THE TRANSITION: AFRICA’S DEVELOPMENT AND THE JOURNAL

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THIS issue ends my three years as editor of the Journal of African Development. I want to thank AFEA members for their support. It is with great pleasure that I hand the editorship to Edward Kutsoati.

There were two major changes during my editorship, 2008-2010. First, with the support of the membership, we changed the journal’s name to reflect a broadening of the journal from African economics and finance to African development. Second, the journal now produces two issues a year rather than one.

As Elizabeth Asiedu and Mohamed El-Hodiri point out in this issue, Africa’s economic performance since the late 1970s “has been abysmal, both in absolute and relative terms.” Indeed the average real GDP for sub-Saharan Africa in constant (2000) US Dollars, based on World Bank data, declined from $590 in 1975-1981 to $565 in 2002-2008. This negative growth contrasts with the rapid growth of East Asia and developing countries generally, and the modest growth of South Asia, spurred by India’s rapid growth since the 1991 economic reforms, which enabled that region to surpass the sub-Sahara’s average income recently.

One of the few bright spots in the Asiedu-El-Hodiri findings is that the sub-Sahara’s stagnation and regress may have been followed by per-capita growth from the turn of this century to the latest figures, 2002-2008. We can hope that this reflects a turnaround from decline to continuing growth.

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