now reached 460 million.

*Table 4: Urbanization dynamics in Africa (% of urbanization by country), 1960-2007*

Table 4: Urbanization dynamics in Africa (% of urbanization by country), 1960-2007

In 1960	In 2008						
	10-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	>70
<10	Burundi Madagascar Tanzania Ethiopia Kenya Lesotho Malawi Niger Rwanda Uganda	Chad Tanzania	Mozambique	Mauritania			
10-19		Madagascar	Senegal D.R. Congo Gambia Mali Sierra Leone Somalia Zimbabwe	Angola Cote d'Ivoire Nigeria Sudan Togo	Cameroon		
20-29			GAB Zambia	Ghana Senegal	Liberia Mali		Libya
30-39				Egypt	Algeria	Congo Rep. Tunisia	
40-49				South Africa			

Source: World Bank World Development Report 1983 for 1960 (Washington) and WDI, Accessed November 18, 2010. For all other African countries data is missing, mostly for 1960.

Source: World Bank World Development Report 1983 for 1960 (Washington) and WDI. Accessed November 18, 2010. For all other African countries data is missing, mostly for 1960.

In the domain of *human capabilities*, the health and education of Africans have improved a great deal in the last fifty years, although Africa is still trailing behind many other parts of the world as far as the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals is concerned. The most basic statistic is the one on life expectancy. In 1960, 17 African countries had extremely low figures, with average life expectancy rates of less than 40 years, with Sierra Leone and Angola at the bottom with an average of only 33 years, mainly due to high infant and child mortality rates. By 2008, no African country had life expectancy figures in the thirties anymore. From the countries that were at the bottom of the list in 1960, seven have improved their life expectancy figures to between 40 and 49, and ten to between 50 and 59 years. In 1960, the majority of African countries had figures ranging between 40 and 50. Of these 29 countries, five have remained at this level, and the situation in Lesotho and Zambia has even deteriorated. Fourteen countries have improved and now lie in the 50 to 60 age range, six countries have risen to between 60 and 70 and five countries have even jumped to have figures of an average life expectancy of over 70, which is close to the European average. Finally, the six African countries at the top of the list in 1960 had life expectancy figures of above 50 years of age. Three of these countries have jumped to the highest category, one almost has, one has stagnated (Botswana) and one country has plummeted down the list. This is Zimbabwe, which has been suffering from the impact of HIV/AIDS and a severe political, economic and moral crisis. See Table 5. [xxxvi]

Table 5: Changes in life expectancy in African countries, 1960-2008



Table 5: Changes in life expectancy in African countries, 1960-2008

In 1960 ▼	In 2008			
	<10	10-19	20-29	30-39
30-39	Sierra Leone Angola CAR Gambia Guinea Rwanda Mali Mozambique Nigeria	Gambia Burkina Faso Eq. Guinea Djibouti Liberia Guinea Ethiopia Malawi Senegal Niger		

40-49	Chad D.R. Congo Swaziland Lesotho (-) Zambia (-)	Burundi Cameroon Ghana Congo Rep. Liberia Cote d'Ivoire Rwanda Sudan Mauritania Kenya Senegal Tanzania Uganda South Africa	Benin Cote d'Ivoire Gambia Mali Madagascar Togo	Algeria Libya Morocco Tunisia Meyote
50-59	Zimbabwe (-)	Botswana	Sao Tome & Principe	Cape Verde Mauritius Seychelles

(-) indicates deterioration

Source: World Development Indicators (World Bank). Accessed November 18, 2010.

(-) indicates deterioration

Source: World Development Indicators (World Bank). Accessed November 18, 2010.

What about education and literacy levels? To compare data for 1960 and 2008, we have access to figures for 34 African countries. In 1960 adult literacy levels were dismally low. In at least 14 African countries fewer than ten out of every hundred adults could read and write, even at an elementary level. Many of these countries are still at the bottom of the list, although average literacy levels have improved everywhere. At least 19 African countries had adult literacy levels of between 10% and 40% in 1960. These countries have all improved their rates considerably and some, like Zimbabwe, to almost universal levels of literacy. In only one African country, South Africa, could the majority of all adults read and write in 1960, and it is now close to universal literacy as well.

Table 6: African adult literacy rates (%), 1960 and 2008

Table 6: African adult literacy rates (%), 1960 and 2008

In 1960 ▼	In 2008									
	<10	10-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	80-89	>90
<10	Mali Burkina Faso Niger	Chad Ethiopia Guinea	Benin Sierra Leone Senegal		CAR Mozambique Mauritania Liberia	Eritrea				
10-19					Morocco	Burundi Sudan Togo Nigeria	Malawi Rwanda Tanzania Cameroon Tunisia Algeria			
20-29						Ghana Egypt	Uganda Zambia	Kenya Libya		
30-39						D.R. Congo				Zimbabwe
50-59									South Africa	

Source: For 1960: World Bank, World Development Report 1983: 196-197; for 2008: World Development Indicators (World Bank). Accessed November 18, 2010; for Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Senegal, Egypt and Algeria, the figures are estimates for 2006/2007. These are no (reliable) figures for many countries for 1960 as they have been omitted.

Source: For 1960: World Bank, World Development Report 1983: 196-197; for



A >75% (2 countries)

Blank no data (at least not since 2000)

Source: WDI. Accessed November 18, 2010. Data for the most recent year provided it was after 2000.

After a promising start between 1960 and 1970, *economic growth* was bleak in many parts of Africa between 1970 and 2000, although the situation improved considerably in many countries between 2000 and 2009.<sup>38</sup> However, patterns of economic growth have varied.

Although ten countries experienced economic crisis in the period between 1960 and 2000, and some even a complete collapse, there were also five countries with remarkably high economic growth over the period as a whole. With a thirteen-fold increase in GDP per capita, Botswana could be regarded as an economic cheetah, long before anybody talked about that African equivalent of the South East Asian tiger. And indeed economic performance across the board in the last decade has looked much more promising than during the previous forty years. However, certainly not all countries have enjoyed success, with some plunging into crisis. Zimbabwe is, of course, the most worrying example. But on the whole, the last decade has produced some signs of an 'emerging Africa', [xxxix] which can also be seen in the continent's poverty level. This is still dismally high, but improving. In 1990, the base year for the Millennium Development Goals, 58% of Sub-Saharan Africa's population were living below the US\$1 per day PPP consumption figure. In 2005 this had dropped to 51%. [xl]

Table 8: Africa's economic performance, 1960-2000

In 1960 ▼	►1960-2000 Collapse	Crisis/ Stagnation	Some Growth	Growth	Rapid Growth
	<30%	50-90/ 90-99%	100-125%	125-200%	>200%
Very poor			<u>Burundi</u>	Burkina Faso Malawi Togo	Lesotho
Poor	<u>D.R. Congo</u>	<u>CAR</u> <u>Chad</u> <u>Ghana</u> <u>Niger</u> <u>Nigeria</u> <u>Sierra Leone</u>	<u>Eritrea</u> <u>Rwanda</u>	Kenya Mauritania Nigeria Sudan	Botswana
Average	Liberia	Madagascar Tanzania Zambia	Côte d'Ivoire	Gambia Congo Rep. Mozambique Zimbabwe	Egypt
Rich				Algeria South Africa	Gabon Senegal

Gross Domestic Product per Capita in US \$ (Constant \$ value of the year 2000) In 1960: Very poor: < 200; Poor: 200-400; Average: 400-1000; Rich: >1000 US\$/capita (2000 value). These have not been corrected for purchasing power parity (PPP). (Severe) crisis countries have been underlined.

