

West and Central Africa

Upheaval as a constant?

No other region in the BTI is as poor as West and Central Africa, and nowhere else are the conditions for transformation as difficult. Upheaval and violent conflict continue to prevail, but there are also rays of hope.



Upheaval, coups, escalating violence: West and Central Africa once again proved a turbulent region during the period under review for the BTI 2012. More changes can be observed here as regards democratic development and political management than in any other BTI region. The clearest advances in terms of democracy are to be found in Guinea and Mauritania. The processes of transition that these two countries began after military coups have led to a massive improvement in their democracy rankings: Mauritania rose from 3.63 points (2010) to 4.50 points; Guinea managed to gain 2.08 points, placing it 66th in the BTI democracy ranking – 42 places higher than in 2010. The clear winner in all three of the BTI's dimensions remains Ghana, which is in the top 20 in the Transformation Index in terms of

its democracy status (8.25 points). Political rights to liberty and participation are especially well-implemented here, despite shortcomings in certain areas. Niger presents a special case worth mentioning in the group of “defective democracies”: Despite a violent overthrow in February 2010, the country has been able to maintain and even slightly improve its status because a process of democratization was started and, to a large extent, also successfully completed during the period under review.

The highly defective democracies Burkina Faso and Guinea are followed by the moderate autocracies Togo, Nigeria, Mauritania and Cameroon. In Nigeria, the catastrophic elections of 2007 continue to have a significant influence; otherwise, the country would undoubtedly be one of the defective democ-

racies. In Togo, the upward trend has not continued as hoped as the presidential elections of March 2010 did not fully satisfy the requirements of democratic quality.

The group of hard-line autocracies has shrunk in size again, but it still consists of five states. Whereas the stateness deficiencies in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Central African Republic remain serious enough to classify them as failing states, the Republic of Congo, Chad and Côte d'Ivoire are autocratic regimes. However, stateness shortcomings are also clearly identifiable in Chad and Côte d'Ivoire; in these cases, the state's somewhat stronger monopoly on the use of force and the slightly less deficient administrative capacity prevent the countries from falling into the category of failing states. In Côte d'Ivoire, there was a

drastic escalation of violence when disputed election results led to a civil war (which has since come to an interim cessation) in which the United Nations and France also intervened. As a consequence, Côte d'Ivoire now scores 0.22 points less, despite a positive trend in previous years, placing it at the bottom of the region in terms of political transformation.

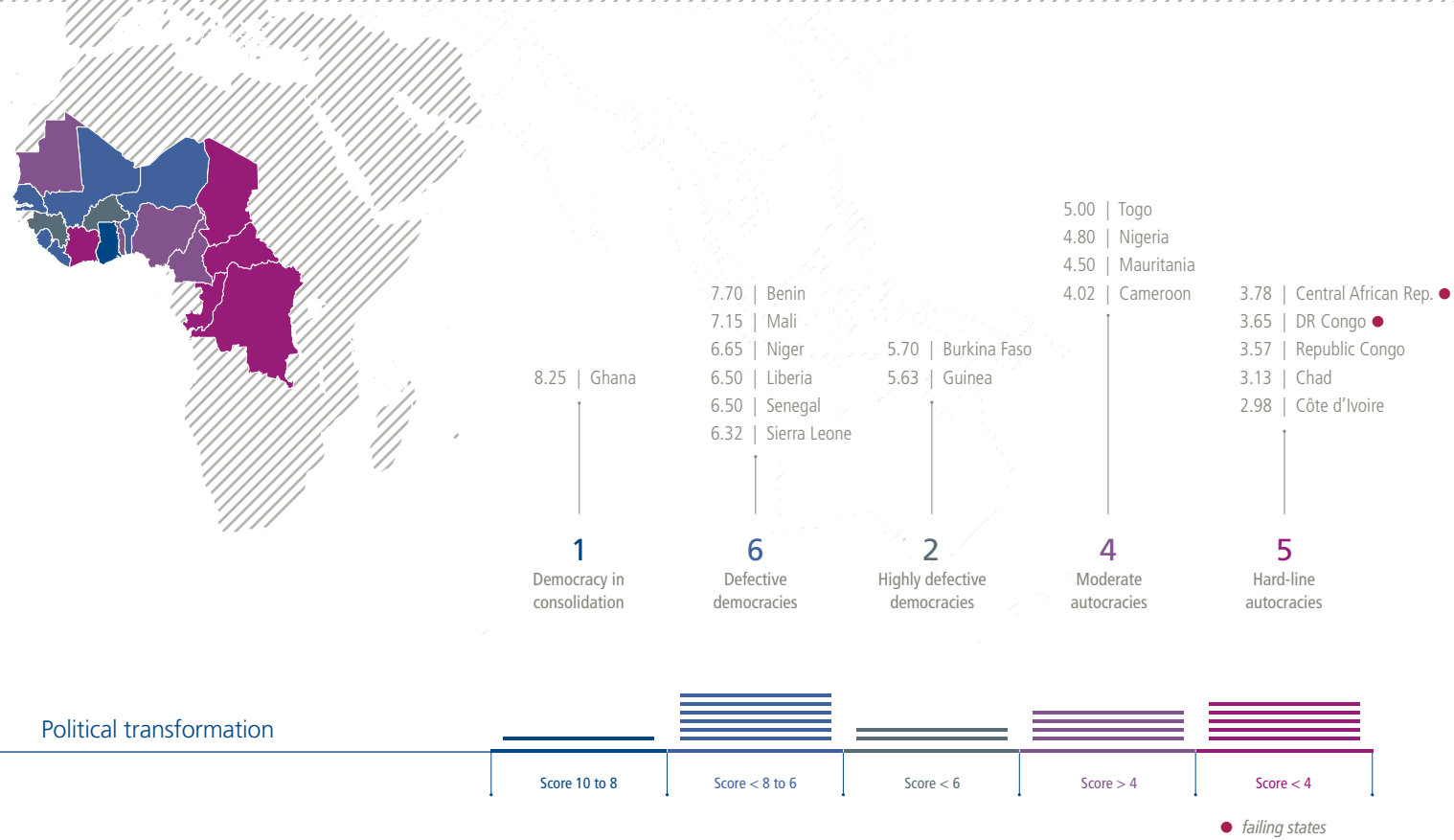
The region's economic performance has not worsened since the 2010 Transformation Index. The effects of the international financial crisis (where they were apparent at all) were largely restricted to 2009. Most of the national economies recovered again in 2010, although they remain at the low average of 4.26 points. West and Central Africa therefore comprise the weakest region in terms of the economy in the BTI 2012, although

