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The Smartest Way To Think

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The Evolutionary Journey

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Ken Rogoff On Dollar Dominance

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How the Middle East War Has Affected Oil Exporters and Importers

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Washington Tasks Govt On Reforms

By Reuben Ademiluyi

The America based Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) has tasked the government on the need for an accelerated reforms in the economy. Specifically, the American based multi lateral organization is concerned about electoral, economic reforms and national unity.

Ms Carrie Monahan of the Department of Compact Operations, at the MCC spoke about this in Washington DC at a meeting with high level government fdelegation that includes the Ginance minister, the governor of the Bank of Sierra Leone (BSL) among others.

She acknowledged the reform trajectory of Sierra Leone and expressed the desire of the MCC to see strong commitments in those areas.

She encouraged the administration to accelerate reforms in three sensitive pillars: economic freedom to unlock business potential, genuine electoral reforms to ensure democratic integrity, and sustained efforts toward national unity. These, she noted,

Continues on page 8

MoFi Moves to De-risk Economy

By Ibrahim Mansaray

Sierra Leone has taken a decisive step towards stemming currency volatility, contract disputes and regulatory changes in the economy. The

country is formally accessing the African Trade and Investment Development Insurance (ATIDI) resources which would among other things buoy investment, trade, fiscal stability, private sector growth, and international credibility.

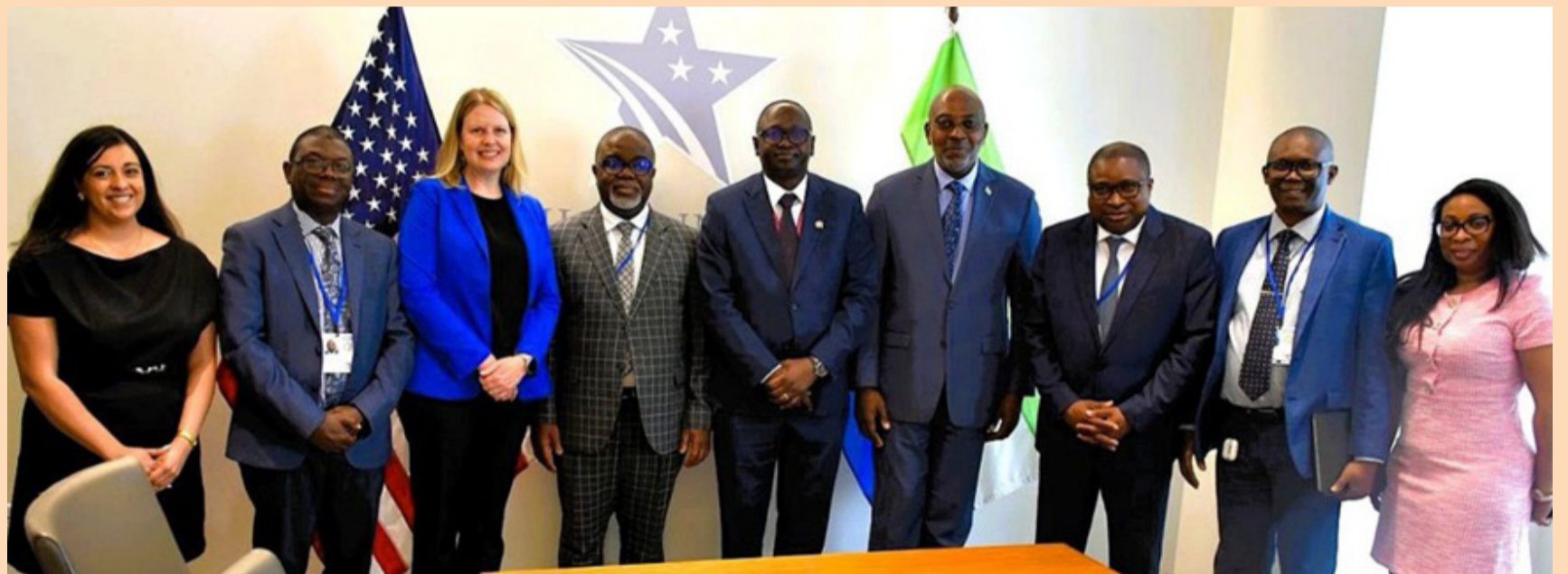
ATIDI—formerly ATI—is Africa’s multi-lateral insurer that provides political risk insurance, credit insurance, and investment guarantees to help countries attract capital and reduce the cost of doing business.

Finance Minister Dr Sheku Bangura hinted that the government recently approved the proposal for the country’s accession of the regional body.

ATIDI reduces investor risk which would make Sierra Leone

a safer destination for capital. ‘ATIDI covers political risks such as expropriation, currency inconvertibility, contract frustration, and civil disturbance. It also provides buffers to investors—especially in

Continues on PAGE 8



At the MCC meeting in Washington D.C. Director of the Department of Policy and Evaluation, Madam Naureen Haque (extreme left) and Ms Carrie Monahan third from the left with Sierra Leone’s Minister of Finance, Sheku Bangura (middle) and other officials of the ministry

Electricity Revenue to Enjoy Special Protection

A dedicated collection account to ring fence revenue from electricity sales is in the offing. It’s one of the measures being planned to revamp the energy sector. Dr Sheku Bangura at a recent meeting with the Director of the Department of Policy and Evaluation at the Millenium Challenge

Corporation (MCC) Ms Naureen Haque in Washington DC informed that a total overhaul of the sector has brought about reforms designed to dramatically improve the financial viability and operational efficiency of the electricity sector, thereby addressing directly one of the bottlenecks to private

investment and industrial growth in Sierra Leone. Private sector investors, he stated are now being invited to partake in electricity distribution in Sierra Leone. The meeting also featured a sharp focus on governance metrics, with the Director of the Department of Policy and Evaluation, Ms Haque, offering a

performance review. She lauded the government for its scorecard performance within the MCC framework but issued a firm word of caution. She encouraged the administration to accelerate reforms in three sensitive pillars: economic freedom to unlock business potential, genuine electoral reforms to ensure democratic

integrity, and sustained efforts toward national unity. These, she noted, are not just political ideals but core economic stability indicators. The Minister assured the MCC that the government is not complacent and is fully engaged in a broad stakeholder consultation process.

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World Business Briefs

eBay Rejects Takeover Bid

Online marketplace eBay has rejected a \$55.5bn (£40.9bn) takeover offer from video game retailer GameStop, calling it "unsolicited" and "neither credible nor attractive". Analysts had expected the offer to be rejected as GameStop is much smaller than eBay, which said there was "uncertainty" over how the deal would be financed. Although eBay has suffered in recent years, partly due to more competition from online sellers like Amazon, Etsy and Temu, it insisted its turnaround plan was working. GameStop rose to prominence as a "meme stock", which sees retail

US Prices Rise

US prices rose in April at their fastest rate since May 2023 as the impact of the war in Iran was increasingly felt by consumers. A jump in the cost of gasoline and groceries pushed the consumer price index (CPI), showing the rate prices rose by in the past 12 months, to 3.8%. It is the highest level since inflation hit 4% three years ago. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) said almost half of the rise was driven by surging energy costs, while housing and food costs also contributed. The US-Israel war in Iran, and the resulting effective closure of the key Strait of Hormuz shipping lane, has led to a jump in oil prices and this has

UK Borrowing Costs Jump

Government borrowing costs has jumped in the United Kingdom. This is coming amid uncertainty over the future of Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer. The effective interest rate on borrowing over 10 years briefly hit a high 5.13%, near levels last seen during the 2008 global financial crisis. Financial markets have been on edge due to fears higher oil prices caused by the Iran war will push up inflation and lead to interest rate hikes. But the possibility of a change of leadership in the UK and perceived risk of looser public spending has further unsettled investors. The UK's main stock index, the FTSE 100, fell 0.5% before recovering slightly. Shares in banks including Lloyds, NatWest and Barclays all fell amid concerns of a tax raid by a potential

Iran War Disrupts Ink Supplies

Japanese snack giant Calbee says it will temporarily switch to black and white packaging for some of its best-known products as supplies of an ingredient used in ink have been disrupted by the Iran war. The firm says new-style packets for 14 of its products, including crisps and prawn crackers, will start to appear in shops in Japan from 25 May. It marks the latest example of how everyday goods are being impacted after Iran effectively closed the key Strait of Hormuz waterway in retaliation for US and Israeli strikes on the country. In recent weeks, companies around the world have warned that supply disruptions

ECOWAS Launches Flagship LPG 20/20 Initiative in Sierra Leone



ECOWAS members at the launch of the LPG 20/20 Initiative in Freetown with the President of Sierra Leone, H.E. Julius Madaa Bio standing seventh from the left and the First Lady of Sierra Leone, Dr. Fatima Bio in the middle.

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has officially launched its flagship LPG 20/20 Initiative in Freetown, Sierra Leone, marking a major step toward accelerating clean cooking adoption across the region. Co hosted by the Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL), which has committed land and regulatory support, the launch on last month positions the country as the proving ground for a sweeping regional energy transition.

At the heart of the LPG 20/20 Initiative is a clear objective: to catalyse the widespread use of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) as a preferred household energy source. The pilot phase is expected to directly benefit up to 10,000 households, enabling their transition from traditional biomass to clean, modern cooking gas canisters.

A central pillar of the programme is the creation of a robust, investable ecosystem capable of attracting

sustained private sector participation. ECOWAS officials emphasise that long term viability depends on an enabling environment built on standardised cylinders, resilient supply chains, reliable filling plants, and accessible distribution networks—all essential to making LPG consistently available and economically competitive for consumers.

Yet questions linger about investor appetite. The LPG value chain remains fundamentally tied to global petroleum

by the US-Iran conflict, which has disrupted maritime chokepoints in the Persian Gulf. These macroeconomic pressures risk widening the gap between the initiative's promise and its price tag.

Despite these headwinds, officials argue that the programme's developmental dividends are too significant to ignore. The initiative is designed to improve public health, curb deforestation linked to charcoal production, and support Sierra

Leone's broader transition away from traditional fuels that have long dominated rural energy use.

