

message from our new chair BONIFACE NGAHU

Embracing the new decade

Ten years ago, Y2K had us all backing up our backups in the fear of the much expected millennium bug that ended up being just a scare. Now we are in 2010 and a new decade of the tens which are normally associated with the teenage years. Having dealt with the teething issues that we faced in the first decade, we have to appreciate the past for what it has taught us, challenge the present for that's where the rubber meets the road and create the future. The following are some highlights from the past:

- Notable economic growth especially after 2002 when there was change of government. This growth slowed sharply in 2008 and 2009 due to the political unrest in the early part of 2008 and global financial crisis in 2009 and less than normal rainfall.
- Kenya's inflation rate fell from 13% to 7% year on year in October 2009 (new ranking)
- In November 2009, the leaders from five East Africa community member states signed a common market treaty that will allow for free movement of people and goods across the region from July 2010.
- The Kenyan government launched the ambitious Vision 2030 strategy.
- The research industry registered a revenue growth of 27% against a global average of 6.5% in 2008
- We also experienced a trend of mergers and acquisition in the research industry.

At our 2009 annual general meeting held in November, we received a brief overview of the MSRA accomplishments for 2009, which under the strong leadership of David Somers, our outgoing Chair, was a very active MSRA year. There were various very successful professional initiatives, i.e. the MSRA ID Cards roll out, MSRA convention on Unmasking the African Consumer, commissioning of field accreditation system and training manual development, bi-monthly celebrity talks, basic training and advanced training courses among others. We also donated Kshs 1 million in support of the Children's Village initiative to make the world a better place. To increase interaction and make life more enjoyable for members we had two highly competitive bowling tournaments and the Mt Kenya climb being the highlights of the year.

MSRA's main aim - besides ensuring our corporate members adhere to professional standards in all types of research and a Code of Practice to which each member subscribes - is to be there for its members. We will try to reflect this purpose in a diverse 2010 activity calendar. We welcome suggestions from members on how to make MSRA a better association for all.

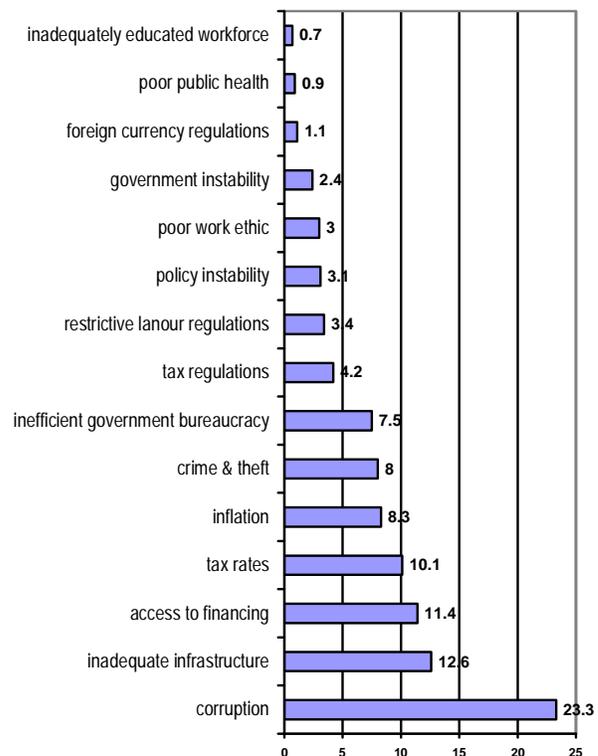
I wish to all of you a happy 2010 with lots of God's blessings and excellence in research.

global competitiveness index 2009 - 2010

KENYA PROFILE

The recent Global Competitive Index ranks Kenya 98th out of 133 countries. This is slightly lower than the 2009-2009 ranking of 93. Our overall score out of seven was 3.7 this year compared with 3.8 last year.

In the survey, respondents were asked to select the five most problematic factors for doing business (from a list of 15) and to rank these between 1 (most problematic) and 5. The chart below shows the responses weighted according to their rankings:



Kenya's strengths were in its education and training, its degree of customer orientation and sophistication of its private sector, its financial sophistication and its capacity to innovate.

In Ranking, Kenya was slightly ahead of its neighbours (Tanzania 100 and Uganda 108) however it is well behind African stars such as South Africa 45 and Mauritius 57.

To download the full report go to the World Economic Forum

website - www.weforum.org

Public Opinion Continues to Prod and Provoke in Kenya

by Tom Wolf

Although the next Kenyan election appears to be still quite distant, polls on various public issues appear to have lost little of the attention that they gained leading up to the last highly controversial (and nearly devastating) election. Given such interest – through the media to the wider public – Kenya thus appears to be retaining its 'first place' position in sub-Saharan Africa in terms of the frequency and breadth of content of such survey findings.

While acknowledged as the most authoritative of several local survey firms (for example, by Dr. David Throup, writing in the Special Issue on the 2007 Kenyan election of the *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, July, 2008) Synovate (formerly, the Steadman Group) is by no means alone, as recent polls by Infotrak-Harris and Strategic Public Relations illustrate the continuing competition within this market.

