

THE COMING OF THE “CHEETAHS”

Patrick Awuah knows that Africa’s future lies in the education of a new generation of leaders. Born in Ghana, Awuah went to the United States as a teenager to attend Swarthmore College. When Awuah returned to Ghana five years later, he was dismayed by what he saw: an autocratic government, economic ruin, and complete lack of basic services. This was certainly no place to stay and have a career.¹

Awuah returned to the United States, where he landed a position as a program manager at Microsoft and began to cultivate a successful career and start a family. However, with the birth of his first child, Awuah’s perspective on his future—and on the potential for Ghana—began to change. As he says, “Being a parent got me to thinking about a lot of things . . . in particular what effect Africa would have on my children. If that continent can turn around, it will make a big difference in how the world perceives my children because they are African.”²

Awuah made his choice. He returned to Ghana in 2001 and cofounded Ashesi University, a small liberal arts college that expressly aims to educate Africa’s next generation of leaders. As Awuah sees it, Africa’s future depends directly on what the new generation of young people does with it. He believes that the question of transformation in Africa is entirely a question of leadership: “Africa can only be transformed by enlightened leaders. Leaders have to be trained and educated right . . . and they are not. There is very little emphasis on ethics [in education] and a stronger

Opposite:

Treating malaria in

Iringa, Tanzania

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Ostergaard / Panos)

Thanks to Casey Dunning for helping to draft this chapter.

¹ Brad Broberg, “Patrick Awuah Left Microsoft to Found Ashesi University,” *Puget Sound Business Journal*, September 10, 2004, <http://seattle.bizjournals.com/seattle/stories/2004/09/13/focus19.html>.

² Ibid.

sense of entitlement than responsibility so I decided to engage this particular problem.”³

Ashesi’s liberal arts coursework focuses on creating students who are “ethical, entrepreneurial leaders of exceptional integrity with the ability to confront difficult problems and come up with the right solutions.”⁴ By being intentional about the kind of students and future leaders Ashesi produces, Awuah hopes to create dynamic professionals who are prepared to succeed in all facets of life, from business to politics. As he sees it, a great society can emerge within one generation.

Patrick Awuah and the students of Ashesi University represent a new generation of African leaders—people determined to revolutionize governments, institutions, and communities through innovative thinking, wise leadership, and hard work, rather than through connections, corruption, and force.

The best news is that Patrick is not alone. Throughout Africa, and especially in the emerging countries, a new generation of leaders and entrepreneurs is rising to the top of government bureaucracies, civil society organizations, and businesses. They have been given many labels: “Africa’s new hope,” “Africa Two,” and, most aptly, from Ghanaian scholar George Ayittey, “the Cheetah generation.”⁵ They have begun quietly and quickly to move into Africa’s government bureaucracies, political leadership, private sector, and civil society groups, replacing staid practices with innovation and accountability. They are Africa’s new generation, a nebulous yet palpable group across the continent that is seeking to redefine Africa through democracy, transparency, and a dynamic private sector, and by fostering strong connections with each other and with the rest of the world.

They are not defined by age, gender, education, or location. Although most are young, some are older but sick of the old ways of doing things. There are both men and women. Many are well educated, but some come with just street smarts, an idea, and some energy. Most live in urban areas, but they can be found in small villages and towns across the continent running small businesses or local NGOs. What sets them apart is their commitment and their drive to break from the past and move their countries in a new direction.

Ayittey vividly described a “new generation of young Africans who look at African issues and problems from a totally unique perspective. [They

3 TED Talk, “Patrick Awuah on Educating Leaders,” TED, <http://www.ted.com/speakers/patrick-awuah.html>.

4 Ibid.

5 George Ayittey, *Africa Unchained: The Blueprint for Africa’s Future* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

are] the cheetah generation. They do not relate to the old colonialist paradigm, the slave trade, nor Africa's post-colonialist nationalist leaders."⁶ In contrast to the old, slow-moving "hippo" generation, which Ayittey sees as stuck in the past complaining about colonialism and imperialism, this emerging class of entrepreneurs and leaders is focused on transparency, accountability, good governance, respect for basic human rights, and private sector economic opportunities. They are working to position Africa as uniquely Africa, neither tied to nationalist pedagogy nor bound to Western mandates.