ECOWAS Resident Representative Miatta Lilly French and Special Adviser on Communication Abdoulie Gassama noted that standardising cylinders, building local filling capacity, and introducing a consumer rebate system could, over time, exert downward pressure on retail LPG prices—making clean cooking more affordable for low income households.

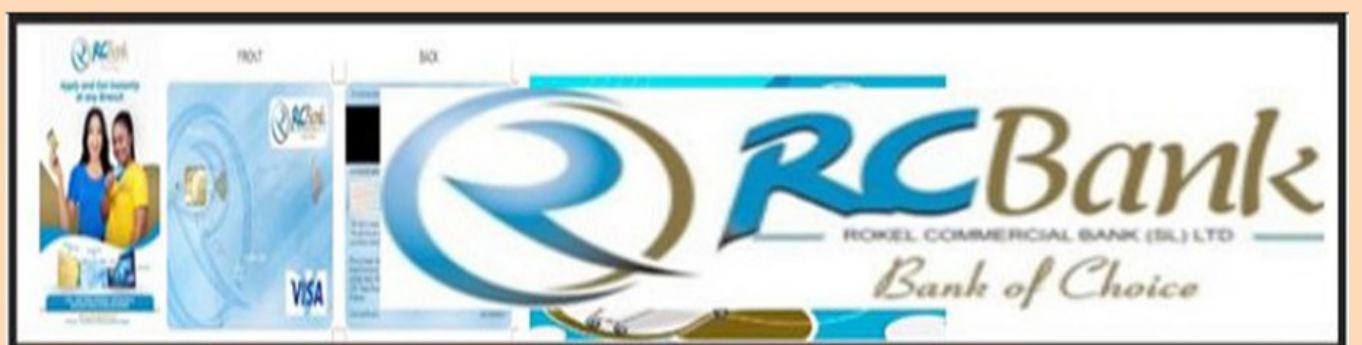
The real test ahead is whether bottom up energy reform can withstand top down global volatility. As international oil prices continue their upward march, the economic space for large scale LPG adoption narrows.

For the thousands of women who still inhale toxic smoke over three stone fires in Freetown's informal settlements, however, the arrival of a clean, reliable cooking cylinder is not merely a policy milestone—it is a matter of life expectancy.

“
The real test ahead is whether bottom up energy reform can withstand top down global volatility. As international oil prices continue their upward march, the economic space for large scale LPG adoption narrows.
”

markets at a time when oil prices are climbing sharply, driven in part

Leone's broader transition away from traditional fuels that have



NEWS ANALYSIS

WBank Reviews Sierra Leone's \$bn Portfolio

A high impact delegation from the World Bank has concluded a significant mission to Sierra Leone, underscoring the scale and strategic importance of the country's \$1 billion development portfolio. The team—comprising seven Executive Directors and three Alternate Directors—represents one of the largest World Bank contingents ever to engage directly with the Government of Sierra Leone.



Minister of Finance, Dr Sheku Bangura (middle) flanked by Dr Ibrahim Stevens (extreme right) Governor of the Bank of Sierra Leone and an official of MoFI (on the left) at the recently held IMF meeting in Washington D.C.

The purpose of the visit was to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the Bank's interventions, evaluate their alignment with national priorities, and identify emerging opportunities and challenges across key development sectors. During

a pivotal meeting with Minister of Finance, Sheku Ahmed Fantamadi Bangura, the delegation—led by the Executive Director representing Angola, Nigeria, and South Africa—outlined their central objective:

to gain granular insights into the real world impact of World Bank-supported programmes in Sierra Leone.

Their review focused on:

- Agricultural transformation, including

food security initiatives

- Energy sector development, particularly access and reliability

- Infrastructure and human capital investments

Overall responsiveness of Bank interventions to evolving

national needs

Minister Bangura provided a detailed briefing on Sierra Leone's economic landscape and expressed deep appreciation for the World Bank's sustained financial and advisory support.

He highlighted the government's strategic priorities as articulated in the National Development Plan, including: Human Capital Development, the flagship Free Quality Education programme and the Feed Salone initiative aimed at strengthening national food security. He spoke on energy and infrastructure expansion, ongoing investments to improve energy access and reliability as well as infrastructure upgrades to support economic growth. Bangura touched on tourism and sectoral diversification including efforts to unlock the potential of Sierra Leone's tourism industry and broader support across health, *Continues on PAGE 8*

CAFIA Exposes Deep Gaps in Financial Inclusion Drive

The Center for Africa Financial Inclusion and Advancement (CAFIA) has released groundbreaking new data exposing significant gaps in Sierra Leone's financial inclusion efforts, revealing that 36.4% of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in Freetown operate without a bank account. The findings highlight a critical disconnect between the availability of digital financial tools and their actual use by the country's business community.

CAFIA's survey of 495 businesses shows

that while 63% of MSMEs hold some form of financial account, actual utilisation remains shallow. Cash continues to dominate daily transactions, slowing progress toward a modern, inclusive financial ecosystem. The report highlights a striking paradox: 90.7% of MSMEs own smartphones, 52.5% can accept digital payments

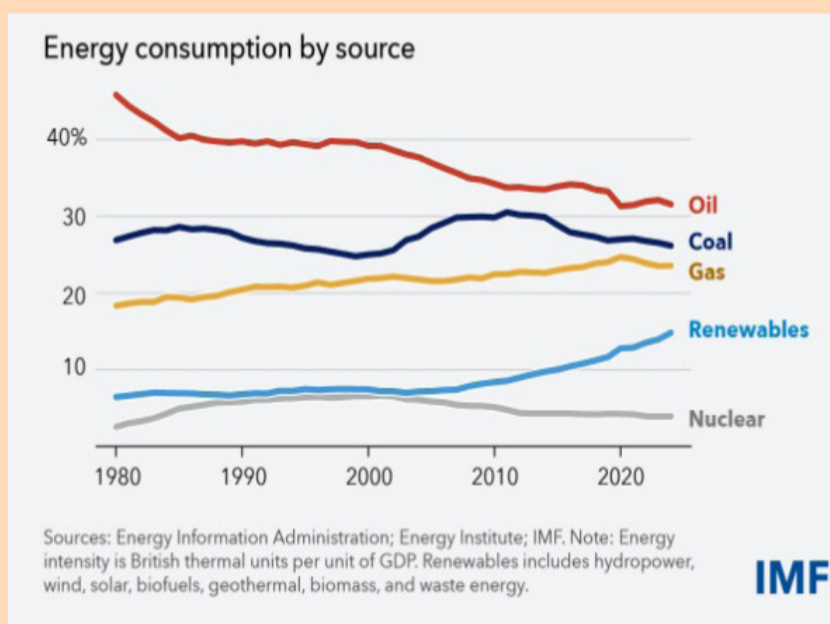
(mostly through personal accounts) while 94% are within a five minute walk

of a mobile money agent. Yet digital tools are barely used for core business

functions. Only 3.6% pay suppliers digitally and just 1% use mobile

platforms for salary payments. CAFIA describes this as a shift that has "reached access, but not transformation" — an ecosystem where infrastructure exists, but behavioural and economic barriers prevent adoption. At a recent panel discussion at the Radisson Blu Hotel in Freetown, Kate Thompson of Ecobank Sierra Leone expressed alarm at the findings: "More than 80

percent of those interviewed have not even approached a bank; that is alarming." She stressed that financial institutions must move beyond generic offerings and design products that reflect the daily realities of MSMEs. CAFIA's CEO, Parvinjeet Kaur, reinforced this point, noting: "These businesses are not outside the economy; they are the economy." The challenge, she argued, is whether the financial system can "see them clearly enough and *Continues on PAGE 8*



The Newspaper

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FS as catalyst for empowerment and development, provides news and information to the reading public. It informs, educates, motivates and provides knowledge; drives financial literacy and seeks to provide a roadmap for initiatives geared towards an enduring organized private sector.

We aim at building capacity for a financially literate community and aggregate its benefits for all; whilst investing prudently and taking advantages of the democratic space to assert economic rights and responsibilities.

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PUBLIC DEBT



The New Face of African Debt

A major transformation is underway in sub-Saharan Africa: Governments are increasingly shifting borrowing away from external debt and toward domestic debt. This trend brings fresh opportunities to build resilience and support development—but also introduces new challenges that must be managed carefully.

At the turn of the millennium, sub-Saharan African governments relied heavily on external loans, particularly concessional lending in foreign currencies from bilateral and multilateral institutions (see Chart 1). After the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative reduced the stock of foreign debt, strong growth in African economies, combined with a global search for yield by international investors, led many countries to issue Eurobonds—loans issued in overseas markets and typically denominated in dollars or euros. While these instruments broadened access to financing, they also increased exposure to currency swings and sudden shifts in foreign investor sentiment. When international interest rates surged and global financial conditions tightened in 2022, many countries were shut out of global markets.

Over time, countries increasingly pivoted toward borrowing at home, issuing debt in local markets and in their own currency. Some countries did so as a firefighting response to high funding needs and the loss of international market access. Others gradually increased domestic borrowing as part of a broader push to develop financial markets. As a result of this transition in how debt is composed, most of sub-Saharan Africa's public debt is now domestic.

Many benefits

Tapping into domestic debt markets brings a host of advantages. Governments can



AMADOU SY is an assistant director in the African Department, IMF.

borrow in their own currencies, sidestepping the risks of exchange rate shocks and the need to dip into foreign reserves for repayments. Local laws govern these debts, making management simpler and more predictable.



ATHENE LAWS is an economist in the African Department, IMF.

Crucially, countries are less exposed to swings in international investor sentiment or global interest rates. The recent freeze in Eurobond issuance for the region—no countries in sub-Saharan Africa issued between spring 2022 and

January 2024—underscores the danger of relying too heavily on a single source of financing.

