

**ECONOMICS & DEVELOPMENT**

**Munyae Mulinge and Pempelani Mufane, eds. *Debt Relief Initiatives and Poverty Alleviation: Lessons from Africa*.** Pretoria: Africa Institute of South Africa, 2003. Distributed by African Books Collective, Unit 13 Kings Meadow, Ferry Hincksey Rd., Oxford OX2 0DP, UK. xiv + 395 pp. Map. Tables. Notes. \$42.95. Paper.

Africa entered the twenty-first century as the poorest continent in the world, with a real gross domestic product per capita lower than it was at the end of the 1960s. The first two chapters of *Debt Relief Initiatives and Poverty Alleviation* view the debt overhang as the major cause of Africa's poverty, stagnation, and falling health and life expectancy. While the focus of the book is Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries, there are four contributions on Kenya and Ethiopia in addition to the introductory chapters.

Based on figures from the early 1990s, Mulinge maintains that Africa's debt-service ratio—i.e., interest and principal payments as a percentage of exports of goods and services—is the highest of any continent. According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), however, Latin America and East-Central Europe had higher debt-service ratios than Africa during the late 1990s and the first four years of the twenty-first century. The reason for Africa's relatively improved ratio was the Jubilee 2000 launched by non-governmental organizations, which put pressure on the World Bank, the IMF, and rich-country donors to relieve, write down, or forgive the debts of the highly indebted poor countries (HIPC), largely from Africa. Because of the publication lag, the book's analysis does not take into account how the HIPC initiative reduced African debt.

Omole and Mulinge's introductory essays attribute the debt crisis not only to vulnerability to global price shocks but also to Africa's poor economic management (including overvalued domestic currencies), poor governance, capital flight, slow economic growth, and political instability. H. O. Kaya sees globalization as supporting U.S. economic hegemony, with World Bank and IMF structural adjustment programs pressuring African countries to reduce social spending while the world's key currency and floating exchange-rate system facilitates massive capital flows to the United States to finance its chronic external deficit. For Kaya, this international system ensnares Africa in a debt trap that diverts resources from health, education, and other social services, a situation that most adversely affects women and children, especially in rural areas. In the last chapter, Bertha Z. Osei-Hwedie deplores the fact that Zambia allocates scarce foreign exchange from loans and copper exports to debt service rather than to socioeconomic development. Zambia's external position has declined because of falling export prices, export taxes, international currency fluctuation, a poor foreign investment climate, and neglect of agriculture, as well as cronyism and looting of government revenues by ruling elites. Con-

ditions set by the World Bank, the IMF, and other multilateral lenders have forced the Zambian government to reduce subsidies for the poor and freeze employment and wages, increasing malnutrition, reducing life expectancy, and creating a vicious circle of increased poverty and debt.

Contributions by Omole, Mulinge, Kaya, and Osei-Hwedie reinforce the introduction, elaborating on the cover's statement that the book "centres on the welfare implications of indebtedness, especially as these affect the poor and the most vulnerable in society." However, the other chapters fail to link poverty specifically to debt. Case studies analyze instead how poverty can be alleviated by foreign aid, employment, a solution to the HIV/AIDS crisis, community projects, social inclusion, female microfinance and empowerment, education, information technology, landmine clearance, orphan care, and other social policies.

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**Mitiku Haile, Diress Tsegaye, and Tegegne Teka, eds. *Research and Development on Dryland Husbandry in Ethiopia*.** Addis Ababa: Organization for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern African (OSSREA), 2004. Distributed by African Books Collective Ltd., Unit 13 Kings Meadow, Ferry Hinksey Rd., Oxford OX2 0DP. viii + 174 pp. Photographs. Bibliography. \$19.95. Paper.

**Elly N. Sabiiti and Tegegne Teka, eds. *Dryland Husbandry in Uganda: Community Participation and Development*.** Addis Ababa: OSSREA, 2004. Distributed by African Books Collective Ltd. vii + 98 pp. Photographs. Bibliography. \$19.95. Paper.

**Nashon K. R. Musimba, et al. *Dryland Husbandry for Sustainable Development in the Southern Rangelands of Kenya*.** Addis Ababa: OSSREA, 2004. Distributed by African Books Collective Ltd. x + 117 pp. Photographs. Bibliography. \$19.95. Paper.

**Muna M. M. Ahmed, Mohamed Fadl Elmoula Idris, and Tegegne Teka, eds. *Dryland Husbandry in the Sudan: Grassroots Experience and Development*.** Addis Ababa: OSSREA, 2004. Distributed by African Books Collective Ltd. xii + 109 pp. Photographs. Bibliography. \$19.95. Paper.

These four volumes, published by the Organization for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern African (OSSREA) and distributed by the African Books Collective, describe four dryland husbandry projects (DHP) that ran in Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan, and Uganda from about 1995 to 2003. Essentially they are reports written by the professionals who designed, implemented, and evaluated the projects in the respective countries. Each volume contains a chapter that discusses organization and