

# Good Governance Analysing Performance of Economic Community of West African States and Southern African Development Community Members on Mo Ibrahim Index of African Governance

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## Abstract

*Governance and good governance are ubiquitous phenomena. Good governance features almost exclusively in discourses relating to developing countries in the South, but not to those in the North where it originated. This article analyses the topical issue of good governance in Africa. It is divided into two main parts. The first is theoretical and focuses on understandings of governance and good governance. Attention is drawn to a number of governance definitions and a plethora of good governance attributes not only to underline the diversity of opinion and socio-cultural basis around which definitions of governance revolves, but also to highlight broad features of what is thought to constitute good governance.*

*The practical second part of the article focuses on good governance in Africa. It briefly discusses the roots of bad governance, origin of good governance agenda, Africa's reaction to it and the essence of good governance for Africa. The continent is saddled with governance challenges. Central to this article is the definition of governance in the African context and how it is assessed. In the light of the growing mantra of good governance for development, the article analyses performance of 15-member states of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and their 15-member Southern African Development Community (SADC) counterparts based on 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011 Mo Ibrahim Index of African Governance reports. The Index is important, significant and appropriate because it outlines criteria and conditions deemed essential for Africans to live meaningful lives. Comparing ECOWAS and SADC blocs' performance provides insight into the state of governance in 30 of Africa's 53 states. Findings indicate that there are consistently excellent, very good, good, average and mediocre performers in both blocs across the criteria. Generally, however, SADC bloc shows better performance than ECOWAS, whose members' scores tend to be concentrated in the 'low', 'average' and 'good' categories, whereas SADC members' scores tend to more widely spread, including the 'very good' and 'excellent' categories. Overall, Safety and Rule of Law/Safety and Security, and Participation and Human Rights are areas of relative strength, while Human Development and Sustainable Economic Opportunity are problematic.*



**Keywords:** Good Governance, Development, Economic Community of West African States, Mo Ibrahim Index of African Governance, Southern African Development Community.

## Sumário

*A Governação e a boa governação são fenómenos ubíquos. Embora estes fenómenos tenham sido originados do hemisfério Norte, os discursos sobre a boa governação apresentam-se quase que exclusivamente relacionados aos países em Desenvolvimento do hemisfério Sul. Este artigo visa fazer uma reflexão sobre a boa governação em África. E, para se fazer essa reflexão, o artigo está dividido em duas partes: a primeira, de natureza teórica, focaliza as percepções de governação e boa governação em que a atenção o é dada às várias definições de governação e aos seus vários de atributos. Com essa discussão pretende-se não somente sublinhar a diversidade de opiniões e as bases sócio-culturais em volta das definições que evoluem a governação, como também ilustrar as características de que se reveste a boa governação na África.*

*A segunda parte, empírica, focaliza a boa governação em África, discutindo de uma forma resumida, as raízes de má governação, a origem da agenda da boa governação para a África, a reação da África e a essência da boa governação para África. Com efeito, o continente está sobrecarregado de desafios de governação, pelo que torna-se necessária a definição do que significa a Governação no contexto africano, uma vez que o continente tem sido avaliado à luz da crescente tônica de boa governação para o desenvolvimento. Em termos concretos, na parte empírica, o artigo analisa o desempenho de 15 estados membros da Comunidade de Desenvolvimento da África Ocidental (CEDEAO) e outros 15 estados da Comunidade de Desenvolvimento da África Austral (SADC). A análise é feita com base nos relatórios de Índice de Governação Africana Mo Ibrahim de 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010 e 2011. O Índice é importante, significativo e apropriado, porque sublinha os critérios e condições julgados essenciais para os africanos terem uma vida melhor. Comparando o desempenho dos blocos da CEDEAO e os da SADC tem-se a ideia do estado da governação em 30 dos 53 países de África. Numa apreciação geral, pode-se constatar que o bloco da SADC mostra melhor desempenho do que a CEDEAO, cujos membros tiveram pontos tendentes a concentrar nas categorias de 'baixo', 'médio' e 'bom' enquanto que os membros da SADC tiveram tendência mais abrangente, incluindo as categorias de 'muito bom' e 'excelente. Globalmente, Segurança e Estado de Direito/Segurança, Participação e Direitos Humanos são áreas relativamente fortes, enquanto que desenvolvimento Humano e Oportunidades de Desenvolvimento Económico são problemáticos.*

**Palavras-chave:** Boa governação, Desenvolvimento, Comunidade de Desenvolvimento da África Ocidental, Índice Mo Ibrahim de Governação, Comunidade de Desenvolvimento da África Austral.

## Introduction

Governance and good governance occupy centre-stage in global political and developmental discourse. In fact, 'governance' has replaced 'government' in political science and policy science circles (Hajer & Wagenaar, 2003:5) and has been the catchphrase of international financial institutions and donors concerned with the effectiveness of aid since the 1990s. In today's complex societies, "the changed role of government and changed environment in which it has to discharge its role have brought governance into common usage as a process for which 'government' is no longer sufficient" (Corkery, 1999:12). Thus, governance is broader than government (Nzongola-Ntalaja, 2003). Governance has no single, generally acceptable definition (Wohlmuth, 1998:1). Campbell (2000:4) offers three reasons which explain "the considerable amount of ambiguity and confusion surrounding the notion of governance as has been used by multilateral and bilateral funding and development institutions over the last decade". First, is a lack of a good management model coupled with the conception of governance as a *modus operandi* in the corporate world. Secondly, governance has multiple definitions and the notion is constantly evolving. Thirdly, 'governance' is by no means a neutral term; it is highly political. The article provides several definitional offerings on governance and multiple attributes of good governance to highlight the emphasis that cultures place on different aspects of governance.

Governance involves interdependent, but unequal, actors. Nzongola-Ntalaja (2003) identifies three actors, each exercising a different form of governance. Firstly, the state, government or public sector exercises political (or public) governance involving organising and managing a society, which guarantees social order and cohesion. Secondly, the private sector exercises economic governance, which provides a material foundation. This is done through policies and processes essential to producing goods and services. Thirdly, civil society exercises social governance, which provides a moral foundation and defines the values and beliefs needed for social behaviour and public decisions (UNDESA, 2007:2). Political governance is pre-eminent because the state plays a more important role than civil society and the private sector. Therefore, governance normally focuses on the role of the state.