Many of Africa's first group of postcolonial presidents and prime ministers rose to power directly from leadership positions in independence movements or rebel armies. Unfortunately, in most cases, they proved to be far more adept at fighting against the colonial government than they were at running their own. Many of those leaders consolidated power in their own hands, weakened mechanisms for accountability and transparency, and hung on in office for far too long (and a few continue to do so). And they installed cronies throughout the government and beyond whose major qualification was loyalty, not competence or accountability. This pattern is by no means unique to Africa; it has been repeated by the first-generation leaders of many newly independent countries around the world. But as Awuah, Ayittey, and many others have argued, these leadership problems were the heart of Africa's conflict and stagnation.

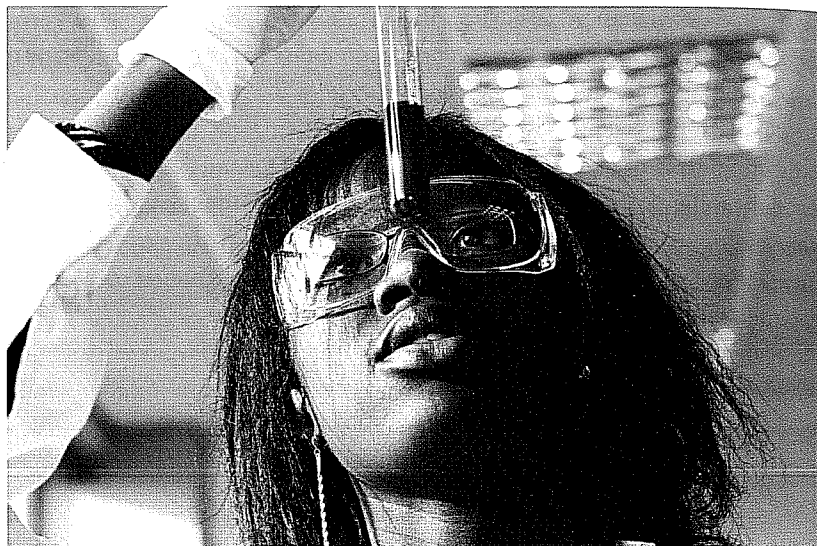
The old leaders and their styles, ideas, policies, fears, and histories are fading away. They are slowly being replaced by a new generation shaped by different experiences and ideas, a generation poised to overcome some of the most trenchant problems of the past and build a new future for Africa. The new generation wants to end the perception of African countries as basket cases and to present instead stable, safe, and dynamic communities that are productive and responsible members of the international community.

This generational change is now widely noted, both at home and abroad. President Barack Obama pointed to "the young people—brimming with talent and energy and hope . . . speaking up against patronage and participating in the political process" in his first speech in sub-Saharan Africa—fittingly in Accra.⁷ Rock star Bono cited the "members of the growing African middle class, who are fed up with being patronized and hearing the song of their majestic continent in a minor key."⁸ Many formerly expatriate Africans are returning to their home countries, and

6 Ibid, xix.

7 Barack Obama, "Remarks to the Ghanaian Parliament," July 11, 2009. http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Remarks-by-the-President-to-the-Ghanaian-Parliament/.

8 Bono, "Rebranding Africa," *New York Times*, July 9, 2009, page A25.



where they have not yet returned, leaders want them back. Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf—who herself returned after the civil war to lead her country in a fundamentally new direction—called out in her 2006 inaugural address: “We have hundreds of doctors, engineers, and economists, as well as thousands of teachers, nurses, professors, and other Liberians who possess specialized skills currently living abroad. I re-echo my appeal to all of you to please come home! Please make the sacrifice, for your country needs you and needs you now!”⁹ Whether returning from abroad to reclaim life in their home country or rising through the system at home, this emerging generation is taking the future into its own hands and moving forward with a new set of standards and strong resolution.

