

WorldWatch Headlines: March 2020

Welcome to our latest compilation of WorldWatch Headlines, taken from the most recently published Country Insight Snapshot reports. These headlines highlight the key development our analysts identified for each country when they updated the report.

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Africa

Algeria	President Tebboune holds talks on constitutional reforms.
Angola	The country receives further funds from the IMF.
Botswana	The ruling party wins the election by a large margin.
Cameroon	The country is set to join a multilateral political risk agency.
Congo, D.R.	FX reserves dip to critically low levels.
Cote d'Ivoire	Uncertainty surrounds October 2020's presidential election.
Ethiopia	Political risk rises ahead of the rescheduled general election.
Gabon	Corruption remains a key feature of the commercial environment.
Ghana	Falling oil production will affect growth.
Kenya	Economic policy adjustments aim to boost growth.
Libya	Dun & Bradstreet downgrades its rating outlook for Libya as the oil blockade continues.
Malawi	The constitutional court annuls the presidential election result.
Mauritius	The export sector will benefit from free-trade deals in 2020 and 2021.
Morocco	FX reserves increase despite a sharp fall in FDI inflows.
Mozambique	President Nyusi faces political in-fighting and major security issues.
Namibia	Namibia ratifies a major regional free-trade area agreement.
Nigeria	The country's land borders remain closed at the start of 2020.
Senegal	The country is close to starting a new IMF programme.
Sierra Leone	New development finance is channelled into the country.
South Africa	The central bank trims the benchmark interest rate to boost private-sector credit growth.
Sudan	The political and security situation remains tense.
Tanzania	The mining sector could get a boost following the settlement of a tax dispute.
Tunisia	Snap elections become more likely.
Uganda	A tax dispute over the Lake Albert Development Project is settled.
Zambia	Business activity is disrupted by both power and fuel shortages.
Zimbabwe	Real GDP will post a sharp 7.0% contraction in 2019.

Asia Pacific

Afghanistan	Taliban attacks reached a ten-year high in October to December 2019.
Australia	Dun & Bradstreet upgrades its rating outlook for Australia amid stabilisation in macro market indicators.
Bangladesh	Dun & Bradstreet downgrades its rating outlook for Bangladesh as risks for the garments sector increase.
Cambodia	An EU decision on trade access nears, creating downside risks.
China	Dun & Bradstreet downgrades China's country risk rating due to the national public health emergency caused by the coronavirus outbreak.
Fiji	Economic growth is slowing as public consumption falls.
Hong Kong (S.A.R)	Dun & Bradstreet downgrades its rating outlook for Hong Kong as the mainland coronavirus hurts demand.
India	Dun & Bradstreet upgrades its rating outlook for India as output stabilises.
Indonesia	The proposed job-creation law is good for businesses but politically risky.

Japan	Dun & Bradstreet downgrades its rating outlook for Japan due to the coronavirus outbreak.
Korea (South)	Fiscal support and the semiconductor cycle will speed growth in 2020.
Malaysia	Economic growth will remain below 5.0% in 2020.
Myanmar	Accusations of genocide are brought to the International Court of Justice.
Nepal	Economic growth is forecast to weaken this year and next.
New Zealand	Slowing GDP growth looks set to turn amid improving fundamentals.
Pakistan	External sector pressures ease, but regulatory challenges remain.
Papua New Guinea	Bougainville holds a long-awaited independence referendum.
Philippines	Budget implementation results in large gains for President Duterte's 'Build, Build, Build' programme.
Singapore	Dun & Bradstreet downgrades Singapore's country risk rating as public health risks increase and Chinese demand slows.
Sri Lanka	The Rajapaksa family's return to power heralds harder-line populist policy.
Taiwan	The supply environment outlook deteriorates as the coronavirus outbreak continues.
Thailand	Growth looks likely to pick up only modestly in 2020.
Vietnam	Economic growth is likely to slow sharply in Q1 at least.

Eastern Europe

Albania	Faster economic growth in 2020 will still be weak by recent standards.
Azerbaijan	The country's external balances are improving as exports grow steadily.
Belarus	Economic growth remains fragile.
Bosnia & Herzegovina	The political environment outlook improves.
Bulgaria	Political tensions are expected to heighten following the recent water and waste crises.
Croatia	Prospects for a strong government diminish following presidential elections.
Czech Republic	Government plans for infrastructure development boost long-term economic potential.
Estonia	Tough trading conditions and capacity constraints weigh on the growth outlook.
Georgia	Economic growth remains buoyant but is set to decelerate.
Hungary	The forint is trading close to an all-time low.
Kazakhstan	Economic growth and inflation both remained robust in 2019.
Kyrgyz Republic	Economic growth remains robust.
Latvia	A new governor is appointed to the scandal-ridden central bank.
Lithuania	The population grows for the first time since the Soviet era.
Macedonia	The VMRO-DPMNE party is likely to win the early elections in April.
Poland	Economic growth is slowing.
Romania	The political environment is improving following a vote of no confidence in the government.
Russian Federation	Central bank easing continues in 2020 with a further key rate-cut.
Serbia	There is no renewed offer of EU membership to Serbia.
Slovak Republic	Data for Q4 suggests the economy is still slowing.
Slovenia	Dun & Bradstreet downgrades its rating outlook for Slovenia following the collapse of the government.
Tajikistan	The government reports strong growth for 2019.
Turkmenistan	The IMF again urges the authorities to adopt meaningful reforms.
Ukraine	Reports suggest that the government has secured a three-year IMF loan.
Uzbekistan	The government unveils more banking system reforms.

