

WorldWatch Headlines: January 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	Five candidates will contest December's presidential election.
Angola	The central bank liberalises its exchange rate regime.
Botswana	A coalition government is a real possibility after the election.
Cameroon	National dialogue fails to resolve the conflict in the anglophone regions.
Congo, D.R.	The deadly Ebola outbreak could be waning.
Cote d'Ivoire	Plans are proposed for a new vehicle assembly plant to serve West Africa.
Ethiopia	Plans to liberalise the economy make progress.
Gabon	Economic recovery continues amid expansion of the mining, petroleum and timber sectors.
Ghana	The IMF raises concerns about rising debt levels.
Kenya	The central bank reduces the benchmark interest rate.
Libya	Washington increases its support for the interim government.
Malawi	The country meets all IMF targets apart from the budget deficit.
Mauritius	The incumbent alliance wins November's general election.
Morocco	The new budget includes tax cuts for manufacturers.
Mozambique	The Frelimo government wins landslide victories in October's elections.
Namibia	Dun & Bradstreet downgrades its rating outlook for Namibia as negative factors converge.
Nigeria	All land borders have been closed to trade in goods indefinitely.
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 keeps rates on hold.
Sudan	New political leadership structures emerge as part of a power-sharing agreement.
Tanzania	The buoyant construction industry supports rapid economic growth.
Tunisia	Growing public debt undermines the short-term economic outlook.
Uganda	A tax dispute over the Lake Albert Development Project is settled.
Zambia	Severe drought and regulatory uncertainty subdue growth.
Zimbabwe	Real GDP will post a sharp 7.0% contraction in 2019.

Asia Pacific

Afghanistan	Results from the September presidential election have been delayed.
Australia	States of emergency are declared in New South Wales due to widespread brush fires.
Bangladesh	Slumping exports heap pressure on the country's export-oriented sectors.
Cambodia	An EU decision on trade access nears, creating downside risks.
China	Trade diplomacy alone cannot reinvigorate growth in 2020.
Fiji	FX reserves are rising, driven by a rise in exports and a decline in imports.
Hong Kong (S.A.R)	Democrats win 86% of the seats in district council elections.
India	Dun & Bradstreet downgrades its rating outlook for India due to evidence that the economy is slowing.
Indonesia	Interest rates are held unchanged in November following four successive cuts.

Japan	The falls in both exports and retail spending have resulted in an enlargement of stimulus plans.
Korea (South)	The currency recovers but record-low policy rates reflect downside risks.
Malaysia	Dun & Bradstreet upgrades its rating outlook for Malaysia as GDP data proves resilient.
Myanmar	Accusations of genocide are brought to the International Court of Justice.
Nepal	A new oil pipeline between Nepal and India has become operational.
New Zealand	The economy continues its gradual loss of momentum.
Pakistan	The market environment outlook improves.
Papua New Guinea	Bougainville holds a long-awaited independence referendum.
Philippines	Typhoon Kammuri disrupts a local tourist, transport and agriculture hub.
Singapore	Talks with Australia about a digital services agreement could boost bilateral trade.
Sri Lanka	The Rajapaksa family's return to power heralds harder-line populist policy.
Taiwan	Dun & Bradstreet upgrades its rating outlook for Taiwan Region due to resilient economic data.
Thailand	The central bank's rate cut reveals concerns about the currency.
Vietnam	Rising inflation creates a challenge for policymakers.

Eastern Europe

Albania	The supply environment outlook deteriorates following a massive earthquake.
Azerbaijan	The political environment outlook is improving rapidly as steps are taken toward modernisation.
Belarus	Real GDP growth remains somewhat weak.
Bosnia & Herzegovina	Dun & Bradstreet downgrades Bosnia & Herzegovina's country risk rating as the EU ends its policy of enlargement.
Bulgaria	A balanced budget supported by vigorous revenue growth is expected.
Croatia	Economic growth appears to be slowing.
Czech Republic	Growth in GDP slows due to the downturn in the wider European economy.
Estonia	The outlook weakens as investment growth slows and trade softens.
Georgia	Real GDP growth remained buoyant between January and August.
Hungary	The government's hold on power suffers a setback.
Kazakhstan	Investment remains the key driver of structural growth.
Kyrgyz Republic	Dun & Bradstreet upgrades its rating outlook for the Kyrgyz Republic as trade performance improves.
Latvia	NATO agrees on an updated defence plan for the Baltics.
Lithuania	NATO updates its defence plan for Lithuania.
Macedonia	Dun & Bradstreet downgrades North Macedonia's country risk rating as the EU rejects its membership request.
Poland	Concerns grow amid plans to further increase the minimum wage.
Romania	The new government aims to restore fiscal stability.
Russian Federation	Dun & Bradstreet upgrades Russia's country risk rating as macro-fiscal buffers remain robust.
Serbia	There is no renewed offer of EU membership to Serbia.
Slovak Republic	The economy is slowing sharply due to a deterioration in the external environment.
Slovenia	The political outlook deteriorates as the government loses its majority.
Tajikistan	The somoni remains weak heading into 2020.
Turkmenistan	The IMF again urges the authorities to adopt meaningful reforms.
Ukraine	New government reforms have led to a robust economic performance in the first nine months of 2019.
Uzbekistan	The government unveils more banking system reforms.