Dr. Agnes Binagwaho heard the call. After she completed her medical training in Belgium and France, Dr. Binagwaho returned to Rwanda in 1996, just after the genocide and as the HIV/AIDS pandemic was beginning to wreak havoc across the continent. “The first week I was back in Rwanda was the worst of my life,” she recalled. The drugs to treat HIV/AIDS were too expensive. Women were dying in childbirth for “entirely stupid reasons.” “I saw more deaths in one week than I had seen in five years as a pediatrician in France. I nearly packed my bags to go back. There were no resources. Everyone was dying.”¹⁰

Luckily for countless Rwandans, Binagwaho did not leave. For the past 14 years, she has led Rwanda’s battle against HIV/AIDS, first as the execu-

9 Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, “Inaugural Address,” January 16, 2006, page 4, http://www.emansion.gov.lr/doc/inaugural_add_1.pdf.

10 Christine Gorman, “Anges Binagwaho on Brain Drain,” Global Health Report, posted April 23, 2008, <http://globalhealthreport.blogspot.com/2008/04/agnes-binagwaho-on-brain-drain.html>.

tive secretary of the National Commission for the Fight against HIV/AIDS, and now as the permanent secretary for the Ministry of Health. She has helped develop the standard of care for the treatment of HIV/AIDS patients in Rwanda, improve access to care for communities, and develop the overall national strategy to fight the disease. And with her leadership and the efforts of countless Rwandans, the tide is beginning to turn. The HIV/AIDS adult prevalence rate in Rwanda has fallen steadily from 6 percent in 1997 to under 3 percent today, the number of annual deaths has fallen by 70 percent, and the number of people living with the disease has dropped by one-third.¹¹ This is what leadership and commitment can do.

But her vision is much bigger. For Binagwaho, confronting HIV/AIDS is just one piece of the economic development puzzle. She is now championing the use of information and communications technologies to improve health care in Rwanda and in the process give people more and better access to information. With a new e-Health system, Binagwaho hopes “to create an effective and sustainable health system that will solve the challenges, such as the lack of infrastructure and the shortage of professionals.”¹²

The cheetahs can be found in all walks of society across all of Africa. They are a particularly important presence in the emerging countries, where democratic governance and friendlier economic policies allow them to flourish. Many are joining businesses in managerial or analytic positions in financial firms, cell phone companies, manufacturers, trading houses, and hotels. Others are starting their own businesses, often overcoming long odds to work in the informal sector, using mobile technology to help farmers find data online, introducing mobile cell phone chargers, or opening Internet cafes or small restaurants. They are taking advantage of the more open economic environment with a strong entrepreneurial spirit. They are bringing in new funds for investment, some of it from friends and relatives overseas in the diaspora.

Many combine fresh ideas, entrepreneurship, technology, and just plain energy. Senegal's Amadou Ba is one. He is the cofounder and president of AllAfrica.com, the largest online aggregator and distributor of news from sub-Saharan Africa. AllAfrica.com is affiliated with more than 140 news organizations throughout the continent that feed content into the website. In return, AllAfrica.com markets and shares the various news articles and, importantly, shares the revenues with the various

11 UNAIDS, “2008 Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic,” UNAIDS, http://www.unaids.org/en/KnowledgeCentre/HIVData/GlobalReport/2008/2008_Global_Report.asp.

12 Agnes Binagwaho, “The Use of Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) to Provide and Support Healthcare Service Delivery in Rwanda,” *Disruptive Women in Health Care*, article posted February 4, 2010, <http://www.disruptivewomen.net/author/abinagwaho/>.

media outlets. Ba also serves as the acting executive director of the African Media Initiative, a program designed to radically change the media landscape in Africa through building capacity and training journalists, media managers, information technology workers, and a host of other media and journalism professionals. Ba wants the African Media Initiative to play a prominent role in the future of African media and help to “strengthen the progress that has been made so far and take the media landscape to the next level.” With “patient capital and a holistic approach to investment in the continent,” Ba believes that the media space in Africa will become even more far-reaching and robust to support a growing and vibrant Africa.¹³

Others are joining the government. A new generation of capable ministers, deputies, and directors are beginning to play pivotal roles in strengthening policy analysis and making governments more efficient and effective. Many have returned from lucrative jobs abroad to underpaid jobs in their native homes simply to have the chance to effect change for a more promising future.