## Conceptions of governance

Although governance is an old concept, there is no strong consensus on a single definition. Kauzya (2003:1) metaphorically captures the essence of governance succinctly, as follows:

Steering, for example a ship, is not only a matter of keeping the ship afloat and in forward, backward, or sideways motion. It strongly demands knowledge of the direction and ensuring that the ship is constantly on course in that direction. Above all, for everyone in the ship



and those waiting for its arrival, a captain can claim good seamanship only when the ship gets to where it is expected safely and in good shape. As an act of steering a people's socio-politico-economic development, governance is a multifaceted compound situation of institutions, systems, structures, processes, procedures, practices, relationships, and leadership behaviour in the exercise of social, political, economic, and managerial/administrative authority in the running of public or private affairs.

The most prominent definition of governance is that of the World Bank (1997:1), cited by Holzer & Byong-Joon (2002): "... the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development". Olowu and Sako (2002:37) see governance as "a system of values, policies and institutions by which a society manages its economic, political and social affairs through interaction within and among the state, civil society and private sector". Kaufmann, Kraay and Zoido-Lobaton (1999:1), drawing on existing definitions, offer their own definition of governance as:

The traditions and institutions by which authority in a country is exercised. This includes the process by which governments are selected, monitored and replaced; the capacity of the government to effectively formulate and implement sound policies; and the respect of citizens and the state for the institutions that govern economic and social interactions among them.

Generally, definitions of governance border on *how* power is exercised (Misuraca, 2007), but confusion and controversies surrounding the concept, definitional complexities, difficulties and ambiguities remain. In spite of a lack of consensus, the World Bank's (1997) definition is popular. As Kauzya's characterisation (2003) and other definitions suggest, "governance is not just about *where to go*, but also about *who should be involved in deciding*, and in what capacity" (Plumptre & Graham, 1999:7-8). There is no universally accepted definition of governance, but broad understanding exists of what it involves. Abdellatiff (2003:3) explains existence of many definitions of 'governance' as resulting from the fact that "governance, as a theoretical construct, separate from the theory of the state, is not only in an embryonic stage, but its formulation also differs among researchers depending on their ideological convictions".

## What is good governance?

'Governance' has "no automatic normative connotation" (Corkery, 1999:15). This is not, however, to deny "some forms of governance are undoubtedly better than others" (Plumptre & Graham, 1999:11). While the notion of governance is old and familiar, 'good governance' is a recent term

reflecting citizens' new expectations of governing actors (Druke, 2007:61). *Good* governance focuses on norms (Ayee, 2007:2). Huther and Shah (2005:40) state that quality of governance is determined by the impact of exercising authority through formal and informal institutions in the management of state resources on the quality of life enjoyed by citizens.

Good governance, a ubiquitous concept appearing in almost every forum where developing countries' issues are the object, gained prominence in international aid circles around 1989 or 1990 (Doornbros, 2003:3). With a decline in citizens' confidence or trust in government (Nye, 2004:2) and a growing concern about development, particularly in Africa, it has become customary not just to talk about governance, but *good* governance. While governance is a neutral concept (Misuraca, 2007), good governance is normative. 'Good' signals a judgement about how a country or entity is being governed. Therefore, *good* governance is value-laden and connotes a positive quality or aspect, but also implies existence of its opposite – *bad* governance. In talking about *good* and *bad* governance, a normative dimension is introduced involving an evaluation focusing on quality: goodness, desirability, what ought to be, or its negation, how disastrous or how it ought not to be.

Debates on good governance are controversial because multiple attributes are associated with it, but the applicability of many to practical situations is conflicting and problematic. Good governance is strongly affected by the cultural context (Abrams, Borrini-Feyerabend, Gardner & Heylings, 2003:19) and definitions are culture-dependent because societies are bound to differ in the emphasis they place on different aspects of governance (Plumptre & Graham, 1999:11). These authors (1999:8) characterise good governance as a model of governance that leads to social and economic results sought by citizens. Kauzya (2003:1) defines it as "the exercise of ... authority with the participation, interest and livelihood of the governed as the driving force". While these definitions are appealing, there is no functional or single-agreed upon definition (Aubut, 2004:8). Consequently, the meaning attached to good governance varies, depending on the user. Further, good governance has narrow and broad dimensions. The narrow dimension is illustrated by Knack (2000), and Stern, Goldin and Rogers (2002) in relation to institutions and their roles in development, while the broad dimension is exemplified by Kaufmann, Kraay and Zoido-Lobaton (2002), Neumayer (2003) and Levy (2002) in extending the meaning to include key players in development such as politicians and bureaucrats.

## **Attributes of good governance**

Styles of governance are often judged as good or bad. Hyden and Braton (1993:7) suggest four criteria for assessing the style of governance in a society:

- degree of trust in government;
- degree of responsiveness in the relationship between government and civil society;



- degree of government accountability to the electorate; and
- the nature of authority a government exercises over society.

All countries need to have the stamp of *good* governance, but what does it mean to say one country exhibits good governance while another epitomises *bad* governance? In other words, what criteria are used to assess the quality of governance, given that socio-cultural norms and values inform definitions of good governance and its attributes?

The literature is replete with diverse views on the attributes or norms of good governance. Wohlmuth (1998:7) indicates that good governance involves six norms:

- legitimacy of government, based on popular sovereignty and international recognition;
- existence of an appropriate legal framework to guarantee rule of law;
- popular participation, which allows for decisions to be made by citizens based on political and social pluralism;
- freedom of association to enable citizens to form civil organisations, and of expression to facilitate critical evaluation of governmental decisions and actions;
- bureaucratic accountability and transparency, to facilitate impersonal decision-making and uniform application of rules; and
- rational governmental structures.

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, according to Misuraca (2007), and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP, 2006:1), highlight an octagon of good governance attributes, namely:

- Participation – through direct or indirect institutions or representatives. The interests of marginalised people are not reflected necessarily or taken care of in decisions through participation. Therefore, a well-organised civil society is paramount.
- Consensus orientation – there should be agreement on what is best for all sectors of society and how to achieve it.
- Accountability – governmental institutions, private sector and civil society organisations must be accountable to those affected by their decisions or actions.
- Transparency – decisions and how they are implemented should be within the confines of relevant laws and affected citizens should have enough free, understandable and accessible information.
- Responsiveness – citizens should not just be served by institutions and processes, but served within a reasonable period.
- Equity and inclusiveness – all citizens, including the marginalised, should feel they are

stakeholders with opportunities for improving their lives.

- Effectiveness and efficiency – institutions and processes need to produce results that satisfy citizens' needs, using resources the best way possible.
- Supremacy or rule of law – a fair and impartial legal framework should exist, human rights protected and an independent judiciary and corruption-free policing system upheld.