Middle East

Bahrain	Bond issuance restocks reserves and reduces FX risk.
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Egypt	Dun & Bradstreet upgrades its rating outlook for Egypt on the back of positive economic indicators.
Iran	Tensions with Saudi Arabia are easing.
Iraq	Dun & Bradstreet downgrades its rating outlook for Iraq after the government resigns.
Israel	Dun & Bradstreet downgrades Israel's country risk rating due to multiple political factors.
Jordan	The credit environment outlook is downgraded amid weak economic fundamentals.
Kuwait	Disputes with Saudi Arabia over the Divided Zone appear to be largely resolved.
Lebanon	Anti-government protests and political paralysis continue.
Oman	There was strong demand for Oman's USD3bn bond issue.
Qatar	Dun & Bradstreet upgrades Qatar's country risk rating as gas reserves are doubled.
Saudi Arabia	The new OPEC+ agreement will curtail Saudi oil output.
Syria	Dun & Bradstreet downgrades its rating outlook for Syria as FX risks increase.
UAE	Growth in Dubai disappoints in the first half of 2019.
Yemen	The government and southern separatists sign a peace deal.

The Americas

Argentina	Washington's reinstatement of aluminium tariffs signals rising trade protectionism.
Bolivia	Dun & Bradstreet downgrades its rating outlook for Bolivia due to the worst political crisis in decades.
Brazil	Dun & Bradstreet upgrades its rating outlook for Brazil as economic growth is set to accelerate in 2020.
Canada	Overall growth slowed in Q3, but some positive signs are emerging.
Chile	Dun & Bradstreet downgrades Chile's country risk rating amid the largest and most intense protests in decades.
Colombia	The economy is gathering pace as private demand and investment expand solidly.
Costa Rica	The government issues bonds to refinance debt and cover budgetary needs.
Cuba	The US dollar and other hard currencies are now legal tender.
Dominican Republic	Growth remains healthy, but is slowing.
Ecuador	Anecdotal evidence suggests that growth weakened in the second quarter.
El Salvador	An internal commission has been launched to fight corruption and impunity.
Guatemala	Subdued global growth prospects and heightened uncertainties cloud the outlook.
Honduras	Dun & Bradstreet downgrades its rating outlook for Honduras as the president's position weakens further.
Jamaica	The IMF has issued a generally positive review of the Jamaican economy.
Mexico	Growth will be flat in 2019, with economic activity remaining weak in 2020.
Nicaragua	The true scale of the political crisis's impact on the economy remains unclear.
Panama	Economic growth will remain solid, but downside risks to the outlook remain significant.
Paraguay	A rebound in exports and stronger domestic demand will accelerate economic recovery.
Peru	The authorities deploy stimulus measures to support feeble economic activity.
Trinidad & Tobago	The foreign exchange market continues to impact businesses.
USA	Market access continues to diminish as new tariffs target imports.
Uruguay	The presidential election is likely to go to a run-off, which promises to be tight.
Venezuela	The US extends sanction waivers to American oil companies operating in Venezuela.

Western Europe

Austria	The likely shape of a governing coalition implies a shift to the centre-left.
Belgium	The outlook is subdued amid weak external demand.
Cyprus	The Q3 GDP flash estimate signals continued growth.
Denmark	Passport controls are introduced on the border with Sweden.
Finland	The business environment is highly amenable, but labour restraints persist.
France	Strike disruption mounts in protest at pension reforms.
Germany	Recession is avoided but weak exports cloud the outlook.
Greece	Stronger private consumption and healthy investment will keep growth solid.

Iceland	Economic growth in 2019 will be below expectations.
Ireland	Recent data suggests that the economy is slowing.
Italy	Venice's worst floods in half a century lead to renewed pressure on the local state.
Luxembourg	Institutional and policy stability looks to be assured.
Malta	Dun & Bradstreet downgrades Malta's country risk rating amid serious street protests.
Netherlands	Growth remains stable in Q3 on the back of solid investment and consumption.
Norway	Central bank reform improves the transparency of monetary policy.
Portugal	Economic growth remained solid in Q3.
Spain	The new coalition government needs Catalan approval to break the political deadlock.
Sweden	The outlook remains clouded despite Q3's better-than-expected outturn.
Switzerland	Growth accelerated unexpectedly in Q3.
Turkey	Political and security threats are still putting pressure on the country's risk rating.
United Kingdom	Dun & Bradstreet upgrades the UK's country risk rating following the general election result.