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African renaissance

By A Reader

Troubles in **Libya, Tunisia, Egypt, Algeria, Morocco** and who knows where next. The wave of unrest and civil uprisings sweeping across North Africa and the Middle East is a clear message from the mass populace that it is time for change. In North Africa, in particular, where the level of political stability has long surpassed that in sub-Saharan Africa, the demand for change is timely and important. It coincides with a growing sense of frustration among people across the African continent.

Africans have endured bad governance for decades. But now, in many segments of African society, the desire for improvement action is beginning to mushroom. Whether this will translate to further civil unrest in other parts of the continent is yet to be seen. Many sub-Saharan African countries would certainly benefit from a radical revamp of state governance and leadership accountability, more so than any other region of the world today.

The frustration most African citizens feel is a direct result of leadership failure across the continent. For decades Africa's development has been hampered by ineffective leadership and endemic kleptocracy. As a result, the continent's immense potential has remained largely untapped, certainly since the end of colonialism. However, the on-going unrest, albeit limited to the north of the continent, is the latest indication of a turning tide in Africa. Earlier signs are easy to spot if one looks closely enough. Countries like Egypt and Morocco have enjoyed the economic benefits of established apparel manufacturing and tourism sectors for a while. More recently, a few other African states have joined a slowly expanding group of regional countries making great strides in improving political stability and economic development – countries like **Ghana, Lesotho, Botswana** and **Senegal**, where economic and industrial development has evolved considerably in areas as diverse as property, hospitality, tourism, banking, ICT and call-centre outsourcing.