West Africa scores significantly better than Central Africa.

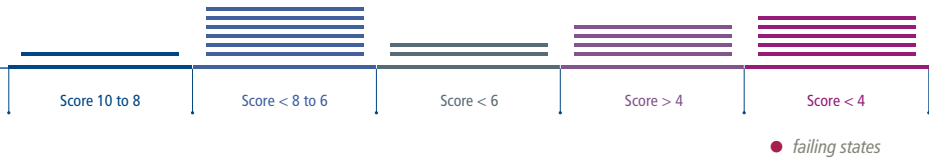
The majority of the countries fall under the category of “poorly functioning” market economies in the BTI 2012. Thanks to minor improvements, particularly in combating inflation, Benin and Mali managed to rise from this category to the middle category in the BTI 2012. Furthermore, there were slight improvements in the banking sector in Benin, as well as in the regulatory framework for the private sector and in equality of opportunities. In Mali, the economic output indicators, in particular, improved. In contrast, Nigeria dropped by one category. Here, the government's anti-cartel policy and protection of private property, in particular, scored worse than in the BTI 2010.

Management achievements in the countries of West and Central Africa are slightly below average, even considering the difficulties involved. No state in the region can be certified to have “very good” transformation management; about a third of the countries were classified as “good.” In the period under review, Guinea improved by two categories and Mauritania by one. Even the Democratic Republic of Congo achieved a change in categories, although its transformation management is still considered weak.





Political transformation



Freedom, on paper

West and Central Africa contains the entire spectrum of BTI regime types: Nine more or less functioning democracies are bordered by nine autocracies of varying degrees. Only in Ghana can the process of political transformation be said to have reached an advanced stage, whereas genuinely free and fair elections are a rare exception in the region.

As elsewhere, the people of West and Central Africa want democracy – as recently proven for many of the countries by the results of the 2008 and 2009 Afrobarometer. These showed that majorities of at least 70 percent favor this form of government in Benin, Ghana and Mali, as well as in Liberia, Nigeria and Senegal. Technically speaking, the regimes are increasingly complying with this wish. In fact, in the wake of military coups in Guinea (2008), Mauritania (2008) and Niger (2010), we’ve seen a transition to democracy with elections. As such, there is no longer any country in West or Central Africa in which the government was not appointed by ballot. Basic democratic rights, too, such as freedom of assembly and expression, are guaranteed in almost every country, at least on paper.

However, the constitutional reality is another matter: Apart from the administrative irregularities observed everywhere, only in Benin, Mali and Niger were the elections truly free and fair, with these countries each scoring 9 out of 10 points in these questions. In a second group of seven countries, the deficiencies are more marked, including in Ghana, where there were serious irregularities in voter registration. Apart from Mauritius, Ghana is the only country in sub-Saharan Africa in which at least two peaceful transitions of power after elections have taken place.

Regarding the quality of elections, there are more serious weaknesses found in Senegal and, even more so, in Burkina Faso, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Guinea. Elections in the remaining coun-

tries enjoy little democratic credibility. Indeed, hopes for free and fair presidential elections in Togo were dashed. In comparison to previous elections, the quality of the ballot in the Central African Republic has also worsened. Preferential treatment for government candidates and administrative shortcomings led to a boycott of the elections by the opposition in the second round. Cameroon, Chad and the Republic of Congo remain notorious cases. Nigeria also falls into this category because the undemocratic elections of 2007 still form the basis for the BTI 2012 assessment.

As regards association and assembly rights, deficits in Chad, the DR Congo and the Republic of Congo are especially pronounced. However, in Niger, a coup, of all things, led to improved scores regarding

participation rights: Unlike the overthrown Mamadou Tandja, the transitional government headed by Salou Djibo highly respected freedoms of expression.

The deficient quality of the elections is also combined with traditional deficiencies in the state’s monopoly on the use of force: Not one country in the region exercises complete control throughout the entirety of its territory. Often, the public administration barely reaches beyond the capital and larger cities. In Niger, Mali and Chad, the extensive countries of the Sahel region, there are vast, essentially state-free areas – in addition to local armed uprisings. Post-conflict states, such as Liberia and Sierra Leone, continue to rely on external aid for state-building after civil wars.

In view of the sad tradition of violent conflict, the Maghrebi offshoot of Al-Qaeda, the Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), is a growing threat. The AQIM was involved in assassinations and kidnappings in Niger, Mali and Mauritania. Religious fundamentalism is also a major problem in Nigeria. Recently, security forces have clashed with fundamentalists in the country’s northern

regions. Furthermore, central Nigeria is frequently the scene of violent clashes between Christian and Muslim ethnic groups, claiming hundreds of lives. However, even in states where a large percentage of the population is Muslim, the secular order of the state is not generally questioned. Secular traditions in the former French colonies and the predominantly moderate or syncretic orientation of African Islam exercise a positive influence here.