Kauzya (2003:2) states that in a situation one would call good governance, the following eleven elements are present:

- constitutionalism – to guarantee separation of powers and ensure checks and balances;
- rule of law – to ensure all laws, rules and regulations are respected;
- effective justice system that is just, fair and open to all;
- security of person and property – to guarantee lasting peace;
- electoral and participatory democracy – to enable citizens to choose their leaders;
- respect for human rights and basic freedoms;
- transparency, accountability, ethics and integrity in conducting public and private corporate affairs;
- intra- and inter-generational equity;
- informed citizenry – through free media, education, easy access to information;
- effective and efficient delivery of public services; and
- a decent standard of living for all.

According to Chowdhury and Skarstedt (2005:5), the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has identified five main attributes of good governance, namely: transparency, responsibility, accountability, participation and responsiveness to citizens' needs.

Parto (2005:6) indicates the European Commission and its institutions adhere to five political principles constituting pillars of good governance:

- openness: institutions are expected to work openly;
- participation: institutions should create confidence in themselves and their achievements by involving people;
- accountability: European Union institutions are expected to explain and be responsible for what they do in Europe;
- effectiveness: policies must be timely and delivered to meet clear objectives; and
- coherence: strong responsibility and political leadership are expected by institutions to ensure consistency within the system.



The United Nations Development Programme (1997), cited by Abdellatiff (2003:5), provides nine characteristics of good governance based on universal norms. These include:

- participation – all citizens should have a direct or indirect say in decision-making;
- rule of law – laws should be fair and impartially enforced;
- transparency – citizens should have free, easy access to information;
- responsiveness – institutions and processes should be at the service of all.
- consensus orientation – the best interest of all should be considered in policies and procedures;
- equity – all should have equal chance of furthering their well-being;
- effectiveness and efficiency – results should be produced to meet citizens' needs, making optimum use of resources;
- accountability – public and private sector decision-makers should be accountable to stakeholders; and
- strategic vision – leaders should have a long-term perspective of good governance and human development.

That there are many attributes of good governance highlights the fact that although the quest for it is universal, “there has hardly been a consensus as to its core meaning, and less of a common idea as to how it could be applied more concretely” (Doornbros, 2003:4). The multiplicity of good governance attributes indicates there is no single set of universally agreed-on attributes. However, considerable agreement exists on broad features of what constitutes good governance. In other words, there seems to be some universal norms or values of good governance spread across cultural boundaries (Plumptre and Graham, 1999:12). Therefore, a lack of consensus on good governance attributes does not imply absence of an objective basis for judging quality of governance. In fact, the nine UNDP attributes cited by Abdellatiff (2003:5), reflect universal norms hinted at, if not explicitly stated, in other enumerations.

## **What is *bad* governance?**

With the UNDP (1997) attributes reflecting broad consensus on what constitutes *good* governance, bad governance is fairly easy to identify. A deviation from the attributes or norms of *good* governance is symptomatic of it. Weiss (2000) characterises bad governance as personalisation of power, lack of human rights, endemic corruption and unelected and unaccountable governments. Ordinary people know bad governance when they see or experience it: stolen elections, corruption in various guises, deprivation of basic public goods – services/utilities, inability of government to guarantee law and order, flagrant abuse of human rights, to name but a few.



# GOOD GOVERNANCE IN AFRICA

## Origins of good governance agenda

The good governance debate is not new to Africa. The quest for it has been a major pre-occupation since the 1980s. The debate started as an inevitable outcome of structural adjustment programmes imposed by the International Monetary Fund (Wohlmuth, 2006:1) and filtered into the vocabulary of international development co-operation (Hossain, 2005:7). It was seized upon, elaborated, popularised and increasingly used by international financial institutions (IFIs), particularly the World Bank, to alter their conditionality attached to finance agreements (Wohlmuth, 2003:26), seeing that aid is the chief source of external finance for many African countries and “despite all the money given, many recipients remain in poverty” (Aubut, 2004:1).

The prominence of IFIs in the good governance debate is not coincidental. Chowdhury and Skarstedt (2005:4) indicate that the phrase ‘good governance’ was originally used by the World Bank in its 1989 publication, entitled *Sub-Saharan Africa: from crisis to sustainable growth*. Since then, IFIs have been steadfast in requiring good governance as a condition for aid to African countries to the extent they have been accused of focusing on the mere ‘presence’ of governmental institutions as a matter of procedure, rather than on their actual ‘performance’ (Chowdhury & Skarstedt, 2005:11). Although early involvement of the World Bank in the good governance debate suggests the concept originated from it, formal discussions among African leaders and bureaucrats on reforming the African state and governance pre-date the World Bank’s 1989 publication.

## Africa’s reaction to the notion of good governance

Good governance has not been well received politically, particularly in Africa, for two reasons (Chowdhury & Skarstedt, 2005:11). First, it is associated with liberalism and *laissez-faire* policies in developed countries. Secondly, ‘good’ is subjective given “the context of large and diverse economies that characterise the developing world”. Further, Doornbros (2003:40) notes references to good governance apply to states and entities in the South, not those in Europe or North America where the concept was launched, implying a judgemental slant. Africa has, however, embraced good governance as a *sine qua non* for development. Plumptre and Graham (1999:12) suggest that different approaches to governance might be suited to different stages of development or historical circumstances. This suggestion is relevant for governance in Africa because, being the least developed continent, and with different material circumstances to the developed world, good governance is not perceived the same way as in developed countries. Africa has struck a balance between contextually relevant criteria and the universal attributes of good governance, which constitute the guiding principles of the Mo Ibrahim Index on African Governance.

Africa has a historical record of bad governance (Hope, 2003:2). To some extent, poor govern-



ance can be traced to 1963 when the Organisation for African Unity, an organisation not primarily known for promoting good governance (Akokpari 2004:244), was formed. Its mandate was to help liberate the continent from colonial rule, promote unity and defend members' territorial integrity. Governance was not a priority as the prevailing ideology saw economic development as the main goal of government (Akokpari, 2004:245). As a result of the pre-eminence of collective welfare, individual rights receded to the background and one-party states, quasi- and full-scale dictatorships in which corruption, mismanagement and human rights violations became entrenched, sprouted.

## Developmental imperative

Good governance in Africa is not an option; it is the only hope for the continent to pull away from the precipice of under-development. Good governance is a critical issue on the African political scene, the talk at continental and regional forums such as the African Union, New Partnership for Africa's Development, Economic Community of African States (ECOWAS) and Southern African Development Community (SADC). Its benefits have been studied (Easterly & Levine, 2002; Rodrik, Subramanian & Trebbi, 2002) and a link between good governance and development outcomes established. No continent is in greater need of development than Africa. In spite of African leaders frequently discussing good governance, it remains a chimera in some countries.