Source: WDI. Accessed November 17, 2010. Other countries: missing data.

Table 9: Africa's economic performance 2000-2009

In 2000 ▼	► 2000-2010 Collapse <50%	Critical Stagnation 50-90/ 90-99%	Some Growth 100-119%	Growth 120-200%	Rapid Growth >200%
Very poor		Liberia	Burundi D.R. Congo Malawi Niger	Chad Bhogo Sierra Leone	
Poor		C.A.R. Togo	Benin Burkina Faso Cote d'Ivoire Gambia Madagascar	Ghana Mali Mozambique Nigeria Rwanda Senegal Tanzania Uganda Zambia	
Average	Zimbabwe	Cote d'Ivoire	Cameroon Djibouti Kenya Mauritania Senegal	Lesotho	Angola
Rich		Gabon Seychelles	Algeria Botswana Congo Rep. Namibia South Africa Swaziland	Cape Verde Egypt Libya Mauritius Morocco Tunisia	Equatorial Guinea

Gross Domestic Product per Capita in US\$ (Constant \$ value of the year 2000) In 2000: Very poor: < 200; Poor: 200-400; Average: 400-1000; Rich: >1000 US\$/capita (2000 value). These have not been corrected for purchasing power parity (PPP). (Severe) crisis countries have been underlined.

Source: WDI. Accessed November 17, 2010. Other countries: missing data.

In terms of *social-political characteristics*, numerous global lists of desirable features compete for the attention of scientists, policy makers and the media. The Africapedia[xli] website lists many of these attempts to value Africa's political decency. Just to mention a few: the Democracy Index, the Government Effectiveness Index, the Failed States Index, the Mo Ibrahim Index of African Governance, the Corruption Perception Index, the Legal Rights Index, and the Freedom Index. These indexes are recent and it is often difficult to get an idea of long-term trends. However, compared to 1990, many more African governments and presidents are in power nowadays as a result of multi-party elections, and there is clearly a perception of increasing decency. Indexes like these, partly originating from Africa itself, do play a role in keeping the media, public opinion, the NGO and business sectors and governments sharp. And the African Union is also building up institutions to deal with the worst cases of abuse.[xlii] I will give an overview of the 'scores' for Africa on these indexes. There is still a lot of room for improvement, at least if you think that a successful state, with regular elections and more than one party, low corruption, good governance, high effectiveness, legal protection for business interests, and high press freedom are positive things. Not all Africans are convinced that all of these are top priorities though.

Table 10: Africa's scores on social-political indexes (no. of countries), 2007 or 2008

DI - Democracy Index: <http://www.eiu.com/index.asp?rf=0> (2008)

Table 10. Africa's scores on social-political indices (no. of countries), 2007 to 2008

Index	Score 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
DI	2	11	14	5	16	3	3	1	0
GEI	1	2	15	16	12	3	3	0	0
FSI	4	4	11	13	14	3	0	1	0
MAIG	1	1	2	8	18	9	6	1	0
CPI	15	21	14	4	3	0	0	0	0
LRI	1	5	23	4	3	0	3	0	3
FI		10			24			33	

GEI - Government Effectiveness Index:  
<http://earthtrends.wri.org/text/environmental-governance/variable-1278.html> (2007)

FSI - Failed States Index:  
[http://www.fundforpeace.org/web/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=99&Itemid=140](http://www.fundforpeace.org/web/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=99&Itemid=140) (2008)

MAIG - Mo Ibrahim Index of African Governance:  
<http://www.moibrahimfoundation.org/index-2008/bycountry> (2008)

CPI - Corruption Perception Index:  
[http://www.transparency.org/policy\\_research/surveys\\_indices/cpi/2007](http://www.transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices/cpi/2007)

LRI - Legal Rights Index (for business, security of borrowing and lending):  
<http://www.doingbusiness.org/ExploreTopics/GettingCredit/?direction=Asc&sort=2> (2007)

FI - Freedom Index: <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=15> (2007)

All At the Africapedia website most scores vary from 0 or 1 (undesirable) to 9 or 10 (desirable). In table 10 the lowest ('worst') score on the source tables get a score of 1, and the highest ('best') one or two a score of 9.

Finally, *cultural change* can be illustrated in many different ways but most attention is directed towards religion and the overwhelming religiosity of most Africans. I have stopped counting the number of times archbishops of one or other religious community and very devout Muslims have tried to convince me of the special value of their particular creed. It is hard to find so-called 'free-thinkers' in Africa! So let us see what the statistics tell us. But before doing so, I would like to repeat Tshshiku Tshibangu's warning about all religious statistics on Africa: **[xliii]**

Accurate statistics are notoriously difficult to come by, partly because national censuses are either out-of-date or non-existent, partly because rival statistics are an important part of the competition for power, partly because there is genuine doubt as to when some who claim to be adherents of Islam or Christianity have effectively ceased to belong to the traditional religion.

According to a German encyclopaedia, **[xliv]** the situation in the 1960s was that 40% of all Africans adhered to Islam, maybe 30% followed some form of indigenous belief system, 12% were Roman Catholic, 9% were Anglican or

Evangelical, 6% were Coptic or Ethiopian Christians and there were some scattered communities of followers of Judaism or Hinduism. In 2009, the number of people adhering to the Islamic faith was estimated at 402 million Africans (39%),**[xlv]** the number of Roman Catholics at 158 million (15%),**[xlvi]** the number of Coptic or Ethiopian Christians was 41 million (4%) and the number of other Christians 288 million (28%).**[xlvii]** This means that 14% of Africa's population can be regarded as being neither Muslim nor Christian. But it is obvious to all who have visited churches and mosques in Africa that hybrid forms of Christianity or Islam and indigenous beliefs are still widespread. If we look at the dynamics of religious expansion, we can see that the combined Protestant, Anglican and Pentecostal faith groups (including the many Independent Churches) grew nine-fold between 1960 and 2009, Roman Catholicism four-fold, Islam three-fold and Orthodox Christianity in Northeast Africa two-fold.**[xlviii]** It is not surprising therefore that South-African Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu was asking the Roman Catholic Cardinals to elect an African Pope at the last conclave in 2005.**[xlix]**

#### *4. What is the future role of the African Studies Centre?*

The African Studies Centre (ASC) has been in existence for almost 65 years. It started as the scientific and library section of the Dutch Africa Institute, which also had a business networking unit and has now become the Netherlands-African Business Council in The Hague. I hope we can celebrate our 65th anniversaries together in about a year from now. However, this will not be a celebration of reaching retirement age. Far from it as both centres bustle with youthful energy!

The ASC is one of the most outstanding research and documentation centres in the field of African Studies and will continue to be so. We are soon to experience another round of external evaluation and this critical assessment of the last seven years will help us prepare a new five-year strategic plan. People have been asking me about the direction the ASC will be taking and I have enjoyed numerous internal and external discussions on the subject, many of which show significant agreement about the most promising route. So let me give you some of the ideas behind our current thinking.

In terms of content, the *library and documentation* centre should stick to its attempts to cover the whole of Africa as far as the social sciences and the humanities are concerned. It will continue to give priority to collecting scientific

publications from Africa itself, and to focusing on comprehensive on-line access to everything of value for Africanists all over the world.