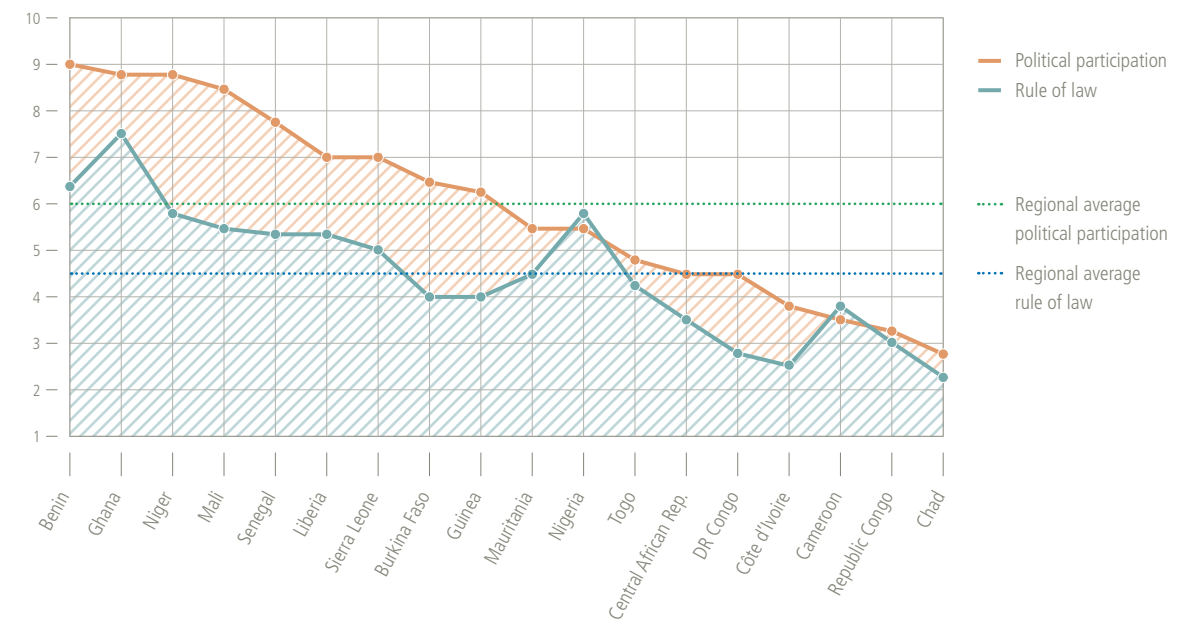
A deficient rule of law is another constant problem – even in countries like Ghana, Benin or Mali. Horizontal separation of powers is severely restricted in most cases. In the exclusively (semi)presidential government systems, the executive generally dominates the legislative. During the period under review, this was most apparent in Côte d’Ivoire and Niger. In Niger, then-President Tandja summarily suspended the Constitutional Court after the court declared his attempt to extend his political term to be unconstitutional. It took the military to stop him.

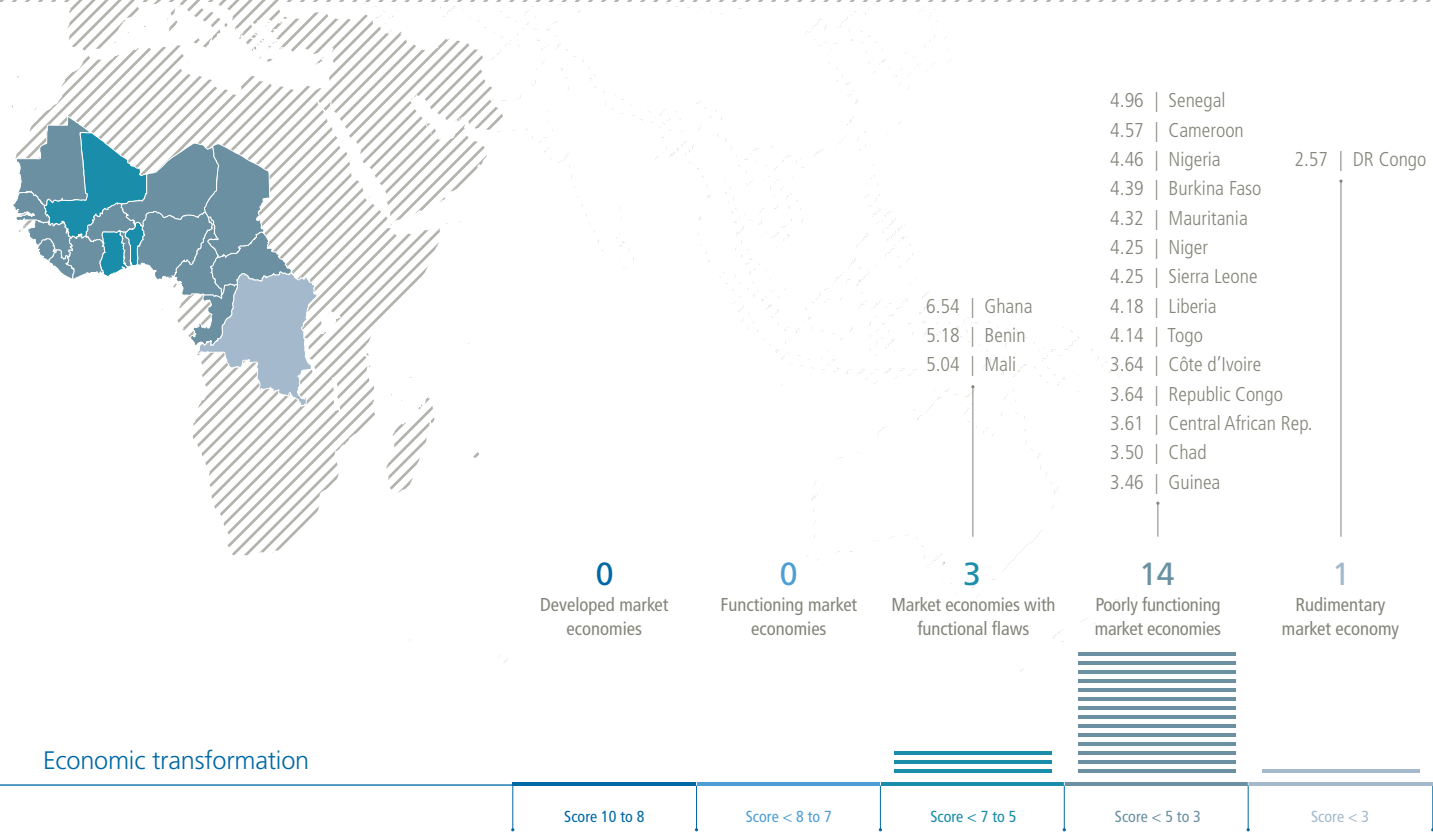
Overall, the stability of democratic institutions is assured almost nowhere. In Nigeria, the parliament successfully averted

