

WorldWatch Headlines: August 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.

Dun & Bradstreet Country Information gives detailed analysis, forecasting and commentary on 132 Countries. For an in-depth view, please see the full D&B Country Insight Reports available on D&B platforms. For more information, visit: www.dnb.co.uk/country-insight

Africa

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| Algeria | The new finance minister rules out foreign borrowing. |
| Angola | The country reels from external shocks and a financial squeeze. |
| Botswana | The recession will be deeper than presumed in 2020 with real GDP falling by 6.0%. |
| Cameroon | Cameroon secures new finance from the IMF and multilateral development banks. |
| Congo, D.R. | The Congolese franc's exchange rate slips to a new low: domestic price pressures will remain high. |
| Cote d'Ivoire | The government is gradually lifting Covid-19 lockdown restrictions. |
| Ethiopia | Consumer price inflation surges as the economy struggles. |
| Gabon | Dun & Bradstreet downgrades its rating outlook for Gabon amid the coronavirus pandemic and a drop in oil prices. |
| Ghana | Coronavirus will impact trade and GDP significantly in 2020. |
| Kenya | Kenya faces high debt servicing costs. |
| Libya | Dun & Bradstreet upgrades its rating outlook for Libya as an end to the country's conflict becomes more likely. |
| Malawi | Dun & Bradstreet downgrades Malawi's country risk rating due to the impact of Covid-19. |
| Mauritius | The outlook is bleak for the travel, tourism and hospitality sectors. |
| Morocco | The central bank is more pessimistic about growth than we are. |
| Mozambique | Dun & Bradstreet downgrades Mozambique's country risk rating as the economy weakens. |
| Namibia | Dun & Bradstreet downgrades Namibia's country risk rating due to the economy's forecast contraction. |
| Nigeria | FX reserves could be run down as the economy struggles. |
| Senegal | The risk rating worsens on the back of lower growth and heightened credit risks. |
| Sierra Leone | The economy will contract in 2020 amid the coronavirus pandemic. |
| South Africa | Covid-19 containment measures are reimposed to tackle the escalating outbreak. |
| Sudan | The economy will contract by as much as 8.0% in 2020, and will remain highly unstable. |
| Tanzania | The country faces a drastic reduction in tourism receipts, as well as budget pressures and a larger current account deficit. |
| Tunisia | Political tensions culminate in the prime minister's resignation, prompting an outlook downgrade. |
| Uganda | Negative developments for travel, trade, and investment trigger a rating downgrade. |
| Zambia | Dun & Bradstreet downgrades Zambia's country risk rating as the economy contracts amid Covid-19. |
| Zimbabwe | The country faces a second consecutive year of deep recession. |

Asia Pacific

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| Afghanistan | The future of peace talks hinges on completing prisoner swaps. |
| Australia | Government stimulus leads to a 'positive shock' for consumption, helping to accelerate the recovery. |
| Bangladesh | The coronavirus, lockdown, and apparel exports all weigh on growth prospects. |

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| Cambodia | Cambodia's risk rating is downgraded as declining construction, tourism and exports weigh on the outlook. |
| China | China's economy will barely grow in 2020 as jobs and services suffer. |
| Fiji | Restrictions on international travel devastate the local tourist industry, leading to a humanitarian crisis in the Western Division. |
| Hong Kong (S.A.R) | A sharp jump in coronavirus cases will hold back the economic recovery. |
| India | Due to supply disruptions inflation has risen, despite the collapse in demand. |
| Indonesia | A sharp GDP contraction is expected for Q2 - but it should be less severe than elsewhere in the region. |
| Japan | The growth outlook worsens as Q2 data shows the scale of the shock to non-IT manufacturing industries. |
| Korea (South) | Data for Q2 suggests that the economy will shrink less in 2020 than was previously forecast. |
| Malaysia | The economic shock will outlast the lockdown that expired in July. |
| Myanmar | Slumping demand in key export markets restrains growth prospects. |
| Nepal | Dun & Bradstreet downgrades Nepal's country risk rating due to the coronavirus pandemic. |
| New Zealand | Macroeconomic data rebounds - resulting in a rating outlook upgrade - but risks remain. |
| Pakistan | Economic and political challenges persist despite the easing of anti-virus restrictions. |
| Papua New Guinea | Dun & Bradstreet downgrades Papua New Guinea's country risk rating due to the coronavirus pandemic. |
| Philippines | Government policy shifts from lockdown to reopening amid concerns over economic harm. |
| Singapore | The incumbent government wins re-election, ensuring policy and leadership continuity. |
| Sri Lanka | Public health measures have affected Covid-19 containment, but the economy will shrink. |
| Taiwan | Technology exports and an almost virus-free island avert a sharp recession. |
| Thailand | The economy is in its deepest recession since 1998. |
| Vietnam | The economy looks set to outperform other countries in the region. |