Hope (2003:5) aptly expresses the need for good governance in Africa, highlighting an urgent need for its institutionalisation to facilitate development: "good governance is worth pursuing in its own right in Africa". Good governance is important for Africa because poverty, inequality and other human failures are endemic. It is essential for achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) because it "establishes a framework for fighting poverty, inequality, and many of humanities' other shortcomings" (UNDESA, 2007:1).

African political leaders and bureaucrats recognise the value of pursuing good governance in its own right and have articulated its invaluable role in reshaping the continent's future. The former UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, has pronounced on the importance of good governance in Africa, thus: "good governance is perhaps the single most important factor in eradicating poverty and promoting development" (UN, 1998:13). Thabo Mbeki has argued that Africa wishes to realise the goal of good governance "not because we seek to improve our relations with the rest of the world as a first objective, ... but to end political and economic mismanagement on our continent, and the consequential violent conflicts, instability, denial of human rights, deepening poverty and global marginalization" (Mbeki, 2002:2). Saitoti (2002:257), a former Kenyan Vice President, has underlined the connection between good political and economic governance and sustainable development. Further, the President of the African Development Bank has noted that "good governance is not only a worthy goal per se but also a prerequisite for sustainable development and poverty reduction in the longer term" (Kabbaj, 2003:7). Finally, Amoako (2000:155), Executive Secretary of UNECA, has underlined the

importance of good governance for political and economic transformation of the continent.

Good governance has become a highly sought-after 'commodity' as well as the dominant factor in development discourse (Adesida, 2001:7) and holds the key to overcoming the enormous obstacles to development in Africa. Good governance and public sector management are central to development and constitute the primary means for social transformation (Adesida, 2001:6). According to Adesida (2001:8), the capacity of African societies and leaders to respond to and address critical challenges such as achieving sustained economic growth and development, meeting basic needs such as increasing agricultural productivity, ending civil strife and wars, and reducing poverty, substantially hinges on the continent's ability to institutionalise good governance. To buttress the importance of good governance, Hossain (2005:6), citing Werlin (2003), asserts: "the inadequacy of governance rather than resources is the primary reason for the gap between poor countries and rich countries".

Wohlmuth (1998:6) outlines the developmental role of good governance, advancing three reasons for it being critical for Africa's development. First of all, it creates the necessary extra-economic conditions favouring economic growth, including an effective public administration, a working legal system, efficient regulatory structures, and transparency that allows for legal and financial accountability. Thus, adequate provision of public goods is essential for development. Secondly, the continent's renewal and development is anchored on public choice in a democratic environment. In other words, development hinges on democratic cornerstones such as accountability, rule of law, freedom of expression and association, and public choice. Finally, good governance involves adapting and continuously improving market reforms in the African context.

The high profile of governance in developing countries is, therefore, development-based. It is a response to compelling evidence, which links the quality of a governance system with its development performance and the need for donors to increase aid to developing countries for effective use to meet the MDGs.

## **ASSESSING AFRICAN GOVERNANCE**

### **Mo Ibrahim Index of African Governance**

In an attempt to institutionalise good governance in Africa and to rid the continent of the vicious cycle of bad governance, Mohamed (Mo) Ibrahim, a US-based academic and successful African entrepreneur with interests in mobile communications, launched the Mo Ibrahim Foundation on 26 October 2006. It is aimed at supporting good governance and fostering good political leadership. The initiative has the support of prominent global political leaders such as Nelson Mandela, Bill Clinton and Mary Robinson, and influential figures including Kofi Annan, Paul Wolfowitz and Amartya Sen. The Mo Ibrahim Index of African Governance is an innovative ranking of African



governance developed by Rotberg and Gisselquist at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government. The Index measures the quality of political goods provided by African states to their citizens (Saisana, Annoni & Nardo, 2009:9). Its aim is not only to inform and empower citizens to hold their governments and public institutions to account, but also stimulate debate in Africa and globally on criteria by which governments should be assessed. The 2011 Index, the fifth successive ranking of African governance, has just been released and now forms part of the reports this article analyses. Up to 2008, the Index was an aggregate of a comprehensive set of governance indicators based on five major pillars or categories of essential political goods, described by 14 sub-pillars composed in a total of 57 indicators made up of qualitative and quantitative measures (Saisana *et al.*, 2009:3) on which each signed up country is assessed (MIF News Release, 2007). Since 2009, however, the Index has been based on four pillars of proxies, namely: Safety and Rule of Law, Participation and Human Rights, Sustainable Economic Opportunity, and Human Development. Rule of Law, Transparency and Corruption is subsumed under Safety and Rule of Law, in line with continuous efforts to improve the Index. Further, governance is now assessed against 84 qualitative and quantitative assessments, the most comprehensive in Africa.

The Ibrahim Index is essentially a two-year lagging indicator-based system, arrived at by a simple average at all levels of aggregation, from the underlying indicators to the sub-pillars, from the sub-pillars to the pillars, from the pillars to the overall Index). Being an abstract concept or latent dimension, governance cannot be measured directly. It is measured indirectly by observing variables describing its different dimensions (Saisana *et al.*, 2009:9). The five original categories or pillars of the Ibrahim Index, their sub- and sub-sub categories shown in Table 1, represent observable variables on which African governance is measured.

**Table 1: Structure of the Ibrahim Index of African Governance**

Category	Sub-category
Safety and Security	National Security (two thirds of the category): six sub-sub categories Public Safety (one third of the category): one sub-sub category
Rule of Law, Transparency and Corruption	Ratification of Critical Legal Norms: three sub-sub categories Judicial independence: three sub-sub categories Corruption: one sub-sub category
Participation and Human Rights	Participation in Elections: four sub-sub categories Respect for Civil and Political Rights: Four sub-sub categories, with one (Women's Rights) sub-categorised into economic, political and social rights
Sustainable Economic Opportunity	Wealth Creation: two sub-sub categories Macro-economic stability and Financial Integrity: four sub-sub categories Arteries of Commerce: four sub-sub categories
Human Development	Poverty: three sub-sub categories Health and Sanitation: 12 sub-sub categories Education: seven sub-sub categories

Source: Extracted from Rotberg & Gisselquist (2009:13-14)

According to Saisana *et al* (2009:3), “... these five categories of political goods are considered to encapsulate the performance of any government”. The Index is touted as setting benchmarks not only for Africa, but for the world. Its key features are: comprehensiveness of measures, focus on measurable key political goods, wide coverage of countries, ranking based on governance quality, and progressive expansion and refinement of criteria. The significance of the Index is that good governance is measured against key criteria and conditions deemed essential for a meaningful life for Africans. The Index is a credible and an appropriate instrument with which Africa’s governance performance may be measured. It is based on raw data collected by in-country affiliates in 38 of Africa’s 53 countries and supplemented by internationally reputable data collected by Mo Ibrahim Foundation researchers (Rotberg & Gisselquist, 2009:v). From its inception up to 2008, the Index focused on 48 sub-Saharan African countries, excluding Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya and Egypt. Since 2009, all African countries, except Western Sahara, are included.