The benefits go beyond government balance sheets. Flourishing domestic debt markets can also support broader macroeconomic growth and provide buffers against economic shocks. Regular issuance of domestic debt enhances central banks' tool kits for monetary policy operations, making it easier to steer the economy and keep inflation in check. In addition, as governments issue more debt at different maturities, they generate a “yield curve”—a vital tool for pricing risk and fostering financial market development. This lays the

foundation for a thriving private sector, which is essential for job creation and economic growth. In a region where access to financing is often a major hurdle for business growth, building robust capital markets is more important than ever.

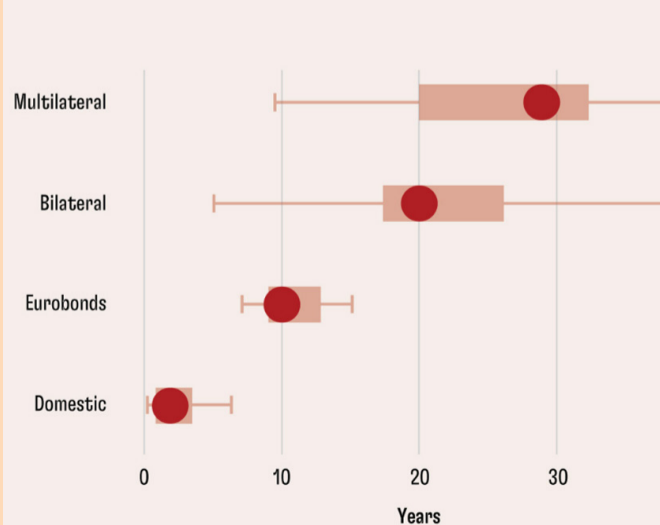
New risks

Alongside the benefits, domestic debt markets bring a swath of new risks that need to be carefully managed. As Chart 2 shows, domestic debt is typically issued for much shorter periods than external loans, sometimes just days or months, rather than years or decades (Manger and others 2025). Some countries, like Mauritius and Tanzania, have managed to lengthen these maturities, generating positive benefits for monetary policy and capital markets. Others, with less developed debt frameworks, shallow markets, or high macroeconomic vulnerabilities, are forced to rely on short-term borrowing. Since its 2023 domestic debt restructuring, Ghana has issued only T-Bills maturing in under a year, with an average outstanding maturity of less than three months as of November 30, 2025. Shorter maturities expose countries to rollover risk—the danger that, when old debt comes due, governments may have to pay higher interest rates or struggle to find new buyers. Building trust through transparent and credible debt management is essential in order to gradually extend maturities and reduce these risks.

Shorter maturities

Domestic debt is often issued for brief durations—some only days or months—unlike external loans.

(distribution of debt maturity by instrument, 2015–24)

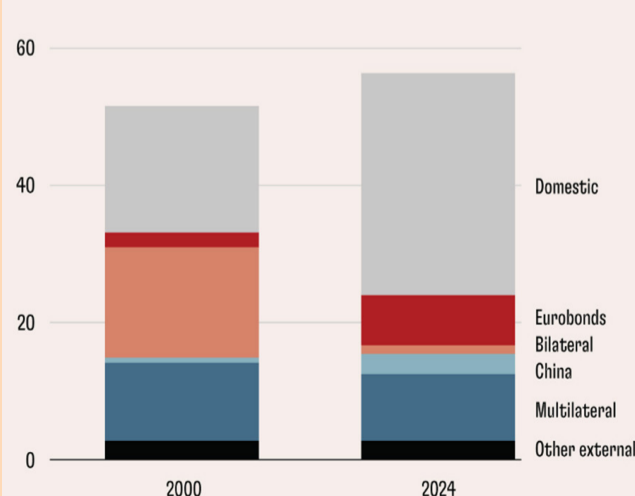


SOURCES: African Debt Database; and IMF staff calculations. NOTE: Maturities are calculated as the weighted average maturity at issuance, by country and instrument.

Toward domestic debt

Sub-Saharan African governments have pivoted away from external loans in favor of domestic borrowing.

(percent of GDP)



SOURCES: World Bank, International Debt Statistics; and IMF, World Economic Outlook Database. NOTE: Excludes Equatorial Guinea, Namibia, Seychelles, and South Sudan due to data availability.

MOTORING

Peugeot Boxer: Best of The Fleet

Peugeot's improved Boxer van is a more confident contender in the large LCV segment, thanks to the addition of more efficient 2.0-litre BlueHDi diesel engines and a strong EV offering. Jonathan Crouch looks at what's on offer. Peugeot's Boxer is a large LCV that has forensically focused on the things that make a real difference to fleet operators in order to give its heavyweight the best chance of a unanimous decision. Let's check out this revised model with its more frugal choice of 2.0-litre BlueHDi diesel or full-EV powertrains.

Background

When choosing a van that can punch above its weight, Peugeot might not be the first name that springs to mind. In fact, you might well associate the brand with smaller commercials like the Partner and Expert. If you need something very big and tough, chances are that you might have looked at the Ford Transit, the Mercedes Sprinter or maybe the Volkswagen Crafter. Overlooking Peugeot's Boxer is easy to do but could well bring on an acute case of buyer's remorse.

The Boxer (the same Stellantis Group design as rival Vauxhall Movano and Citroen Relay models) has quietly edged itself into position to challenge the very best in this market and the current model, a beneficiary of more than two million miles of testing



in extreme conditions, brings the sort of quality, robustness and durability that commercial operators demand. Couple that with what's now promised to be the best diesel fuel economy in the market, a full-EV option if you want it and a wide range of bodies and load capacities and you have a vehicle that's capable of doing the business.

Driving Experience

This Boxer now offers a strong line up of three 2.0-litre BlueHDi diesel engines, all fitted with diesel particulate filters. At the foot of the range, there's a 120hp unit with 310Nm of pulling power. The next BlueHDi unit up is the 140hp variant, which delivers 340Nm of torque, 20Nm up on before. There's also a 165hp version. Big brakes, strong suspension mountings and a rigid body all improve the driving characteristics. BlueHDi technology has enhanced performance too. If running costs

are everything and your business is urban-based, there's also a full-electric model too, with a 75kWh battery and a 154 mile electric driving range.

The ESP stability control system is particularly refined on this van, with a Load Adaptive Control function which adapts the point at which the ESP intervenes, according to the load in the vehicle and its distri-

but ion. There's also Hill Start Assist, built into the ESP software. This system is activated when the vehicle is stationary, engine running, foot on the brake pedal, on a slope steeper than 5 per cent, in forward gear going up or reverse gear going down. Under these conditions, braking pressure is maintained for around two seconds after the driver releases the brake pedal, offering assurance and ease in moving off without the

Design and Build

On to the main practical facts you'll need. There are two body styles - Panel and Window van. The Panel and Window van can be specified in four lengths (L1, L2, L3 and L4) and three heights for the Panel van and two in the Window van. The Panel van offers loadspace options between 8m³ and 17m³. And payload options between 1115kg and 1900kg. And aesthetics? Well normally when manufacturers try to translate exterior design cues from cars onto vans, the how approach fails and comes across as a bit desperate, but the Peugeot Boxer actually looks pretty slick with its big chromed grille. The headlights are interesting too, looking like rather feline eyes, garnished with a daytime running light strip.

The interior is nicely executed with far better materials quality than you might expect. The steering wheel looks quite car-like and can be trimmed in perforated leather as an

option. The dashboard gets a smartly styled control panel and buyers can option it up by choosing from a wide range of audio systems. Black 'Darko' cloth punctuated with red and grey is used for the seats, with brown Achilles trim as an option. The whole effect contributes towards the perception of quality and creates a modern appearance in the cabin. Despite that, this van is tough - and feels it. This Boxer has benefited from testing such as 1,500 hours at temperatures from -20°C to +40°C to ensure that the components and materials used in mechanical, plastic and electronic parts won't easily age. It's been subjected to 1,000 dunkings in 10cm of water or 3cm with saline spray, with no washing of the vehicle during the following 1,000 km, to validate the sealing and resistance to corrosion. Half a million door opening test cycles were carried out at temperatures of -30°C to +80°C, to simulate ten years of hard use.

Market and Model

Peugeot's fighting for a share of a revitalised post-Pandemic large van market, which now represents around 500,000 vehicles a year in Europe. Ex-VAT prices start from around £27,000 for the combustion models. If you want the full-electric e-Boxer, ex-VAT prices (after subtraction of the available £5,000 government grant) start from around £58,000. There's a single trim level, badged 'Professional Premium+'.

”

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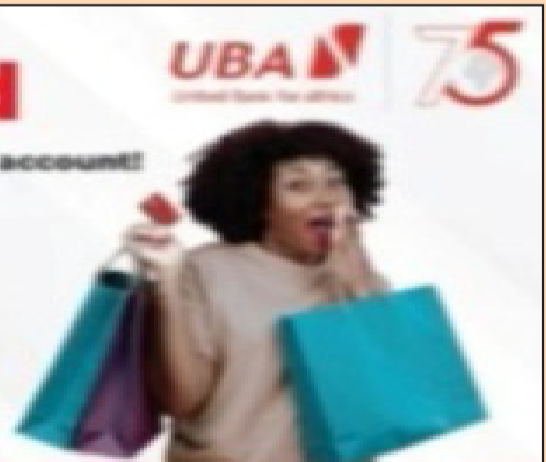


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GLOBALIZATION

Global Imbalances: Old Questions, New Answers?

Widening global current account imbalances are best addressed by simultaneous domestic policy adjustments. Industrial policy and tariffs offer a costly fix with unreliable effects on imbalances.