Amara Konneh fled Liberia when he was 20 years old when his family was viciously gunned down in the civil war. After a long and difficult journey, he made his way to a refugee camp in the remote village of Musardou in Guinea. He watched Liberian refugees in the camp die from hunger, poverty, and disease and decided to do something. He helped form a refugee committee for the camp that took a census and kept birth and death records and used this information to advocate for larger food supplies from the United Nations High Commission on Refugees. He then went to the local chiefs to ask for a piece of land to grow beans and corn, sold the crops on the local market, and used the proceeds to rehabilitate an abandoned building and turn it into a school for children from the camp. He soon had more than 100 students and impressed the International Rescue Committee so much that they began to provide school supplies and pay some of the teachers. They then hired Konneh as the refugee education coordinator for the district.

At age 23, he made his way to the United States, where he worked his way through Delaware County Community College, earned a bachelor’s degree from Drexel University, and eventually a graduate degree in Management Information Systems from Penn State. He landed a plum job as a financial systems analyst at the Vanguard Group of Investment Companies and settled down to enjoy life with his wife and children.¹⁴

13 David Sasaki, “Interview with Amadou M. Ba of AllAfrica.com,” *Rising Voices*, article posted October 10, 2009, <http://rising.globalvoicesonline.org/blog/2009/10/10/video-interview-with-amadou-m-ba-of-allafrica-com>.

14 Amara Konneh, interview with the author, December 15, 2009.

He could have very comfortably stayed put. But when Liberia's civil war ended in 2003 and the presidential elections heated up in 2005, he could not sit back and watch from afar. Although he had never met Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, he took a leave of absence from his job to sign up for her campaign. She was impressed and offered him a job, so following her inauguration he moved back to Liberia. After 18 months in the president's office spearheading information technology initiatives, he went to the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University to study public administration. He returned in 2008 at age 38 to become the minister of planning, one of the youngest ministers on the continent. He has attracted a smart young staff, and they are moving fast to develop strategies for growth and poverty reduction and to change relationships with donors, NGOs, and others supporting those strategies. Konneh typifies the cheetah generation: young, energetic, technically savvy, and shaped by experiences both at home and around the world. They are poised to lead the emerging countries to a future very different from the past.

They are also poised to change the gender biases of the past. Women are moving into higher-profile private and public positions, as they become income earners, civil society leaders, political leaders, and government officials. Shifting gender paradigms have played a crucial role in defining the cheetah generation; an increased focus on women and girls has created the opportunity for women to enter into traditionally "masculine" roles and jobs. The education and professionalization of women adds a whole new dimension to the available skilled workforce, doubling Africa's human capital potential.

Kenya's Wangari Maathai was a great leader in the spirit of the cheetah generation long before most of the new generation was even born. A scientist by training, she has always been a trailblazer. She was the first woman in East Africa to earn a doctorate degree, and she became chair of the Department of Veterinary Anatomy at the University of Nairobi in 1976. During the late 1970s and early 1980s, she rose to leadership positions in several key civic organizations, including director of the Kenyan Red Cross Society, chair of the board of the Environment Liaison Center, and chair of the National Council of Women in Kenya. In 1977, she founded what eventually became the Green Belt Movement, a broad-based grassroots organization dedicated to organizing groups of women to plant trees to preserve the environment, create jobs, and improve the quality of life. The Green Belt Movement has helped women plant more than 20 million trees on their farms, school grounds, and church compounds. In 1986, the movement established a Pan African Green Belt Movement, and started chapters in

Tanzania, Uganda, Malawi, Lesotho, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, and several other countries.