a constitutional crisis after the premature death of President Umaru Yar’Adua and accomplished a remarkably smooth transition of power to former Vice President Goodluck Jonathan. What’s more, support for democratic institutions seems to be stronger overall than the actual performance of those institutions. Even in the autocracies, political actors use the (nominally) democratic institutions as a platform for their activities.

Interest groups and NGOs are not very well-developed in the region. The party systems do not fulfill their functions adequately, either. Long-standing absolute majorities for governing parties are often a sign of an authoritarian regime or a highly deficient democracy. The democratic frontrunners, especially Benin and Mali but also Liberia, all exhibit strong fragmentation. Nonetheless, it is important not to place too great an emphasis on this aspect. The DR Congo, Mauritania and the Central African Republic are also characterized by a highly fragmented party landscape.

Political participation and the rule of law in comparison





The world's poorhouse

With an average of 4.26 points, the region remains the weakest in the BTI in terms of the economy. Differences between the individual countries are relatively minor. Although the national economies have recovered well from the global financial crisis, socioeconomic development remains worryingly low.

Poorly functioning market economies is an attribute ascribed to 14 of the 18 countries in West and Central Africa in the 2012 Transformation Index. Only Ghana, Benin and Mali perform better. The DR Congo, by contrast, continues to exhibit problems in all areas to such an extent that the implementation of a market economy can only be considered rudimentary. However, worse was to be expected for the region as a whole: The Transformation Index 2010, compiled before the effects of the global financial crisis became apparent, already included worsening performance figures for the region's national economies. Yet, after a brief slump, the economies in the region have recovered markedly.

Twelve countries exhibit improved scores in the area of currency and price stability, for example. This was one source of hope

back in the previous rounds of the BTI survey. The main reason for this is that within the CFA franc currency union, which is pegged to the euro, two independent central banks (one for West Africa and one for Central Africa) determine monetary and exchange-rate policies. Although this restricts individual nations' control over their national economies, the members of the currency union (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Togo) benefit from lower inflation rates. The rates for non-members in the period under review were significantly higher, such as Nigeria (more than 13 percent) and the DR Congo (more than 25 percent). Economic growth trends have also been positive: The Economist Intelligence Unit estimates growth at an average of 2.7 percent, with significantly

higher rates in the oil-producing states Nigeria and the Republic of Congo, as well as in Niger.

However, these moderately positive figures cannot hide the enormous structural deficiencies present. Poverty, above all, remains an endemic problem. In 16 out of 18 countries, the majority of the population has to get by on no more than two dollars a day. These numbers are particularly drastic in Liberia (almost 95 percent of the population), as well as in Nigeria, Chad, the Central African Republic and Burkina Faso (80 percent of the public). As a result, the region scores an alarmingly low average of 1.9 points for socioeconomic development in the Transformation Index 2012.

Added to this, social safety nets are either rudimentary or non-existent. The states are therefore reliant on external aid, especially