### **Five-year performance data for ECOWAS bloc**

Tables 2 and 9 present indices for ECOWAS and SADC members on relevant governance criteria of the Mo Ibrahim Index. ECOWAS and SADC are the most prominent regional blocs in Africa, collectively accounting for 30 countries and the most powerful economies, South Africa and Nigeria. Table 2 that follows shows ECOWAS members’ individual rankings, overall ratings and ratings for each of the five categories of the Index for 2007 and 2008, and four categories for 2009, 2010 and 2011. Governance data for SADC members are presented in Table 9. In the mini-tables following Tables 2 and 9, analyses of these blocs’ performance criteria are presented.



**Table 2: The Ibrahim Index of African Governance – indices for ECOWAS members**

Ranking 07 08 09 10 11	Country	Overall rating					Safety and Security/*Safety & Rule of Law				
		07	08	09	10	11	07	08	09	10	11
13 13 15 12 11	Benin	61.2	62.5	58.2	57	60	78.4	86.1	69.2	59	66
21 20 27 21 19	Bourkina Faso	56.7	58.3	51.6	52	55	78.4	86.1	61.9	64	59
4 3 2 4 2	Cape Verde	72.9	74.7	78.0	75	79	84.0	100.0	89.9	84	87
36 42 47 44 46	Ivory Coast	48.8	45.6	36.6	37	36	77.1	75.2	37.7	33	31
22 27 19 18 24	Gambia	55.8	55.2	55.1	53	52	78.3	86.0	57.7	57	46
8 7 7 7 7	Ghana	66.8	70.1	66.0	65	66	85.9	86.1	71.3	75	72
33 40 44 45 43	Guinea	51.5	47.8	40.0	36	38	72.8	80.3	43.7	39	43
44 30 40 43 44	Guinea-Bissau	42.7	51.9	43.5	39	37	71.2	80.5	46.9	46	40
43 38 39 38 36	Liberia	42.7	48.7	44.9	43	45	65.1	58.8	45.7	50	47
20 23 20 19 22	Mali	56.9	55.9	54.5	53	54	84.0	77.8	62.4	62	62
28 24 34 40 39	Niger	53.1	55.5	46.6	42	44	78.4	86.1	56.4	56	50
37 39 35 37 41	Nigeria	48.3	48.5	46.5	43	41	62.8	63.7	50.6	48	46
9 10 17 14 15	Senegal	66.0	66.1	56.0	56	57	85.9	85.4	61.8	63	59
39 37 30 32 30	Sierra Leone	48.3	49.1	48.9	46	48	72.0	79.6	52.4	52	58
35 29 43 39 35	Togo	49.8	53.0	40.8	43	46	77.4	77.2	64.6	57	57

Source: Extracted from *The Ibrahim Index of African Governance reports for 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011*.

**\*Note:** Since 2009, Rule of Law, Transparency and Corruption has been subsumed under Safety and Rule of Law.

## Interpreting the scores

The Mo Ibrahim Foundation provides no guidance on how the scores should be interpreted. To undertake an intelligible analysis, the following interpretation is adopted:

0-49 = poor, underperformance or below threshold;

50-59 = average performance;

60-69 = good performance;

70-79 = very good performance; and

80-100 = excellent performance.

	Rule of Law, Transparency and Corruption		Participation and Human Rights				Sustainable Economic Opportunity				Human Development						
	07	08	07	08	09	10	11	07	08	09	10	11	07	08	09	10	11
	52.8	52.3	69.6	81.1	66.5	62	65	46.9	36.9	47.0	51	52	58.4	56.2	50.2	45	39
	58.5	56.5	58.0	70.1	55.5	57	56	39.1	30.3	46.7	52	59	49.2	48.4	42.2	35	47
	80.4	86.1	74.6	77.7	79.6	80	78	52.8	47.2	68.0	67	68	72.8	62.6	74.5	72	83
	37.8	36.0	32.8	22.6	27.8	29	30	44.1	42.9	39.4	39	39	52.2	51.6	41.5	42	45
	53.4	54.7	52.1	42.5	49.8	49	44	44.4	40.5	48.5	51	52	51.0	52.2	64.6	62	64
	70.1	72.7	67.7	80.2	75.2	68	69	46.5	47.3	49.7	53	53	63.8	64.3	67.7	62	70
	51.1	51.0	44.9	25.4	36.3	33	35	37.3	32.2	36.3	34	30	51.5	50.0	45.4	36	44
	33.8	34.6	38.7	75.2	47.6	46	53	28.2	23.3	32.1	33	33	41.5	45.8	47.4	31	40
	32.2	26.8	40.4	87.9	54.0	51	54	41.4	36.9	33.7	50	34	34.4	33.2	46.3	42	47
	52.7	50.0	71.1	74.7	61.0	58	56	33.8	31.4	49.5	50	47	43.1	45.8	45.3	42	50
	52.6	51.7	70.7	79.4	50.2	38	42	28.3	27.6	43.7	43	45	35.6	32.5	36.1	33	40
	44.3	48.2	44.2	44.1	41.8	38	34	40.7	40.7	42.6	43	41	49.5	45.9	50.8	43	44
	64.8	66.2	75.5	81.7	61.1	60	59	46.2	42.3	50.1	53	53	57.5	54.9	50.9	49	59
	35.1	37.3	68.4	69.8	60.2	52	53	39.4	27.1	41.3	42	43	26.4	31.8	41.7	39	38
	46.7	47.1	41.4	44.2	32.6	40	42	42.7	42.0	30.4	34	36	40.5	54.4	40.8	40	48

## ANALYSIS OF ECOWAS MEMBERS' PERFORMANCE

### Rankings

From 2007 to 2011 Cape Verde and Ghana have consistently featured as top performers in the ECOWAS bloc and among the top 10 on the continent. In 2007 and 2008, Senegal was in this league, but has since fallen out. Cape Verde improved its ranking in 2008 and 2009, before retrogressing in 2010. Currently, it ranks as the best governed in the ECOWAS bloc. After ranking number eight in 2007, Ghana has maintained a consistent seventh position since 2008. Senegal declined in 2008 and 2009 before improving in 2010 and declining again in 2011. Many countries, including Ivory Coast, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Togo have been performing particularly well. The first three countries count among the lowest ranked on the continent.