Its unique *African Studies Abstracts* are accessible online<sup>[i]</sup> and I am happy to announce that one of our most prestigious publications, the *Africa Yearbook*, will be a freely accessible online resource soon.<sup>[ii]</sup>

The library's on-line services should be further developed in the direction of personalized data access. The function of a documentation centre of scientific information will move towards helping users to make sense out of an ever greater and more chaotic supply of knowledge. Researchers and documentation specialists at the ASC will be looking to provide coverage of the whole of Africa and to connect to all other relevant centres in the Netherlands - be they academic, business, NGOs, policy makers and/or the media - where there is an interest in Africa.

It is my wish that the community of Africanists that makes use of our Centre consists of fellow academics and associates from the world of policy, business and NGOs, and also PhD and Research Masters students who would like to be connected to the Centre as affiliates<sup>[iii]</sup>. And of course we will continue our visiting fellow programme, and our collaboration with African partners like CODESRIA,<sup>[iiii]</sup> OSSREA,<sup>[liv]</sup> SANPAD<sup>[lv]</sup> and others. Although we will focus on the Netherlands and on Africa, others are very welcome as well, and we already have fruitful contacts with colleagues in the Africa-Europe Group for Interdisciplinary Studies (AEGIS)<sup>[lvi]</sup> and in Asia and the Americas. I would also like to establish productive connections with other area institutes and their directors in and outside the Netherlands<sup>[lvii]</sup> and to work together towards comparative approaches in line with current activities, such as the Tracking Development project and the IS Academies in which we are involved.<sup>[lviii]</sup> And I hope we can expand our mutually enriching relationships with African embassies in the Netherlands and Brussels, and with the Dutch embassies in Africa.

It is also sensible to focus our major *research activities* on areas of scientific interest where we think we can contribute to the frontiers of knowledge. These should be fields where there will be an interest from our global peers, both in academia and in other knowledge centres. We now think there will be five domains in which our efforts will probably be most useful and we plan to build on the Centre's current strengths and steer them in new directions.

The first domain involves the *livelihoods* of Africans in connection with *nature* and natural resources for livelihood development, but also connected to people's *capabilities*.**[lix]** This is linked to the study of endogenous and exogenous forces of innovation and restraint, which shape people's life chances and their well-being.**[lx]** Africa's demographic, economic and socio-political characteristics are changing rapidly, as we have seen, and I expect further changes in the next few decades, with many ups, and definitely also some downs, in terms of economic growth and well-being, and in terms of the ecological and physical content and impact of these dynamic

changes. And a lot of this will be visible in the changes in Africa's landscape, in access to land, water and nature, and in fierce conflicts over entitlements to Africa's major resources: nature and people. The African Studies Centre can and will contribute to the emphasis on food security, agriculture and water development, in our government's new priorities**[lxi]**.

The second domain is related to the first one, but deserves special visibility. Africa's population is hyper-mobile and a lot of this *mobility* will boost *urbanization*. Africa currently has the fastest rate of urbanization of all macro-regions in the world and its cities are bustling centres of youthful expectation. This makes city life both promising and challenging. We have already seen some African cities join the ranks of the world's mega-cities, and more are on their way.

Governing these cities and managing expectations will be a major task for new generations of urban politicians and entrepreneurs, and understanding these processes is a major task for scholars like the ones at and connected to the ASC. In this expanding domain, we can use the expertise our researchers have gained on projects like '*Mobile Africa*' and '*Connections and Transformations*'.**[lxii]**

The third domain has to do with the *perceptions and identities* of Africans themselves and of others about African culture.**[lxiii]** How do people express these identities? And what about the dynamics of creating, renewing and rediscovering identities with regard to language and fashion, religion and morality, ethnicity and nationhood, ceremonies and festivities, diet/food style and lifestyle, music and dance, architecture and the visual arts? How do people form cultural and political alliances around these identities? How do identity politics include and exclude others and how does identity mobilization relate to violence and peace? And how do people perceive the many changes that they have experienced? How do they write their own histories?



The fourth domain deals with *constellations of governance arrangements*. Our researchers have a lot of experience in dealing with the peculiarities of African states at various levels.

Concepts like the neo-patrimonial state and the developmental state are widely used nowadays. However, a focus on the state can be deceiving. From a bottom-up perspective, the African population has to deal with a mixture of authority structures and with a myriad of players with power and influence. For them, and for researchers, this can be a confusing constellation of governance arrangements, in which a lot is not as it appears at first sight. And what seems to be normal in Ethiopia can be completely different in Senegal or Zimbabwe. Various types of state agencies with different levels of scale, diverse civil-society agencies, a host of business actors and community-based and group-based agencies, legally recognized or not, form intertwined networks. **[lxiv]** And the foreign element is manifesting itself in many of these agencies and networks. From the North, but ever more also from the East and the West.

This leads me to a fifth and final major domain of study where the ASC community could excel and be useful to society. The world's geo-political set-up is changing with the emergence of China, India and Malaysia, the changing role of Arab countries and Iran, the knocking on Africa's door of Brazil, and the growth of the African Union as a political entity. Africa's so-called south-south connections are no longer just happy NGO talk but are a stark reality, and not always that happy anymore. However, instead of positioning Africa at the receiving end of a new global battle for resources, or even a new imperialism, Africa's political and economic leaders do have the capability to negotiate this multi-polar world. And it is obvious that Europe and the United States, and their multinational companies, are facing a challenge. The study of *Africa in the World* should be a major element of our new research programme, **[lxv]** but it is clear that this should be linked to all other focus areas, as they all have elements of global linkages.

Instead of continuing the ASC's research architecture as separate research groups, I think we should consider a more flexible organization. Members of our research community could commit themselves to one or more themes, in shifting groups of scholars, and with an annual renewal of pledges and performance assessment. This would also make it easier to connect these research project groups to our library staff and to our community of fellows, associates and affiliates in and outside the Netherlands. We are going to use the year ahead to

discuss and formalize these arrangements for the next five-year period. And we will also try to broaden our resource base.

### *5. Standing on many shoulders*

This is my third inaugural address. The first was delivered in Amsterdam in 1996. It was about political environmental geography and I talked about entitlements to natural resources, starting with a case-study from Kenya. Kenya is still part of my activities and I owe a lot of gratitude to the people who have supported me and helped me to build up my expertise over so many years. They include the team around our research in West Pokot: Annemieke van Haastrecht and Mirjam Schomaker, my PhD promoters Herman van der Wusten and Willem Heinemeyer, and people like Rachel Andiem, Albino Kotomei, Simon Lokomoriang Lopeyok, Huub Hendrix and Paul Mertens in Kenya and later Wiegert de Leeuw, Jacinta Chebet and many students and local assistants too. My Kenyan adventures broadened when I got a chance to coordinate a major collaborative programme with the School of Environmental Studies in Eldoret with Charles Okidi and, later, Wilson Yabann. Anthropologist Joshua A'kong'a was instrumental in my receiving an honorary doctorate from Eldoret in 2007, for which I am very grateful. In Amsterdam, I was able to develop programmes to study the environment and development with support from first Ad de Bruijne and later Isa Baud and colleagues like Maarten Bavinck, Mirjam Ros-Tonen and Fred Zaal. I gradually widened my regional focus to include African countries like Ghana and Southern Africa, and also India. In Ghana I have been inspired by David Millar and Saa Dittoh, and in South Africa by Timm Hoffman and Anshu Padayachee. And for many years Robert Chambers, Elinor Ostrom, Mary Tiffen and Amartya Sen have been my heroes from the scientific literature.