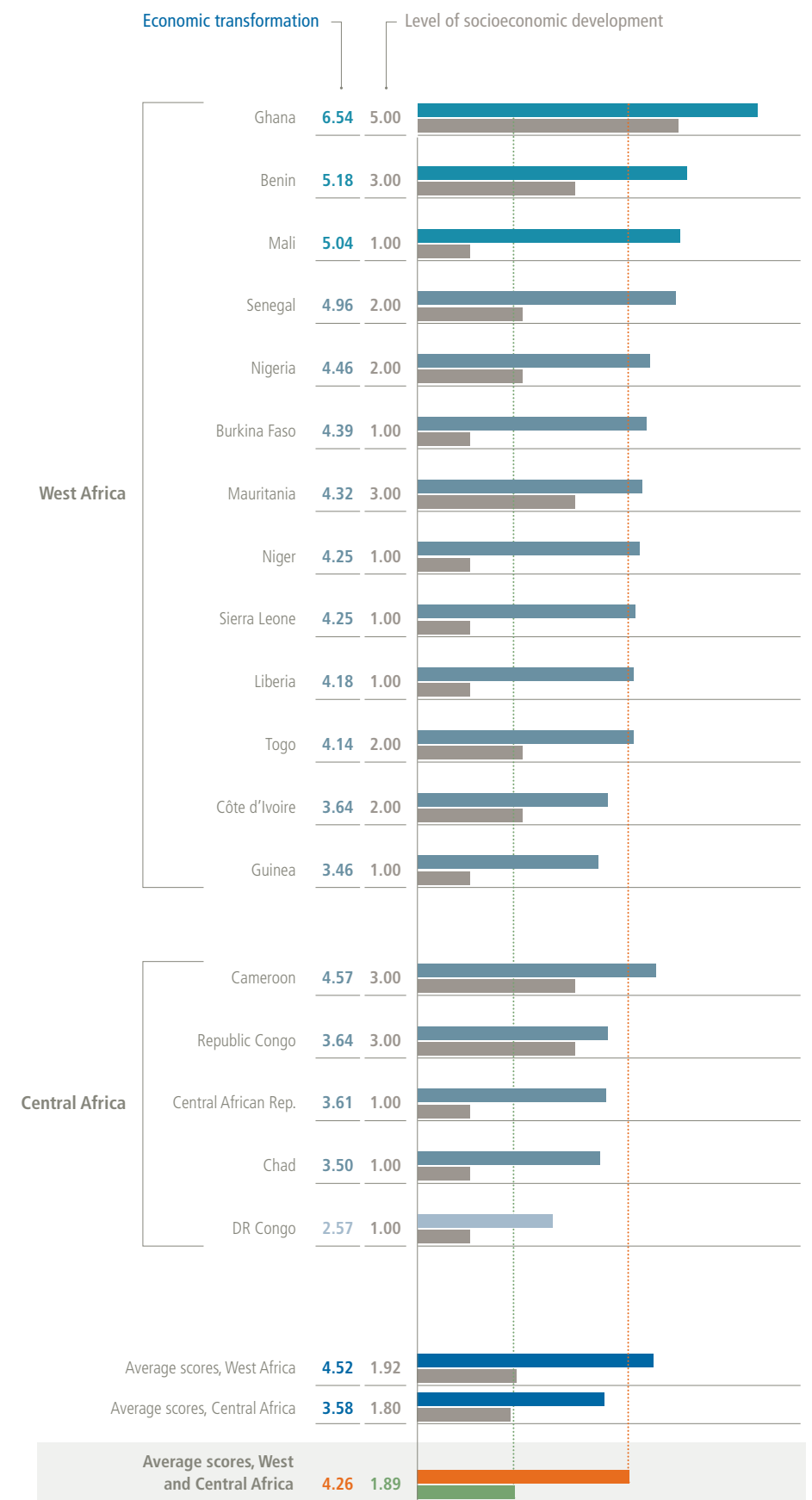
the near-omnipresent programs of the IMF and World Bank. Yet these have proven as ineffective as similar programs in the past. Frequently, the only relief from hardship comes from informal or traditional clan- and family-based networks. Consequently, the average welfare regime scores for the region reach a meager 3.4 points in the Transformation Index 2012.

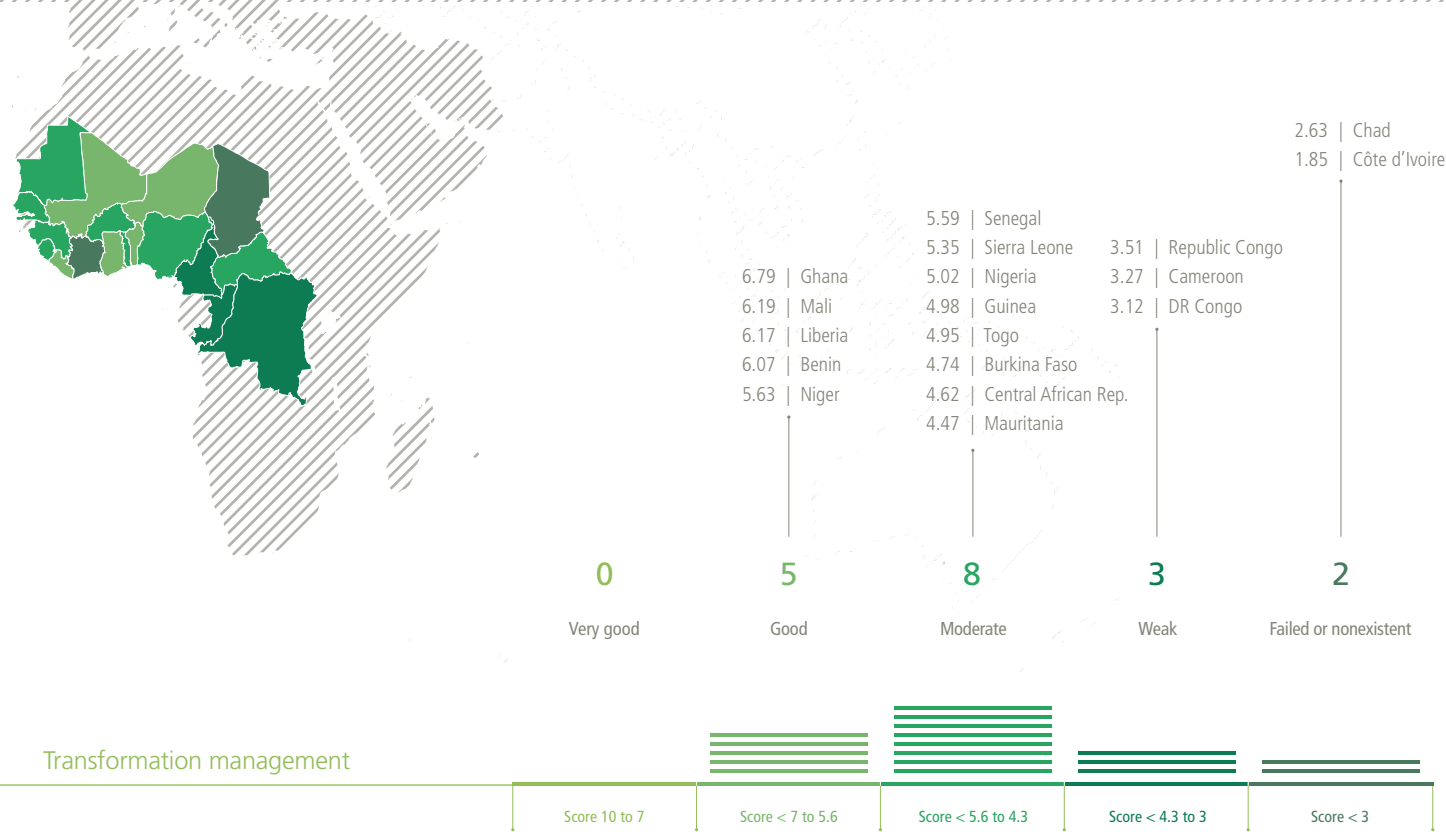
With the exception of Ghana, the situation is hardly better when it comes to equality of opportunity: Female genital mutilation remains a common practice in many countries, as does systematic discrimination against certain ethnic groups. In Mauritania and Niger, some groups continue to be informally treated as slaves.

