

## By 2050, 1 in 4 of the world's working age population will be African.



What kind of prospects will they face? The answer will have far-reaching consequences not just for Africa, but for the whole world.

We believe that Africa can be in the first half of this century what Asia was in the second half of the last century. The old image of Africa – of a continent ravaged by war, poverty and disease – needs to be discarded. Yes, huge challenges remain. But a transformation is possible – in fact in many parts of the continent, it is already under way.

We set up the Africa Governance Initiative more than two years ago now, with the simple yet ambitious objective of helping a new generation of visionary African leaders to realise that transformation by making their countries more peaceful, stable and prosperous. We were asked to begin our work in Rwanda and Sierra Leone in 2008, and extended our commitment to Liberia in 2009.

Our work in each country is a partnership founded on the principle that political leadership matters, and that government has a crucial role in making people's lives better. That means creating a climate in which jobs can be created, essential services like health and education delivered, and people lifted out of poverty. The support of the international community and a new generation of global philanthropists will be critical. But ultimately this kind of change can only be achieved – and sustained – if it is led by African leaders themselves.

Our approach is guided by this belief in the ability of Africa's people and their leaders to seize the opportunity to transform their countries, and our desire to support them in this effort. All too often, the challenge they face is one of capacity. They know what needs to be done to transform the lives of their citizens. They have a vision to achieve it, and no shortage of will. But the capacity to implement – to translate vision into results – is weak. The systems of government at their disposal are simply inadequate to meet the

challenges of a fast-changing world. In countries like Sierra Leone and Liberia, now recovering from decades of conflict and misrule, this is hardly surprising.



Responding to this challenge, we embed teams of highly trained, motivated people from the international public and private sectors within the heart of partner governments, working alongside their African counterparts to build the capacity and systems necessary to put their policies into effect. Complementing the work of our on-the-ground teams, Tony Blair supports the Presidents of the countries we work with, visiting frequently on behalf of the charity, offering the kind of personal insight and guidance that comes from someone who has himself spent a decade working at the highest levels of political leadership and has grappled with the complexity of delivering radical reform. AGI's focus is government effectiveness – we recognise that this can sometimes seem further away from reducing poverty than working on education, on health, on sanitation. But for us, effective governance is the bedrock of long-term, sustainable development in any of these areas. When governments are unable to effectively design and implement programmes or when they don't have the capacity to be real partners in development, all sectors suffer.

You probably won't have heard much about AGI. That has been deliberate – over the past two-and-a-half years, our focus has been on working alongside our partners and proving that this approach works. What matters to us is achieving results with our partners in Africa, and it's right that they get the credit for the success they achieve, not us. It is our colleagues in Rwanda, Sierra Leone and Liberia who must wrestle with how to bring affordable power and light to cities that have been dark for decades; to provide access to the basic services - health, education, sanitation – that their people demand; to show the world they are open for investment, and promote home-grown entrepreneurship. And they must do all this in the face of bureaucracy, scarce resources, and entrenched interests. It is an honour to take the opportunity of AGI's first annual report to pay tribute to the Presidents and governments we work with, and to the dedicated public servants who support them day-in, day-out. Our work is only made possible by the trust they



have placed in us, allowing us to work side-by-side with them in their mission. It is these people who will be the bedrock of Africa's success in the future, and their professionalism and dedication is what makes working for AGI such a privilege.

So, talking ourselves up isn't our style. But I am proud to publish our first Annual Report, which gives a brief description of what we do, how we do it and the impact that we think we are having. The story of AGI in 2009 is complicated by the fact that we became a registered charity here in the UK half-way through the year. But because we want to explain what we do as clearly as possible, the report goes back to the beginning of our story, from where we first began as a not-for-profit team within the Office of Tony Blair, through our first two years of operation, and now as a fully-fledged charity operating in three countries, with plans to expand our reach and impact in coming years.

We recognise that this is only the first chapter of our story. The kind of work we do does not lend itself to instant results. The countries AGI supports are still fragile, each in different ways recovering from the events of the past half-century. Their development is a journey, and one AGI is proud to be taking with them. But already, there are clear signs that we are having an impact.