By Pierre-Olivier Gourinchas, Christian Mumssen

Global current account imbalances are widening again, reversing a decade of steady decline following the global financial crisis. History suggests a clear risk: widening imbalances have often been accompanied by concentrated and lower-quality growth, triggered sectoral dislocations across trading partners, and preceded financial crises or abrupt reversals of capital flows. With the global economy already absorbing multiple shocks, such a disorderly adjustment could be exceptionally costly. This renewed widening has revived questions about which policy tools can meaningfully impact external positions. In particular, the recent expansion of industrial policies and the proliferation of trade restrictions have diverse economic and non-economic motives, but are often justified by the objective of reducing current account imbalances. Yet there is limited analytical and empirical clarity on how these policies affect external balances. The new policy paper aims to fill this gap by linking domestic drivers to external outcomes. We conclude that traditional macroeconomic policies remain the dominant drivers of external balances and are the best lever for addressing current account imbalances. Our analysis suggests that tariffs only improve the current account in a limited set of circumstances, and generally have modest and uncertain effects on the current account. Industrial policies, when applied with economy-wide tools, can have



larger impacts by raising national saving and compressing domestic demand.

Saving and investment

For any economy, the current account reflects the difference between what its people, businesses, and government save and invest. This concept anchors the IMF's long-standing analytical framework for external sector assessments.

Policies affect the current account to the extent that they alter saving or investment. This depends not just how policies affect activity today, but also how they shift expectations. Personal saving rises when people expect income to decline, and it falls when they expect increased income. Companies invest based on their outlook for returns, not just today's profitability. This insight is central to understanding why many trade and industrial policies often have limited or counterintuitive impacts on the current account. We can see how standard macroeconomic policies have

driven some of the recent increase in global imbalances: bigger budget deficits and robust consumer spending have lowered saving in the United States, while weaker demand and higher saving in China have followed its real estate slowdown. Of course, positive or negative current account balances are not inherently undesirable, as they can reflect structural factors such as countries saving more as their population ages. It is also

is the overall current account position of a country against the rest of the world, not bilateral or sectoral balances. Nor are imbalances simply about misaligned exchange rates and price competitiveness. A meaningful diagnosis requires a full macroeconomic assessment of influences on saving and investment, including policy drivers and structural forces.

Policy details matter

Tariffs have been

that they have only small and unreliable effects on the current account because they are often perceived as permanent or are frequently retaliated against. In such cases, people do not adjust saving in anticipation of future price changes. The result is a nearly unchanged current account. There is one important exception: temporary tariffs can raise saving by encouraging people to postpone consumption. In theory, this can increase the current account balance, though such episodes are rare, and empirical evidence suggests the effects are modest and short-lived. Industrial policies are more diverse—and so are their effects. We distinguish two types of industrial policies: micro, which target specific companies or sectors, and macro, which are economy-wide policies that are often combined with financial or capital account restrictions. Micro industrial policies—such as subsidies for a specific industry or targeted tax incentives—generally have ambiguous and limited effects on the

current account. When they succeed in raising aggregate productivity, they tend to boost investment and consumption, often lowering the current account balance. When they fail, for example by misallocating resources and depressing productivity, they can increase the current account balance, but at the cost of lost output. Either way, large and systematic effects on external balances are uncommon. Macro industrial policies, by contrast, can have larger effects. These strategies, often associated with export-led growth models, combine foreign asset accumulation, capital flow restrictions, financial repression, or other mechanisms that boost national saving. These policies work not by improving efficiency but by forcing saving, often at the expense of economic welfare. The current account balance increases, but mainly because domestic demand is restrained and resources are redirected toward external surpluses.

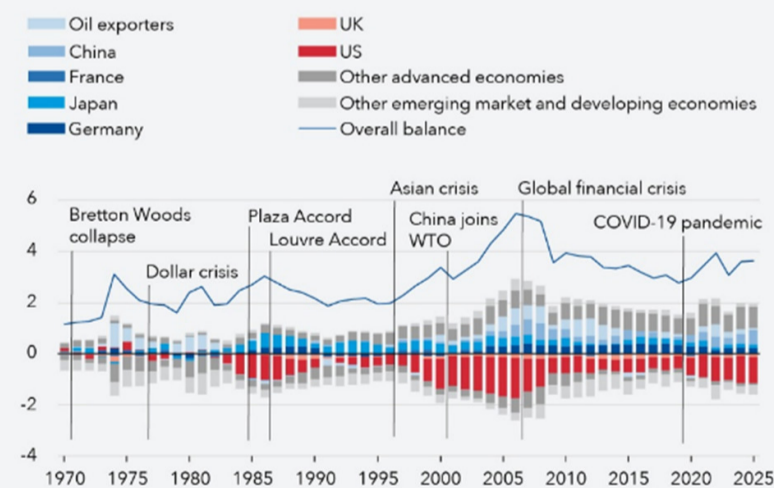
The conclusion is clear: industrial policies and tariffs are not shortcuts to external rebalancing. When they affect the current account, they often do so by suppressing consumption or investment—hardly a recipe for sustainable growth. Durable rebalancing still depends on sound domestic policies, not trade barriers.

Future imbalances and output

Applying our findings to the current economic picture, scenario analysis shows that global imbalances could widen further if trends persist. This would reflect continued large fiscal deficits and strong.

Global imbalances are widening after years of narrowing

Percent of world GDP



Sources: IMF, World Economic Outlook; IMF, Balance of Payments; and IMF staff calculations. Notes: Overall balance is sum of absolute values of current account surpluses and deficits. Figures for 2025 partly based on projections.

IMF

important to bear in mind that the relevant metric for assessing imbalances

justified as a way to narrow trade deficits. However, analysis finds

incentives—generally have ambiguous and limited effects on the

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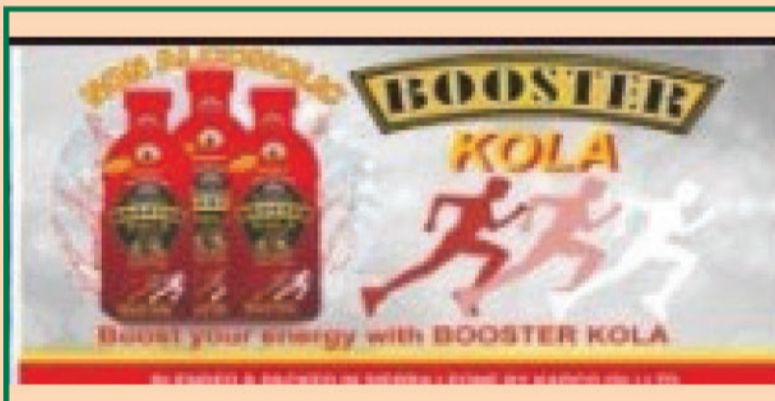
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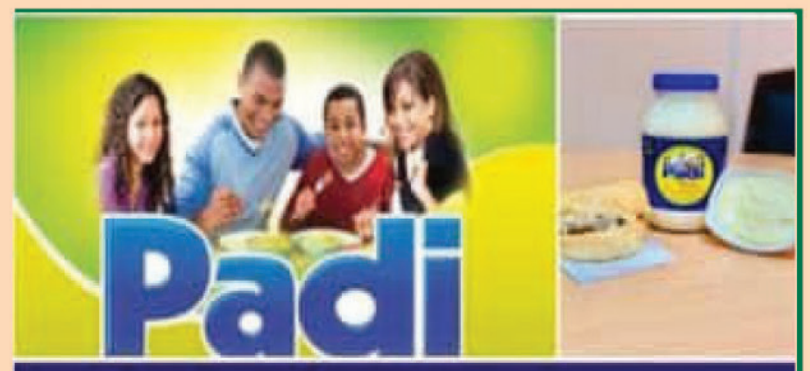


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NEWS



At Changemakers certification ceremony in Freetown. Ms Chika Justina Okeke, Executive Associate at the UN Women Executive Associate (third from the left) with graduands. Next to Ms Okeke is Hon. Patrick Michaelson Gibri

Continued from PAGE 1

MoFi De-risk Economy

energy, mining, infrastructure, and agribusiness who are more willing to commit long term capital when risk is insured. The country is expected to experience higher Foreign Direct Investment (FDI inflows as investors are allowed

the leverage to insure their projects at lower premiums. The move is also expected to attract more bankable projects in energy, ports, tourism, mining value addition, and digital infrastructure.

Addressing an audience of investors which include executives of the Millennium Challenge Corporation's (MCC) Department of Compact Operations, in Washington DC,

Dr Bangura that the government is not merely signing documents 'but is actively executing deep structural reforms. He outlined series of aggressive measures

already introduced by government to transform the nation's economy.

He emphasised that joining ATIDI is part of a broader national strategy to de risk the economy, attract quality investment, and accelerate inclusive development. The

move aligns with Sierra Leone's long term vision of building a stable, competitive, and opportunity rich economy for all citizens. Bangura said the country would work closely with ATIDI to unlock new pathways for growth, resilience, and prosperity.

Continued from PAGE 1

MCC Tasks Govt On Reforms

are not just political ideals but core economic stability indicators.

The Sierra Leonean delegation assured the MCC that the government is not complacent but fully engaged in stakeholders consultation process on reforms in the country. Dr Bangura, Minister of Finance and leader of delegation enumerated ongoing dialogues with opposition parties, civil society, and traditional leaders on the implementation of electoral reform and the solidifying of the national

unity agreement as part of the ongoing efforts. 'This commitment to inclusive governance, is fundamental to sustaining the macro-economic stability that the MCC Compact is designed to support', he stated.

