**Determinants of GDP in Selected African Economies: A Comparative Study of East Africa and African Counterparts**

### **Introduction**

Africa is a continent characterized by wide economic diversity, with countries at different stages of growth, industrialization, and integration into global markets. East African nations such as Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya, and Rwanda have attracted attention for their dynamic growth trajectories, regional integration efforts, and innovation in areas such as digital finance. According to the World Bank’s income classifications, Uganda and Rwanda remain low-income economies, while Kenya and Tanzania have transitioned into the lower-middle-income category in recent years. These distinctions reflect differences in structural transformation but also highlight the region’s shared challenges, including heavy reliance on agriculture, rapid population growth, and constraints in industrialization. At the same time, Kenya has emerged as a continental leader in mobile technology and financial innovation, most notably through the global success of mobile money platforms.

In contrast, countries such as South Africa, Nigeria, Botswana, and Côte d’Ivoire represent a different set of economic profiles and income levels. South Africa is classified as an upper-middle-income economy, with the most industrialized and diversified economy on the continent. Nigeria and Côte d’Ivoire fall into the lower-middle-income group but demonstrate distinct strengths: Nigeria combines oil wealth with a rapidly expanding technology sector, while Côte d’Ivoire plays a central role in global cocoa exports and West African trade integration. Botswana, meanwhile, is classified as an upper-middle-income economy, having leveraged diamond exports and prudent fiscal management to achieve relative economic stability.

This study investigates the determinants of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) across these eight economies, examining the relationship between GDP and key socio-economic indicators—exports, the share of high-tech versus non-high-tech production, levels of educational attainment (primary, secondary, tertiary), demographic patterns such as birth rates, and foreign reserves. These dimensions are not only important drivers of current economic performance but also provide insight into long-term development capacity. Trade reflects integration into regional and global markets, technology signals innovation and industrial growth, education underpins human capital development, and demographic trends shape labor markets and consumption patterns.

By comparing East African economies with selected African counterparts, this paper seeks to highlight both areas of convergence and divergence in economic structure and performance. More specifically, it asks: Which socio-economic measures most strongly influence GDP across these countries, and what do their similarities and differences reveal about Africa’s broader growth dynamics? The findings aim to inform policy-making, regional cooperation, and strategies for sustainable economic transformation.