My second inaugural lecture was given in Utrecht in 2003 when I was appointed Professor in the Social Sciences and Director of the CERES Research School. Thanks to Arie de Ruijter, Lolita van Toledo, Agniet Cools, Ab van Eldijk, Wil Pansters and many others, CERES has become an effective national research school. I am grateful that Han van Dijk was willing to take over after my five-year term at a time when national research schools were beginning to suffer as a result of a lack of national leadership in research and higher education, and due to parochialism in our university landscape. There are too many alpha males (and a few alpha females) **[lxvi]** in charge of our intellectual heritage and future. CERES also was a bridge for me to very interesting research on the impact of

climate change on drylands, and a bridge to SANPAD in South Africa (my thanks to Anshu Padayachee, Jonathan Jansen, Ahmed Wadee, Nelke van der Lans and the SANPAD team!). I also learned a lot from my work for NWO-WOTRO (thanks Renée van Kessel, Henk Molenaar, Willem van Genugten and many others).

As a geographer, I have always been straddling disciplinary boundaries but at CERES and WOTRO I learned to appreciate the importance of cross- and trans-disciplinary knowledge production. I learned to connect academic excellence with societal relevance and to work in truly global, multicultural settings. I have tried to implement these lessons in the activities of the Development Policy Review Network (thanks Jan Donner, Paul Hoebink, Mirjam Ros-Tonen, Kim de Vries and many others), the activities of the Worldconnectors (thanks Sylvia Borren, Koen Kusters, Ellen Lammers, Ruud Lubbers, Alide Roerink, Herman Wijffels and many others) and in the inspiring environment of the *Broker* (thanks Frans Bieckmann, Rutger Engelhard, Louk de la Rive Box, Evelijne Bruning, Rajendre Khargi and the *Broker* team). And I have also become involved in many other positions of knowledge networking: within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, at SNV, **[lxvii]** ICCO, Woord en Daad and Prisma, in Tropenbos International **[lxviii]** and Both Ends, **[lxix]** and on the *Curatorium* of the Prince Claus Chair for Development and Equity. **[lxx]** In the current political doldrums, a lot of these networks are coming together as there is a genuinely felt need to make sure there is a better alternative than hiding behind these dikes of ours.

And now here in Leiden, this is my third, and probably last, inaugural address, as a Professor in African Development! I am enjoying the intellectual atmosphere here and my discussions with deans and colleagues at the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences and at the Faculty of Humanities. And I am enjoying being the director of the African Studies Centre.

I have known the Centre since the start of my academic career and have always enjoyed using its excellent library, publications, research and outreach services. And I know I have inherited a well-respected institute because its current and former staff have made it world famous. I am truly enjoying standing on the shoulders of my predecessors.

The foundations were laid by Professors Idenburg and Holleman. The pillars and the roof were built by Peter Geschiere, Jan Hoorweg and Wim van Binsbergen. Gerrit Grootenhuis was responsible for the kitchen. **[lxxi]** After him, Stephen Ellis

built an elevator and strengthened the walls and Gerti Hesselning, who is still much missed, painted the walls in beautiful colours. Leo de Haan started to build a few annexes: thanks Leo for connecting the African Studies Centre more firmly to the world of policy makers and NGOs.

When I applied for the job of director of the African Studies Centre, my wife, Annemieke, said: 'Then you will have your *hobby job*'. If a 'hobby job' means that I am supposed to enjoy every minute of it, she is right. If her expectation was that it would be quiet and relaxing, I am proving her wrong. Now she is telling me that I need to calm down a bit. I think I should, and I think I can because there are many capable people around me. The ASC is privileged to have always had dedicated members on its Board of Governors and I am extremely grateful to them for appointing me and for their ongoing commitment. And the research, library and support staff, as well as the visiting fellows and PhD and Research Masters students have all welcomed me with warmth - and expectations. I am trying to inspire them to continue to do a good job. The ASC is lucky to have excellent members in its management and scientific teams: Jan Abbink, Jan Binnendijk, Mirjam de Bruijn, Jos Damen, Dick Foeken, André Leliveld, Gitty Petit, and Maaïke Westra. The members of the Research Masters Board, our Advisory Council and the Netherlands African Studies Association (NVAS) deserve a special mention here too. **[lxxii]**

Behind all of them, there are fathers and mothers and, for many, life partners and children. In my case, the people closest to me deserve my last few words: I would like to say a special 'thank you' to my father and mother, and to Annemieke, Luuk and Richard. I hope I can find a fair and sustainable balance between this 'hobby job' of mine and you. And I hope that we can do so in a world that is striving for more sustainability and greater fairness. Ladies and gentlemen, unlike some of the pessimists among you perhaps, I can see silver linings, and certainly one around Africa. **[lxxiii]**

## **NOTES**

**i.** It was based on the Ghana TransNet research programme, funded by NWO, with Valentina Mazzucato as programme leader and Ernest Appiah, Mirjam Kabki and Lothar Smith as major collaborators. It was carried out at the University of Amsterdam and the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, with support from the African Studies Centre in Leiden. Together with Valentina Mazzucato, Jan Willem Gunning and the ASC's Rijk van Dijk, I was promotor of the two PhD students. See

<http://www2.fmg.uva.nl/ghanatransnet>. My presentation is currently on my personal website at the University of Amsterdam: <https://home.medewerker.uva.nl/a.j.dietz>. You can also find an overview of all my activities and publications here, many as pdf files.

**ii.** Joyce Millen, with thanks. She presented a paper on diaspora engagement in homeland health, with a comparative analysis of the US and Ghana on the one hand, and Senegal and France on the other.

**iii.** Bob van der Bijl. The African Studies Centre shares an early history with the Netherlands-African Business Council. In December 1946 we started out together as the Africa Institute.

**iv.** I paraphrase here the title of a shocking book by Michela Wrong on corruption in Kenya: *It is Our Turn to Eat. The Story of an African Whistle-blower* (Harper Collins Publishers, New York, 2009). The feeling of triumph in Dutch business circles was fed by the adoption of the recent report of the Dutch Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR) on development assistance by the new Dutch government, and the expectation that there would be a major shift in development funding to the private sector, mainly in Africa, and involving many Dutch enterprises, particularly those dealing with food, agriculture and water. In its recent English translation, the WRR report is called 'Less Pretension, More Ambition: Development Policy in Times of Globalization' and was written by Peter van Lieshout, Robert Went and Monique Kremer (Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam, 2010).

**v.** The lecture at Hunan University in Changsha was about 'sustainable cities'. I would like to thank Li Qiu and Fu Rong for their invitation and hospitality. This trip not only gave me a chance to revisit Shanghai and the amazing EXPO grounds but also to give lectures and meet scientists at three of the leading African Studies Centres in China: in Jinhua (Zhejiang Normal University) and in Beijing (the IWAAS at the Chinese Academy of Sciences and Peking University). My thanks to Liu Hongwu, Liu Haifang and Li Anshan.

**vi.** Most of the African countries shared the Africa Joint Pavilion. The exceptions were South Africa, Nigeria, Angola, Egypt, Libya, Tunisia and Algeria. The African Union had its own section too. Morocco had a separate pavilion far away (because they have not been accepted as members of the African Union?). It is interesting to see how the African Union presented themselves on their website: 'At the entrance of the pavilion, a gigantic African primitive sculpture with words on it reacts towards a glimmering globe, symbolizing the important role which Africa plays in environmental protection and coordination of world affairs. Entering the

pavilion and walking along the curving corridor, visitors will learn about development of African countries, urban transformation, economic rise and cultural prosperity in Africa. Visitors will feel as if they were standing between the past and the future of Africa, impressed and inspired. In the central round area for forums, visitors can watch films about urban development in Africa, especially about environmental protection and the use of clean energy in the process of development. These films will tell the world about Africa's vitality, progress in strides and the contributions of Africa's harmonious development to world peace and development.' See [http://en.expo2010.cn/c/en\\_gj\\_tpl\\_132.htm#gk](http://en.expo2010.cn/c/en_gj_tpl_132.htm#gk).