Despite the predictions of numerous studies that the effects of climate change will be especially pronounced in Africa, the issue of sustainability is all but ignored by the majority of regimes. On average, the countries in the region score 3.6 points for environmental policy. Education and research are not sufficiently promoted, either. Even in Ghana, which once again leads the field (6 points), there are numerous shortcomings. In six countries (Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Chad, the two Congos and Guinea), education and research are so neglected that serious deficiencies are observed at even the primary level.

The market economic system (4.8 points on average) and protection of private property (4.9 points) score slightly better. Nevertheless, there are also grave problems here: When it comes to the organization of competition, only Ghana scores above the global average of all 128 countries in the Transformation Index, with 7.3 points; Benin is just below average, with 6.3 points. Although private property is satisfactorily defined de jure throughout West and Central Africa, corruption and deficient administrative capacity prevent these laws from being properly implemented.

Economic transformation and socioeconomic development in West Africa and Central Africa





Transformation management

Difficult terrain for reforms

In no other region are the conditions for effective transformation management as difficult as in West and Central Africa. None of the countries comes off well without reservations. The prevalence of international cooperation is the result of destitution.

Extreme poverty, a lack of education, infrastructural deficiencies, natural disasters and disease, weak civil societies and ingrained societal conflict: The list of barriers to transformation in West and Central Africa is longer than anywhere else; the average level of difficulty is 7.3 points. Countries in the Sahel (e.g., Burkina Faso, Chad and Niger) also suffer from their landlocked locations and desertification, which also lead to serious problems in the supply of foodstuffs.

In this context, Guinea made remarkable progress in the period under review, now scoring 4.98 points, placing it 66th in the overall ranking – which represents an improvement of 2.85 points and 57 places since the Transformation Index 2010. Mauritania also confirms the link between the state of transformation and management

performance (now 4.47 points, 82nd place). But management performance in neither country rates better than “moderate,” improvements notwithstanding. Senegal’s relegation to this category can primarily be explained by the increasingly authoritarian tendencies of President Wade, which resulted in major protests in the capital, Dakar, after the end of the period under review.

The DR Congo’s improvements, on the other hand, are solely attributable to improved relations with neighboring countries; otherwise, transformation management remains as weak as it does in Cameroon and the Republic of Congo. Even weaker are the transformation efforts toward democracy and a market economy being made by Chad’s President Idriss Déby. Successes in

combatting armed revolts and tentative attempts to open up a dialogue with the opposition should not obscure the fact that Déby’s sole aim is to hold on to power.

The greatest range in the region is to be found in the criterion of consensus-building (from 2.0 in Côte d’Ivoire to 8.0 points in Benin, average score: 5.1). Whereas the governments of Benin and Ghana, in particular, pursue the goal of democracy, the opposite is true for Chad, Cameroon, Côte d’Ivoire and the Republic of Congo. In these countries, the ruling elites themselves are the key anti-democratic veto players. Additionally, military coups in Guinea, Mauritania and Niger, as well as an attempted coup in Togo, show that the armed forces must still be reckoned with in the political arena. Nevertheless, the military forces do not act anti-democratically

per se. In Niger and Guinea – and, less stringently, in Mauritania – the leaders of the coups began processes of transition that resulted in relatively open elections. By contrast, Côte d’Ivoire is almost the perfect example of how reckless power struggles by the elites can plunge a country into disaster.

With regard to steering capability, Ghana (7.7 points) is head and shoulders above the rest. On average, the region scores only 4.4 points for this criterion. Resource efficiency fares even worse: the average regional score here is 4.0 points, with the more democratic governments tending to do better than the autocratic regimes. In Cameroon and the Republic of Congo, for example, bloated cabinets of 60 and 35 members, respectively, are a clear sign of entrenched patronage. Power-reinforcing client politics are even more prevalent in Chad, the DR Congo and Côte d’Ivoire, which brings up the rear.