Maathai's work with the Green Belt Movement and her growing calls for democracy brought her into repeated conflicts with the government of Daniel Arap Moi during the late 1980s and 1990s. She led a number of protests, regularly spoke out against the government on both democracy and environmental issues, and was briefly jailed on several occasions. She became a leader of the growing democracy movement, ran for parliament several times, and finally won a seat in the 2002 election that brought an end to Moi's 24-year reign. In January 2003, she was appointed assistant minister of environment and natural resources. In 2004, she was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in recognition of her efforts, the first African woman and environmentalist to win the honor. Wangari Maathai is proof of the changes that can come from one woman's energy, ideas, and determination.¹⁵

Some of the cheetahs made major contributions first at home, and now are contributing to Africa's revival as leaders in international organizations. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Nigeria's first female minister of finance, tirelessly led the fight against corruption in her home country and was later appointed managing director of the World Bank in 2007. Antoinette Sayeh served as Liberia's minister of finance following the election of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, and is now director of the Africa Department of the International Monetary Fund. And the best known of all is Kofi Annan, who served as the secretary-general of the United Nations from 1997 through 2006 and was a co-recipient (with the UN) of the 2001 Nobel Peace Prize.

Many have played changing roles over time. Benno Ndulu is a leading thinker about economic development in Africa, an accomplished teacher, and a prominent policymaker. Ndulu was the lead author of the African Economic Research Consortium (AERC) study on economic growth in Africa that I have referred to many times in this book. His extensive writing has been a major force in shaping the debate and thinking on economic development in Africa. But he has been more than a writer. Ndulu was instrumental in setting up the AERC in 1988, and served as its first research director and later as its executive director. The AERC's Collaborative Masters Degree Program, based at African universities with a joint faculty at AERC in Nairobi, has graduated more than 1,700 well-trained master's students in economics between its founding in 1993 and 2009. Its collaborative PhD program has produced 58 PhDs since 2000.

15 This account is drawn from Wangari Maathai's autobiography, *Unbowed: A Memoir* (New York: Knopf Publishing Group, 2006).

These graduates are making a difference in public and private sector positions throughout SSA.¹⁶ In 2008, Ndulu became the governor of the Central Bank of Tanzania, where he is shaping economic policy and laying the foundation for Tanzania's continued economic success.

The cheetahs outside of emerging Africa are beginning to provide hope as well; given the chance, they will be central to igniting change in their own countries. Doing so will take dogged determination, and nobody exemplifies this better than Zimbabwe's Tererai Trent. *New York Times* columnist Nick Kristof tells the amazing story of this village cattle herder turned PhD:

Tererai was born in a village in rural Zimbabwe . . . and attended elementary school for less than one year. Her father married her off when she was about 11 to a man who beat her regularly. She seemed destined to be one more squandered African asset. A dozen years passed. Jo Luck, the head of an aid group called Heifer International, passed through the village and told the women there that they should stand up, nurture dreams, change their lives. Inspired, Tererai scribbled down four absurd goals. . . . She wrote that she wanted to study abroad, and to earn a BA, a master's, and a doctorate.

Tererai began to work for Heifer and several Christian organizations as a community organizer. She used the income to take correspondence courses, while saving every penny she could. In 1998 she was accepted to Oklahoma State University, but she insisted on taking all five of her children with her rather than leave them with her husband. "I couldn't abandon my kids," she recalled. "I knew that they might end up getting married off." Tererai's husband eventually agreed that she could take the children to America—as long as he went too. Heifer helped with the plane tickets, Tererai's mother sold a cow, and neighbors sold goats to help raise money. With US\$4,000 in cash wrapped in a stocking and tied around her waist, Tererai set off for Oklahoma.

An impossible dream had come true, but it soon looked like a nightmare. Tererai and her family had little money and lived in a ramshackle trailer, shivering and hungry. Her husband refused to do any housework—he was a man!—and coped by beating her. "There was very little food," she said. "The kids would come home from school, and they would be hungry." Tererai found herself eating from trash cans, and she thought about quitting—but felt that doing so would let down other African women.