**vii.** In the 'Shanghai Expo Site National Pavilions Memorial Stamp Album', the page about Africa was entitled 'The hottest place under sunlight' and added that 'Africa, the second biggest continent on Earth, covers an area of 30.22 million km<sup>2</sup>, which accounts for 20.4% of the total land area. And it has a population of 1 billion (2009), which is approximately 15% of the world's population. The name of Africa means the hottest place under sunlight.' The real origin of the word 'Africa' is controversial: on the English-language Wikipedia website various hypotheses are presented: from *afar* (dust in Phoenician), *ifri* (cave in Berber) and *af-rui-ka* (birthplace in Egyptian) to *aprica* (sunny in Latin) and *aphrica* (without cold in Greek). See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Africa#Etymology>.

**viii.** See [www.padev.nl](http://www.padev.nl).

**ix.** I would like to thank all the PADEV collaborators for a steep learning curve; in Africa in particular David Millar, Adama Belemviré, Francis Obeng and Richard Yeboah, and in the Netherlands Kees van der Geest, Dieneke de Groot, Wouter Rijnveld, and Fred Zaal. Among the students, Anika Altaf, Geneviève Audet-Bélangier, Roger Bymolt, Agnieszka Kazimierczuk, Aurélien Marsais and Jerim Obure deserve a special word of praise.

**x.** Robert Chambers is the author of many publications on participation. His book *Revolutions in Development Inquiry* (Eartscan, London, 2008) summarizes his life achievements. He spoke at a workshop entitled 'Insights in Complexity' that was organized at ICCO on September 15, 2010 ([www.padev.nl](http://www.padev.nl), under Forum). Robert Chambers has been an inspiration to me all my academic life.

**xi.** In the last decade it has been trying to increase its leverage by connecting to like-minded donors (particularly in Scandinavia, the UK and Ireland) and promoting donor harmonization and the coherence agendas of the OECD DAC group. See [www.worldconnectors.nl](http://www.worldconnectors.nl) for the paper on coherence by a working group that I chaired.

**xii.** Examples are the activities of companies like Unilever, Heineken, Ahold and the Rabobank. The Netherlands-African Business Council ([www.nabc.nl](http://www.nabc.nl)) plays a role in stimulating fairer, more sustainable and socially responsible relationships among the business sector in Africa.

**xiii.** I recommend Amartya Sen's *Identity and Violence: The Illusion of Destiny* (W.W. Norton & Co., New York, 2006).

**xiv.** The book *Dead Aid* by Dambisa Moyo (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, New York, 2009, subtitled: *Why Aid Is Not Working and How There Is Another Way for Africa*) has poured a lot of oil on the fire. Although with many more nuances, the IOB Evaluation of the Dutch Africa Policy 1998-2006 was also quite critical. See the special issue of the *Broker* on 'The Dutch Treatment' (*The Broker*, February 6, 2008; [www.thebrokeronline.eu](http://www.thebrokeronline.eu)).

**xv.** Aid Watch provides interesting insight in the debate on the application of RCTs in evaluating development assistance. See <http://aidwatchers.com/2009/07/development-experiments-ethical-feasible-useful/>. Also in the Netherlands there is a lot of debate in circles of evaluators of development programmes, e.g. at two recent conferences, one organized by Irene Guijt and colleagues (Conference 'Evaluation Revisited'. May 20-21, 2010, [www.cdi.wur.nl/UK/newsagenda/agenda/Improving\\_the\\_Quality\\_of\\_Evaluative\\_Practice\\_by\\_Embracing\\_Complexity.htm](http://www.cdi.wur.nl/UK/newsagenda/agenda/Improving_the_Quality_of_Evaluative_Practice_by_Embracing_Complexity.htm)) and one organized by AIID and ISS (Amsterdam, October 4-7, 2010) on the Role of Impact Evaluation in Measuring the Effectiveness of Dutch Aid. See [www.aiid.org](http://www.aiid.org).

**xvi.** It is difficult to include those who are locally regarded as very rich or very poor. The very rich are too busy or elsewhere, and the very poor tend to exclude themselves or are not readily available to attend public meetings.

**xvii.** See [www.padev.nl](http://www.padev.nl). A brief summary: our research design consisted of five steps: (i) an inventory of development agents and their monitoring and evaluation practices; (ii) three workshops in areas with on-going major Dutch development involvement; (iii) three workshops in areas where Dutch development involvement has been considerable but is no longer very prominent; (iv) three workshops in areas that were locally regarded as areas with little external involvement and also without Dutch development involvement; and (v) follow-up activities with development agencies. Many additional research activities took place. In the workshops we gradually developed an approach with ten units: (i) Time line (30 years); (ii) Changes in capabilities/capitals: natural/physical/human/economic/social-political/cultural; (iii) Wealth categorization: very rich/rich/average/poor/very poor); (iv) A list of 'projects'; their valuation and their

perceived impact on capabilities (and information about the agency and 'sector'); (v) Relations between trends (per 'capital' or 'capability') and interventions/'projects'; (vi) Selection of five best and five worst 'projects'; (vii) A historical assessment of these five best and five worst 'projects'; (viii) The effects of the best five and worst five 'projects' on wealth classes; (ix) An evaluation of reasons for assessing the best and worst 'projects'; and (x) Personal and family life history forms (individual survey).

**xviii.** The capability approach merges insights from Amartya Sen and the DfID livelihoods approach. Anthony Bebbington, and Leo de Haan and Annelies Zoomers in the Netherlands are among the people who have made it a useful tool for understanding development dynamics. See, for example, L. de Haan & A. Zoomers (2005) 'Exploring the Frontier of Livelihood Research', *Development and Change* 36(1): 27-47.

**xix.** The African Studies Centre was among the pioneers here. See, for example, W. van Binsbergen & R. van Dijk (eds), *Situating Globality: African Agency in the Appropriation of Global Culture* (Brill, Leiden, 2004).

**xx.** There are often heated debates in our research workshops about the definition of wealth classes. However, many people agree that the difference between the poor and the ultra poor is the perception that for the poor there still is hope that one day they or their children might become well-to-do, while the ultra-poor are seen as hopeless, and also without hope themselves. These are people who are excluded or who exclude themselves from social life. The ultra poor are people who are often said to have no friends.

**xxi.** Published by Routledge Studies in Development Economics, Abingdon (2009) and based on his PhD that he defended at Radboud University Nijmegen.

**xxii.** My thanks to Ursula Oberst and Jos Damen for finding data for this section.

**xxiii.** <http://www.vaughns-1-pagers.com/history/worldpopulation-growth.htm>. Used in T. Dietz, F. den Hertog & H. van der Wusten, *Van Natuurlandschap tot Risicomaatschappij. De geografie van de relatie tussen mens en milieu*, (Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam, 2008). See [www.geonatrix.eu](http://www.geonatrix.eu). For current data, see L. Rowntree *et al.*, *Diversity amid Globalization. World Regions, Environment, Development* (Pearson/Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River NJ, 2009). According to the Population Reference Bureau (world population data sheet, 2010; [www.prb.org/pdf2010/10wpds\\_eng.pdf](http://www.prb.org/pdf2010/10wpds_eng.pdf)), Africa's current population is 1030 million, and will increase to 1.4 billion in 2025 and 2.1 billion in 2050. Current annual population growth for Africa as a whole is 2.4% (birth rate 37/1000; death rate 13/1000; net migration rate 1/1000). Infant mortality is 76/1000 and the



fertility rate is 4.7. As a result of the on-going population explosion, 15% of Africa's population today is under 15 and only 3% is over 65 years of age.