### Overall rating

As Table 3 shows, over the five-year period a third or more of the countries performed poorly overall and a third performed averagely. A fifth or less had 'good' scores; few obtained 'very good'



**Table 3: Analysis of ratings**

Score categories	Number of countries				
	07	08	09	10	11
0-49	6	5	8	8	6
50-59	5	6	5	5	5
60-69	3	2	1	1	3
70-79	1	2	1	1	-
80-100	-	-	-	-	-

**Table 4: Analysis of ratings**

Score categories	Number of countries				
	07	08	09	10	11
0-49	-	-	4	4	6
50-59	-	1	4	6	5
60-69	2	1	5	3	2
70-79	9	4	1	1	1
80-100	4	9	1	1	1

**Note:** *Safety and Security apply to 2007 and 2008 scores, while Safety and Rule of Law apply to those of 2009, 2010 and 2011.*

**Table 5: Analysis of ratings**

Score categories	Number of countries				
	07	08	09	10	11
0-49	6	6	-	-	-
50-59	6	6	-	-	-
60-69	1	1	-	-	-
70-79	1	1	-	-	-
80-100	1	1	-	-	-

**Table 6: Analysis of ratings**

Score categories	Number of countries				
	07	08	09	10	11
0-49	6	5	6	7	6
50-59	2	-	3	4	6
60-69	3	1	4	3	2
70-79	4	5	2	-	1
80-100	-	4	-	1	-

scores and none had an 'excellent' score. Cape Verde obtained the third highest overall score in 2011 and counts among the top five of Africa's best governed countries.

### **Safety and Security/Safety and Rule of Law**

ECOWAS recorded its best performance in this domain in 2007 and 2008. Table 4 shows in these years 13 countries scored in 'very good' and 'excellent' categories. However, in 2009, 2010 and 2011, most countries' scores were concentrated in 'below threshold', average and 'good' categories.

### **Rule of Law, Transparency and Corruption**

Table 5 indicates that the majority of countries achieved 'poor' and 'average' scores in 2007 and 2008. Very few countries scored in 'good', 'very good' and 'excellent' categories in both years. Scores for 2009, 2010 and 2011 are subsumed under Safety and Rule of Law.

### **Participation and Human Rights**

The picture Table 6 gives is that for the five years, most countries' scores fell in the 'poor' category. However, scores were also spread among 'average', 'good' and 'very good' categories, with a few scoring 'excellent' in 2008.



**Table 7: Analysis of ratings**

Score categories	Number of countries				
	07	08	09	10	11
0-49	14	15	13	7	9
50-59	1	–	1	7	5
60-69	–	–	1	1	1
70-79	–	–	–	–	–
80-100	–	–	–	–	–

**Table 8: Analysis of ratings**

Score categories	Number of countries				
	07	08	09	10	11
0-49	8	7	9	12	
50-59	5	6	3	–	
60-69	1	2	2	2	
70-79	1	–	1	1	
80-100	–	–	–	–	

‘good’ and ‘very good’ scores. None fell in the ‘excellent’ category as indicated in Table 8.

To sum up, looking at performance in terms of Mo Ibrahim Index criteria, ECOWAS bloc recorded its best in Safety and Security/Safety and Rule of Law. Participation and Human Rights was second best area of performance. In third position came Rule of Law, Transparency and Corruption, with Human Development following. The worst performance was in Sustainable Economic Development. Currently, Cape Verde is among the top five countries continentally in Safety and Rule of Law; it has the highest score in Participation and Human Rights in Africa; is the third highest ranked country in Sustainable Economic Opportunities, and has achieved the third highest score in Human Development. Two of Africa’s best governed countries, Cape Verde and Ghana,

## Sustainable Economic Opportunity

As Table 7 indicates, this domain has been the Achilles’ heel of ECOWAS members. In 2007, only Cape Verde achieved ‘average’ score. All of them underperformed in 2008. About half of the countries scored poorly in 2010; the other half achieved ‘average’ scores. In 2011, three-fifths performed below threshold, while a third achieved ‘average’ scores.

## Human Development

This category registered the second worst performance for the five-year period. Most countries’ scores were concentrated in the ‘poor’ and ‘average’ categories, with the majority in the former. Few countries achieved



## Five-year performance data for SADC bloc

**Table 9: The Ibrahim Index of African Governance – indices for SADC members**

Ranking	Country	Overall rating					Safety & Security (Safety & Rule of Law*)				
		07	08	09	10	11	07	08	09	10	11
42	Angola	43.0	43.3	58.4	39	41	67.8	82.0	41.6	44	39
3	Botswana	73.0	62.5	73.6	76	76	75.0	75.0	85.0	88	87
47	DRC	38.6	29.8	33.2	31	32	69.4	52.8	31.4	33	30
11	Lesotho	64.1	63.3	61.2	60	63	91.7	75.0	68.9	70	69
17	Madagascar	57.7	60.4	58.4	49	47	86.1	86.1	63.4	51	44
12	Malawi	63.1	63.9	53.0	52	57	86.1	60.4	65.6	65	65
1	Mauritius	86.2	85.1	82.8	83	82	91.7	91.7	87.0	90	89
23	Mozambique	55.8	57.1	52.4	52	55	86.1	86.1	62.5	63	61
7	Namibia	67.0	70.9	68.8	67	70	77.7	83.3	79.5	80	78
5	South Africa	71.1	71.5	69.4	71	71	61.1	61.1	70.3	71	69
34	Swaziland	50.9	50.2	49.4	51	51	63.9	69.4	63.3	64	62
2	Seychelles	83.1	79.8	77.1	79	73	83.3	83.2	75.5	81	78
14	Tanzania	60.7	61.6	59.2	55	58	83.3	83.3	64.6	62	60
19	Zambia	57.5	58.3	55.3	55	57	77.8	77.8	66.5	64	54
31	Zimbabwe	52.0	50.4	31.3	33	31	75.0	75.1	28.9	35	28

are ECOWAS members.