Ms Monahan declared Sierra Leone a "real success story" for the MCC portfolio. She praised the deep, transparent, and responsive engagement she has witnessed from the highest levels of

the Sierra Leonean government. This characterization is significant, as it positions Sierra Leone favorably for potential future tranches of funding and technical assistance beyond the current Compact cycle, contingent on continued performance. The high-powered Sierra Leonean delegation underscored the national priority of this engagement. Minister Bangura was accompanied by a constellation of key economic actors, including the Minister

of Energy, Mr. Cyril Grant; the Sierra Leone Ambassador to the U.S., Mr. Amara Sowa; Financial Secretary, Mr. Matthew Dingie; the Governor of the Bank of Sierra Leone, Dr. Ibrahim Stevens; the Chief Economist, Mr. Alimamy Bangura; and Technical Adviser, Dr. Franklin Sisabu Bendu. The collective presence signalled that the government is treating the MCC partnership as a core driver of its national development strategy,



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ENERGY



How the Middle East War Has Affected Oil Exporters and Importers

Countries face vastly different exposure to higher oil prices and supply uncertainty, shaped by whether they import or export, and how much policy space they have to respond

A resilient world economy is being tested again by the war in the Middle East. The conflict has caused considerable hardship around the globe. My heart goes out to all people affected by this war and all wars. The focus is on how best to weather this latest shock and ease the pain on economies and people. This requires understanding the nature of the shock, the channels through which it affects the economy, the size of the impact, and the policies that can mitigate

it. So what hit us? A supply shock that is large, global, and asymmetric:

- It is large because the world's daily oil flow cut by some 13 percent, and its LNG flow by some 20 percent;
- It is global because all of us now paying more for energy and with supply chains disrupted across the world;
- And it is asymmetric because its impact depends on proximity to the conflict, whether you are an energy exporter or importer, and your policy

space. As always, a negative supply shock pushes prices up. As a point of reference, Brent jumped from \$72 per barrel on the eve of hostilities to a peak of \$120. Thankfully, oil prices have fallen, but they remain much higher than before the war—and many countries are paying high premiums for access to precious supplies. Spare a thought for the Pacific Island nations at the end of a long supply chain, wondering if fuel will still reach them in the wake of such a severe

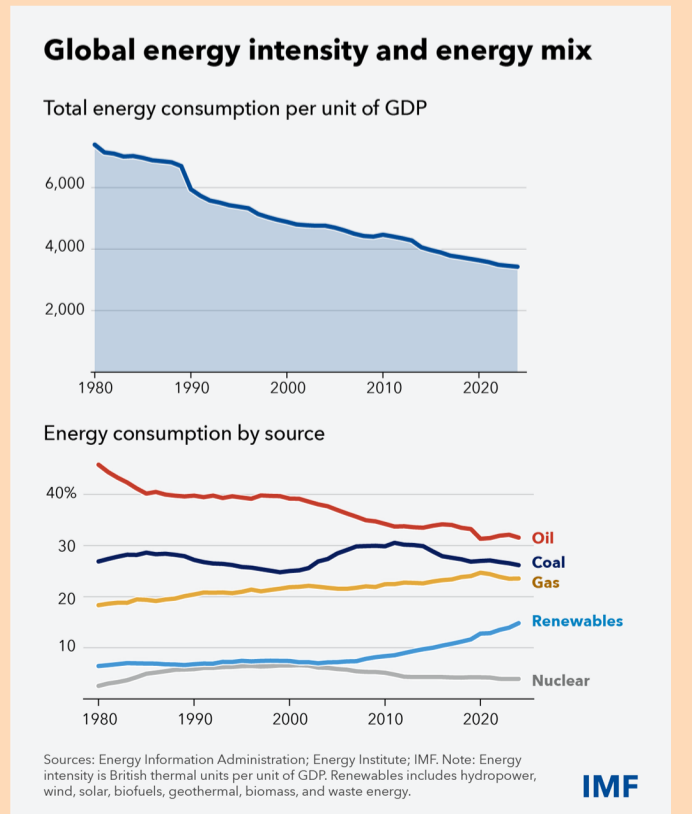
disruption. The supply interruptions have had—and will for some time continue to have—ripple effects, such as:

- Oil refinery disruptions given the need to maintain minimum flow rates, with warning lights flashing red in many far-flung places.
- Shortages of refined products including diesel and jet fuel, which have disrupted transportation, trade, and tourism in a world more interconnected than ever;
- Food insecurity

for another 45 million people given the transport issues—taking the total number of people in hunger to over 360 million—with the problem potentially worsening over time because of higher fertilizer prices; And supply chain disruptions given industrial dependencies such as on sulfur, helium for silicon chipmaking and MRI imaging, and naphtha for plastics. The second question is: how can this shock play out? Through three main channels:

- First: the price impact and supply shortages. Higher prices for key inputs feed into many consumer goods, lifting inflation. This, coupled with shortages, reduces demand by brute force.
- Second channel: inflation expectations. These can break anchor and ignite a costly inflation process. Here is the distribution of near-term inflation forecasts for the U.S.; notice how the curve has moved to the right, indicating higher short-run inflation expectations. And here is the curve for the euro area; it also moves right, and it widens, indicating higher uncertainty. Fortunately, longer-run expectations have not budged—this is very good and very important.

Continues on **PAGE 12**



WORKPLACE



Passing Probation At Work

You've landed your dream job... congratulations! Starting a new role is an exciting experience, but it can also be stressful as you need to pass probation at work. There's a lot to take in in the first few weeks—you're getting to grips with a new environment, trying to learn new services and adapting to the charity culture, having to remember everyone's names and impress your boss. But, remember that you've made it this far for a reason. The probation period is your employer's chance to determine whether they've made the right choice and your chance to show them exactly what you're made of. Need a few tips to help guide you in the right direction? Here's how to pass probation at work.

Get to know the organisation and the people

Every organisation operates differently. In smaller charities, you're more likely to be working closely with your colleagues. But if

you're somewhere larger, you may have to arrange more meetings and deal with different stakeholders on every project. It's all about figuring out how your skills can help drive things in the right direction. It's important to get to know your manager, but also try to meet as many of your colleagues as you can. Make sure you understand what they each do and how this relates to your new job. They can offer valuable insight on how things work and provide support when you need it. Getting along with your new team will be one of your greatest selling points. Passing probation at work isn't just about proving that you can work hard, it's also an opportunity to demonstrate your ability to lead and be a real team player.

Connect with the cause and the culture

Working for a charity or social enterprise? These organisations are fuelled by passion. Your colleagues will often be very dedicated to the

organisation's cause and will want to see how it resonates with you. Get to know the values, culture and policies of your new workplace. It's crucial to understanding what's expected of you. Listen out for key industry news, read leading sector publications and talk to your colleagues so that you're constantly being kept up to date with what's happening and can participate in discussions.

Be proactive and eager to learn

Not knowing what you're supposed to do isn't a crime! You're new and it's perfectly natural to have questions about your role or the organisation so you can pass probation at work. Ask as many questions as you need to—failing to do so may leave people thinking that you're not all that interested. Show that you're willing to use your initiative by constantly trying to improve yourself. It's important to be visible and offer to help out, especially for remote and hybrid roles. Everyone needs time to get to grips with

their new responsibilities, but it's hard for your manager and colleagues to give you any feedback if they haven't seen much of you. Try to make your mark by sharing your ideas and participating in discussions whenever you can. Employers don't want to micromanage, so make it clear that you can be independent and contribute to the success of your new charity.

Don't be afraid to own up to your mistakes

We can't guarantee you won't make any mistakes in your first few months. But it's how you handle them that really defines the type of employee you are. Always be honest and own up if you've done something wrong. Your probation is an adjustment period. The longer you're there, the more comfortable you'll be with the charity and how it operates. So don't beat yourself up when you stumble—your employer will appreciate your honesty and will have respect for you. It's also an opportunity to

reflect and put processes in place so that, next time, everything goes as planned.

Be present, punctual and don't waste time

If you possibly can, avoid taking a sick day during your probation period. Many organisations don't offer paid sick days during probation. Find out what the policies are so you know what to do if you are unwell before you pass probation at work. Similarly, don't take too much annual leave—remember, this is the time that you're supposed to be learning and making your mark. If you're not there, your employer can't see your hard work, skills and talent. Always be on time, including for video calls. If you're running late, or having technology issues, let your manager know. Remember that logging on a few minutes early or working a few minutes later can make a good impression, rather than leaving at the first possible opportunity. Don't waste work time by googling irrelevant things on your work laptop, taking personal calls or scrolling your phone, at home or in the office. Even if you see your colleagues doing this,

it doesn't make a good impression. You need to focus on establishing yourself as a reliable team-member and understanding your charity's policies about personal communications.

Go the extra mile

Bending over backwards to deliver above and beyond your manager's expectations is a sure-fire way to pass probation at work. The more you do, the more your employer will rely on you which, in turn, makes you more valuable to them. Always go that extra mile—you have nothing to lose and everything to gain!

Be confident, not cocky

There's a fine line between confidence and arrogance. They hired you because they saw potential. That doesn't mean that you can do no wrong. Don't be afraid to voice your opinion, especially if you're bringing a fresh perspective to the table. Just remember that your colleagues also bring their own experience and values, so all input needs to be considered and respected. It's all about being part of the team but not overpowering them.

Continues on **PAGE 12**



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ARTS & CULTURE HUB



Kennedy Adewale is a poet and photographer who captures genuine human connections, highlighting spontaneous expressions and gestures that reflect shared experiences.

EVOLUTIONARY JOURNEY



Review

The Evolutionary Journey

Author: Kennedy Adefolaju Adewale

Publisher: Daily Graphics, Nigeria. Lace

Date of Publication: 2025

Reviewer: Professor Abdullahi Kadir Ayinde, Head, Department of English & Literary Studies, University of Ilorin, Nigeria

Introduction

The first part of two major collections of poems by Kennedy Adefolaju Adewale, *The Evolutionary Journey* includes other prominent sub-titles that attract attention. They are *Concrete Sunset* and *Copper dust*, *Indigo Horizons* and *Golden Grass*, *Blood lines of the savannah*. The collections poetically resonate the historical, social and political trajectories of the postcolonial African states in its transformational process to modernity and reclamation of the lost heritage at home and in Diaspora.

William Wordsworth, one of the finest English poets of the Romantic era refers to the "poetry as the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge; it is the impassioned expression which is in the countenance of all science" (Wordsworth and the poetry of Epitaphs 1809, p. 16). The classical thought of Wordsworth underscores the aesthetic value of poetry. The beauty of poetry is in both its expressional and musical aesthetics. The beauty of the expression

is realized in its special use of language while the musical in sound and rhythms. The immediate result of the beauty is the pleasure of mental and sensual satisfaction. This is the perspective from which Adewale's collections prove to be a worthy academic scrutiny.

