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The Growth Report – Highlights on Sub-Saharan Africa

- Sub-Saharan Africa is enjoying its fastest growth for decades –around 6 percent a year—thanks to better macroeconomic management, aid, higher prices of commodity exports, and an efficient and accountable leadership in many countries.
- Despite Africa’s resumed growth, its growth rate since the 1980s has fallen short of the rest of the developing world by 5 percentage points, so poverty persists.
- The region has made rapid progress in primary education and in fighting malaria and AIDS, but it still faces challenges in the delivery of public services, infrastructure, governance, and inclusiveness. 23 African countries are unlikely to reach the MDGs.
- African countries with natural resources are growing quickly thanks to the hike in commodity prices. The challenge is how to use this boom to reduce the region’s dependency on commodities, and how to face food shortages, a problem that might worsen as the climate warms.
- Botswana is one of the only 13 countries have been successful in achieving sustained high growth. South Africa, Rwanda, Ghana, Uganda and Madagascar are countries that, having achieved macroeconomic stability, can now afford to think about long-term growth.
- The Report calls for industrialized economies to grant African countries’ time-bound trade preferences to manufactured exports to help them overcome the disadvantages of being late starters, and a financing of the expansion of Africa’s tertiary education to make up for Africa’s brain drain.

Some of the report’s main recommendations specific to Africa include:

- Increasing the productivity and output of agriculture.
- Reducing the cost of doing business through the simplification of administrative procedures.
- Continuing progress in elementary school enrolments, improving quality of education, and committing more resources to secondary and tertiary education, ensuring the inclusion of girls.
- Encouraging regional cooperation and integration – key for landlocked countries.
- Giving all citizens/sectors access to secure channels for saving and credit.

- Adopting best practices in the area of the exploitation of natural resources, such as the setting up of a fund for resource rents, which pays out a percentage of the total each year for the benefit of the citizens.
- Continuing to focus on macroeconomic stability and responsible fiscal policies (Nigeria's 2007 Fiscal Responsibility Bill being an example of this.)