**xxiv.** According to a press release (*De Volkskrant* November 24, 2010: 12), the number of AIDS-related deaths in the world has dropped from 2.1 million in 2004 to 1.8 million in 2009. In four of the five most severely hit countries, Ethiopia, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe, the number of new cases fell by 25% between 2001 and 2009, mostly thanks to antiretroviral therapy programmes. See <http://www.unaids.org/globalreport/>.

**xxv.** FAOSTAT data, Harvested area, Africa total. Accessed November 23, 2010.

**xxvi.** Tracking Development is a comparative research programme, funded by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, that is being undertaken by KITLV and the ASC. The programme leaders are David Henley (KITLV) and Jan Kees van Donge (ASC), with support from Ursula Oberst. One can and should argue about the social and environmental costs of these state-led pro-rural policies. In Indonesia, the massacres and authoritarian rule following 1965 hit the rural working poor. China's Cultural Revolution and the preceding so-called Great Leap Forward were disastrous for many in the countryside. They simply did not survive it. The boost of agricultural production for the world and urban markets has also created major environmental problems (deforestation, decreased biodiversity, soil and water pollution, and erosion).

**xxvii.** The fibre crops are the exception.

**xxviii.** See [www.forestry.gov.uk](http://www.forestry.gov.uk) (forestry statistics 2010). See M. Ros-Tonen & T. Dietz (eds), *African Forests between Nature and Livelihood Resources* (Edwin Mellen Press, Lewiston, 2005). The fourth edition of the UNEP's 'Global Environmental Outlook' contains data (and warnings) as well. GEO4 was published in Nairobi in 2007.

**xxix.** See [www.forestry.gov.uk](http://www.forestry.gov.uk) (forestry statistics 2010). The forest area shrank from 23.2% of Africa's total land area to 20.7% between 1990 and 2010.

**xxx.** See [http://nobelprize.org/nobel\\_prizes/peace/laureates/2004/maathai-bio.html](http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/2004/maathai-bio.html).

**xxxi.** Although there are many places where farmers have taken the initiative to improve their environment and where there has been serious support from governments, NGOs and international donor agencies. An inspiring study is *More People, Less Erosion. Environmental Recovery in Kenya*, by M. Tiffen, M. Mortimore & F. Gichuki (John Wiley & Sons, Chichester, 1994). See [http://www.drylandsresearch.org.uk/drylands\\_aboutus.html](http://www.drylandsresearch.org.uk/drylands_aboutus.html). In a recent research project I was involved in, we looked for further evidence and we did a meta-study

about the way this book was received. See T. Dietz, with J.W. Gunning, A. Klaasse Bos & A. Zuiderwijk, 'Optimistic Determinism or Explaining a Miracle', in: K. Burger & F. Zaal, *Sustainable Land Management in the Tropics. Explaining the Miracle*, pp. 1-20 (Ashgate, Farnham, 2009). For West Africa, I recommend looking at the evidence presented by C. Reijg in his PowerPoint presentation, 'Developing Another Green Revolution for Africa. Some Lessons from the Poorest Country in the World (Niger)', not dated, at <http://arts.monash.edu.au/ges/pgrad/midea/pdf/chrisreij-sahel.pdf>. In our own study, T. Dietz, R. Ruben & J. Verhagen, *Impact of Climate Change on Drylands, With a Focus on West Africa* (Kluwer, Dordrecht, 2004), there are many examples as well, especially in contributions by ASC researchers Mirjam de Bruijn, Han van Dijk and Wouter van Beek on Mali.

**xxxii.** The importance of studying a long period in this domain is clear from a beautiful publication edited by J-B. Gewald, S. Luning & K. van Walraven, *The Speed of Change: Motor Vehicles and People in Africa, 1890-2000* (Brill, Leiden, 2009).

**xxxiii.** In a recent presentation for the Dutch Knowledge Network on Sustainability, Climate and Energy (November. 11, 2010 in Utrecht), Jos Bruggink (IVM/VU Amsterdam) presented interesting data that suggest a high correlation between the percentage of people living on less than US\$2 a day and electricity coverage, but a low correlation between this poverty indicator and the household coverage of modern fuels. Even in African countries with 'only' 40%-60% poverty, the use of modern fuels is still very limited, unlike many Asian countries in that poverty segment. He used data from the OECD/IEA *World Energy Outlook 2010* ([www.worldenergyoutlook.org](http://www.worldenergyoutlook.org)) and poverty data provided by the World Bank: [data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.2DAY](http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.2DAY).

**xxxiv.** One of the on-going research projects at the ASC deals with the explosion of mobile phones in Africa. See M. de Bruijn, F. Nyamnjoh & I. Brinkman, *Mobile Phones: The New Talking Drums of Everyday Africa* (Langaa/African Studies Centre, Bamenda/Leiden, 2009).

**xxxv.** UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs/Population Division. *World Urbanization Prospects* (the 2003 revision). New York. For the urban agglomerations with more than one million inhabitants: WDI online. Accessed November 18, 2010. According to Van Susteren's *Metropolitan World Atlas* (010 Publishers, Rotterdam, 2007) Cairo had 14 million inhabitants in 2000, Lagos 10 million, Kinshasa 5.8 million and Johannesburg/Rand area 5.5 million. A website with the pompous name 'true knowledge' ([www.trueknowledge.com](http://www.trueknowledge.com)) gives

current figures of 17.7 million for Cairo, 6.6 million for Lagos (nobody knows....), 7.6 million for Kinshasa and 3,9 million for Johannesburg (but that excludes the other cities in the Rand area). For West Africa, a very interesting French website gives lots of maps and figures for its fast growing cities: Africapolis. See <http://www.afd.fr/jahia/webdav/site/afd/users/administrateur/public/publications/BT/0808ProjetFicheResumeeAfricapolisV4-en.pdf>.

**xxxvi.** A major reason for higher life expectancy is the lower child death rates. In Africa mortality among the under-fives for 1960 are not clear but were certainly far above 200/1000, and for some countries even over 350/1000 (Mali: 518/1000; Sierra Leone 390/1000; Malawi 361/1000). See D.T. Jamison *et al.*, *Disease and Mortality in Sub-Saharan Africa* (World Bank, Washington, 2006) (2nd ed., Chapter 3). Data can be found at: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK2296/table/A168/?report=objectonly>. In 2010 the figure for Africa as a whole had improved to 142/1000 but was still far below the targets set in the Millennium Development Goals and generally lower than in other parts of the world, although much better than 50 years ago.

**xxxvii.** Egypt: 16%, South Africa 15% and Tunisia 12%. World Bank WDR 1983.

**xxxviii.** According to the World Bank's Africa website, PPP GDP per capita growth was 15% for Sub-Sahara Africa (US\$ 1,159 to US\$ 1,328) between 1990 and 1999 and 54% (US\$ 1,373 to US\$ 2,114) between 2000 and 2008: <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/AFRICAEXT/0,contentMDK:20563739~menuPK:1613741~pagePK:146736~piPK:146830~theSitePK:258644,00.html>.

**xxxix.** In 2001 the Development Centre of the OECD published *Emerging Africa* (OECD Publishing, Paris) by J-C. Berthélemy (and colleagues) and in 2010 another book was published with the same title: *Emerging Africa*.

