Executive Summary
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Africa’s Overall Governance progress slows, and score declines for first time in 2019

The 2020 IIAG, with an updated framework and strengthened indicators, shows that although African governance has improved since 2010, progress has slowed in the last five years. Indeed, the 2019 Overall Governance score concerningly registers a year-on-year decline for the first time in the decade. Additionally, the continent’s path towards sound governance is uneven, with economic opportunity and human development improving at the expense of worrying declines in participation, rights, inclusion, rule of law and security. This is all the more concerning with COVID-19 set to worsen already existing challenges and reverse any positive gains and with Africa’s citizens already expressing increasing dissatisfaction with governance delivery in their countries.

1. The new Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG) has undergone an in-depth review in 2018-2020. The new updated conceptual framework reflects the evolved governance landscape and is based on strengthened indicators, thanks to better data availability on key African governance dimensions.

2. The 2020 IIAG results show that governance in Africa has improved over the last decade (2010-2019), with more than 60% of Africa’s population in 2019 living in a country where governance has improved since 2010. However, progress has slowed down over the last five years. Concerningly, the 2019 African average score for Overall Governance even registers a decline for the first time since 2010, while between 2010 and 2018 it had either improved or remained constant year on year.

3. The 2020 IIAG provides a picture of the continent until the end of 2019, just before it was hit by COVID-19. In terms of rights, civil society space and participation, the continent had long before embarked on a deteriorating path and the pandemic simply aggravated this existing negative trajectory. Conversely, economic opportunity was set on a positive course of sustained progress, and the impact of COVID-19 is now threatening the hard-won achievement in this area.

4. Governance performance is not meeting Africa’s citizens’ growing expectations. Public Perception of Overall Governance has deteriorated over the last ten years, at twice as quick a pace since 2015, and registers the lowest score of the past decade in 2019.

5. While more than half of the countries have improved their governance within the last decade, progress appears unbalanced. 20 countries improved in Human Development and Foundations for Economic Opportunity, which are the main drivers of Overall Governance progress. But at the same time their performance in Security & Rule of Law and Participation, Rights & Inclusion declined. Only eight countries have managed to improve in all four governance categories over the decade. This growing imbalance might threaten the sustainability of overall governance progress.

6. Ranks are not a definite given. Some high-ranking countries, such as Mauritius, Botswana or South Africa, though still currently ranking 1st, 5th and 6th, follow a concerning path of deterioration since 2015. In contrast, some lower-ranking ones such as Gambia (16th), Côte d’Ivoire (18th) and Zimbabwe (33rd) feature among the five largest improvers over the decade. Somalia, ranking 54th, is the 7th most improved country over the last ten years.

7. Besides a balanced approach to governance progress, rule of law, justice, inclusion and equality appear to be the main common denominators among best performing countries.
1. The new IIAG: a new framework with three main new features

MIF’s definition of governance aims to fully reflect the expectations citizens have of their governments. In today’s world, these have largely expanded, amplified by the 21st century’s multiplying challenges and Africa’s specific young and urbanising demography to include growing demands for political participation, solidarity, protection against various criminal threats, jobs, business-enabling environments, climate change mitigation and food security, to name a few.

a. An enlarged governance scope

While the first iterations of the IIAG were mainly focused on traditional public services, such as security and education, the new IIAG encompasses additional areas such as environment, digital rights, inclusiveness, healthcare affordability, inequality mitigation or social protection. The new IIAG framework includes three new sub-categories, Anti-Corruption, Inclusion & Equality and Sustainable Environment.

The three new IIAG sub-categories

- **Anti-Corruption**
  - Anti-Corruption Mechanisms
  - Absence of Corruption in State Institutions
  - Absence of Corruption in the Public Sector
  - Public Procurement Procedures
  - Absence of Corruption in the Private Sector

- **Inclusion & Equality**
  - Equal Political Power
  - Equal Political Representation
  - Equal Civil Liberties
  - Equal Socioeconomic Opportunity
  - Equal Access to Public Services

- **Sustainable Environment**
  - Promotion of Environmental Sustainability
  - Enforcement of Environmental Policies
  - Air Quality
  - Sustainable Management of Land & Forests
  - Land & Water Biodiversity
b. A strengthened data basis

The increased availability of data has also made it possible to construct more robust IIAG indicators: nearly 90% of them are now based on more than one source or variable as opposed to less than half of the indicators in the 2018 IIAG, therefore mitigating the ‘one source or variable bias’. Composite scores constitute a key added value of the new IIAG dataset.