Thematic Analysis and Review of the Collections.

The *Evolutionary Journey* is the first major collection by the author, Mr Kennedy Adewale. It has several other poems namely; "Unbroken Sunsets", "Dust on My Soles", "The Drumbeat in the Bone", "Where the Boabab Dreams", "Concrete Savannah" and "Cradle of the First Morning". The motif and themes that permeate all the poems are the landmark historical encounter of Africa with the heavy weight of imperial culture. The poet-personae recalibrates the vestige of African values and heritages subsumed by the hegemony of the White imperialist. Quite an array of poetic expressions such as sarcasm, epigram, symbolism, anecdotes, metaphor and cultural images are deployed by the

poet to deride the scramble and partition of Africa by the European powers. In *the Soil Remembers*, the personae says:

The borders were drawn with ink that did not know the names of our rivers

Yet the water flows, indifferent to the scars on the map (line 1-2)

The above verse is epigrammatically composed to track the lane of Africa's historical adventure and the aftermath of its lost heritage in the wake of imperialism. However, African values refused to sink despite the hegemony of the colonisers. The poet insists that:

But look-the baobab does not ask for permission to grow.

Its roots are deep in a history that predates the gavel and the gun

The above verse symbolically reinvents the counter discourse of the postcolonial aesthetics that has evolved into colonus, meaning colonialism in contemporary sense. This is a dialectics of stasis and transition referring invariably to a condition of transgression and change. In the specific sense of African postcoloniality, history and culture have assumed a highly value-charged character, mobilized by the poet as a site of ideology formation and identity reclamation. The poem, without any doubt, establishes a trope

linkage between blacks in the continent and those in diaspora who have had to undergo condition of uprooting and dispersal. *Iron Under silk* symbolically ignites the spirit of pan Africanism by affirming poetically that:

We dance in the spaces between the decrees,

Finding melody where they intended only noises

The sunset is not an ending; it is a burning promise

That even when the world goes dark

The heat of our resolve remains in the stones beneath our foot (line 4-9)

The images deploy here are testaments to the survival of the spirit of Africanism. Despite the heavy shadow of political and cultural subjugation, the love for Africa and its civilization refused to extinguish. The heat of our resolve to remain unbroken is re-affirmed. The metaphor used to concretely reclaim the lost glory are located in natural elements like sunset, heat, stone and burning promise. Several other titles such as the "Unbroken Trend" explores the idea that culture is not read from literature, it biologically resonates in people. The metaphor of drumbeat represents the heart beat that receives the first rhythm that a baby echoes at birth and which, of course, eternally connects the ancestral

POETRY CORNER



Wager of a Clean Man

By Ibrahim Mansaray

When the drums fell silent, the hunters chose iron over clean hands.

The scrolls glowed like moonlit water, naming the humble man victor of the field.

Yet the keeper of seals buried truth beneath his heavy robe.

And the lantern meant for justice slept cold upon the table.

In the market, cassava rotted like forgotten prayers beneath the sun.

Children counted hunger while distant towers counted profit in gold ink.

For a spotless man is a storm to kingdoms built on rusted chains.

But a stained ruler bends easily, like wet clay in a merchant's palm.

Across the white sands, the Stranger dined where iron whales kissed the shore.

The Guardians frowned in daylight, yet fed him quietly at dusk.

An eagle loves the dying tree because it never resists the wind.

And poisoned cups are easier served when the palace keeps its silence.

They sing of freedom like cracked bells echoing through an empty cathedral.

Yet beneath the hymn swims the whale of mines, steel, and stolen fire.

A clean man would ask why rivers of ore leave villages thirsty.

So the powerful pray for fearful dancers, never for honest kings.

Tell me, is the Guardian a healer, or merely the warden of the cage?

The evidence lies open like bones beneath the noonday sun.

But empires trust men wrapped in shadows more than men clothed in truth.

For the pure carry mirrors, and mirrors terrify the corrupt.

Still, Free Land, your dawn waits beyond the smoke of frightened rulers.

The lantern will rise again, and hidden faces will tremble in its flame.

The chains are not broken by foreign hands, but by hearts that refuse the dark.

For people do not perish from blindness alone, but from those who teach the night to hate the light.

NEWS

PASSING PROBATION

Continued from PAGE 10

Always be positive and professional

Positivity can go a long way, especially when you're the new person in the office. It's a well-known fact that being more positive in your behaviour, language and outlook makes room for greater success, satisfaction and reward in life. Positivity helps you engage with your colleagues and projects a good image of yourself, showing your attributes and personality in the best light. And speaking of good image, remember to keep things professional. Avoid office gossip, and be careful if you're involved in social gatherings with colleagues and alcohol is involved. All the good work you've been doing

to pass probation at work can too easily be undone by one careless comment or action under the influence of alcohol.

Ask for feedback

Once you feel settled and have got to grips with your new role, schedule some time to get feedback from your line manager. This shows that you care about your performance and are looking for ways to truly contribute to the organisation. Once you've received the constructive criticism you have the tools in place to surpass their expectations and pass probation at work! It comes down to just getting comfortable with your new role and applying your skills and experience to make it your own. Don't just try to copy what the previous role-holder did.



African Development Bank (AfDB) Country Manager for Sierra Leone, Dr Ado Mensah (right) with Finance Minister Dr Sheku Bangura during a meeting at the Treasury Building in Freetown.

THE EVOLUTIONARY JOURNEY

Continued from PAGE 11

origin to our whole existence. Apparently, before the epoch of the transatlantic slave trade, the black African people had their historical cycles of great empires, like small kingdoms and semi-urban settlements, which also had evolved brilliant and complex cultures. The African slaves who were moved to the foreign land had been socialized into distinct cultural groups bound together by their local traditions through the shared codes and conventions of meanings. This is the perspective of the historical linkage that poetically constitutes the common ground in

the collections under review. Adewale's recourse to postcolonial artistic traditions and forms are the poet's way of coming to terms with the problem of authenticity and achieve aesthetic integrity.

Analysing this perspective, Jan (cited in Iyasere, 1975, p.109) posits that "Every mature artist achieves his best work when he attaches himself to his own artistic tradition.

The Evolutionary Journey is encapsulated in indigenous rhetorical and artistic resources deploys in terms of reconstruction, incorporation and transposition of tradition of oral forms and materials.

How the Middle East War has Affected Importers

Continued from PAGE 10

• *Third channel: financial conditions. From a highly supportive starting point, these tightened, in an orderly manner. Emerging market bond spreads widened substantially; equity prices adjusted; and the dollar appreciated. And now we see some easing.*

We have been here before in the 1970s and earlier this decade. We know eventually a significant part of the shock will dissipate, leaving us in a new equilibrium. Supply recovers and demand adjusts. New capacity comes on stream. Energy efficiency rises.

As proof, please

appreciate how the world has become progressively less energy intensive since the 1980s, which cushions the shock. Renewable energy increased its share, yet oil remains our number one fuel.

As the world responds, it is important that we maintain our collective quest for energy efficiency and energy diversification. Different countries have different paths to energy security, but all must strive for it.

Let me move to the third question: how large is the growth impact? The answer very much depends on whether the ceasefire

holds and leads to lasting peace and how much damage the war leaves in its wake.

Given the uncertainties, our World Economic Outlook, will include a range of scenarios, going from a relatively swift normalization, to a middle scenario, to one where oil and gas prices stay much higher for much longer and second-round effects take hold. All these scenarios start from a situation where strong AI and tech investment, supportive financial conditions, and other factors were driving considerable momentum in the world economy.

In fact, had it not been for this shock, we would have been upgrading global growth. But now, even our most hopeful scenario involves a growth downgrade. Why? Because of significant infrastructure damage, supply disruptions, losses of confidence, and other scarring effects. Take Qatar's Ras Laffan complex—a tremendously important example of strategic investment done right; producer of 93 percent of the Gulf's LNG, some 80 percent of it going to Asia-Pacific, a region that now endures serious fuel shortages. Ras Laffan has essentially been shut since

March 2, took direct hits on March 19, and could take 3–5 years to restore to full capacity.

Even in the best case, there will be no neat and clean return to the status quo ante.

Another relevant fact: see how ship passages through Bab-el-Mandeb on the Red Sea have never quite recovered from the devastating disruptions there—they remain stuck at about half their 2023 level. So the reality is, we don't truly know what the future holds for transits through the Strait of Hormuz or, for that matter, for the recovery of regional air traffic.

What we do know is that growth will be slower—even if the new

peace is durable.

And we also know there are significant variations across the world. Countries able to export oil and gas undisturbed are the least affected. In contrast, countries directly disrupted by the war—including oil and gas exporters who suffered the blockade—and countries relying on imported oil and gas, still bear the brunt of the impact.

How bad this impact will be will depend, in no small measure, on how much policy space countries have, including oil and gas reserves, given the five-week gap we have seen in tanker traffic from the Gulf.

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EXECUTIVE SUITE

Ken Rogoff On The Dollar Dominance

The US dollar has been the world's reserve currency of choice for decades now, but Ken Rogoff says things are changing

You may know Ken Rogoff for his groundbreaking research on exchange rates and central bank independence, but you may also know him as a world chess champion of the '70s. Either way, his experiences as a teenager playing chess in the Soviet-controlled Eastern Bloc and later studying at Yale and MIT under some of the greats in economics gives Rogoff a pretty unique perspective on why economies work or don't. His latest book, *Our Dollar, Your Problem*, studies the rise of the US dollar as a reserve currency and things that might cause it to fall, like debt. Ken Rogoff: There's been this idea everywhere, but particularly in the United States, that debt's just a free lunch, that interest rates are always going to be really low. Ken Rogoff is a professor of economics at Harvard University, but he also served as chief economist at the IMF in the early 2000s. He was invited back recently to talk about his book, which was a great opportunity to sit him down in front of a microphone

So maybe we should start with how we got here. I mean, how did we end up with the US dollar being so dominant as an international reserve currency?

