



## Africa's a bustling continent

By Mort Rosenblum  
PAN-AFRICAN NEWS SERVICE

FANDANE, Senegal — If Africa is dying, the news has not reached this bamboo-fringed village, which has revolutionized itself with a coughing one-cylinder motor and a hole in the ground.

Up the road in Dakar, warfare is the last thing on the minds of well-fed urban middle class couples in silks and smiles at the African Sunset, who are still dancing at sunrise.

With all the mayhem and misery in Africa these days, there is also happiness and hope. In more than half of the 49 black African states, things are looking up. A few are beginning to boom.

"All you read about Africa is disaster," said Djibril Diallo, a self-made Senegalese savant with the United Nations. "But most of Africa is something else. I see a whole chain of reasons for hope."

A fresh look at the once-dark continent revealed similar optimism, from Timbuktu at the Sahara's edge to the thriving port of Cape Town.

Crises persist, and in some countries festering war and durable dictators block progress. Africa remains the world's poorest continent, plagued by AIDS epidemics and vulnerable to drought.

Combined debt of at least \$200 billion stymies development, and many economies depend heavily on world commodity prices.

But now there is hope for reversing old trends. A majority of Africans are making new headway, whether on a national scale or just in terms of putting a little more food in village cooking pots.

If 7 million refugees are still displaced, they total hardly more than 1 percent of the population in black Africa. Their number has fallen by a quarter in two years, and it is dropping steadily.

Ethiopia, once the world's syn-

onym for despair, had 12.4 percent economic growth in 1996.

Growth should average 5 percent in sub-Saharan Africa this year, with five countries over 10 percent, the World Bank says. A majority of economies are doing better than in 1995.

Equatorial Guinea, awash in oil, saw its economy grow by 37 percent in 1996 and may double that this year. Its growth is so fast it is left out of Africa's overall averages to give a realistic picture.

And statistics tell only part of the story in societies where the "informal sector" — undeclared economic activity — can easily equal what is officially on the books.

Because of moves toward democracy, private enterprise and rural development, millions of Africans are living richer, freer lives than many of them thought possible only a few years ago.

Across much of the continent, parents make a similar point. If they can feed and educate their children, and live in relative security, that alone is substantial progress.

Evidence is convincing in places like Fandane, a typical sprawl of thatched huts down a dirt road in Senegal.

A cooperative diesel-powered mill saves women hours a day of pounding grain. With extra time, they grow vegetables and turn out handicrafts to trade in nearby markets.

With a simple borehole, women no longer walk miles each day to fetch dirty water. They produce far more food, and most of their children live past the age of 5.

In Fandane, motivated villagers run their own show. When they pay back the few thousand dollars of outside help that got them started, they will invest in new projects.

"My kids will grow up strong and smart," said Ama Diop, barely 19 herself. To the horror of

elders who swore by large families to help with chores, she wants only two children.

Senegalese President Abdou Diouf sees a changing mindset in much of Africa, not only among leaders but also among ordinary people, who are taking charge of their own lives.

"Women are the key," he said in an interview. "With only a little assistance, they can perform miracles to help their families have a better life. And men, by and large, follow their lead."

On the grand scale, whole countries are turning around.

The Ivory Coast, determined to be an African elephant in league with Asian tigers, is adding oil, minerals, industry and banking to its traditional wealth from coffee and cocoa.

Its capital, Abidjan, looks like a mini-Manhattan plunked down on the French Riviera, a vibrant, glittering metropolis where restaurants serve cheese enchiladas and Korean kim chee.

Prosperity is trickling into the tin-roofed hovels around it. The worst slum — called Washington — was just bulldozed.

Diaspora money pours into Uganda. Neighboring Tanzania, once a writeoff, now borders on success. With Kenya, they are renewing the East African Community that warfare torpedoed decades ago.

South Africa, no longer the enemy, is linked to nearby smaller economies growing on their own.

After decades of trying to impose centralized systems, governments allow businessmen and villagers to take the lead.

Foreign donors focus on what they call "capacity building" and "good governance" at basic levels.