Wider data coverage
- more IIAG sources
  - 2018 IIAG: 35
  - 2020 IIAG: 40
- more IIAG variables from source
  - 2018 IIAG: 191
  - 2020 IIAG: 237

Fewer IIAG indicators
- 2018 IIAG: 102
- 2020 IIAG: 79

These statistics don’t include data from the Citizens’ Voices section.

The methodology used to calculate IIAG scores, initially built with the Kennedy School of Governance at Harvard University, remains unchanged. The in-depth review of potential better ways to calculate the IIAG has confirmed the current methodology as the best possible compromise to calculate a composite index like the IIAG.

c. A new dedicated section for Citizens’ Voices

From now on the IIAG will also include a new Citizens’ Voices section, sourced from Afrobarometer data, providing a comprehensive ‘reality check’ to complement the IIAG results with citizens’ perceptions and levels of satisfaction with public services.

PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF OVERALL GOVERNANCE

- Public Perception of Security & Safety
- Public Perception of the Rule of Law
- Public Perception of Accountability
- Public Perception of Anti-Corruption
- Public Perception of Elections & Freedom
- Public Perception of Inclusion & Equality
- Public Perception of Women’s Leadership
- Public Perception of Public Administration
- Satisfaction with Economic Opportunities
- Satisfaction with Infrastructure
- Satisfaction with Health Provision
- Satisfaction with Education Provision
- Lived Poverty & Public Perception of Social Protection
2. The 2020 IIAG key findings (2010-2019)

a. *Overall Governance*: following slackening progress since 2015, the first ever year-on-year decline in 2019

With an African average score of 48.8, *Overall Governance* has improved by +1.2 points since 2010. In 2019, 61.2% of Africa’s population is living in a country where *Overall Governance* is better than in 2010.

However, since 2015 continental progress has lost pace, with the annual average pace of progress in the last five years (+0.05) being less than half that over the decade (+0.13).

Deteriorating over the decade, *Participation, Rights & Inclusion* worsened its decline since 2015, while *Security & Rule of Law* continued deteriorating albeit at a slower pace. Meanwhile, *Foundations for Economic Opportunity* and *Human Development*, despite continuing to improve, have done so at a slower pace.

This concerning trend has paved the way for the first year-on-year decline (-0.2 in 2019 compared to 2018) in the African average score for *Overall Governance* since 2010, after having improved or remained constant year-on-year until 2018.

The 2019 decline is driven by a deteriorated performance in three of the four IIAG categories: *Participation, Rights & Inclusion*, showing the largest decline between 2018 and 2019, followed by *Security & Rule of Law* and *Human Development*.

b. COVID-19 impact: while worsening already existing trends in *Participation, Rights & Inclusion, Security & Rule of Law* and *Human Development*, the pandemic is concerningly threatening progress made in *Foundations for Economic Opportunity*

Given data availability, the 2020 IIAG provides a picture of the continent just before it was hit by the pandemic allowing an assessment of Africa’s preparedness and the potential impact of COVID-19 on existing trends.

*Participation, Rights & Inclusion*: COVID-19 has had an impact on democratic processes as some elections have already been postponed. Measures to contain the virus have also been used to conceal interference with election monitoring and preparation and to restrict civic space. However, the 2020 IIAG results show that the continent has been going through a deterioration of civil society space, participation and rights long before COVID-19, and the pandemic is just worsening an already alarming situation.

*Security & Rule of Law*: the African average score for the *Security & Safety* sub-category has in fact been deteriorating over the past decade, but at a slower pace since 2015. Therefore, COVID-19 hit the continent while it was already experiencing a long declining security and safety landscape, with increased repression in some countries to implement lockdown rules. The heavy economic and social impact of the pandemic may also lead to increased domestic unrest.
**Human Development**: the response of governments in terms of prevention measures have been swifter than in other regions thanks to lessons learnt from previous pandemics. However, the COVID-19 crisis put under the spotlight already existing gaps in health capacities across the continent. The 2020 IIAG underlines that progress in key health-related indicators, while on a positive path over the last decade, has already been slowing in the last five years.

