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Outline

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"Banana Out of Republic?" Note on the Political Economy of Africa's Transformation

Steve Kayizzi-Mugerwa[1]

1 | Introduction

Africa's structural transformation will take time to achieve but policymakers are convinced that the time is right to make an earnest start. A recent policy document of the African Union Commission entitled "Africa 2063" projects the vision of: "[A]n integrated prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena". The document argues that to attain its vision of economic transformation, Africa must seek both energy and inspiration from "within." That it ought to return to the Pan-Africanist and solidarity driven continental agenda, that helped lead the continent to independence some 50 years ago.

This note takes a brief look at the political economy of Africa's transformation in a globalizing world, drawing on vision statements crafted by African countries, with the common goal of attaining middle income status within a generation. It argues that while Africa's transformation is inevitable, progress will be tortuous. There will be challenges at many levels: policy, planning and financing, and above all political economy since transformation will entail winners and losers. But the note also underlines that the enthusiasm and dedication with which Africa's progress is being pursued at many levels is unprecedented.

2 | Africa's Changing Development Narrative

The relative economic weakness of the world's richer countries today, greater opportunities for South-South collaboration, and less ideologically inclined policy prescriptions by donor agencies, have emboldened Africa to once again search for "own" solutions. However, as described in a review of the Report of the African Commission spearheaded by the UK Government during its Presidency of the G-8 in 2005, and which had claimed a break with the past, these "searches" are not always "new".[3] They are often more attuned to the global agendas of the day than the problem they purport to address, hence loss

[1] Steve Kayizzi-Mugerwa is the Director of Research at the African Development Bank.
[2] African Union, African Development Bank and Economic Commission for Africa, "Africa 2063"—Framework for Structural Transformation (mimeo, Addis Ababa, Tunis).
[3] See Steve Kayizzi-Mugerwa, "Report of the African Commission. What is New?" Journal of Development Studies, Vol. 41, 6, 1126-1132 (2005).

of focus and coherence as soon as the main actor/driver leaves the scene. However, there are signs and examples that the newer approaches are more African-driven. Examples include continent-wide plans to embark on a trillion dollar program for infrastructure development using mainly Africa's own resources; East and West Africa's moves towards monetary unification; and the fact that many countries are financing domestic infrastructure expansions by using innovative approaches, including issuing Eurobonds on the basis of their natural resources, notably Zambia.

However, it is now so frequently asserted that Africa is on the verge of "take off" that many Africans—including policymakers—in the face of poverty, have some doubts. Are these flattering statements, they might ask, not simply one of those global fads that come and go, leaving things pretty much the way they were before? It no longer strikes us as particularly ironic that the phrases used to describe Asia's resurgence of two decades ago are the same used for Africa today i.e. "Africa rising", "African lions", "Africa's growth miracle", "Africa—the new global growth pole" etc.[4] [5] This time it might be different.

The post-independence decades were very difficult for many African countries. There was initially a high level of enthusiasm among politicians and the intelligentsia about the continent's prospects, but states were invariably weak, politics were violently contested and economic decline ensued almost everywhere. By the 1980s, countries that had dreamt of self-determination were instead deeply indebted, while poverty, insecurity and ill health mounted as described for Zambia in a study of the country's Fourth National Development Plan, significantly entitled by the authorities: "Growth from Own Resources."[6]

The era of structural adjustment that followed increased the grip of international agencies and that of richer countries on the African economies. To avoid bankruptcy, countries adopted austerity measures that were so severe as to make those currently undertaken by southern Europe seem mild by comparison. To their credit, donor countries and the rest of the international community bowed to the inevitable i.e. that the debts owed to them by many developing countries could never be repaid. They embarked on an epic reduction of poor country indebtedness in the following decades.

Africa has enjoyed a decade of strong growth during the 2000s on the back of the natural resource boom, better governance, and sharp reduction in macro-risk. The continent is changing in ways that would have seemed inconceivable only a decade ago. The widespread use of the mobile telephone and related ICT has raised the efficiency of telecommunications and helped African countries leapfrog to technological sophistication. The MPESA ("mobile money") platform in Kenya has, for example, revolutionized mobile banking in the country, bringing services to the remotest parts, and has been widely emulated in Africa and elsewhere.[7]

In the past decade, Africa has been more at peace with itself than ever before. The frequency of civil wars and cross-border incursions has declined markedly. The long-running conflicts in the DRC, Somalia and Sudan and South Sudan no longer threaten regional stability to quite the same extent as in the past. An important trend has been the willingness of countries to intervene regionally to resolve internal strife, when necessary through direct military intervention. They do this partly out of self-interest, with their eyes set on the protection of regional markets, transit routes, and generally on the importance of peace for regional investment, tourism and trade.