Middle East

Bahrain	US-Iran tensions pose a risk to Bahrain's domestic security.
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Egypt	The EGP continues to appreciate.
Iran	Political and security risks increase even further.
Iraq	The president nominates a new prime minister.
Israel	A US peace plan has been decisively rejected by the Palestinians.
Jordan	The latest data confirms that growth is stagnating.
Kuwait	The government resigns after a ministerial dispute.
Lebanon	The new government is to reach out to the IMF for help.
Oman	Dun & Bradstreet upgrades Oman's country risk rating as the Sultan's succession goes smoothly.
Qatar	US-Iran tensions weaken Qatar's outlook.
Saudi Arabia	The oil price collapse undermines growth prospects.
Syria	Dun & Bradstreet downgrades its rating outlook for Syria as FX risks increase.
UAE	Slumping oil prices undermine short-term growth prospects.
Yemen	The government and southern separatists sign a peace deal.

The Americas

Argentina	The pace of contraction will slow in 2020.
Bolivia	Risks to growth remain tilted to the downside.
Brazil	Tax reform and fiscal flexibility are among the key objectives of the legislative agenda.
Canada	The economic malaise is beginning to fade.
Chile	The government intends to issue bonds to fund a substantial public-spending programme.
Colombia	The economy grew at its fastest pace for five years in 2019.
Costa Rica	The government faces a challenge to bring down the fiscal deficit.
Cuba	The tightening of US sanctions is exacerbating debt sustainability challenges.
Dominican Republic	The Dominican Liberation Party candidate is set to win the May presidential election.
Ecuador	A government plan to cancel fuel subsidies causes mass protests.
El Salvador	The projected slowdown in the US will weigh on economic activity.
Guatemala	Dun & Bradstreet upgrades its rating outlook for Guatemala as the new president is sworn in.
Honduras	Anti-corruption efforts suffer a severe blow as an anti-graft body ceases operations.
Jamaica	The IMF has issued a generally positive review of the Jamaican economy.
Mexico	In 2019 the economy contracted for the first time since 2009.
Nicaragua	The main non-partisan opposition groups attempt to create a unified opposition.
Panama	Economic growth will remain solid.
Paraguay	A rebound in exports and stronger domestic demand will accelerate economic recovery.
Peru	An upturn in public investment will help economic activity to gain steam.
Trinidad & Tobago	The foreign exchange market continues to impact businesses.
USA	The gentle turn from lower to higher economic growth remains intact.
Uruguay	The new president could sometimes struggle to maintain the unity of his multi-party coalition.
Venezuela	President Maduro tightens his grip on power.

Western Europe

Austria	The Austrian People's Party and the Greens form a new government.
Belgium	The outlook is subdued amid weak external trade conditions.
Cyprus	The country makes an early repayment of an IMF loan.
Denmark	The krone is experiencing downward pressure.
Finland	A new prime minister is appointed but the policy agenda is unchanged.
France	Sluggish trade and slower investment weigh on the economic outlook.
Germany	The economic outlook remains sluggish.
Greece	The longest-dated bond sale will improve the country's debt profile.
Iceland	Economic growth is expected to rebound in 2020.

Ireland	Dun & Bradstreet downgrades its rating outlook for Ireland amid a backdrop of political uncertainty.
Italy	The economy contracts in Q4.
Luxembourg	Environmental taxes are increasing.
Malta	Dun & Bradstreet upgrades its rating outlook for Malta amid encouraging political developments.
Netherlands	Brexit poses significant risks to short-term growth.
Norway	The resilient onshore economy and strong exports will lift 2020 real GDP growth.
Portugal	The European Commission criticises the 2020 budget.
Spain	Preliminary figures from Q4 indicate 2.0% annual growth in 2019.
Sweden	Growth is set to slow sharply.
Switzerland	The franc comes under renewed pressure.
Turkey	The lira weakens as the central bank cuts interest rates again.
United Kingdom	Forward-looking indicators improve as political uncertainty decreases.