**Foundations for Economic Opportunity**: the economic impact of COVID-19 in Africa is dramatic and there is limited capacity at national or regional levels to mitigate its effects. The 2020 IIAG results show that the COVID-19 pandemic hit the continent while it was set on a positive path of improvement both over the last ten and five years and may undoubtedly threaten this progress.
c. Citizens’ Voices: deterioration of public perceptions of governance

This new section provides results over the decade 2010-2019 for 39 countries, providing a sample for 86.8% of Africa’s population.

The African average score for Public Perception of Overall Governance (48.8) is the lowest registered over the 2010-2019 period.

The pace of deterioration has nearly doubled within the last five years (-0.43 over 2015-2019 compared to -0.22 over 2010-2019).

For all four sub-sections, the respective 2019 African average scores are the lowest across the whole ten-year time-period.

In more than half the countries surveyed (23), citizens are less satisfied with their country’s governance performance than ten years ago. For most countries, the deterioration in Public Perception of Overall Governance has even worsened since 2015.

d. Progress towards governance is unbalanced and might prove unsustainable

Progress in Overall Governance over the past decade has been driven by the categories Foundations for Economic Opportunity (+4.1) and Human Development (+3.0).

The biggest strides have been made in the sub-categories Infrastructure and Health, complemented by improvements in Sustainable Environment.

However, in the same period, countries have shown concerning declines in Participation, Rights & Inclusion (-1.4) as well as in Security & Rule of Law (-0.7).

Here, a deteriorating security situation and an increasingly precarious environment for human rights and civic participation are the primary drivers.
In 2019, *Human Development* is the highest scoring of the four categories at the African average level, while *Participation, Rights & Inclusion* is the lowest scoring category with a difference in score of almost six points.

This is reflected at country level. Over the past decade, 20 countries, hosting 41.9% of Africa’s population, have made progress in *Human Development and Foundations for Economic Opportunity*. But at the same time have deteriorated in both *Security & Rule of Law and Participation, Rights & Inclusion*.

Only eight countries manage to improve in all four categories over the decade: Angola, Chad, Côte d’Ivoire, Ethiopia, Madagascar, Seychelles, Sudan and Togo. Of these, Ethiopia is the only country improving in all 16 sub-categories over the decade.

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e. Ranks cannot be considered a definite given

In *Overall Governance*, for the tenth consecutive year, Mauritius maintains its top position in 2019 with a score of 77.2 while Somalia remains bottom with a score of 19.2.

However, the two top and bottom countries follow opposing trajectories as the gap between them shrinks to its lowest over the decade in 2019.

Mauritius’s *Overall Governance* score has been declining at an increasing rate, driven by weakening social protection and a deteriorating environment for human rights.

On the other hand, Somalia’s *Overall Governance* score has increased by +5.7 since 2010, on the back of improved infrastructure and increased gender equality, among other things. Since 2015 improvement has even modestly accelerated, with an annual average trend between 2015 and 2019 of +0.02 higher than that for the period 2010-2019.

South Africa, ranked 6th, has declined over the decade, even at an increased pace since 2015, while 5th placed Botswana is starting to show warning signs.

Still ranking respectively 16th, 18th and 33rd, Gambia, Côte d’Ivoire and Zimbabwe feature among the five most improved countries over the decade.

The second part of the decade also sees Angola, Mauritania and Sierra Leone appear among the five best-trending countries, though still ranking respective 43rd, 40th, and 24th.
f. The key drivers of governance performance are balanced progress, as well as rule of law, justice, inclusion and equality

The IIAG sub-categories most strongly correlated with Overall Governance are Rule of Law & Justice and Inclusion & Equality. This is the same both for the scores in 2019 and those of the full decade.

Moreover, both in 2019 and over the ten-year time series, the indicators showing the strongest relationships with high governance scores span across the four IIAG categories, underlining the importance of a balanced approach to governance.

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![Graph showing correlations between Overall Governance and sub-categories]

**Correlations between Overall Governance and the 16 IIAG sub-categories: final scores 2019**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-category</th>
<th>r</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rule of Law &amp; Justice</td>
<td>+0.95</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inclusion &amp; Equality</td>
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<td>Accountability &amp; Transparency</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sustainable Environment</td>
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r = strength of correlation (out of -/+ 1.00)

**Correlations between Overall Governance and the 16 IIAG sub-categories: decennial trends 2010-2019**

<table>
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