AGI's first project began in Rwanda. It was founded on the long-standing relationship between President Kagame and Tony Blair. Our engagement in Rwanda has fundamentally shaped AGI's model and approach, and we are indebted to our colleagues in the Government of Rwanda for their help as we designed the Initiative. It was they who helped define our model – thinking through what had and hadn't

worked for them in the past and how AGI could try and do better. This is hardly surprising: Rwanda prides itself on being ahead of the curve, and setting the terms for the way in which donors engage with their development. In two years we have helped to re-engineer the centre of Government in Rwanda, creating new structures to support the Presidency, Prime Minister and the Cabinet, and to drive the delivery of vital public services to all Rwandans. With our help, the Government has reformed their annual planning system and aligned this to the national budget. Outside of government (but at the government's request) we worked with Rwanda's first ever think-tank, IPAR, to help it become established as a leader in the region for independent analysis of policy questions. We are also working with the Government to create a national capacity building strategy, which for the first time articulates the capacity gaps across government and pulls together a plan to fill these. We have supported the creation of a new "one-stop-shop" to attract investment to Rwanda, and over the last two years the Government of Rwanda

has made major strides towards achieving the national vision of becoming a middle-income country by 2020. In 2008 Rwandan GDP growth at 11% was one of the highest anywhere in the world and in 2009 it bucked the global trend to achieve growth of 6%. At the same time, Rwanda has been named as the “top global reformer” by the World Bank’s *Doing Business* ratings, a powerful example of the country’s determination to end its dependence on foreign aid.

Sierra Leone has long been a country close to Tony Blair’s heart. His father taught at Freetown’s Fourah Bay College when it was still known as the “Athens of West Africa”. Free and fair elections brought the reforming government of President Ernest Bai Koroma to power in 2007 – a milestone in a country that had never seen a peaceful and democratic transfer of power – and



it was a privilege when the new government asked us to work alongside them to help deliver the *Agenda for Change*, their blue-print for poverty reduction. Take our work in the Ministry of Health. Sierra Leone is well known for having some of the worst maternal and health statistics in the world. This April, Sierra Leone abolished the fees which had proved such a barrier to women and children seeking medical care across the country. It is still early days, but the evidence from the first few weeks of the programme is remarkable. Almost a million children and a quarter of a million mothers are expected to benefit from the policy by the end of this year. This is an extraordinary achievement. Five other countries pledged to introduce free healthcare at the same time as Sierra Leone, including Ghana and Malawi, but none moved as fast as Sierra Leone to turn their words into action. We are so proud to have helped the Government achieve this. We have also been working on private sector development. To showcase Sierra Leone’s enormous potential for investment, AGI helped to organise Sierra Leone’s first international investor conference, held here in London in November 2009 and supported by the Government’s development partners. The number of investors registering an interest in Sierra Leone with its investment promotion agency has risen by 240% since then.

In 2009, AGI was asked to begin work in Liberia. It was an honour to be invited to support President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, Africa’s first female President - and a personal heroine of mine. Our team began work in Monrovia earlier this year, and are now embedded in the Ministry of State, supporting the development of Liberia’s Cabinet processes, as well as putting in place systems to deliver those policies most necessary to get



Liberia on the road to prosperity – getting reliable, affordable power, getting key infrastructure, such as roads, built, and bringing sustainable investment to the country. I hope to be able to say more about our progress in next year's report.

It feels odd writing about our achievements in 2009, when that already feels like light-years ago. So this is a great opportunity to say a little about our plans for the future. First, AGI is all about impact. We will remain committed to our current partners in Liberia, Rwanda and Sierra Leone for as long as there is demand for our work and for as long as it takes to build the systems they need to bring about sustainable change. Second, there are many others doing work on governance in Africa, some working on a far greater scale



than AGI. But we believe that what we do is different, and provides a new, additive and complementary approach to existing development assistance. In the next few years, we will seek to systematically evaluate our work, and learn the emerging lessons from our three projects – what it is that allows us to be successful – and share and debate these with the widest possible audience in Africa and across the development community. Our

aim is to distil what we have learnt about governance and implementation in Africa and share this, while applying this learning to our work in existing as well as new countries.

The last two years have been an exciting journey at AGI. Much has been achieved. But the challenge is great, and the potential is there to do so much more. We are profoundly grateful to our donors and supporters who have been willing to invest in the new approach that we and our partner governments are trying to forge. We are looking to expand our funding base to continue and grow our work. We hope you will follow AGI's development in the years to come. In the mean time – if you want to get involved, to support us, or to join our team, please just call or email.

**Kate Gross, Chief Executive**



## A MESSAGE FROM THE TRUSTEES

I am delighted to be introducing the Africa Governance Initiative's first annual report. The Commission for Africa's report ahead of the G8 Gleneagles summit in 2005 identified good governance as central to Africa's continuing development. The work that AGI now does in Sierra Leone, Rwanda and Liberia is a direct response to that challenge, offering a new model which focuses on governance capability as a means of enabling development, whether in health, education, jobs, economic growth, or peace and security. AGI's work is possible only through the generous support of its funders and those who provide us with pro-bono support. I also want to pay tribute to the commitment of those we work with and who work for us - for their professionalism, dedication and energy which has been an inspiration to all the Trustees. It's early days and there are many challenges. But with partner governments in Sierra Leone, Rwanda and Liberia, change is being achieved.

**Liz Lloyd, Chair of the Board of Trustees**



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