*How 17 Countries Are Leading the Way* by Steven Radelet (Center for Global Development, Washington). On the website of Radio Nederland Wereldomroep, attention is paid to 'Emerging Africa' too ([www.rnw.nl/africa](http://www.rnw.nl/africa)) and there are ever more websites referring to this concept and to business ventures or public-private partnerships under that logo. The recent annual business day of the Netherlands-African Business Council was called 'Emerging Africa' too and its introductory statement goes a bit further than my 'silverlining'; it promotes a platinum continent. This is what they had to say (and because it illustrates so nicely the euphoria in business circles I quote the complete introduction): 'Africa is set to become the developing world's next success story. In 2008, Africa's combined

GDP reached \$1.5 trillion - more than India or Brazil - and GDP growth rates averaged 5 percent per year between 2002 and 2009. The IMF expects this outperformance of markets like Brazil, Russia and Eastern Europe to continue in the future. Foreign direct investment into Africa stood at \$62 billion in 2008, seven times more than in the year 2000. Already per capita GDP is higher in Africa than in India, as is the number of middle-class households. Africa hosts 10 percent of the world's reserves of oil, 40 percent of its gold, and 80 to 90 percent of chromium and platinum metals. Yet, only a quarter of the economic growth is driven by the resource sector. Retail, agriculture, transport, and telecommunication all contribute significantly to the economic rise. McKinsey expects a 35% increase in spending power and 221 million extra basic-needs consumers by 2015. The continent has more than 500 million people of working age today. By 2040, their number will exceed 1.1 billion. A quarter of the world's arable land lies in Africa. Infrastructure investments on the continent have quadrupled in the past decade to a total of \$12 billion in 2008. And the mobile phone, of which there are more than 450 million in use today, is only the prelude to a fundamental ICT revolution in Africa. These opportunities can be translated into revenues and profits. Publicly traded companies in Africa achieve an annual return on capital that is on average 65% higher than that of their counterparts in China, India, Vietnam, or Indonesia, according to economist Paul Collier. Globally, Asia has been the main benefactor. The combined share of Africa's exports to the European Union and the United States fell to 49 percent, from 73 percent in 1990 while Chinese imports from sub-Saharan Africa increased to over \$13 billion, from \$64 million. Now is the time for Europe to break that trend by becoming a valuable partner for Africa.' See [www.inschrijven.nabc.nl/EmergingAfrica.aspx](http://www.inschrijven.nabc.nl/EmergingAfrica.aspx). Accessed December 3, 2010. It is interesting to note that my predecessor at the ASC, Leo de Haan, does not seem to share their (and my) optimism. In his inaugural lecture at the ISS entitled 'Development Studies in Perspective. Sharing the Future at ISS' (The Hague; ISS, Dies Natalis October 14, 2010), referring to the success of the South East Asian Tigers, he writes: 'There is no sign of African Lions yet' (p. 4) and in the rest of his otherwise optimistic account there is hardly anything on Africa.

**xl.** See [http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/MDG\\_FS\\_1\\_EN.pdf](http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/MDG_FS_1_EN.pdf). In North Africa, the poverty situation is much better and improving as well. See <http://mdgs.un.org/unsd/mdg/Data.aspx>.

**xli.** The Africapedia data can be found at <http://www.2logicstudios.com/bitweaver/wiki/view>. Accessed December 4, 2010.

**xlii.** These trends are followed closely every year in a special section of the *Africa Yearbook*.

**xliii.** In: A. Mazrui, *General History of Africa VIII (Africa since 1935)*, p. 503 (UNESCO, Paris, 1993).

**xliv.** *Brockhaus Enzyklopädie*, Part 1 (A-ATE), p. 163 (Wiesbaden, 1966).

**xlv.** Based on T. Miller (ed.) *Mapping the Global Muslim Population: A Report on the Size and Distribution of the World's Muslim Population* (Pew Research Center, Washington, 2009). A list of data for individual countries can be found at: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_countries\\_by\\_Muslim\\_population#cite\\_note\\_mprc-1](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_Muslim_population#cite_note_mprc-1).

**xlvi.** See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman\\_Catholicism\\_in\\_Africa](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Catholicism_in_Africa).

**xlvii.** See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christianity\\_by\\_country](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christianity_by_country).

**xlviii.** In a detailed study, Amadu Jacky Kaba tried to do the same for the year 2001 in 'The Spread of Christianity and Islam in Africa: A Survey and Analysis of the Numbers and Percentages of Christians, Muslims and Those who Practice Indigenous Religions', *The Western Journal of Black Studies* 29(2): 553-570. He drew conclusions for the whole of Africa that can be summarized as follows: Muslims 45%, Christians 37%, Indigenous Religions: 17%, Other: 1%, None: 0% (not a single one).

**xlix.** Quoted in *The Star* (South Africa, April 4, 2005). See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman\\_Catholicism\\_in\\_Africa](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Catholicism_in_Africa).

**i.** See <http://www.ascleiden.nl/library/abstracts/asa-online/>. It provides a quarterly overview of journal articles and edited works on Africa in the field of the social sciences and the humanities that are available in the ASC library.

**ii.** This will be backdated to include all the six previous editions. We edit the *Africa Yearbook* with colleagues in Hamburg and Uppsala and it is published in Leiden by Brill Academic Publishers, our favourite publishing house. The sixth edition, *Africa Yearbook 2009* edited by A. Mehler, H. Melber & K. van Walraven, has just been published.

**iii.** Widening the African Studies Centre community to include additional fellows, associates and affiliates will put quite some additional demands on our support staff, and particularly on our secretariat (currently Gitty, Anne, Maaïke and Mieke), our communications specialists (Marieke and Ann), our IT staff (Willem, Ursula and Harro) and our finance staff (Jan and Lenie), and also the functions of our library and documentation staff will gradually change.

**iiii.** Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa, which is based in Dakar. See [www.codesria.org](http://www.codesria.org). The ASC collaborates with CODESRIA in

the Consortium Development Partnership (CDP) initiative.

**liv.** The Organization for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa (OSSREA: [www.ossrea.net/](http://www.ossrea.net/)) is based in Addis Ababa. One of my books was published there: T. Dietz, M.A. Mohamed Salih & A. Ghaffar Mohamed Ahmed (eds), *African Pastoralism. Conflict, Institutions and Government* (Pluto Press/OSSREA, London/Sterling Virginia, 2001).

**lv.** The ASC has become a solid partner of the South Africa Netherlands research Programme on Alternatives in Development. See [www.sanpad.org.za](http://www.sanpad.org.za). The second edition was recently published of T. Dietz, A. Wadee, M. Keane & D. Hay (eds), *Effective PhD Supervision, Mentorship and Coaching* (Rozenberg Publishers, Amsterdam, 2010).

**lvi.** See [www.aegis-eu.org](http://www.aegis-eu.org).

**lvii.** Five of these centres in the Netherlands form an alliance of area institutes. In addition to the ASC, they are: the Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies (KITLV) in Leiden, the International Institute of Asian Studies in Leiden, with connections to the University of Amsterdam, the Centre for the Study and Documentation of Latin America (CEDLA) in Amsterdam and the International Institute of Social History (IISG) in Amsterdam.

**lviii.** These are 'The State in Africa' (with DAF, the unit in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs dealing with Africa) and the 'Land Academy' (with DDE, the unit in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs dealing with the economy and partners elsewhere, and coordinated by IDS, Utrecht University). I would like to encourage that whenever the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Dutch embassies work together with others in IS academies or knowledge networks and whenever it is about Africa, the ASC will be involved in some way or another as well. And I would like to encourage the same self-evident cooperation with Africa oriented knowledge activities in other ministries, NGOs, the media and in the private sector.

