

The Research Group on African Development Perspectives Bremen

The uneven growth in Africa, the lack of inclusive development in most of Africa, and the aggravating social, political, and economic crisis in some countries of the African continent require new policy initiatives. These developments force institutions, organisations, researchers, development practitioners, ad hoc working groups and networks being active on Africa, and all others involved in African development affairs to intensify the analytical and conceptual work on alternative development visions and designs for Africa. There exist a growing number of development plans and restructuring programmes, strategy conceptions, researches on specific issues, and ideas for policy action and projects which being published world-wide and which are focussing on the peculiarity of the African crisis factors, Africa's recent growth dynamics, the opportunities and chances for structural adjustment and transformation. Also, the issue of revitalizing development planning in Africa, the issue of structural change beyond caring merely for adjustment, and the issue of responding to the globalisation trend are intensively discussed. The discussion referring to Africa's development problems and perspectives is widening. However, it is difficult to get an overall view of the different approaches and proposals and, subsequently, to make the discussion useful for the programming and co-ordinating of development policies and for development cooperation. So, there is a need for a comprehensive publication that compiles, evaluates, and analyses the scattered material and the often not easily available sources. Most important, it is necessary to present a balanced view of the medium to long-term developments.

To fill this gap, the *Research Group on African Development Perspectives Bremen*, established at the University of Bremen, Faculty of Economics and Business Studies, is presenting the *African Development Perspectives Yearbook*, being published since Volume 1 on "Human Dimensions of Adjustment" in 1989. Research activities of the group members comprised over the years country case studies and comparative country analyses; studies on macroeconomic policies and strategies, aspects of labour market policies and informal sector activities, human development policies and strategies, agriculture and food security policies; studies on natural resources development and environmental policies, but also researches on the promotion of small-scale industries, private sector development policies, entrepreneurship development, and assessments of sector and structural adjustment policies, trade and regional integration policies, as well as reviews of economic diversifica-

tion options. The issues of scientific and technology policies and of innovation experiences were also considered in some of the volumes, but the volumes 20 and 21 of the *African Development Perspectives Yearbook* present a comprehensive analysis of their importance for Africa.

The *African Development Perspectives Yearbook* is the leading English-language periodical which is published in Germany and which is relating to the key development problems and perspectives in Africa. African, European and North-American experts from universities, research institutes, international and regional organisations, and from non-governmental and donor organisations are reporting on problems and on possible solutions, on new political and economic approaches, on specific economic programmes, and on visions for alternative African development paths. Country cases and project cases highlight the issues of implementing sustainable policies and ventures.

Africa's future will depend on both, on its economic and political connections with the international community at the Pan-African, sub-regional, national, provincial and sectoral levels, and on local projects and development efforts at the micro and sector level. Most important are own African development visions, programmes, strategies, and policies. The *African Development Perspectives Yearbook* contains information and analyses regarding these various dimensions. Global analyses, regional and country studies, sectoral studies and individual project evaluations are published in the *African Development Perspectives Yearbook*, as well as statements and declarations on Africa submitted as the result of international and regional African conferences; important documents of African regional organisations and of individual African states, and important programmes of African civil society organisations and African self-help groups are presented.

Beside the analytical, comparative and documentary character of the *African Development Perspectives Yearbook*, the editors successfully established an extensive network for the exchange of news and information; by this way the editors of the *African Development Perspectives Yearbook* are relating and connecting development organisations and research institutions that are working in and for Africa. The members of the *Research Group on African Development Perspectives* are interested to deepen the contacts with partners in and outside of Africa who are sharing similar objectives.

The *African Development Perspectives Yearbook* is targeted to political decision-makers, to project and research personnel in development policy institutions, and to experts and staff members in project development offices,

consultancies, media, research and development agencies, donor and aid institutions, and to all others that are interested in Africa's development. It also offers comprehensive analyses and information about recent developments regarding the African continent, but the central focus is on Africa's development perspectives.

Thus, the *African Development Perspectives Yearbook* is reporting on

- visions and conceptions regarding the long-term development strategies for Africa,
- strategies that emphasize a longer-run planning process that goes beyond conventional structural adjustment policies,
- successful projects and programmes concerning countries, regions, institutions, or specific sectors of African economies, by analysing the conditions of their success,
- resourceful and creative activities of socio-economic interest groups, local development initiatives and NGOs, which could serve as models for other regions,
- innovative strategies for and prospects of regional integration in Africa, and on
- economic, social, and political trends in Africa's sub-regions, nation-states, provinces, towns, and local communities.

The *African Development Perspectives Yearbook* uses sources and information from all relevant levels of action, policymaking, planning, discussion, and research, i.e. from international, regional, and national organisations and institutions, committees, working groups, and NGOs, but of key relevance are those ideas and approaches which are originating from Africa.

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