Ken Rogoff: Well, the short answer is World War I and World War II. World War I really crippled the British economy, and sterling was the dominant currency. It stayed a dominant currency despite all that they lost in the war. The US lost a lot in the war, but the UK lost much more. The US began to rise in that period. Then after World War II, the UK empire just crumbled. The UK was broke. It was very hard to think about being a reserve currency. Beyond that, at the end of World War II, by many measures, the US was 40, 45% of global GDP. It was nobody else. The United States lost many lives. We paid a dear price in World War II, but compared to Europe, the United States was almost unscathed. So, we were the dominant economy, and there was an agreement made towards the end of World War II, somewhat contentious with the British, that put the dollar on a pedestal. We had this system where everyone had to peg to the dollar and follow the dollar. The US could do whatever it wanted, but with one big caveat. For official creditors, we had to trade dollars for gold if they asked. So, that was certainly a constraint



Professor of Economics, Harvard University
Ken Rogoff

on our behavior. The book's title comes from 1971 when Richard Nixon shocked the world. He was our president, the United States President. He shocked the world by saying, "You know what we said about trading your dollars for gold? Not anymore, we're not going to do it." But so the dollar had been placed on top. On the other hand, in the '70s, the dollar lost a lot of ground because it had massive inflation, Europe on its own way. So, it's gone through a cycle.

And as you just mentioned there, the title of your latest book, Our Dollar, Your Problem, well, I know it's a quote from Nixon's treasury

secretary, but I assume it implies the US pursuing its own interests. Hasn't that always been the case? I mean, what's different this time around in terms of the US using the strength of its dollar to improve, or bolster its position in the global economy?

Ken Rogoff: Well, let's go to 1971 first. Okay.

Ken Rogoff: The title captures the arrogance of the US. We went off gold and the Europeans, the Japanese, the Canadians, who by the way were really the only ones who were on the dollar standard, nobody else. Everyone else had very controlled and repressed economies for

the most part. The ministers in Europe, meeting in Rome, our treasury secretary, John R. Connally once said, "What are we supposed to do with all these treasury bills you're inflating?" And John R. Connally said, "Well, it's our dollar, that's your problem." That arrogance is something I've never liked, but also, we didn't realize that by getting rid of the gold standard, we didn't have a plan for how to control inflation. It was our problem. That was a disastrous decade for the United States. So, fast forwarding to today, when we do things like undermine Federal Reserve independence, when we have budget deficit problems and debt problems that threaten inflation stability, financial stability, it is a problem

for everyone, but it's also a problem for the United States. So, I mean, that's really very much where the parallel is today. We're doing all these policies that throw turmoil into the system and might end up leading to a better situation than if nothing happened, I am skeptical, but trying to keep an open mind, but I think a lot of the suffering for the instability will be us in the United States.

So if you don't mind, I'd like to step back a little bit and get more of a sense of your beginnings. A lot of our listeners will know you not only as a world-renowned economist, but as a chess grandmaster, a title that you won in your teens. I mean 16 I think it was. That is remarkable, but what I thought really interesting was how you decided to move to Yugoslavia, on your own, to play chess. This is Yugoslavia in the early '70s, right? So it's under Tito.

Ken Rogoff: Communist. Bruce Edwards: It's a communist state. Ken Rogoff: Yeah, very communist.

So how did all that come about, and did it perhaps have any influence in you deciding to pursue a career in economics?

Ken Rogoff: Well, back then, the two best countries in chess were Russia- Soviet Union, and

Yugoslavia. There were a number of other countries... the United States had a few really good players, but it didn't have a lot of tournaments. There wasn't a lot of sponsorship, whereas Europe did. There were tournaments in Spain, England, but a lot of the best players were in Yugoslavia. So, I went to live in Europe. I was playing in tournaments around Europe. I was very good already. I was making money doing it. It wasn't a question of starving or anything. I didn't have any support. I mean, I was just making money playing chess, and I wanted to get better. If you want to get better, you got to play the best. So, going to Russia wasn't possible at the time. You couldn't go live in Russia, but you could go hang out in Yugoslavia. So, I went to live there and I would say I learned a lot. I mean, it's not just passing through every day, but really living there, seeing other people's lives, getting a feel for what socialism was. I wish some of today's young people could have an experience like that. B

It was a communist state but...

Ken Rogoff: It was slightly more liberal. They had a little bit more free market orientation, just slightly. It wasn't China. China today has a huge free market orientation, but it had a little bit. Tito experimented with that, and it was considered to be by far the most affluent.

Continues on PAGE 14



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EXECUTIVE SUITE

Continued from PAGE 13

But I was looking around, it was not very affluent.

I was everywhere in Yugoslavia. So, when I was being taught later at Yale, I decided to go- decided not to stay in chess, to become an economist. Later, I was taking an economics course and I was being told Russia is going to catch up to the United States. Our textbook taught us that. A lot of the famous professors taught us that. I was thinking, "Well, wait a second. Yugoslavia is richer than Russia." I stayed in the student dormitories where they had no running water basically. I went off in the countryside. I saw what it looked like in Belgrade. And I tell a story in the book where, I didn't know anything about wearing suits, I had an electric blue suit... traveling around, and where I would've looked ridiculous in New York...

You described that suit in the book as being the "discount rack electric blue polyester suit". (laughter)

Ken Rogoff: I paid nothing for it because I didn't know that it was important. But when I was traveling around in Eastern Europe, they'd go, "Wow, that's so cool. Do all Americans have such great suits?" So it gave me some skepticism about that when I was taught that.

I love that story because you use that to explain how the Soviet economy worked at the time, in terms of the limited availability of products.

Ken Rogoff: The command and control economy, the way it worked back then, it's hard for people to imagine who live in today's world. The government told factories what to produce, but of course, in fashion, how do you know what people are going to want? Well, they don't care. So, everyone gets a gray suit, that's what the fashion's going to be. It was like that all over Eastern Europe. They just had all that- not very nice material,

The Dollar Dominance

and they were drab gray suits. So, when they saw me in an electric blue suit, that was just, "Wow, the coolest person."

And going back to that circumstance where you bought this suit, you were going into your

read Samuelson? Do you have any idea what's going on?" But it was a good life experience.

So we know what the outcome was there. The ruble never did really challenge the dollar...

Ken Rogoff: Yeah, but

bigger, more stable than it turned out to be.

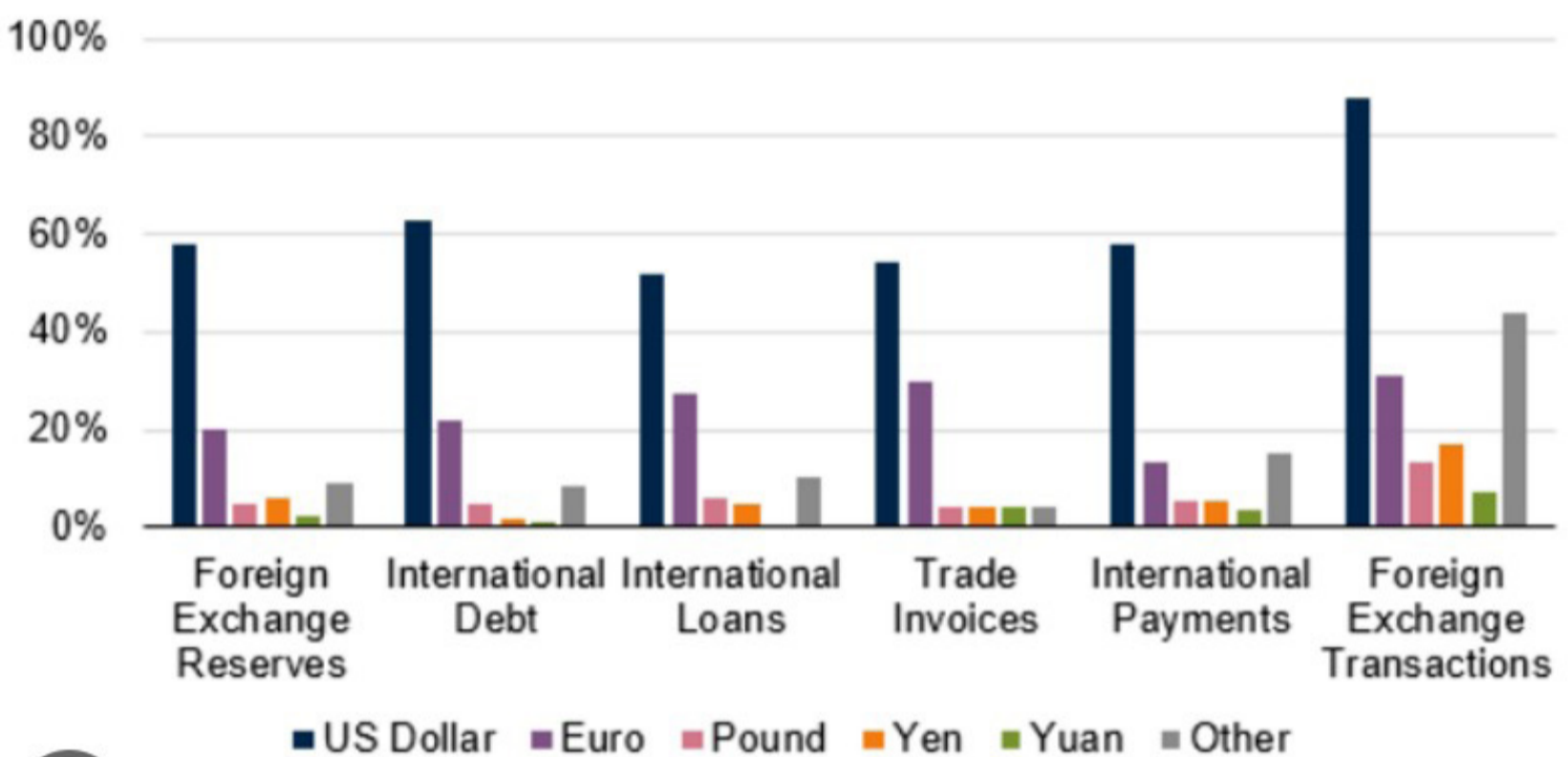
So in more recent history, has there been any real threat to dollar dominance?