**lix.** This field has been the core of the research activities of the African Studies Centre's current research group on the Economy, Environment and Exploitation and the ASC can build on publications like: M. Rutten, A. Leliveld & D. Foeken (eds), *Inside Poverty and Development in Africa. Critical Reflections on Pro-poor Policies* (Brill, Leiden, 2008); M. Dekker, 'Sustainability and Resourcefulness: Support Networks during Periods of Stress', *World Development* 32(10): 1735-1751; D. Foeken, *To Subsidise My Income. Urban Farming in an East-African Town* (Brill, Leiden, 2006); and J. Hoorweg, D. Foeken & R. Obudho (eds), *Kenya Coast Handbook: Culture, Resources and Development in the East African Littoral* (Lit Verlag, Hamburg, 2000).

**ix.** The newest addition to the ASC's *African Dynamics* series, which is published by Brill in Leiden, specifically deals with the linkages between health care, well-being and economics. See M. Dekker & R. van Dijk (eds), *Markets of Well-being. Navigating Health and Healing in Africa* (Brill, Leiden, 2010). Books like these present a platform for researchers, visiting fellows at the ASC and invited guest authors, many of them from Africa, to explore new themes. For example, in this book the ASC's contributions were written by the two editors, and Akinyinka Akinyoade, Walter van Beek, Dick Foeken, Wijnand Klaver, André Leliveld and Marcel Rutten. Corine 't Hart is a former Research Masters student. The invited guest authors, some of whom are former visiting fellows, were Nadine Beckmann (Oxford), Christine Böhmig (Utrecht), Jérémie Gnimadi (Lomé), Alice Mboganie Mwangi (Nairobi), Kenneth Ombongi (Nairobi), Samuel Owuor (Nairobi), Bukola Adeyemi Oyeniyi (Leiden) and Robert Thornton (Johannesburg).

**ixi.** The African Studies Centre has a lot of experience in food and nutrition studies, with a host of publications which have been a result of the Food and Nutrition Studies Programme in Kenya, led by Jan Hoorweg. The recent research activities around urban agriculture are an offshoot. The governance arrangements around water provision are a current research theme too. My own research has many linkages with agriculture and water issues. I am currently chairing the World connectors working group on food security (see [www.worldconnectors.nl](http://www.worldconnectors.nl)).

**ixii.** There are various building blocks in existing publications such as M. de Bruijn, R. van Dijk & D. Foeken (eds), *Mobile Africa. Changing Patterns of Movement in Africa and Beyond* (Brill, Leiden, 2001) and P. Konings & D. Foeken (eds), *Crisis and Creativity. Exploring the Wealth of the African Neighbourhood* (Brill, Leiden, 2006).

**ixiii.** Building blocks are, for example, W. van Binsbergen & R. van Dijk (eds), *Situating Globality. African Agency in the Appropriation of Global Culture* (Brill, Leiden, 2004); Jan Abbink, 'Suri Images: The Return of Exoticism and the Commodification of an African Tribe', *Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines* 49(4): 893-924; and Ben Soares & R. Otayek (eds), *Islam, état et société en Afrique* (Karthala, Paris, 2009).

**ixiv.** Most of the work of ASC's current Social Movements and Political Culture in Africa Research Group is in this field but many others at the Centre have contributed as well. Out of many of the ASC's highlights I would like to mention J. Abbink, M. de Bruijn & K. van Walraven (eds), *Rethinking Resistance, Revolt and Violence in African History* Brill, Leiden, 2003); J. Abbink & I. Van Kessel (eds), *Vanguard or Vandals. Youth, Politics and Conflict in Africa* (Brill, Leiden, 2005);

M. de Bruijn, R. van Dijk & J-B. Gewald (eds), *Strength beyond Structure. Social and Historical Trajectories of Agency in Africa* (Brill, Leiden, 2007); S. Ellis & I. van Kessel *Movers and Shakers. Social Movements in Africa* (Brill, Leiden, 2009); P. Konings, *Neoliberal Bandwagonism. Civil Society and the Politics of Belonging in Anglophone Cameroon* (African Studies Centre/Langaa, Bamenda, 2009); and M. Rutten & S. Owuor, 'Weapons of Mass Destruction: Land, Ethnicity and the 2007 Elections in Kenya', *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 27(3): 305-325.

**lxv.** Until now this theme has clearly not received much scholarly attention at the ASC. It is mainly our younger staff members who have been active in this field, for example, Lotje de Vries who published 'The Developmental Impact of the Asian Drivers on Senegal', *The World Economy* 32(11): 1563-1585, and Mayke Kaag who, with Oumma Aide, published 'Les ONG islamiques transnationales au Tchad', in R. Otayek & B. Soares (eds), *Islam, état et société en Afrique* (Karthala, Paris, 2009).

**lxvi.** See K. Ludeman & E. Erlandson, *Alpha Male Syndrome* (Harvard Business School Press, Boston, 2006).

**lxvii.** Soon after I started my new job, I was happy to see that Inge Brinkman (assisted by Anne-Lot Hoek) had published *Bricks, Mortar and Capacity Building: A Socio-Cultural History of SNV Netherlands Development Organisation*. (Brill, Leiden, 2010). I recommend this book to anyone who is interested in the history of Dutch development assistance and I hope many Dutch development agencies will be as bold as SNV were in asking independent researchers to write their histories. The African Studies Centre is ready to assist them.

**lxviii.** Tropenbos International ([www.tropenbos.org](http://www.tropenbos.org)) is a non-governmental knowledge organization based in Wageningen, the Netherlands. It was established in 1986 in response to ongoing concerns about the disappearance and degradation of tropical rain forests worldwide. It undertakes research, capacity building and institutional development, with programmes in the Congo Basin (Cameroon and DR Congo), Colombia, Ghana, Indonesia, Vietnam and Suriname. René Boot, Rudy Rabbinge, Sam Nketiah and many others, thanks for a pioneering learning environment.

**lxix.** Both Ends supports organizations in developing countries in fighting poverty and working towards sustainable environmental management. Its head office is in Amsterdam. I am looking forward to being a member of your Board. Thanks Danielle Hirsch for your confidence and for being able to see a silver lining everywhere. I am proud to say that two of my former PhD students now work for



Both Ends: Tobias Schmitz and Karen Witsenburg, after having done fascinating research in South Africa and northern Kenya respectively. (In Karen's case with Adano Wario Roba, one of our many colleagues at Moi University's School of Environmental Studies, who was supported in the MHO (NUFFIC) programme that Annemieke and I coordinated on the Dutch side).

**lxx.** See [www.princeclauschair.nl](http://www.princeclauschair.nl).

**lxxi.** I still use some of the recipes in D. Foeken & K. van der Meulen, *Eten met Gerrit* (ASC, Leiden, 1990), which, I am told, was one of the ASC's bestsellers!

**lxxii.** The RESMA Board is currently chaired by Robert Ross, the Advisory Board by Georg Frerks and the NVAS by Michel Doortmont (<http://www.afrikastudies.nl/nvasengels.html>). I thank you and your colleagues for your dedication!

lxxiii. My thanks to Ann Reeves and Gitty Petit for supporting me in the writing of this inaugural lecture!

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*Silverlining Africa - From images of doom and gloom to glimmers of hope. From places to avoid to places to enjoy.*

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