Even the great mineral wealth found in some areas can, without consistent and competent management, result in additional problems. Nigeria is the best example of this “resource curse,” although 2009 saw some lessening of tensions in the oil-rich Niger Delta. The combination of resource-allocation conflicts and ethnic tension makes for a particularly explosive mix, as illustrated by central Nigeria and Côte d’Ivoire.

On the other hand, a wealth of resources also contributes to the fact that the region’s best-scoring management criterion on average is in the field of international cooperation (6.6 points). However, the prime reason for this is the enormous dependency on external donors – who also pursue their own particular interests. The United States has integrated the Sahel states of Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger into its Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Initiative (TSCI). The increasing threat from AQIM in the Sahel is proof of its relevance, even if critics suspect that the United States is in-



Population: 21.6 mn
Life expectancy: 58 years
Human Development Rank (out of 187): 170
GDP p.c. PPP: \$ 1,885

New hopes for Côte d’Ivoire?

The civil war lasted five years. The 2007 peace agreement seemed to pave the way for reconciliation between the Muslim north and the Christian south. However, the presidential elections in the fall of 2010 did not mark the hoped-for milestone on the path to national unity. Instead, they led Côte d’Ivoire back into chaos – and a “historic low,” as the BTI country report has it. This erstwhile model country is, in many ways, now the worst-performing in the region.

Above all, a power struggle between elites has resulted in a distinctly poorer evaluation of the management performance. When President Laurent Gbagbo lost the elections but refused to

recognize Alassane Ouattara’s victory, violence once again flared up between the two camps. At least 3,000 people were killed between November 2010 and March 2011, and almost a million people fled their homes. The country report names Côte d’Ivoire as an example of “how a country with a sound economic basis and a lot of potential should not be managed.” Accordingly, the country was downgraded by 1.07 points in the Management Index, now placing it 124th out of the 128 countries reviewed, with a score of just 1.85. It’s not just the inability to manage conflict that attracted harsh criticism: no coherent policy

concept can be discerned, and there is “a total lack of steering capability.”

Nevertheless, with the help of the UN and France, Gbagbo was arrested in April 2011; in the arraignment against him in August 2011, Ouattara stressed that both sides should expect to come under investigation. Ouattara will have to face the challenges of promoting reconciliation between the conflict parties, as well as those associated with regaining international credibility and initiating macroeconomic reforms.

| Political transformation Côte d’Ivoire | Transformation management Côte d’Ivoire |
|--|---|
| Ghana | 19 |
| Benin | 25 |
| Mali | 35 |
| Niger | 46 |
| Liberia | 47 |
| Senegal | 47 |
| Sierra Leone | 53 |
| Burkina Faso | 64 |
| Guinea | 66 |
| Togo | 75 |
| Nigeria | 81 |
| Mauritania | 83 |
| Cameroon | 93 |
| Central African Rep. | 103 |
| DR Congo | 107 |
| Republic Congo | 108 |
| Chad | 116 |
| Côte d’Ivoire | 118 |
| Ghana | 13 |
| Mali | 25 |
| Liberia | 26 |
| Benin | 28 |
| Niger | 42 |
| Senegal | 45 |
| Sierra Leone | 57 |
| Nigeria | 65 |
| Guinea | 66 |
| Togo | 67 |
| Burkina Faso | 72 |
| Central African Rep. | 76 |
| Mauritania | 82 |
| Republic Congo | 105 |
| Cameroon | 111 |
| DR Congo | 114 |
| Chad | 117 |
| Côte d’Ivoire | 124 |

terested in the region as a result of new oil discoveries. The region’s raw materials also account for the palpable increase in the People’s Republic of China’s involvement there.

Even if regional integration in West and Central Africa has scarcely made progress, a clear asset to transformation management continues to be found in participation in numerous international regional organizations, such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU), the Central African Economic and Monetary Union (CEMAC), the Economic Community of Central African States (CEEAC) and the African Union (AU).



Dark shadows, few rays of hope

The region of West and Central Africa still has an alarmingly low development status. In view of the economic problems, the transformation successes achieved in some areas are certainly remarkable. It remains the responsibility of the international community to continue supporting this process.

In terms of progress, West and Central Africa has a mixed record in the BTI 2012. The region has improved by 0.34 points in the democracy ranking, by a negligible 0.07 points in the market economy ranking and by 0.19 points in the Management Index. It must be taken into consideration that the gains in democratization and management performance can largely be traced back to Guinea, Mauritania and – with certain concessions – Togo and Niger. Moreover, these improvements either build on an exceptionally low foundation or reflect the return to democratization. Even Ghana, Benin and Mali hardly live up to the ideals of a democracy under the rule of law and a socially responsible market economy that are embodied within the Transformation Index. In particular, deficiencies in stateness and the rule of law, as well as social integration, must be tackled in order to further political transformation. It is only in the area of political participation that any successes are to be seen.

The alarmingly low state of development and inadequate implementation of market-based structures postpone the goal of transformation into a market economy yet

further into the future. Even more worrying, the aims of regimes like those in Chad or the DR Congo run counter to democracy and a market economy. Added to this, the foundations of even the comparatively successful states remain shaky. In view of the sobering overall situation, foreign hopes have been repeatedly focused on would-be “model countries,” and they have been almost constantly dashed. Even Ghana needs to expand and consolidate what is undoubtedly a positive trend. One decisive factor here will be how the country handles its incipient oil extraction industry: Can it avoid the “resource curse”?

In Nigeria, a country that did succumb to this curse, the elections of April 2011 were at least significantly more democratic than those in 2007. Even if this positive signal arrived too late to be included in the Transformation Index 2012, Nigeria has a good chance of once again becoming a (defective) democracy. In Chad, on the other hand, there is little reason for hope, even after the elections in early 2011. Nevertheless, with the end of the transitional process in Guinea, Mauritania and Niger, every country in the region now has a government that emerged from multiparty elections.

