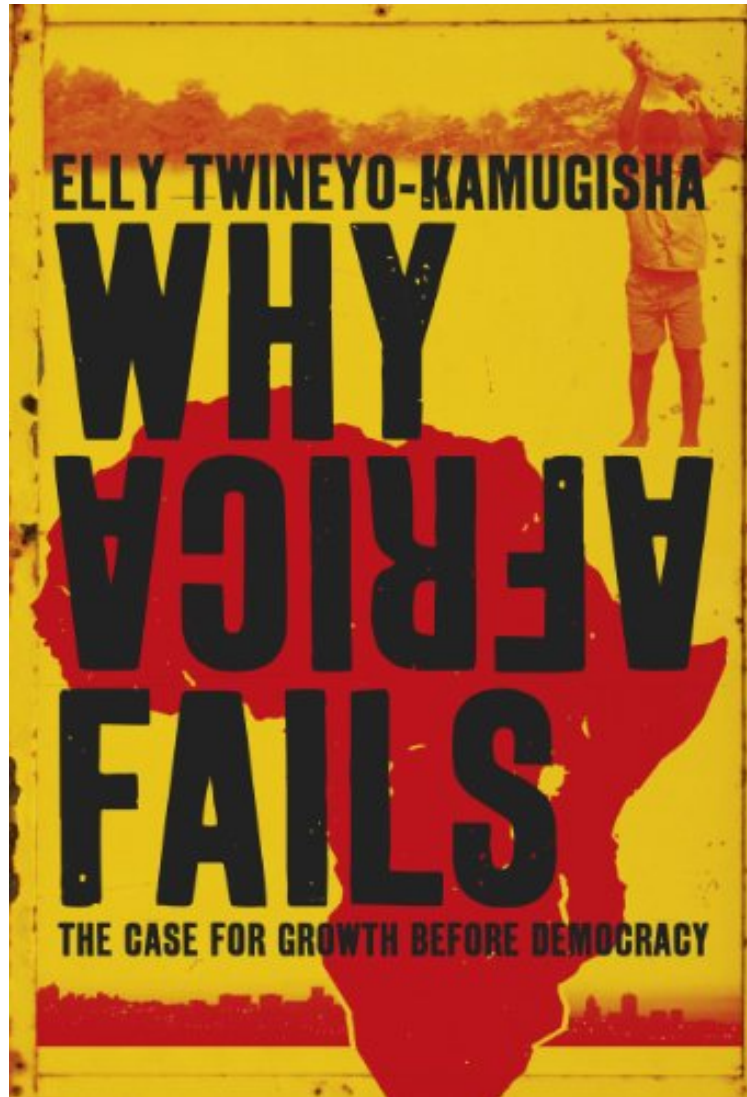


(Download free pdf) Why Africa Fails: The case for growth before democracy

## Why Africa Fails: The case for growth before democracy

*Elly Twineyo-Kamugisha*

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East African Business Week (Kampala)  
Africa: 'Why Africa Fails' Book Launched  
By Leonard Magomba, 25 December 2012  
Dar es Salaam -- On the 7th of December 2012, I landed at O. R. Tambo International Airport. As it is my routine, I went around bookshops and saw a book titled 'Why Africa Fails'. I smiled, picked it and turned to its back. I quickly glanced at it. The Author was an African from East Africa. I bought it immediately. When I started reading it I could never stop, says Zitto Kabwe, Member of Parliament for the leading opposition party, Chadema when narrating to