"I knew that I was getting an opportunity that other women were dying to get," she recalled. So she struggled on, holding several jobs, taking every class she could, washing and scrubbing, enduring beatings, barely sleeping. At one point the university tried to expel Tererai for falling behind on tuition payments. A university official, Ron Beer, intervened on her behalf and rallied the faculty and community behind her with donations and support.

¹⁶ Thanks to Steve O'Connell for the background information on the AERC degree programs.

"I saw that she had enormous talent," Dr. Beer said. His church helped with food, Habitat for Humanity provided housing, and a friend at Wal-Mart carefully put expired fruits and vegetables in boxes beside the dumpster and tipped her off.

Soon afterward, Tererai had her husband deported back to Zimbabwe for beating her, and she earned her BA—and started on her MA. Then her husband returned, now frail and sick with a disease that turned out to be AIDS. Tererai tested negative for HIV, and then, feeling sorry for her husband, she took in her former tormentor and nursed him as he grew sicker and eventually died.

Through all this blur of pressures, Tererai excelled at school, pursuing a PhD at Western Michigan University and writing a dissertation on AIDS prevention in Africa even as she began working for Heifer as a program evaluator.¹⁷

Tererai Trent, now Dr. Tererai Trent, completed her PhD in December 2009. When she gets the chance, there is little doubt she will be a major force for change in Zimbabwe.

The cheetah generation means many things, but five stand out: ideas, technology, entrepreneurship, market power, and the push for good governance and accountability. First, they are bringing fresh ideas to the table in business, government, and civil society. As Ayittey has pointed out, they do not see the world through the lens of colonialism, imperialism, socialism, or the Cold War. They are self-reliant and self-starters. They are providing new thinking and perspectives on brand new businesses, such as biomass fuel for cleaner and smaller-scale energy in rural areas, and on how to organize old businesses better, including everything from bakeries to breweries. They come with ideas and strategies for organizing communities, particularly youth, to provide local services and speak out in political debates. And they come with ideas and approaches for using the private sector to solve what were once seen as public sector problems, such as supplying clean water and basic health services.

William Kamkwamba is full of ideas. The young Malawian began inventing when he was just 14 years old, after he had to drop out of school when his family could no longer afford his tuition. He built his family an electricity-generating windmill using blue gum trees, bicycle parts, and materials collected in a local scrap yard, and working from rough plans he found in a library book. His description illustrates great entrepreneurial spirit:

After I dropped out from school, I went to the library, and I read a book that was called *Using Energy*, and I got information about doing the mill. And I tried and I made it. In fact, the design of the windmill that was in the book,

17 Nicholas Kristoff, "Triumph of a Dreamer," *New York Times*, November 14, 2009, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/11/15/opinion/15kristof.html>.

it had three blades, and I made four blades because I wanted to increase power. I used a bicycle frame, and a pulley, and plastic pipe, and it produced 12 watts—enough to power four bulbs and two radios.¹⁸

Since then, he has built a solar-powered water pump that supplies the first drinking water in his village of Wimbe and two other windmills (the tallest standing at 39 feet), and he is planning two more.¹⁹ His work inspired the founding of the Moving Windmills Project, which works with local leaders to design, organize, and implement appropriate solutions for problems in food, clothing, shelter, sanitation, health, education, clean water, and community building. William's latest project is to team with Moving Windmills and buildOn.org to rebuild the Wimbe Primary School. William's energy and ideas are solving problems and helping to bring electricity, water, and education to the people of Wimbe.

Second, the cheetahs are at the forefront of introducing innovative technologies that are creating new opportunities and solving old problems. In the last chapter we explored these new technologies, especially mobile phones and the Internet. But just as important as the technologies themselves are the people who are bringing them. New technologies would not have had the same impact if it were not for the people who understand them and have the creativity to figure out how to use them. Young Africans who have lived in Europe or the United States are deeply comfortable with new technologies and with adapting quickly to even newer ones. And having experienced the wide-ranging applications of these technologies elsewhere, they have the capacity and vision to bring them home and apply them to new problems. Whether it is creating the platform for farmers to get crop prices, figuring out how to transfer money more safely and easily or how to transfer health data to rural nurses, or establishing a mechanism for more open political debate, the cheetahs are at the cutting edge of making these new technologies work. It takes both the technology and the cheetahs to make it happen.