Eastern Europe

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| Albania | The easing of Albania's national lockdown prompts an upgrade in its country risk rating. |
| Azerbaijan | The economy will contract by 10% in 2020 amid coronavirus and deflated oil prices. |
| Belarus | Widespread protests pose a major threat to President Lukashenko. |
| Bosnia & Herzegovina | Political problems still beset the country, despite our risk rating upgrade. |
| Bulgaria | The economy gradually reopens - to an uneven recovery. |
| Croatia | Improving business sentiment and consumer confidence lead to an upgrade in Croatia's risk rating. |
| Czech Republic | We have upgraded the Czech Republic's overall risk rating from DB3c to DB3b. |
| Estonia | The economy contracts sharply as domestic and trade activity both dive. |
| Georgia | Real GDP will contract by 3.0% this year. |
| Hungary | Government grants and interest rate cuts position the economy well for Q3, prompting a ratings upgrade. |
| Kazakhstan | Slumping demand will prompt a GDP contraction in 2020. |
| Kyrgyz Republic | The authorities move to end the state of emergency. |
| Latvia | A recovery appears to be underway across all sectors, resulting in the rating outlook being upgraded. |
| Lithuania | Economic life resumes in June as almost all restrictions are lifted. |
| Macedonia | North Macedonia faces long delays in forming a new government as elections produce a hung parliament. |
| Poland | The efficiency of the anti-crisis support package and a sharp increase in retail sales both contribute to an outlook upgrade. |

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| Romania | The risk rating is upgraded as Romania emerges from the pandemic, but problems still remain. |
| Russian Federation | We expect the economy to contract by 4.5% in 2020 and to only recover gradually in 2021. |
| Serbia | The risk outlook improves as the country emerges from lockdown. |
| Slovak Republic | Slovakia's risk rating improves as it emerges from the pandemic, but the threat of a second wave remains. |
| Slovenia | With most businesses reopening, we have upgraded Slovenia's risk rating. |
| Tajikistan | Growth is set to fall drastically. |
| Turkmenistan | Dun & Bradstreet downgrades Turkmenistan's country risk rating as the coronavirus pandemic makes its presence felt. |
| Ukraine | The economy is forecast to contract by 4.7% in 2020. |
| Uzbekistan | Dun & Bradstreet downgrades Uzbekistan's country risk rating due to the Covid-19 crisis. |

Middle East

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| Bahrain | Foreign reserves drop to critical levels, necessitating additional capital-raising. |
| Egypt | Portfolio investors are returning to the T-bill market. |
| Iran | Official data confirms that the economy is contracting sharply. |
| Iraq | Dun & Bradstreet downgrades its rating outlook for Iraq due to the crash in oil prices. |
| Israel | The threat of a second wave of coronavirus looms. |
| Jordan | Dun & Bradstreet downgrades Jordan's country risk rating as policies to mitigate coronavirus push the economy into contraction. |
| Kuwait | Political infighting between parliament and government flares up as lockdown eases. |
| Lebanon | The currency goes into freefall, prompting an outlook downgrade. |
| Oman | Oman's foreign policy independence is threatened as it is forced to seek financial support from Gulf countries. |
| Qatar | Qatar's order for 100+ new LNG carriers confirms its commitment to expand production. |
| Saudi Arabia | Payment performance in the private and public sectors alike will be undermined as the economy heads into recession. |
| Syria | The Syrian pound's sharp depreciation damages economic activity and fuels social discontent. |
| UAE | Dubai's economy contracted sharply in Q1. |
| Yemen | Civil war and coronavirus put the outlook under continued strain. |