Democracy has softened dictatorial rule in a score of countries. Though often flawed and sometimes fixed, elections allow harsh criticism of leaders who once stifled any hint of dissent.

## Jackson visits Kenya

Rev. Jesse Jackson, left, President Clinton's special envoy for democracy in Africa, visits a market in the Nairobi slum of Korogoshi Tuesday. Jackson arrived in Nairobi late Sunday for a two-day visit ahead of Kenya's second general election since the east African nation returned to multiparty politics in 1991. Jackson was appointed in October to be President Clinton's envoy for encouraging democratic development in Africa.

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## Monzambique moves ahead

By Mort Rosenblum  
PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION

MAPUTO, Mozambique — Free-market democracy seems a strange fit for this scrapheap of Marxist dreams, crippled by civil war. But to its own surprise, Mozambique is suddenly an example for Africa.

In this Mediterranean-flavored capital, bankers in suits weave among construction crews on Mao Tse-tung and Ho Chi Minh streets. At night, neon bounces gaily off flaking pastel walls.

On rich rural land that for years produced only famine, farmers are harvesting again. Spectacular deserted beaches are sprouting tourist hotels.

Though still poor as countries come, needing a billion dollars a year in life support, Mozambique has shown how quickly a no-hope African basket case can turn itself around.

And if Mozambique can save itself with only shrimp and cashews and the promise of things to come, what about places like Angola and Congo with vast mineral wealth just waiting to be collected?

It is too early to declare success, but the mood is clearly upbeat.

"Things are working wonderfully," said Aldo Ajello, the former U.N. envoy who brokered peace in Mozambique's civil war in 1992, back on a visit. "People who used to kill each other are now debating in parliament."

Nearly all of Mozambique's 1.7 million refugees have since come

home.

Jose Luis Cabaco, the party ideologist in the old socialist state and now a filmmaker with nothing against amassing money, explained it simply: Mozambicans, sick of war, want a working society.

"We'll make it," he said. "We've had three good rainfalls. We have demonstrated that we can get along and build together. There is no turning back."

With Cambodia in turmoil again, Mozambique is the United Nations' success story of choice. Peacemakers stayed until 1994 and dragged the two foes into fair elections.

The World Bank prescribed bitter economic medicine. Foreign investors and Mozambicans bought moribund state enterprises. Inflation plummeted to a single digit. Growth is 7 percent and rising.

Billion-dollar projects to produce aluminum and to pipe out natural gas — as yet unexploited resources — could trim the need for aid. South Africa is developing a road-rail corridor from Maputo to Johannesburg.

On a recent Saturday at the soccer stadium, a single wild kick made the optimists' point. The ball rocketed past Malawi's goalkeeper, and set off the emotional equivalent of a nuclear explosion.

"Eeeeeeeeee," shrieked Anita Manjate, but the sound was lost in the din. A vegetable market vendor, she gyrated in salsamba steps and chanted: "Mo-

zambique! Mo-zam-bique!"

The national team had humbled an old foe to enter playoffs for the Africa Cup. More, the rejoicing reflected a civic spirit in a society no longer at odds with itself. Pride was back.

Watching the swirl of green and red flags, Roberto Lora, an Italian aid volunteer, observed: "This is a country that has won more than a soccer game."

Veteran diplomats share the optimism but add a note of caution.

"If you look backward, this is a tremendous success story," said Dutch ambassador Roeland van de Geer. "If you look forward, you wonder how in the world they're ever going to make it."

The new mood is reflected across the skyline of Maputo, a once-lovely city that is coming back from ruin, and up along the country's 2,500 miles of tropical-paradise coastline.

"I just drove the entire length of the country," exulted Arne Anderson, a Swedish contractor, as though describing a voyage to Saturn. A few years ago, only armed convoys ventured out of Maputo.

Export earnings increased by 30 percent to \$225 million this year, and are likely to grow as activity picks up in remote areas.

The Portuguese, the former colonial overlords who were driven out in 1975 and left ships scuttled in the harbor just for spite, are welcomed back with little apparent rancor.