As analyzed by the African Development Bank, the emergence of an African middle class is also a key factor in recent growth.[8] At some 330 million strong in 2011, it is beginning to have important impacts on the African economies: robust consumer demand, increasing business and leisure travel and rapidly expanding demand for social services, including private provision of health and education. Many families have sent their relatives abroad and the remittances received today exceed net aid inflows.

3 | Banana Out of Republic

Borrowing from the epithets of the past, a most important task for African countries in coming decades will be to "take the banana out of the republic." But even as Africa seems on the verge of "take-off" memories of past missteps and failures often return to haunt its policymakers. Recent estimates indicate that Africa has some of the most unequal societies in the world, congregated in regions with economies traditionally ba-

[4] See Mckinsey Global Institute, Lions on the Move: The Progress and Potential of African Economies (London, 2010).
[5] Ibid, The Rise of the African Consumer (London, 2011).
[6] Steve Kayizzi-Mugerwa, Growth from Own Resources: Zambia's Fourth National Development Plan in Perspective, Development Policy Review, Vol. 1, 59-76 (1990).
[7] See Mthuli Ncube and Peter Ondiege, Silicon Kenya, Harnessing ICT Innovations for Economic Development, African Development Bank, Tunis, 2013.
[8] See African Development Bank, The Middle of the Pyramid: Dynamics of the Middle Class in Africa (Tunis, Chief Economist Complex, April 2011).

sed on extractive industries, such as Southern Africa, but with pockets of high levels of inequality spread throughout the continent. It is now clear that recent high growth and increasing wealth are not being distributed equally and large swathes of the population continue to feel excluded.

The Arab Spring, and its ramifications, as well as socio-economic challenges facing many other countries, including recent putsches in Central African Republic and Mali show that the road to prosperity will be winding and difficult. Moreover, in some countries, corruption and overbearing politics are becoming entrenched even as the private sector and market economy continue to make steady advance. Given challenges on all these fronts, there are genuine fears that Africa's renaissance might be snuffed out and that the region could return to economic and social regression.

While Africa's advance will be far from linear, with vast variations at national and regional levels, there seems to be a clear understanding among Africa's leadership that the poverty, inequality, state fragility and internal strife that collectively gave the continent a bad name in the past must be confronted head on[9]. Many countries have devised national visions stretching many years into the future, with poverty eradication on top of the agenda. The visions also highlight the importance of democracy and the rule of law, and underline that this time things must be done differently from the past to ensure implementation and results.

4 | Towards Economic Transformation

Many African policymakers are now convinced that to lift their population from poverty on a sustainable basis will require rapid economic transformation. This aspiration is not new and is at least as old as Africa's independence, explaining to some extent why it has been easier to embrace it than, for example, the more externally imposed "structural adjustment". Already in 1963, Kenneth Kaunda's election manifesto entitled "When UNIP Becomes Government" had underlined the importance of generating rapid growth in copper rich Zambia to eradicate "[p]overty, ignorance and disease".[10] The manifesto acknowledged that Zambia needed to diversify the economy rapidly so that when copper was exhausted in the future the country would have transformed into an industrialized and modern economy. What is new in today's debate is the acknowledgement that success will ultimately depend on the quality of domestic policies, the effectiveness of local-level implementation and unreserved political commitment and leadership.

In studying the dynamic of structural transformation, researchers like to cite the example of South Korea, which in the 1950s had a lower GDP per capita than Ghana, and many other African countries. Today, South Korea is a leading economy, buttressed by modern technologies, with a GDP per capita that is at least 30 times that of Ghana. The cases of Brazil, China and India are equally instructive. All three have been able to lift large shares of their populations out of poverty into middle income status, perhaps one of the largest class crossovers in history.