East African Business Week about a newly launched economic book "Why Africa Fails." The next day he says, "I was travelling to Germany and there I met the author. I didn't hide my happiness. Within a week today (Last week) I am in Kampala to officiate the launch of this very critical book about our own development, Africa's development." The Official Launch of the Book- Kamugisha E.T., Why Africa Fails: The Case of Growth Before Democracy (NB Publishers, 2012), 19th December, 2012- Kampala Uganda. It is unfortunate that Africa has been struggling with economic, political, and social issues. The continent is extremely rich in natural resources and potential for competent human resources. However, this richness has only remained on paper and inside the pockets of some few individuals connected to the powers. The continent, as we all know, has been experiencing poverty, civil wars, epidemic diseases, corruption, dictatorships, and coups. All these have led to the labelling of Africa as a 'poor continent' 'black/dark continent' and 'a scar on the conscience of the world' among many other negative phrases. The continent forms largest part of what Prof. Paul Collier calls The Bottom Billion, Kabwe says. Since late 1960s there have been many scholarly and political attempts to explain the poor state of Africa. These include academic theories such as the World System Theory (which blames Capitalism and the Western World - as responsible for Africa's poverty). Walter Rodney, for example, published a masterpiece titled 'How Europe Underdeveloped Africa', which analysed the adverse impact of slavery, colonialism, and other European intervention on Africa. "Other explanations focus on inward problems including corruption, undemocratic regimes, and failing states," Kabwe says. The World Bank and IMF, for example, link the problems of Africa with 'poor' policies that do not comply with the market economy and democratic ideals. Of late, Prof. Acemoglu and Prof. Robinson published a book 'Why Nations Fail' which attributes success and failure to the type of institutions a state has in place. Thus, from their arguments, Kabwe says Africa fails because of African states have institutions that are extractive and exploitative to its people. By and large, the kind of policies that Acemoglu and Robinson recommend are those that conform to the market economy or in modern times, we can call them neo-liberal policies- These, according to them, are inclusive institutions. "All these explanations for the failure of Africa are apportioning the blame to different actors," he lamented. The attempts to explain the failure of Africa are often attached with recommended policies that often come with strings attached- which, at best, perpetuate the same issues. The World Bank and IMF, for example, came up with the Structural Adjustment Policies (SAPs), which, by and large, did not work. He said that efforts to solve African problems have been numerous and most of them do not result in sustainable improvements. Thus the question remains - Why Africa Fails? This is why Dr. Kamugisha's book is timely and of extreme importance to the development of our continent. This is especially so because Dr. Kamugisha is an African, full of insight into what the African problems are, hence he is equipped with all rounded knowledge to recommend relevant and sustainable solutions, he says. "As a result of his education, research, and experience as an economic adviser, Dr. Kamugisha brings us an analytical book that, if taken seriously, can help Africa to change its status from 'a scar' to 'a beacon of hope,'" he added. Dr. Kamugisha stops the syndrome of 'apportioning the blame' and call upon Africans (ourselves) to deal with our problems. He argues that African malaise is due to our own blunders. "Indeed there are a number of mistakes made by African governments that cannot be attributed or blamed to external factors. These are such as corruption, illicit money transfers, unfair contracts, and brain drain," Kabwe told the gathering. Many a times, as a Member of Parliament and a Shadow Finance Minister, I have moved private motions in Parliament as an attempt to deal with issues that are stagnating our economies. The latest motion I moved was on the illicit money transfer. This issue, for example, has nothing to do with external intervention, and so we cannot blame anyone apart from ourselves. Millions of money are transferred from the government/country to private accounts abroad by our fellow Africans, he noted. He says that such malaise actions are facilitated by poor policies and corruption that is rampant in our governments. "We can correct this ourselves through right legislations and policies." Studies have shown that billions of US dollars are illicitly transferred from Africa annually. Recent study published by Global Integrity Report shows that around \$560bn are transferred from Africa annually. If we compare this figure with the total amount of foreign Aid as well as Foreign Direct Investments flowing to Africa it a factor of 1:7!..... UNCTAD reports that Africa receives an average of \$37bn every year as FDI. Similarly around \$37bn flows into Africa annually as foreign aid. Therefore, in every one US dollar coming to Africa, seven US dollars illicitly leaves Africa. It is our duty as Africans to end this through strengthening institutions that oversee our economic sectors especially extractive sectors like minerals and Oil and Gas, he insisted. "I have learnt that in Uganda, the Parliament has just passed a legislation to govern its Oil wealth. It is very disappointing that Ugandan Parliament has vested the management of the sector to an individual in the name of the Minister," he said. In Tanzania, the move is towards establishing an Authority to regulate licencing and the whole upstream and midstream as well as downstream sections of the hydrocarbons. The sub-title of the book 'The Case for Growth Before Democracy' is the catchiest. I asked Dr. Kamugisha if he advocates growth before democracy as I didn't find this argument in the book. The sub title is supposedly a question mark rather than an argument. Democracy and economic development have to go together. "Most of the African countries tried dictatorship for almost three decades and it didn't bring people out of poverty. I always tell my colleagues in Tanzania that our country is poor out of choice. We have chosen to be poor. Africa's is Optional Poverty," he added. In light of the above, Dr. Kamugisha challenges us all to look inward and come up with the right policies that will make Africa a success story. The meager state of Africa is not natural, it's optional

and we can change it.

Africa should accept that its present malaise is largely due to its own mistakes: greed, poor policies and a lack of leadership. Blaming colonialism for Africa's failings belongs to the past. Africa has been blessed with great wealth, but where has this wealth gone? Why are so many countries in need of aid? And why has this wealth not filtered down to poor people? Elly Twineyo-Kamugisha surveys African governments, aid agencies and the private sector and provides surprising insights into why certain policies have worked and others not.