The Americas

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| Argentina | A resurgence of coronavirus cases triggers an extension of the mandatory lockdown. |
| Bolivia | The reopening of the economy prompts an outlook upgrade. |
| Brazil | Political risk remains elevated as the president remains dogged by tensions with the legislature. |
| Canada | The near-term economic recovery remains on track as activity normalises. |
| Chile | The government comes under fire amid a spike in coronavirus infections. |
| Colombia | The severe macroeconomic shock caused by the coronavirus pandemic has led to a downgrade in Colombia's risk rating. |
| Costa Rica | Dun & Bradstreet downgrades Costa Rica's country risk rating due to the economic and social cost of the coronavirus pandemic. |
| Cuba | A three-phase reopening plan has begun. |
| Dominican Republic | The government pushes ahead with easing the lockdown, despite the continued threat of the virus. |
| Ecuador | Coronavirus is still hitting the economy and putting the government under pressure. |
| El Salvador | The economy records its weakest expansion rate in four years as spiking coronavirus cases force a temporary pause to economic reopening. |
| Guatemala | Dun & Bradstreet downgrades Guatemala's country risk rating amid the impact from Covid-19. |

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| Honduras | Dun & Bradstreet downgrades Honduras' country risk rating due to the socioeconomic impact of the coronavirus pandemic. |
| Jamaica | Damage to the government finances from stimulus spending triggers a risk-rating downgrade. |
| Mexico | Still-high levels of Covid-19 add to the extensive uncertainty clouding the outlook. |
| Nicaragua | The government's insistence that there is no national transmission of coronavirus risks a humanitarian crisis. |
| Panama | The economy re-opens as lockdown measures ease. |
| Paraguay | The economy is gradually reopening under a four-phase plan. |
| Peru | The government announces new stimulus measures to fight the deep coronavirus recession. |
| Trinidad & Tobago | Low energy prices underpin a steep recession in 2020. |
| USA | The uptick in Covid-19 cases creates a significant risk to the recovery. |
| Uruguay | The country's risk rating is upgraded given the excellent public health response to the coronavirus pandemic. |
| Venezuela | EU sanctions against government officials intensify foreign pressures to remove President Maduro. |

Western Europe

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| Austria | The growth forecast undergoes another downgrade. |
| Belgium | Uncertainty weighs on the outlook as consumer confidence wavers. |
| Cyprus | The country's risk rating improves, but the viability of the public finances looks uncertain. |
| Denmark | Recovering business confidence leads to a risk rating upgrade. |
| Finland | The outlook stabilises and a cautious upturn beckons, but substantial risks remain. |
| France | We expect GDP to contract by 8.2% in 2020, followed by growth of 5.0% in 2021, but downside risks remain severe. |
| Germany | There is an improving trend after H1's shock, but risks remain. |
| Greece | Tourism data has been disappointing since the partial lifting of travel restrictions. |
| Iceland | Dun & Bradstreet downgrades Iceland's country risk rating as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. |
| Ireland | Ireland's EUR85bn trade with the UK is at risk as Brexit negotiations stall. |
| Italy | The rating outlook improves amid the positive impact on Italy of the Recovery Fund negotiation. |
| Luxembourg | Parts of the economy are beginning to recover. |
| Malta | The cessation of coronavirus measures sees economic activity restart. |
| Netherlands | Early signs of recovery in Q3 following Q2's steep contraction are menaced by a possible coronavirus resurgence. |
| Norway | The rating outlook improves, lifted by rebounding oil prices and resilient domestic demand. |
| Portugal | The tourism sector is dealt another blow by the UK's decision to impose a 14-day quarantine for returning travellers. |
| Spain | We have upgraded Spain's risk rating as the country emerges from its coronavirus crisis. |
| Sweden | Stronger manufacturing activity triggers a supply environment outlook upgrade. |
| Switzerland | The economy is on its way to recovery: in May, sales were up by 6.6% y/y and by 30.7% relative to April. |
| Turkey | Downward currency pressure and rising political risk see Dun & Bradstreet downgrade Turkey's risk rating. |
| United Kingdom | We have downgraded our growth forecast for the UK: we now expect the economy to contract by 9.8% this year. |

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