By comparison, the field of economic development looks grim. Given the serious structural problems and a continuously high rate of population growth, we can hardly expect substantial successes in fighting poverty in the future. The privatization processes

demanding by foreign donors have in recent years reinforced the part played by private companies, but there is still no strong middle class. Instead, state-owned enterprises and multinational corporations dominate the raw-materials sector. The role of private enterprise is especially problematic in Central Africa, particularly in the DR Congo, the Republic of Congo and the Central African Republic.

All the countries are dependent on foreign aid and accept it willingly. Nevertheless, democracy and a market economy are rarely the real objectives of governments in West and Central Africa, and there is often little external pressure for democratic reform. It is not up to the Africans alone to consolidate and entrench the transformation successes that have been achieved so far and to address urgent problems in the economic sphere. International donors still have a responsibility to commit themselves more fully and purposefully and to continue promoting political and economic transformation in the long term – and to do so with a sense of context and with respect.

Nicole Kekeh, 43, is the founder of The Dora Kan Group (www.thedorakangroup.com), a startup strategy firm dedicated to affecting change in Africa by working with emerging entrepreneurs in Africa and connecting them to ideas and solutions for growth. Prior to that, she worked in the private sector and in multilateral organizations, such as the World Bank and the United Nations. Ms. Kekeh holds a Master in Finance & Banking from the Sorbonne and a Master in Public Administration from Harvard Kennedy School. She has been a member of the Transformation Thinkers network since 2008.



Interview

“The real test for sustained democratic transformation”

Nicole Kekeh on Togo's comeback – and strategies to bring Africa's military under control

In the BTI 2012, Togo ranks among the top ten regarding the trend of its political transformation. But, according to BTI experts, Togo has not made as much progress as hoped. Are you satisfied or disappointed?

Togo has just begun a long comeback. Faure Gnassingbé was re-elected for another five-year term as president, thus consolidating a firm hold on the country as the opposition lost – for the first time – its unifying voice and some of its “mystique.” As an oil importer, Togo was hit by the global crises in fuel, food and finance, and the severe flooding in 2008 and 2010. But the short-term economic outlook is more encouraging, thanks to high levels of foreign assistance, investment in infrastructure and a reform program. The business environment remains difficult, as was highlighted by the World Bank's “Doing Business 2010” report, which ranked Togo 160th out of 183 countries. These rankings have captured the president's attention and made improving the business and investment climate one of his top priorities. He established, for example, the Togo Presidential Investment Advisory Council (TPIAC), which is composed of an external advisory board of international business leaders, bankers and CEOs and is to “help prevent past mistakes from being repeated.” Challenges ahead include the need to focus and deepen long-range structural reforms and boost economic growth. Whether implementation will follow remains to be seen, though the renewed international attention should increase pressure to deliver.

The coalition formed between the long-time ruling RTP and the oppositional UFC within the Government of National Recovery is new to Togolese politics. What do you make of it? Will it last?

This is an ongoing political experiment. The opposition ministers are giving it a fair try. A case in point is Togo's election to the U.N. Security Council – an important international victory attributable largely to Foreign Minister Ohin, a member of the UFC. The legislative election in 2012 could test popular support for reconciliation between the regime and the UFC. The political infighting might further erode an already weak trust in institutions and political parties, which would weaken the sense of statehood and nation. More broadly, the situation is fraught with unknowns, with a “bras de fer” between the ANC, the break-out opposition party, the RPT and the UFC. The broad political accord on dialogue and “concertation” remains unfulfilled.

Until recently, the military has always been prominent in the long tradition of violent uprisings in West and Central Africa. In Togo, sections of the military were involved in an attempted coup against President Faure Gnassingbé in 2009 and, in July 2011, conservative officers of the Guinean army rebelled against the elected president, Alpha Condé. What kind of strategy might bring the military under control?

In Togo, the ongoing shifts in alliances within the president's clan and the army make things difficult to predict. In Guinea, reforming a military that has long enjoyed considerable economic privileges and peacefully resolving ethnic tensions will test the leadership of any administration. President Alpha Condé has recently announced the retirement of over 4,000 soldiers and paramilitary officers, many of whom are long past the legal retirement age. Although the road to peaceful democratic transition remains fragile, West Africa overall is turning away from bloody coups, wars and revolutions. How to disentangle the military's influence and networks remains the real test of sustained democratic transformation. It is a hard task, as we see in the case of Egypt. Any long-term strategy would have to involve the right mix of incentives and controls and create civilian jobs for former members of the military. Ghana stands out in West Africa for having facilitated one of the most successful and peaceful transitions from military to civilian rule. Today, Ghana enjoys a professional, well-trained military not split along ethnic lines that works for the greater good in regional and continental peace-building and peacekeeping efforts.

According to the BTI 2012, West and Central Africa is again the poorest of all seven world regions. Could or should the international community do more?

Togo has historically been open to the outside world and has long “punched above its weight” with its involvement in regional and international affairs. Staying engaged with Togo should matter to the international community if it wants to nurture further progress in political and economic transformation. More recently, BRICS nations have gained a foothold in West Africa's economy, as evidenced by China's massive investment in Guinea's mining sector and Indian telecom's stake in mobile networks across Africa. Their presence, and Africa's own modernization-minded reforms, could help redefine Africa's economic role in the world.

 This summary is based on the West and Central Africa regional report by Matthias Basedau, available at www.bti-project.org/wca

 Full reports for each country in the region available at www.bti-project.org/countryreports/wca