

EDITOR'S NOTE

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June/2021

In the second half of 2020, the social and economic challenges arising from the pandemic of COVID-19 became more evident in Africa. In South Africa, it is estimated that the economy will have its worst contraction since 1930, with a result of -7.1% and an unemployment rate of 30%. The GDP of many African countries is expected to contract by 2020 or, at best, to have little growth. To circumvent this scenario, most governments have launched plans to stimulate economic activity, including rolling over debts and taxes for companies, opening up easier credit lines and financing energy and water bills.

In most African countries, the main form of tax collection is still the taxation of exports. Thus, a break in international trade chains has a strong impact on the state budget, just at the time when the pandemic of COVID-19 requires greater state investments in health, sanitation, and infrastructure. On the other hand, drops in sales and prices of a certain product — in the case of countries that are very dependent on a single type of exported product — mean greater difficulty in obtaining strong currencies like the dollar and the euro, which are crucial for the importation of medicines, vaccines and food.

As they seek to combat the spread of COVID-19 on their territories, many African countries have to deal with serious security crises. In the Sahel, attacks by extremists continued to occur throughout the year in Burkina Faso, Mali, Chad, and Niger, affecting the civilian populations. In northern Nigeria, Boko Haram's actions intensified, including, in October, the kidnapping of hundreds of students from a school in the city of Katsina. In the east of the continent, a separatist uprising in Ethiopia led to several deaths and thousands of refugees, who took shelter in Sudan. In Mozambique, rebels occupied important parts of the province of Cabo Delgado, causing a large

displacement of people towards Nampula, and in Angola there were armed conflicts in the province of Lunda Norte.

Security issues impact resource mobilization (financial and human), the disruption of school and production cycles, as well as migration flows and the spread of contagious diseases. The withdrawal of the UN missions in Sudan (Darfur) and Guinea-Bissau also represents an impact on the budgets of these countries, since it will depend on national agencies to maintain stability in these regions. Another phenomenon that required attention and investment from the public authorities, and also generated many internally displaced people, were the heavy rains and floods that hit Niger, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Chad, Sudan, and South Sudan.

However, both the African Union and the African Regional Organizations have played an important role in the formulation of far-reaching public policies. Foreign and domestic policy initiatives aimed at overcoming the health crisis (and other resulting crises) and, fundamentally, regional and international concertation have been important responses to the problems that have arisen. Finally, the South-South axis clearly shows itself to be vigorous in establishing the possibilities for cooperation, even in a scenario of many overlapping crises.

In its sixth year, the BJAS discusses, in this issue, historical and contemporary themes, focusing on issues of foreign and domestic policy, development and education, as well as security issues. In the article "Diplomacy and Foreign Policy in Mozambique: the first post-independence government - Samora Machel (1975-1986)", Ercilio Neves Brandão Langa analyzes diplomacy and foreign policy in the first government of independent Mozambique. Gilberto Libânio and José Castigo in "Regional inequality and the persistence of poverty in Mozambique, explained from the perspective of the vicious circle of poverty" analyze how regional inequalities negatively influenced the effectiveness of policies for poverty reduction in Mozambique in the period 2001-2014, through the principle of the Vicious Circle of Poverty advocated by Myrdal.

In the work of João Paulo Davi Constantino, Robson Dias da Silva, Georges Flexor, entitled, "The development of post-*apartheid* South Africa in the light of the institutionalist perspective: a critical review", it is evaluated to what extent the adaptation to market-oriented institutional models

has contributed to the South African development, from a set of institutions. Following, Anselmo Otávio discusses the permanences and ruptures of Ramaphosa's foreign policy in relation to his predecessors in the article "The Ramaphosa administration and the return to South Africa's protagonism: trends and challenges to foreign policy".

In "Democracy in Africa: the outstanding case of Somaliland", Pio Penna Filho and Henrique Oliveira da Motta analyze the political success of the self-declared Republic of Somaliland. According to the authors, since its independence from Somalia in 1991, the country has gone through four electoral processes, considered fair and reliable, and has achieved significant stability in its territory, even without any international recognition and under adverse conditions. Nilton César Fernandes Cardoso, Guilherme Geremias da Conceição and Igor Estima Sardo discuss Ethiopia's foreign policy from the 1974 Revolution to the first year of Abiy Ahmed Ali's administration, investigating in the process the country's greater political and economic openness.

Terence M. Mashingaidze, in the article "Zimbabwe's paradoxical 'new dispensation': political harm, endemic impunity and unending silences, 2017-2020" analyzes the capacity and commitment of the post-Mugabe government in Zimbabwe to the task of reconciling Zimbabweans and healing the country's historical wounds. Next, Nigeria's position in the *Next Eleven vis-à-vis* the BRICS is analyzed, with particular reference to the prospects for its emergence as an economic power before and after the COVID-19 pandemic. "Nigeria-BRICS relations and the Next-11: the dynamics of economic power before and beyond COVID-19 disruptions" is authored by Sharkdam Wapmuk, Oluwatooni Akinkuotu, and Vincent Ibonye.

Still on Nigeria, Emmanuel Olugbade Ojo, in "Dimensions of electoral reforms in Nigeria", presents a prognosis of the dimensions of electoral reforms and the likely challenges for the nascent democracy to withstand the possibility of reversion to autocracy. "Party politics, passive stakeholders and vengeful governorship election campaign in Ekiti state, Nigeria" by Mike Opeyemi Omilusi studies the 2018 governorship election in Ekiti State as a window to peek into the ruling party/opposition in a tough political contest and the behind the scenes of some passive stakeholders in Nigeria's electoral politics. And, Aondover Eric Msughter and Hamza A. Pate, in their article "National interest, freedom of expression and the nigerian press in contemporary democratic context" discuss the media as the Fourth Estate of the Nation.

Finally, Cesário José Sanajmbo Barbante analyzes the inclusion of technology, information, and communication in education in Angola, which marks another moment of transition in the Education and Teaching System,

with the integration of new digital tools that have provided a new teaching, a new learning, and new ways to manage administrative processes in the article "Digital inclusion in education in Angola: advances and retreats".

BJAS publishes a bilingual electronic and printed version (Portuguese and English). Thus, we expect the contribution of colleagues from Brazil and abroad, with whom we intend to establish links for the deepening of knowledge and the construction of a Southern vision on the African continent and its relations with them.

We thank the Editorial Assistants Cecília Pereira, Larissa Teixeira, Luiza Flores, Mariana Vitola and Rafaela Serpa and the CEBRAFRICA team that worked on the translation of the articles. We would also like to thank João Pedro Mascarello Funck for his collaboration in the translation and revision of the English texts.