

RELEASE IN PART  
B6

**From:** Mills, Cheryl D <MillsCD@state.gov>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 25, 2012 5:56 AM  
**To:** H  
**Subject:** Fw: Boston Globe 1/24/12, on APARC ... (for the e-record)

**From:** Stith, Charles R [redacted]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 24, 2012 03:59 PM  
**To:** Mills, Cheryl D  
**Subject:** FW: Boston Globe 1/24/12, on APARC ... (for the e-record)

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Part two. CRS

**From:** Taffe, Richard P  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 24, 2012 3:03 PM  
**To:** Stith, Charles R  
**Cc:** Norman, Verity  
**Subject:** Boston Globe 1/24/12, on APARC ... (for the e-record)

**Boston Globe**  
**1/24/12**

<http://www.bostonglobe.com/opinion/2012/01/24/good-governance-africa/gmx52pvBV6o0zbYeb5JeRI/story.html>

## OPINION

### Good governance in Africa

By Farah Stockman, Globe Columnist

It was surely one of the most unusual ideas in the annals of academic fellowships: Ten years ago, **Boston University** began to offer an undisclosed stipend, a house in the Back Bay overlooking the Charles River, and light teaching duties to former African heads of state who had stepped aside peacefully in a democratic process.

The “presidents-in-residence” program - the brainchild of Charles Stith, former US ambassador to Tanzania - aims to reward statesmen on a continent better known for strongmen, and send a message that leaving power could be just as rewarding as clinging to it. At first, the fellowship sparked questions about whether unsavory characters - like Zimbabwe’s Robert Mugabe - would one day be strolling **BU**’s campus. But in fact, it has not served as much inducement for dictators to give up power. It turns out that no amount of Red Sox games and lunches at the University Club will convince Mugabe to surrender his grip on Zimbabwe.

Instead, **BU**’s fellowship has served a different but perhaps far more important purpose: to highlight the small but growing group of countries in Africa that have already built successful democracies. It has served as a kind of think-tank and support system for well-run nations you almost never hear about: Cape Verde, Botswana, and Mauritius.

It's no accident that those three countries - whose former heads of state recently spent time at **BU** - also topped the list of the best-governed places in Africa, according to an index created by Sudanese cell phone billionaire Mo Ibrahim, who created a \$5 million prize for former African heads of state who leave office voluntarily. (Botswana's former president, Festus Mogae, has received both the **BU** fellowship and the Ibrahim prize.)

Political benefits have brought economic rewards to millions: steady, respectable economic growth. Mauritius's gross domestic product grew 4 percent last year, Cape Verde's 5.5 percent, and Botswana's 6 percent. (By contrast, the United States grew 1.5 percent.)

The **BU** program aims to reward statesmen on a continent better known for strongmen.

It fact, the closer we look at Africa, the more we find to celebrate, especially on the economic front. Despite all the news of wars and famine, over the last four years, a quarter of the world's fastest-growing economies have been in Africa. Growth in Ghana - another stable democracy - has outpaced China. Some of the most groundbreaking technology for the developing world - like a system that allows people to pay bills using their mobile phones - was invented in Kenya, and is transforming the way business is done there. Social media is updating what it means to be democratic, and to be listened to by one's leaders. Tanzanian President Jakaya Kikwete writes regular Facebook messages to his constituents, and his page has more than 34,000 "likes."

Of course, many African countries have a long way to go to arrive at good governance. But the idea of ruling for life - and the type of despotism that plagued much of the developing world over the past 50 years - is more of an exception today in Africa than the norm. Gradual economic and political reforms are adding up to what historians might one day call a slow-motion revolution that is positioning Africa - the world's second largest and second most populous continent - to be a serious economic force in the future.

So why is it that we can never seem to erase our impression of Africa as an inevitably dysfunctional place? Why is it that we perpetually view its billion citizens as victims and foreign aid recipients rather than allies and potential customers? Why do we assume its leaders can't - or won't - govern?

Psychologists call it "confirmation bias" - the tendency of people to lean toward information that already confirms their existing beliefs. In this complex world, new information about distant places like Botswana and Cape Verde is too hard to take in.

So it could be that the greatest value of the **BU** fellowship is actually to Americans, who must start the long process of seeing Africa differently. As a place to sell our products. As a place to buy our technology. And yes - even as a place to find inspiring examples of good governance.

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