Source: *The Ibrahim Index of Good Governance reports for 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011*

**Note:** Since 2009, Rule of Law, Transparency and Corruption is subsumed under Safety and Rule of Law.

## ANALYSIS OF SADC MEMBERS' PERFORMANCE

### Rankings

Since 2007, four countries, namely: Mauritius, Seychelles, Botswana, South Africa and Namibia have been top performers in the bloc and among the top 10 continentally. Mauritius and South Africa have consistently been the first and fifth best in governance since 2007. Seychelles took second place in 2007, 2008 and 2010. However, in 2009 and 2011, it fell to third and fourth

	Rule of Law, Transparency & Corruption	Participation and Human Rights	Sustainable Economic Opportunity	Human Development
	07 08	07 08 09 10 11	07 08 09 10 11	07 08 09 10 11
	28.1 38.4	36.8 29.0 43.5 44 43	40.7 32.9 37.1 36 42	38.3 34.4 41.8 33 39
	88.3 81.6	75.5 87.4 72.8 69 68	58.1 58.2 68.3 70 68	67.9 68.0 68.2 77 82
	25.4 24.3	24.3 14.7 35.5 30 33	31.6 26.3 29.9 26 29	42.3 30.7 36.1 35 38
	66.7 69.3	63.4 75.5 72.4 55 66	43.4 42.9 50.8 52 55	55.5 53.7 52.6 51 61
	57.8 57.3	58.1 74.9 66.7 51 44	40.1 39.4 51.9 50 50	46.4 44.3 51.5 85 50
	65.0 69.1	66.0 40.7 57.9 51 59	45.0 59.7 43.8 45 48	56.3 63.9 44.7 45 54
	85.2 80.5	88.7 92.2 56.1 77 75	75.5 71.4 80.5 84 79	90.0 89.9 83.2 40 87
	43.8 50.4	71.0 70.4 63.0 37 58	36.8 36.7 46.6 49 51	42.4 41.7 37.5 40 48
	74.5 76.7	69.4 75.3 72.7 66 66	55.0 57.4 61.7 63 63	58.3 61.6 61.3 60 72
	75.2 78.1	81.1 86.3 77.0 73 72	67.4 63.5 62.1 65 64	70.5 68.7 68.4 75 77
	51.3 56.9	31.2 28.8 32.5 27 28	50.4 46.5 52.2 52 50	57.5 49.2 49.8 60 66
	74.2 80.4	79.3 76.9 70.6 69 67	80.5 70.0 64.5 66 63	98.3 88.4 97.9 99 86
	58.4 59.6	61.0 65.4 67.6 56 60	48.6 43.4 51.5 56 58	52.1 56.4 53.4 49 54
	61.3 60.5	54.9 66.6 59.7 56 62	47.8 43.0 50.8 56 51	45.8 41.7 47.3 51 61
	45.8 44.6	45.0 41.9 32.0 31 27	44.4 38.8 20.2 31 24	49.7 51.7 44.1 46 44

positions, respectively. Botswana has been alternating between third and fourth positions, while Namibia has maintained sixth position since 2008 after being seventh in 2007. Conversely, Angola and Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) have been among the worst performers within SADC and on the continent for the five-year period, joined by Zimbabwe in 2009, 2010 and 2011.

## Overall rating

Two countries performed poorly in 2007, five achieved 'average' scores, four 'good' scores, three 'very good' and one 'excellent'. In 2008, the same two countries again underperformed, four achieved 'average' scores, five countries had 'good' scores, three 'very good' and one 'excellent'. The situation deteriorated in 2009, with three countries underperforming. Six achieved 'average' scores, four had 'good' scores, one had scored 'very good' and one 'excellent'. Further deterioration occurred in 2010, when four countries achieved below the threshold. Five achieved 'average' scores, two 'good', two 'very good' and one 'excellent'. This is reflected in Table 10. With the



best overall scores, Mauritius, Botswana, Seychelles and South Africa are among the five best governed countries in Africa in 2011.

**Safety and Security/Safety and Rule of Law**

**Table 10: Analysis of ratings**

Score categories	Number of countries				
	07	08	09	10	11
0-49	2	2	3	4	4
50-59	5	4	6	5	5
60-69	4	5	3	2	1
70-79	2	2	2	3	4
80-100	2	2	1	1	1

**Table 11: Analysis of ratings**

Score categories	Number of countries				
	07	08	09	10	11
0-49	-	-	3	3	4
50-59	-	1	-	1	1
60-69	4	3	7	5	6
70-79	4	4	3	2	2
80-100	7	7	2	4	2

**Table 12: Analysis of ratings**

Score categories	Number of countries				
	07	08	09	10	11
0-49	4	3	-	-	-
50-59	3	4	-	-	-
60-69	3	3	-	-	-
70-79	3	2	-	-	-
80-100	2	3	-	-	-

**Note:** Since 2009 Rule of Law, Transparency and Corruption ratings are subsumed under Safety and Rule of Law.

Like their ECOWAS counterparts, only a few countries performed poorly in this domain. Most scores were in ‘good’, ‘very good’ and ‘excellent’ categories, as shown in Table 11.

**Rule of Law, Transparency and Corruption**

Most countries performed well in this category in 2007 and 2008, with about three-quarters scoring in the ‘good’, ‘very good’ and ‘excellent’ categories as shown in Table 12.

**Table 13: Analysis of ratings**

Score categories	Number of countries				
	07	08	09	10	11
0-49	4	5	4	5	5
50-59	2	-	3	5	2
60-69	4	2	3	3	6
70-79	3	4	5	2	2
80-100	2	4	-	-	-

**Participation and Human Rights**

As Table 13 indicates, countries’ scores were almost evenly spread across the five categories, indicating generally ‘good’ performance

Score categories	Number of countries				
	07	08	09	10	11
0-49	9	9	5	5	4
50-59	3	3	5	5	6
60-69	1	1	4	3	4
70-79	1	2	–	1	1
80-100	1	–	1	1	–

Score categories	Number of countries				
	07	08	09	10	11
0-49	6	6	5	7	4
50-59	5	3	5	2	3
60-69	1	4	3	2	3
70-79	1	–	–	2	2
80-100	2	2	2	2	3

since a third of countries scored in the ‘poor’ category.

### **Sustainable Economic Opportunity**

Most countries scored in the ‘poor’ and ‘average’ categories, with relatively few in ‘good’ and ‘very good’ categories. Fewer still scored in ‘excellent’ category, as shown in Table 14.

### **Human Development**

Relatively weak performance based on this

criterion is indicated in Table 16, where half or more of the countries scored in the ‘poor’ and ‘average’ categories.

In summary, in terms of performance according to criteria, the best performance for SADC bloc in the five-year period was in Safety and Security/Safety and Rule of Law. Rule of Law, Transparency and Corruption came second, followed by Participation and Human Rights. Next was Human Development. The weakest area of performance was Sustainable Economic Development. Continentally, among the top five scores in Safety and Rule of Law in 2011 are Mauritius, Botswana, Namibia and Seychelles; for Participation and Human Rights, Mauritius, South Africa and Botswana are among the top five. Mauritius and Seychelles are among the top five on the continent in Human Development, and in Sustainable Economic Opportunities Mauritius and Botswana feature in the top five. Five of Africa’s best-governed countries on the Ibrahim Index are SADC members: Mauritius, Botswana, Seychelles, South Africa and Namibia.