Economic transformation happened in Brazil and South Korea under military dictatorships, indeed in retrospect the military juntas were forced to search for technological improvements, export orientation and growth as a means of keeping their grip on power. In China, the Communist Party is credited for spearheading the country's growth miracle that has spanned several generations of break-neck growth. India, on the other hand, is prospering despite its vast and non-converging array of administrations, cities, regions and castes. These experiences indicate that in no country were the points of departure similar, indeed that development could emanate from the most diversified backgrounds and sources.[11] While there is no off-the-shelf template for economic transformation, four broad themes emerge from the transformation experiences cited above:

(i) A leadership that is capable of articulating a national development vision, even in the face of imperfect institutional structures, has the best chance of sustaining the transformation process.

(ii) The process of economic transformation is not linear. To stay on course, populations must be able/have the means to hold their politicians' feet to the fire. In other words poor performance must have consequences.

(iii) Transformation requires popular engagement, including in taking advantage of emerging domestic opportunities.

[9] See again the joint document by the African Union, African Development Bank and the Economic Commission for Africa, "Africa 2063": A Framework for Structural Transformation, (mimeo, Addis Ababa, Tunis).
[10] Kenneth Kaunda, When UNIP Becomes Government—Election Manifesto (UNIP Headquarters, Lusaka, 1963).
[11] See Donald Kaberuka's Lecture delivered in Kampala, Uganda, in June 2012 entitled: "From Economic Growth to Economic Transformation."

(iv) Because political influence is unevenly distributed between groups, the distribution of the benefits and the costs of structural transformation will be unequal and could engender domestic tensions—they have to be managed.

The following section discusses examples of the visions that African countries are projecting for themselves as they seek economic transformation.

Visions of Transformation: Prosperity, Democracy and Development

Africa's 5-year national development plans of the past were routinely dismissed by domestic and external experts and observers as works of fiction, but no one scoffs at the new vision statements that countries have rolled out in the past decade. Their themes include attaining middle income status and transforming countries from poverty to prosperity. Above all, they indicate that African countries dare to dream once again. There are no references to structural adjustment policies, once the only African reality worth of note. The new visions provide a good mix of economic intentions and political exhortation, while specific national experiences in the past decades have added flavor (see Table 1).

In all the visions looked at, transformation is the key theme. Kenya's Vision 2030 projects a country that will provide a high quality of life for all its citizens, while that of Uganda (Vision 2040) sees the transformation of a peasant economy into a modern and prosperous one, with a high level of technological sophistication. Nigeria's vision is more pointed—it seeks to attain by 2020 the number one position for the country in Africa with respect to foreign investment, tourism and place to reside. Malawi, as an indicator of the extent of national ambitions, mentions a "technologically-driven" economy as a key ingredient of its vision of the future, as opposed to its current dependence on peasant agriculture. It also highlights the importance of food security and nutrition as well as fair and equitable distribution of income.

Countries are categorical in discussing their political futures: Uganda mentions the attainment of a more democratic political dispensation as a goal. Mozambique, which overcame decades of conflict, looks towards a future of peace and stability, national cohesion and democratic governance, while Cameroon projects a united country in diversity, linguistic as well as religious. Zambia's vision underlines the promotion of democratic principles, social and economic justice, and patriotism and ethnic unity, while that of Rwanda emphasizes that social cohesion can only be maintained in the presence of a capable state which treasures the county's most important asset—its people. Notably, Kenya will encourage "issues-based" politics, a goal which says a great deal on the changes taking place in that country.

The African visions are conscious of the competing needs within individual countries and of the budget constraints—hence they highlight prioritization, strategic emphasis, and innovative thinking with regard to implementation. These policy goals are then concretized in the more operational national development plans and the annual national budgets. Among priorities are infrastructure development, agriculture and rural development, social and human development, private sector development, science and technology, and the promotion of peace.

In terms of new approaches, Kenya will, for example, introduce a national health insurance and voucher schemes for schools in poorer districts, as it rolls out social services to all regions. It plans to create centers of specialization, to encourage innovation and promote scale economies in manufacturing. Uganda, on the other hand, aims to take advantage of its comparative advantages, including as gateway to countries further inland, to build transport infrastructure and related industries that will spearhead its transformation. Uganda's access to fresh water lakes and, the newly found oil and gas resources, are additional factors that are boosting domestic confidence, but also causing anxiety regarding the distribution of benefits. Cameroon's vision discusses the importance of pursuing an ambitious industrialization policy and active promotion of the private sector.