Third, the cheetahs bring a new entrepreneurial energy to business enterprises, small and large. The cheetahs are both taking advantage of the economic opening in the emerging countries and pushing hard to further reduce barriers against business. They include young farmers introducing sesame seeds to sell to market, investment bankers working out of Johannesburg, tailors opening a second (or third) clothing shop, cell phone operators selling minutes back in their villages, engineers de-

18 Transcript from "William Kamkwamba on Building a Windmill," TED Global 2007, http://www.ted.com/talks/william_kamkwamba_on_building_a_windmill.html.

19 Sarah Childress, "A Young Tinkerer Builds a Windmill, Electrifying a Nation," *Wall Street Journal*, December 12, 2007, A1. See also William Kamkwamba and Bryan Mealer, *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind: Creating Currents of Electricity and Hope* (London: William Morrow, 2009).



veloping new ideas for solar power, and horticulturists selling cut flowers from Uganda and Kenya. The cheetahs share the energy, determination, and self-reliance to make their businesses of all sizes work.

Masetumo Lebitsa knows how to overcome the odds. When the European women who had started Lesotho's mohair weaving industry abruptly left in the early 1990s because of the political turmoil surrounding the end of apartheid in neighboring South Africa, the local weavers were left to fend for themselves. With little education and less business management training, these women faced an uphill battle trying to operate successful businesses. Many failed. But not Lebitsa. She organized the women that remained in a small company called Matela Weavers, formed an association, and changed the name to Maseru Tapestries and Mats. She signed up for free artisan training programs to develop her business skills. She interviewed her clients to get a better idea of what they wanted and needed, in effect performing her own marketing survey. And she kept at it. Despite a number of initial difficult years, Lebitsa was focused on succeeding on her own merits, noting "I want to have my business run like a real business. I don't want to continue to take handouts." Lebitsa has built Maseru Tapestries and Mats into a thriving business, taking orders from visitors, diplomats, and even

the king. Her business has gone international, and her weavings are now sold in Southern Africa, Europe, and the United States.²⁰

Fourth, the cheetahs are a powerful consumer force. They are not just starting their own businesses, as important as that is. With their size and buying power they are the customer base for a wide range of goods and services: banking, mobile phones, restaurants, theaters, bookstores, coffee shops, tailors, and a range of other consumer goods.²¹ Some cheetahs are investing in businesses specifically designed to cater to other cheetahs. For investors, they are a growing force that cannot be ignored.

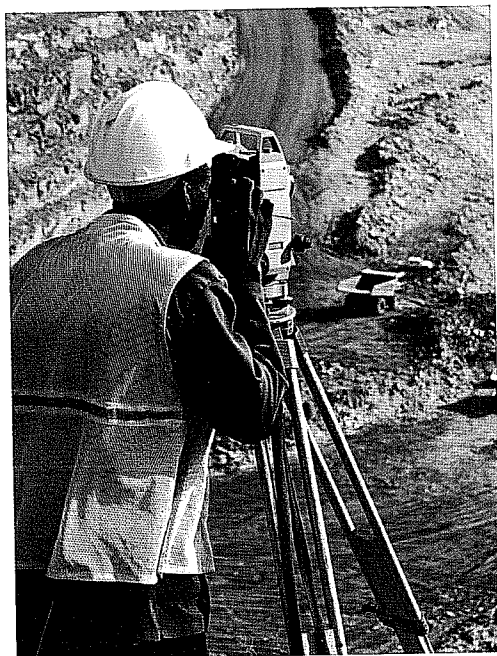
Fifth, the cheetahs are leading the charge for greater transparency, accountability, and honesty. Partly because of their ingrained use of technology and their globalized outlook, they expect open debate, tolerance for opposition, and much better data and information on what is happening. They expect governments to post information quickly on key government policies and financial information, including budget outcomes, contracts with investors, major policy decisions, and pending legislation. They do not easily tolerate delays or hiding of information. For many, the question is not whether democracy makes sense—that seems patently obvious—but how to make it work better and hold elected leaders more accountable for their actions. And they carry a lot of votes; the young generation makes up a huge and growing portion of the populations of the emerging countries, gaining increasing power to choose their leaders.

