

World Bank Africa chief economist launches new blog

The World Bank Africa region has announced the launch of a new blog from its chief economist Shanta Devarajan. The blog, AfricaCan.org, will serve as an online forum for the sharing of ideas about the continent's development.

The objective of the AfricaCan blog is to create a platform for (1) conversation around the issues of sustainable growth and development in Africa, and (2) outreach to help promote analysis and evidence about what is working and what isn't on the continent.

The blog will include guest commentary from Devarajan's colleagues at the World Bank and will feature posts in English and French.

"There is no shortage of economics blogs out there, but this is one of the very few you will have to turn to if you are interested in a serious debate on African development," said Dani Rodrik, the Rafik Hariri professor of International Political Economy at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. Rodrik's own popular weblog features "unconventional thoughts on economic development and globalization."

Devarajan invites comments from students, academics, fellow economists and bloggers, members of government and civil society, and anyone interested in ending poverty in Africa. Journalists are encouraged to quote Devarajan directly from the blog.

"Africa Can is a place for all those who care about Africa's economic development to gather and comment. The debate on Africa's economic growth and poverty reduction should not just be held in boardrooms and parliament halls but in classrooms, tea shops, and village meetings, where the people who are most affected can contribute," Devarajan said.

Devarajan joined the World Bank's Africa region as chief economist in January 2008 after five years in the Bank's South Asia region. While in South Asia, he launched End Poverty in South Asia, a blog aimed at creating a conversation around how South Asia can end poverty in a generation.

"The End Poverty in South Asia blog was a great success for the region. It drew together many voices on South Asia's development, voices not just of assent but of discord and debate. It livened up the discussion and drew a whole new audience for the Bank," said Praful Patel, former World Bank vice-president for the South Asia region.

View the blog [here](#).

About Shanta Devarajan

Shanta Devarajan is the chief economist of the World Bank's Africa region. Since joining the World Bank in 1991, he has been a principal economist and research manager for public economics in the Development Research Group, and the chief economist of the Human Development Network, and of the South Asia region. He was the director of the World Development Report 2004, *Making Services Work for Poor People*. Before 1991, he was on the faculty of Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government.

The author or co-author of over 100 publications, Devarajan's research covers public economics, trade policy, natural resources and the environment, and general equilibrium modelling of developing countries. Born in Sri Lanka, Shanta received his B.A. in mathematics from Princeton University and his Ph.D. in economics from the University of California, Berkeley.

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