In many ways, the visions also project current official thinking on how to handle the burning policy issues of the day—not just the future. For example, Nigeria's vision will prioritize employment creation to address the problem of youth unemployment, income generation, especially in the countryside, increasing electricity supply, and creating an investment environment that is attractive for both domestic and foreign investors. In the case of Rwanda, given its geographical position, broadening regional and international integration takes precedence. Generally, the visions are aware of the welfare gaps between rural and urban areas and the challenges of deep poverty and inequality in some urban centers. The promotion of agriculture is a popular policy response, although the broad use of modern techniques in the sector will imply the displacement of rural dwellers and point to the importance of creating alternative rural livelihoods.

Challenges and Risks

In the past, implementation of Africa's national development plans was bedeviled by a serious shortage of domestic resources, making even the more modest targets unachievable. Although the new visions are more realistic in this regard, considerable amounts of money will be required. Uganda's 30-year vision 2040 has a price tag of US$200 billion, several times current GDP. In contrast to the past, governments are looking to partnerships with the private sector to realize their plans. Many governments have also taken care to popularize the national visions through broad consultations and direct stakeholder participation in the launching of flagship projects associated to the visions, as was done recently in the launching of the construction of Konza Techno City outside Nairobi.

As the economies expand, their relative dependence on donor resources will reduce even more. Therefore, developing new modalities for raising capital is crucial. Domestic stock exchanges have done better than expected given that there was only a handful two decades ago but 29 today. Countries, as noted earlier, are also borrowing directly from the international markets as Africa's relative risk has improved in recent years. As argued by participants at a Policy Seminar in Maputo, the recent discovery of oil and gas and other minerals in most African countries provides a rare opportunity to kick-start the development process, although these discoveries have also brought with them unique challenges of their own, including distorting incentives and escalating popular expectations.[12]

Moreover, domestic capacity to raise revenue is receiving considerable attention. National revenue authorities have been developed in many countries, and have helped to raise revenue effort across the board. There has been resistance in several quarters, especially the nascent industrial sector, which argues that it is excessively taxed because it is "visible", while less "visible" activities in the informal sector are not. There are also concerns that the inflow of cheap manufactures from Asia is killing domestic initiative and Africa's attempts at industrialization. That it is counteracting the transformation effort.

However, President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda does not see the risks of achieving the ambitious visions as solely lying in lack of finances, but also in "ideological disorientation". This happens when countries attempt to change the economy while still holding onto parochial ideas from the past, such as religious differences, tribalism and gender chauvinism.[13] The "Africa 2063" document referred to earlier is also concerned that human capacities might not be able to match the ambitious programs and projects in the national visions. Moreover, many observers, including Kofi Annan when presenting the 2013 Africa Progress Report at the World Economic Forum in Cape Town, South Africa[14], see Africa's resource boom not as an unqualified financial boon but as a potential source of conflict, basis for siphoning off domestic resources to abroad and cause of economic regression, as the rest of the world descends on Africa's relatively untried administrative and regulatory systems in search of rents.

On its part, the African Development Bank has responded to Africa's search for economic transformation by launching a Ten-Year Strategy on which it will base its support[15]. It has the same basic thrust as the earlier Medium-term Strategy, with infrastructure taking pride of place. However, the new strategy highlights that development and poverty reduction will be impossible in the absence of structural transformation. Moreover, that inclusion and greening the economy will be important features of any sustainable approaches to the development of Africa.

5 | Conclusion

This note has attempted to crystallize Africa's structural transformation debate, from the point of view of a rapidly changing global dispensation, where the old arguments on the direction of Africa have little currency. Many African countries have responded by developing their own development visions, most see reaching middle income status within a generation as the key goal, while a number underline the importance of achieving full-fledged democracy. The visions are in some cases fairly ambitious. However, governments are determined to deliver and are constructing the machineries necessary to guide them to completion. Moreover, in many countries the private sector is a welcome partner in the process as well as civil society. The international development community is not oblivious to these heady developments, and is generally supportive, although some habits, such as stereotyping, one-size-fits all approaches, and generally failing to reign in the multinationals, die hard.