Sometimes being a cheetah comes at a price, especially for those fighting against corruption. Kenya's John Githongo is a former journalist who at age 34 founded and subsequently ran the Kenyan chapter of Transparency International, an NGO devoted to transparency, accountability, and good governance. Four years later, newly elected Kenyan President Mwai Kibaki, who had run on an anticorruption platform following the 24-year reign of Daniel arap Moi, appointed Githongo as permanent secretary for governance and ethics in the president's office. He had two tasks: investigate corruption perpetrated under Moi and take steps to prevent new government officials from following the same path.

He was making good progress on both counts, but apparently making too much progress on the second to suit the tastes of some of his new colleagues. After just two years he abruptly fled to London and resigned. The

20 Masetumo Lebitsa, e-mail interview, May 6, 2010. See also "Maseru Tapestries and Mats," AfricanCrafts.com, <http://www.africancrafts.com/artisan.php?sid=32937883115182448238975381169031&id=maseru&pg=intro>.

21 See Vijay Mahajan, *Africa Rising: How 900 Million African Consumers Offer More Than You Think* (Philadelphia: Wharton School Publishing, 2008).



Surveying an
open-pit copper
mine in Zambia

reason became clear only later: he had uncovered a series of corrupt procurement deals involving several senior government officials worth hundreds of millions of dollars, and his life was under serious threat. He could have decided to stay and remain silent. After all, he belonged to the elite, was raised in comfort, was close to the president, and could have expected a long and financially rewarding career had he played along. But his conscience wouldn't let him. Since 2004, he has lived in exile in London, teaching, writing, speaking, and doing all he can to keep pushing for good governance back home. But chances are that at some point in the future, Githongo will have his chance to return home.

In many ways Githongo epitomizes the courage of the cheetah generation. Michela Wrong, the author of a biography about Githongo, put it this way: "I am convinced that the Githongo story is one of those flares that history periodically sends up, alerting us to an important change taking place on the continent: a generation of well-educated, self-confident, and frustrated young Africans is preparing to call time on its fathers' ways of doing business."²²



This book has analyzed some of the key transformations that are taking place across the emerging countries: the shift to democracy, the introduction of more sensible economic policies, the end of the debt crisis, the establishment of better relationships with the international community, and the rise of new technologies. The cheetahs are a bit different from these other transformations; they are not so much a thing that is changing as they are the driving force that is bringing about that change. They are the force that brings together these other changes, gives them their power, and brings them to life.

The cheetahs are pushing hard for more representational and democratic governments and demanding transparency and accountability.

²² See Michela Wrong, "NS Profile—John Githongo," *New Statesman*, February 6, 2006, <http://www.newstatesman.com/200602060018>; Michela Wrong, "The Buck Stops Here," *Financial Times*, January 19, 2007, <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/2/1c4e2482-a6c0-11db-83e4-0000779e2340.html>; and Michela Wrong, *It's Our Turn to Eat: The Story of a Kenyan Whistleblower* (London: Fourth Estate, 2009).

They are willing to stand up, be heard, and push back against the old ways of doing business. They are strong advocates for a better business environment, less red tape, and more space for small business and entrepreneurs. They have little time for talk of strong forms of socialism and heavy state intervention. They are demanding their voices be heard in discussions and debates about their countries' poverty reduction strategies and in negotiations with donors, sometimes pushing back on their governments' old ways of thinking, and sometimes pushing back on donors when they are stuck in their bureaucratic and paternalistic mindsets. And they are the main vehicles for introducing new technologies to solve long-standing problems in imaginative ways.

All of this bodes well for sustaining the progress of the emerging countries. The cheetahs are coming to the fore as the new generation of talented leaders in business, government, politics, and civil society. The future is in their hands. And in their hands the future looks bright.