In addition to continuing to conduct its quarterly SPEC (Social, Political Economic and Cultural) Barometer surveys, the firm has made increasing use of its CATI (computer-assisted telephone interview) capacity by undertaking shorter, quick-shot polls, in recognition of the country's ever-expanding mobile phone market. Most recently, this involved a set of questions about the draft constitution, the results of which did not go unnoticed by members of the Parliamentary Select Committee deliberating at Naivasha (the results of which were given prominence in all major newspapers, 23 January, 2009)..

Significantly here, as was the case with (Prof. Y. Ghai-led) Constitution of Kenya Review Commission of Kenya after 2002, the current Committee of Experts conducted no national survey on the subject matter of their work (so that only those who came forward at scheduled and publicized public hearings had a chance to express their preferences), leading various political and civil society actors to claim to speak on behalf of "all Kenyans", without really knowing what their (surely quite divergent, and apparently somewhat fluid) views are.

While the capacity for survey research of this nature is not always exploited when it might be useful, such poll results have become a standard and generally applauded ingredient of the country's national discourse about its current condition and future leadership and policy choices. And this is so even if a few dissenting voices remain. One recent example is that of Kigumo MP and PNU Vice-Chairman Jamleck Kamau, who rejected the provincial results from Synovate's December SPEC poll-ratings on potential presidential candidates, which put Raila Odinga slightly ahead of (actually, in a statistical tie with) Uhuru Kenyatta in the latter's own Central Province ('PNU trashes poll showing Raila's rising star in Central', *The Standard*, 11 January, 2009), claiming it to be "malicious" and "tailored to favour certain political sides."

While such hostile responses could easily be dismissed as self-serving 'knee-jerk' reactions, they do suggest the further work that has to be done by survey firms, in close connection with media, in order to further educate the public (including politicians) on the rigour as well as the inherent limitations of such research tools.

Given the contribution that they make to the 'broadening of democratic space', however, engaging in such activities now, well before tensions inevitably rise ahead of the next election, would seem to be a worthwhile investment. In the meantime, the possibility of a second national constitutional referendum may provide the pollsters not just with an opportunity to test the accuracy of their methods, but also to shed light on public attitudes that will determine the actual outcome of the review process. Giving the increasing importance of 'public voice' in Kenya's political life, then, certainly underscores the positive contribution that professional survey work of this nature can – and undoubtedly will – make.

QUARTER 1 - 2010
JANUARY/FEBRUARY/MARCH
CALENDAR OF ACTIVITIES
TO PARTICIPATE CONTACT
SECRETARIAT

EVENT CELEBRITY TALK
MSRA EVENING CELEBRITY TALK
DATE 11TH FEBRUARY 2010
VENUE HOLIDAY INN, WESTLANDS
TIMING 6.30P.M

EVENT INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH
MSRA BASIC TRAINING COURSE
VENUE SYNOVATE TRAINING ROOM, RIVERSIDE DRIVE
DATE 18/19 FEBRUARY 2010

EVENT FACING THE AFRICAN CONSUMER
MSRA ANNUAL CONFERENCE
VENUE JACARANDA HOTEL, NAIROBI
TIMING 26 MARCH 2009

Wisdom & wit ... marketing concepts made easy

A Professor, tired of explaining the same things over and over, simplified marketing concepts for his students as follows...

1. You see a gorgeous girl at a party. You go up to her and say: "I am very rich. Marry me!" - That's Direct Marketing
2. You're at a party with a bunch of friends and see a gorgeous girl. One of your friends goes up to her and pointing at you says: "He's very rich. Marry him." - That's Advertising
3. You see a gorgeous girl at a party. You go up to her and get her telephone number. The next day, you call and say: "Hi, I'm very rich. Marry me." - That's Telemarketing
4. You're at a party and see a gorgeous girl. You get up and straighten your tie, you walk up to her and pour her a drink, you open the door (of the car) for her, pick up her bag after she drops it, offer her ride and then say: By the way, I'm rich. Will you marry me?" - That's Public Relations
5. You're at a party and see gorgeous girl. She walks up to you and says: You are very rich! Can you marry me?" - That's Brand Recognition
6. You see a gorgeous girl at a party. You go up to her and say: I am very rich. Marry me!" She gives you a nice hard slap on your face. - That's Customer Feedback
7. You see a gorgeous girl at a party. You go up to her and say: "I am very rich. Marry me!" And she introduces you to her husband - That's Demand and Supply Gap
8. You see a gorgeous girl at a party. You go up to her and before you say anything, another person come and tell her: "I'm rich. Will you marry me?" and she goes with him - That's Competition eating into your Market Share
9. You see a gorgeous girl at a party. You go up to her and before you say: "I'm rich, marry me, your wife arrives. - That's Restriction for entering New Markets

If you would like to comment on the contents of this newsletter or contribute an article, please contact:
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