Table 17 presents a side-by-side comparative analysis of ECOWAS and SADC members’



**Table 17: Five-year comparative analysis of ECOWAS and SADC members' performance on all criteria of Mo Ibrahim Index**

	Overall rating					S&S					S&RL		RL/T&C P&HR					SEO					HD				
	07	08	09	10	11	07	08	09	10	11	07	08	07	08	09	10	11	07	08	09	10	11	07	08	09	10	11
ECOWAS																											
0-49 (poor)	6	5	8	8	8	0	0	4	4	6	6	6	6	5	6	7	6	14	15	13	7	9	8	7	9	12	10
50-59 (average)	5	6	5	5	4	0	1	4	4	5	6	6	2	0	3	4	6	1	0	1	7	5	5	6	3	2	2
60-69 (good)	3	2	1	1	2	2	1	5	5	2	1	1	3	1	4	3	2	0	0	1	1	1	1	2	2	1	1
70-79 (very good)	1	2	1	1	1	9	4	1	1	1	1	1	4	5	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	-	1	0	1	0	1
80-100 (excellent)	0	0	0	0	-	4	9	1	1	1	1	1	0	4	0	1	-	0	0	0	0	-	0	0	0	0	1
SADC																											
0-49 (poor)	2	2	3	4	2	0	0	3	3	4	4	3	4	5	4	5	5	9	9	5	5	4	6	5	7	7	4
50-59 (average)	5	4	6	5	5	0	1	0	1	1	3	4	2	0	3	5	2	3	3	5	5	6	5	4	3	2	3
60-69 (good)	4	5	3	2	4	4	3	7	5	6	3	3	4	2	3	3	6	1	1	3	2	4	1	4	3	2	3
70-79 (very good)	2	3	2	3	2	4	4	3	2	2	3	2	3	5	5	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	2	2
80-100 (excellent)	2	1	1	1	2	7	7	2	4	2	2	3	2	3	0	0	-	1	0	1	1	-	2	2	2	2	3

performance on all criteria of the Ibrahim Index over the five-year period. The numbers represent countries scoring at different levels in each category per year. From the spread of scores in the statistics, it is evident that across all criteria ECOWAS members' scores are heavily concentrated at the low (40-49), average (50-59) and middle (60-69). Scores for SADC members are widely spread across the spectrum, an indication of the latter's better overall performance.

### Fluctuating performance

Table 18 reflects the fact that countries' performances have been fluctuating across different criteria over the five-year period. While the table shows countries are improving on their scores



**Table 18: Pattern of governance performance – ECOWAS and SADC (2007-2011)**

	Safety & Security/ Safety & Rule of Law					Rule of Law, Transparency & Corruption		Participation and Human Rights					Sustainable Economic Opportunity					Human Development				
	07	08	09	10	11	07	08	07	08	09	10	11	07	08	09	10	11	07	08	09	10	11
ECOWAS																						
Countries improving	-	10	0	3	4	-	8	-	11	4	4	4	-	1	12	11	7	-	6	9	1	7
Countries declining	-	5	15	12	9	-	7	-	4	11	11	11	-	13	3	4	4	-	9	6	14	8
Countries stagnating	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	-
SADC																						
Countries improving	-	4	3	11	-	-	9	-	8	5	2	7	-	3	11	11	6	-	5	7	9	12
Countries declining	-	4	12	4	15	-	6	-	7	10	13	7	-	12	4	4	7	-	10	8	6	3
Countries stagnating	-	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-

across the criteria, one cannot take comfort because in many cases improvements are miniscule. Of concern is the growing trend towards declining scores. As the table indicates, in the main, the number of ECOWAS and SADC members registering declining scores across the criteria over the five-year period outstripped those that made improvements. In the main, over the five-year period, more countries in ECOWAS and SADC registered declining than improved scores.

## Conclusion

At the heart of this article is how governance should be defined and assessed. Returning to the issue of defining governance, the earlier part of this article highlighted multiple definitions governance and attributes of good governance. It is significant that a broad definition is adopted by the Mo Ibrahim Foundation to inform the Mo Ibrahim Index because it is appropriate to Africa's circumstances. Governance, after all, is not solely political. It has social, economic and other dimensions. Significantly, the broad definition of governance takes cognisance of "the central responsibilities of state governments to provide safety and security, as well as to provide for a basic level of well-being for their citizens" (Rotberg and Gisselquist, 2009:8). Thus, defining good governance as what is delivered to people, not policies pursued by governments, more accurately and fully reflects African governmental performance. This view of governance is widespread and strongly held across Africa.

Governance assessment systems such as the African Peer Review Mechanism, Corruption Perceptions Index and Human Development Index tend to narrowly focus on aspects of political governance such as peace and security, rule of law, corruption, democracy, political participation, human rights and sustainable development. In the context of this article, constituents of political governance are Rule of Law, Transparency and Corruption; and Participation and Human Rights, which are not given any more prominence by the Ibrahim Index than Safety and Security, Sustainable Economic Opportunities and Human Development.

Three observations may be made on the comparative analysis. First, ECOWAS and SADC blocs show similar strengths and weaknesses in governance. For the four years under review, both demonstrate their best performance in Safety and Security/Safety and Rule of Law. While the second best domain of performance for ECOWAS was in Participation and Human Rights, this category was third for SADC. Conversely, Rule of Law, Transparency and Corruption came second for SADC, but third for ECOWAS. Human Development was fourth for both and Sustainable Economic Development was their weakest area of performance.

Secondly, The top ten best-governed countries in ECOWAS and SADC seem to be fairly well established. There are groups of consistently 'excellent', 'very good', 'good', 'average' and mediocre performers in both blocs, but individual countries' scores tend to fluctuate. Among ECOWAS members, Cape Verde, Ghana, Senegal and Benin are strong performers, whereas Cote d'Ivoire,



Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Nigeria and Togo tend to perform poorly. In the SADC bloc, Mauritius, Seychelles, Botswana, South Africa and Namibia are top performers in most dimensions across time, while Angola, DRC and Zimbabwe consistently underperform.

Thirdly, generally SADC demonstrates better governance in almost all dimensions than ECOWAS. There is an emerging pattern of declining, rather than improving, scores for many countries from year to year, which is more pronounced in the ECOWAS bloc. A correlation is widely believed to exist between good governance and development, so it is worrying that many ECOWAS and SADC countries are consistently underperforming in governance criteria, particularly Sustainable Economic Opportunity and Human Development. Good governance in Africa is not an option. It is the only hope for the continent to pull away from the precipice of underdevelopment. Africa's political leaders need to make sustained and concerted efforts to improve on all criteria of the Ibrahim Index.

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