[12] See Steve Kayizzi-Mugerwa, Uganda's Oil and Gas in the Pipeline: Managing Expectations, Paper read at a High Level Seminar in Maputo, Mozambique, January 2013 (Mimeograph, African Development Bank).
[13] Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, Uganda's Vision to Transform from a Predominantly Peasant Economy into a Competitive Upper Middle Income Country by 2040, Speech at Launch of Vision 2040, Kololo Grounds, Kampala, (Republic of Uganda, April 18, 2013).
[14] African Progress Panel, 2013 Africa Progress Report, (Geneva, 2013).
[15] See the African Development Bank, AfDB Strategy 2013-2022—At the Center of Africa's Transformation (Tunis, 2013).

Table 1 Selected African Development Visions—Kenya, Uganda, Zambia, Nigeria, Mozambique, Cameroon, Malawi and Rwanda

Country, Title and Launch Date	Vision	Key priority/emphases	Pillars/implementation strategy	Comment
Kenya **Vision 2030** July/August 2007[16]	"—middle income country providing high quality life for all its citizens by the year 2030."	Accord specific attention to economic, social and political issues.	A total of 8 priority sectors identified in the economic pillar: tourism, agriculture, domestic commerce, manufacturing, business process off-shoring (i.e. IT based service provision to foreign companies), and financial services. In social pillar, a national health insurance scheme and voucher schemes for schools in poorer districts are key planned interventions. In politics, the goal will be to inculcate an "issues-based" politics. Overall, the use of modern technologies and support to "centers of specialization" will be important implementation strategies.	No real measure of how much the Vision will cost to implement. It mentions that financing it will require higher levels of savings, remittance flows, and efficiencies. The election crisis of 2007/2008 delayed implementation of important segments. The oil discovery will have important implications, however. An average growth rate of 10 percent over period looks optimistic, but growth in last 5 years has been above average.
Uganda **Vision 2040** April 2013[17]	"A transformed Ugandan society from a peasant to a modern and prosperous country within 30 years."	Transform country into a competitive upper middle income country with per capita income of about US$9500.	Exploit country's enormous opportunities; oil and gas, tourism, minerals, ICT business, youthful labor force, geographical location, fresh water resources, industry and agriculture. Strengthen infrastructure, science and technology, engineering and innovation, and human resources.	Discusses important roles for the government: service delivery, strategic investment, support to science, technology and innovation; front-loading infrastructure investment to capture oil externalities, attract offshoring industries. Vision states that the importance of implementing strategies within existing standards and protocols in East African community.
Zambia **Vision 2030** December 2006[18]	"A prosperous middle-income nation by 2030."	Social and economic justice in a country aspiring to a "common and shared destiny, united in diversity, equitably integrated and democratic in governance, promoting patriotism and ethnic integration."	National Vision is accompanied by elaborate sector visions on: (i) economic growth and wealth creation; with specific visions on land, tourism, manufacturing, mining, infrastructure, energy, science and technology, information communication technology and employment and labor; (ii) social investment and human development—education and skills development, health, and food and nutrition, housing and settlements, water and sanitation, social protection and arts and culture; and (iii) creating an enabling environment for sustainable social development — macro- economy, governance systems, foreign relations, information services, public safety, population, HIV/AIDS, gender, and environment and natural resources.	Vision highlights the importance of developing a conducive business environment to ensure (i) affordable credit, (ii) development of capital markets, (iii) effective financial framework, (iv) improved performance of key government agencies, (v) improved regulation of mining, (vi) skills and technology innovation, and (vii) develop and maintain productive and social infrastructure and services such as roads.

[16] Republic of Kenya, Vision 2030 (Nairobi, 2007).
[17] Republic of Uganda, National Planning Authority, Vision 2040 (Kampala, 2013).
[18] Republic of Zambia, Vision 2030 (Lusaka, 2006).