Ken Rogoff: Well, the yen was a big deal. I mean, there was a period where

off than Mississippi. They handled it very badly and ended up having a disastrous financial crisis and not coming out of it. But things could have gone differently there. There are these episodes in history where had things gone differently,

which I think after a while did not work for them. After a while, it distorted their development, slowed it down. Had they not done that, the dollar would be much smaller today. Asia is half the dollar block, and if China hadn't been circling around the dollar, Asia might be a quarter of the dollar block or a third the dollar block.

The Role of the Dollar



Rhodes scholarship...

Ken Rogoff: Rhodes scholarship interview.

Okay. So all that experience you had in these countries, how did all that work for you in the interview?

Ken Rogoff: Well, I mean, I didn't get my Rhodes scholarship, which maybe I could have or should

I mean, things could have gone differently. Russia had its moments when it could have gone the direction of China. There were these Brezhnev-Kosygin reforms. Brezhnev later became president of Russia, but it could have gone



have, but I was asked by one of the questioners, "Is Russia going to catch up?" I said, "I didn't think so." He just huffed at me. "You don't know anything. You're presenting yourself as an economist. Did you

differently. He had these liberalization ideas. It almost caught fire, but it didn't, which were very similar to things China did later. So, I mean, that's one of these turns where Russia, I don't think their system could have necessarily rivaled the United States, but it could have been a lot

the Japanese economy seemed to be overtaking the US. I now teach at Harvard, and some of my distinguished, even older than I am, colleagues had books about how we all have to imitate Japan. Japan back then had half the population of the US, but let's not forget the United Kingdom had a quarter of the population of France, much less Germany. That's not a big deal. Their stock market was worth more than the US. Their land was worth more than the US. They seemed to be just crushing us and everything. We came down hard on them, and I don't think they handled it very well. Had they handled things better, I think Japan, instead of falling to be really one of the middle upper income countries now and not upper, upper income countries where it was, it was second to the US. Now it's not really much better off than Italy, which we know is not better

the dollar might be on top, but not as much. Then as far as China goes, they made this decision to basically peg to the dollar. For a long time, it worked. But there was a period even starting when I was chief economist at the IMF, where we were saying, "You shouldn't do this anymore. Why are you doing this? You're a big country. You should have your own monetary policy. You're a fast-growing country. So, if you peg your exchange rate, it tends to cause appreciation. It tends to make non-traded goods, services, haircuts, golf memberships, house prices go up too fast. You're going to get inflation. You don't want to have it." I talked about it in the book. I think back then I didn't understand all the dimensions of the problem they were facing, but we were telling them that, and many people did, "You should pull off of this." Had they not stuck to this fixed exchange rate,

I know you're a big proponent of independent central banks, as many are. Do you worry about that these days? I know all eyes are on the US right now, but I mean more generally, do you think that central banks around the world are going to eventually become, or there's pressures for them to become less independent?

Ken Rogoff: Those pressures have been going on for a long time. So, first, I think when I actually visited the fund in 1982, I wrote the first draft of what I think was the first paper on why you should have an independent central bank and how to use a theoretical model. There have certainly been commentators who'd made that, but how it could be a way of dealing with inflation. I think there are other people who contributed for sure, but I think it's been the most impactful policy innovation of the last 70 years.

STATISTICAL SIERRA LEONE

Table 1.1. General government fiscal balance, 2019–30: overall balance

(Percentage of GDP, unless noted otherwise)

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
World	-3.5	-9.5	-6.3	-3.7	-4.9	-5.0	-5.1	-4.7	-4.5	-4.5	-4.5	-4.6
Advanced Economies	-3.0	-10.3	-7.2	-3.7	-4.6	-4.7	-4.3	-3.9	-3.8	-3.9	-3.9	-4.0
Advanced Economies excl. US	-1.0	-7.6	-4.3	-3.7	-2.5	-2.6	-2.5	-2.5	-2.4	-2.5	-2.6	-2.6
Canada	0.0	-10.9	-3.1	-3.7	0.1	-2.1	-1.9	-1.6	-1.4	-1.2	-1.0	-0.8
Euro Area	-0.5	-7.0	-5.1	-3.7	-3.6	-3.1	-3.2	-3.4	-3.5	-3.5	-3.6	-3.7
France	-2.4	-8.9	-6.6	-3.7	-5.4	-5.8	-5.5	-5.9	-6.1	-6.1	-6.0	-6.1
Germany	1.3	-4.4	-3.2	-3.7	-2.5	-2.8	-3.0	-3.5	-3.9	-4.1	-4.3	-4.4
Italy	-1.5	-9.4	-8.9	-3.7	-7.2	-3.4	-3.3	-2.8	-2.6	-2.4	-2.5	-2.5
Spain ¹	-3.0	-10.0	-6.7	-3.7	-3.5	-3.2	-2.7	-2.4	-2.3	-2.2	-2.1	-2.0
Japan	-3.0	-9.1	-6.1	-3.7	-2.3	-2.5	-2.9	-3.1	-3.3	-4.0	-4.6	-5.3
United Kingdom	-2.5	-13.2	-7.7	-3.7	-6.1	-5.7	-4.4	-3.7	-3.1	-2.8	-2.6	-2.3
United States	-5.8	-14.1	-11.4	-3.7	-7.2	-7.3	-6.5	-5.5	-5.4	-5.6	-5.5	-5.6
Other Advanced Economies	-0.1	-4.7	-1.1	-3.7	-0.2	-0.5	-0.6	-0.3	-0.1	-0.1	-0.2	-0.2
Emerging Market and Developing Economies	-4.4	-8.4	-5.0	-3.7	-5.2	-5.5	-6.1	-5.9	-5.5	-5.4	-5.3	-5.3
Emerging Market and Middle-Income Economies	-4.4	-8.6	-5.0	-3.7	-5.3	-5.6	-6.3	-6.1	-5.6	-5.5	-5.4	-5.4
Emerging Markets excl. China	-3.1	-7.8	-4.2	-3.7	-4.2	-4.3	-4.5	-4.2	-3.8	-3.5	-3.4	-3.3
Excluding MENA Oil Producers	-4.6	-8.7	-5.3	-3.7	-5.8	-6.0	-6.5	-6.3	-5.9	-5.8	-5.7	-5.7
Asia	-5.6	-9.4	-6.3	-3.7	-6.4	-6.7	-7.6	-7.6	-7.2	-7.2	-7.1	-7.1
China ²	-6.0	-9.6	-5.9	-3.7	-6.7	-7.3	-8.6	-8.5	-8.1	-8.1	-8.0	-8.1
India	-7.7	-12.9	-9.4	-3.7	-7.9	-7.4	-6.9	-7.2	-7.1	-7.0	-6.8	-6.7
Vietnam	-0.4	-2.9	-1.4	-3.7	-2.4	-1.6	-3.4	-3.2	-3.0	-2.9	-2.9	-2.9
Europe	-0.6	-5.4	-1.7	-3.7	-4.2	-4.4	-4.0	-3.4	-3.0	-2.8	-2.7	-2.7
Russia	1.9	-4.0	0.8	-3.7	-2.5	-2.2	-1.0	-1.2	-1.1	-1.1	-1.2	-1.3
Latin America	-3.7	-8.2	-3.9	-3.7	-5.2	-4.8	-4.8	-4.0	-3.4	-3.1	-2.9	-2.9
Brazil	-4.9	-11.6	-2.6	-3.7	-7.7	-6.6	-8.5	-7.7	-6.3	-5.2	-4.9	-4.7
Mexico	-2.3	-4.3	-3.7	-3.7	-4.3	-5.7	-4.0	-3.3	-2.9	-2.9	-2.9	-2.9
MENA	-2.3	-8.2	-1.9	-3.7	0.1	-1.6	-3.4	-3.2	-2.4	-1.8	-1.5	-1.2
Saudi Arabia	-4.2	-10.7	-2.2	-3.7	-2.0	-2.8	-4.9	-4.9	-4.0	-3.7	-3.3	-3.1
South Africa	-5.1	-9.6	-5.5	-3.7	-5.4	-6.1	-6.6	-6.1	-5.9	-5.8	-5.7	-5.6
Low-Income Developing Countries	-4.1	-5.4	-4.6	-3.7	-3.9	-3.4	-3.5	-3.3	-3.1	-3.1	-3.2	-3.2
Kenya	-7.4	-8.1	-7.2	-3.7	-5.7	-5.5	-5.4	-5.0	-4.4	-3.9	-3.6	-3.6
Nigeria	-4.7	-5.6	-5.5	-3.7	-4.2	-3.4	-4.5	-4.5	-3.9	-4.3	-4.7	-4.7
Oil Producers	-0.1	-7.3	-0.6	-3.7	0.5	-0.9	-1.2	-1.3	-1.0	-0.8	-0.6	-0.5
Memorandum												
World Output (percent)	2.9	-2.7	6.6	3.6	3.5	3.3	2.8	3.0	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.1

Source: IMF staff calculations and projections.

Note: The calculations and projections are based on statistical information available through April 14, 2025, but may not reflect the latest published data in all cases. For the date of the latest data update for each economy, please refer to the notes provided in the online World Economic Outlook database.

All country averages are weighted by nominal GDP converted to US dollars (adjusted by purchasing power parity only for world output) at average market exchange rates in the years indicated and based on data availability. Projections are based on IMF staff assessments of current policies. For country-specific details, see "Data and Conventions" and Tables A, B, C, and D in the Methodological and Statistical Appendix. excl. = excluding; MENA = Middle East and North Africa.

¹ Including financial sector support.

² China's deficit and public debt numbers presented in this table cover a narrower perimeter of the general government than the IMF staff estimates in China Article IV reports (see IMF 2024 for a reconciliation of the two estimates).