Country, Title and Launch Date	Vision	Key priority/emphases	Pillars/implementation strategy	Comment
Nigeria **Vision 2020** October 2009[19]	"To be the number one country in Africa for foreign investment, tourism and place to reside by 2020."	Reduce unemployment, increase per capita income, provide regular electricity, and create conducive investment environment.	Vision identifies areas for strategic emphasis: (i) agriculture and rural development, (ii) economic diversification, (iii) infrastructure development, (iv) economic policy and external debt management, (v) law and justice, (vi) comprehensive education policy, (vii) health delivery, and (viii) energy operational excellence.	Nigeria's vision document is quite forthright in discussing the country's challenges and opportunities. The oil sector is not given pride of place in Nigeria's vision.
Mozambique **Agenda 2025** The Nation's Vision and Strategy November 2003[20]	"Mozambique, an enterprising, and continuously successful country—living in peace, united, cohesive, democratic and prosperous—".	"Nation in the first place" is the point of departure—calling for commitment, nationalism and hard work to secure the "motherland's future."	Emphasis on need for multiple implementation scenarios to suit a developing country with a difficult past. Scenarios derived on basis of assumed implementation speeds of chosen symbols: goat, crab, tortoise and bee. The following areas were identified as having the greatest multiplier effect: (i) education and training, (ii) national health systems, (iii) access to land and tenure, (iv) rural development, (v) competitiveness and technological innovation, (vi) peace and social stability, and (vii) democracy and participation.	The Mozambican Vision was one of the earlier ones—it undertakes a SWOT analysis, but also dwells on exhortation a great deal. At the time of its launch, it was seen principally as an instrument for cementing national unity. The financing of the many intervention listed is not clear-cut It was of course before the discovery of the large gas deposits in the country.
Cameroon **Vision 2035** February 2009[21]	"Cameroon: An emerging, democratic and united country in diversity."	Poverty alleviation, becoming a middle income country and, newly industrialized country, and consolidating democracy and national unity.	Emphasis on increased investments in infrastructure, rapid modernization of production, better business climate and governance, as well as efforts to create employment. Also importance of achieving the Millennium Development Goals "no matter how late" and to ensure that the population is entirely mobilized in the fight against climate change. An improved financial system will mobilize domestic and foreign investment. The government aims to pursue an ambitious industrialization strategy, a strategy of national integration and the advancement of democracy, a private-sector promotion strategy, a good governance and management strategy with blueprint for a resource allocation strategy,	The vision specifically underlines the importance of a strategy for sub-regional, regional and international integration, and a strategy for partnership and development assistance, and a development funding strategy. The vision mentions the management of the dual Anglophone-francophone heritage as a key consideration.

[19] Federal Republic of Nigeria, Vision 2020 (Abuja, 2006).
[20] Republic of Mozambique, Agenda 2025—The Nation's Vision and Strategy (Maputo, 2003).
[21] Republic of Cameroon, Vision 2035 (Yaoundé, 2009).

Country, Title and Launch Date	Vision	Key priority/emphases	Pillars/implementation strategy	Comment
Malawi **Vision 2020** March 1998[22]	"—democratically mature and technologically driven middle-income country."	Secure country, environmentally sustainable, self-reliant with equal opportunities for all, having social services, and vibrant cultural and religious values.	The vision identifies 9 pillars: good governance, sustainable growth and development, vibrant culture, economic infrastructure, social sector development, science and technology, fair and equitable distribution of income and wealth, food security and nutrition, and sustainable natural resources and environmental management.	No explicit discussion of implementation or financing strategies.
Rwanda **Vision 2020** July 2000[20]	"---transform Rwanda into a middle income country (per capita income of about 900 USD per year)"	Emphasis on spirit of social cohesion and equity, underpinned by a capable state—at the core of the Nation's principal asset - its people.	Six pillars: Good governance and a capable state; human resource development and a knowledge-based economy; private sector-led development; infrastructure development; high-value and market-oriented agriculture; and regional and international integration. Three cross-cutting issues: gender equality, natural resources and the environment, and science, technology and ICT. The Vision was accompanied by an implementation roadmap.	Explicit macroeconomic assumptions and projections for financing the vision are made: 7% average growth, investment of up to 30% of GDP, use of agricultural surplus as engine of growth in initial years, private investment of 20% of GDP per year and 8 percent for the public sector.

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Republic of Rwanda (2000), Vision 2020, Kigali.

Republic of Mozambique (2003), Agenda 2025—The Nation's Vision and Strategy, Maputo.

[22] Republic of Malawi, Vision 2020 (Lilongwe, 1998).
[23] Republic of Rwanda, Vision 2020 (Kigali, 2000).