

A Nigerian child stands in front of the massive trunk of a felled ironwood tree.

WITNESS HISTORY AUDIO

Plundering Forests at Gunpoint

In Ivory Coast, also known as Côte d'Ivoire (koht dee VWAH), civil war has allowed armed gangs to log trees that have taken hundreds of years to grow. This is having a devastating effect on local economies.

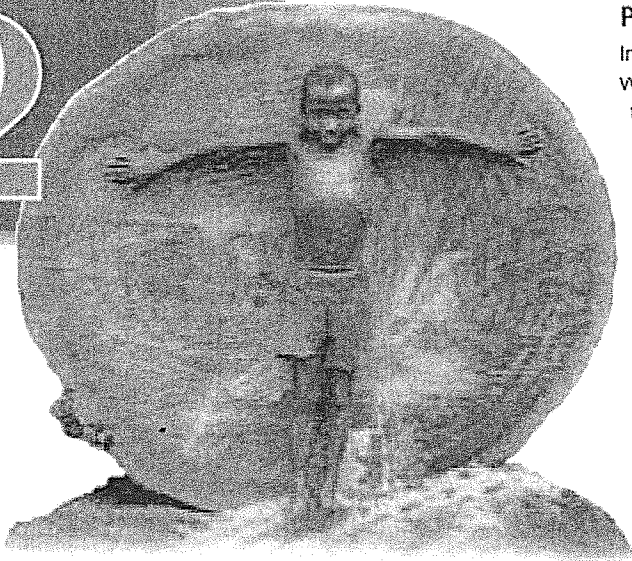
Village chief Kouadio Yao (KWAH dyoh yow) told a United Nations worker of watching a nearby grove of valuable teak trees being completely destroyed. He was helpless to save it.

“If someone came with a gun, would you be able to stop them and demand that they pay for the trees? What I do know is that because of the conflict, we have lost everything.”

— Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN), December 23, 2004

Focus Question What challenges have African nations faced in their effort to develop their economies?

Chapter 33
2



Africa Seeks a Better Future

Objectives

- Describe the choices African nations had to make as they began to develop their economies.
- Understand obstacles that African nations faced in their search for well-being.
- Analyze the challenges faced by a developing nation by taking a closer look at Tanzania.

Terms, People, and Places

- socialism
- endangered species
- desertification
- Wangari Maathai
- urbanization
- sustainable development

Note Taking

Reading Skill: Identify Main Ideas As you read, use a concept web to record the main ideas in this section and to note details that support those main ideas.



After World War II, the emerging nations of Africa faced many challenges. A few achieved social stability and strong economic development. However, as part of the developing world, all African nations faced challenges to the economic and social welfare of their citizens, as many still do today.

Making Economic Choices

Development means building productive economies and raising standards of living. To achieve these goals, African nations had to establish industries, build transportation systems, develop resources, increase literacy, and solve problems of rural poverty. Many had little capital to invest in such projects. As a result, they had to make difficult choices about how to run their countries.

Socialism or Capitalism Many newly independent nations chose socialism, a system in which the government controls parts of the economy. They hoped to end foreign influence on their economies as well as the inequalities between rich and poor. But to regulate the economy, socialist governments created large bureaucracies, which generally were inefficient.

Other nations relied on capitalism, or market economies with private ownership of property, as a path to development. These countries often had more efficient economies, but they allowed more profit to be taken out of the country by foreign owners.

Cash Crops or Food In the early years, governments sought to increase earnings that could fund development by growing cash crops for export, such as coffee or cotton. But land used for export crops could not be used to produce food crops. As a result, countries that had once been able to feed their own people now had to import food. This was costly. Also, many nations became dependent on a single crop, such as coffee, which put their economies at the mercy of abrupt changes in the market.

Meanwhile, many governments kept food prices artificially low to prevent unrest among the urban poor. Low prices, however, discouraged local farmers from growing food crops. Governments then had to subsidize part of the cost of importing food from overseas.

✓ **Checkpoint** Why did governments promote the growth of cash crops?

Facing Obstacles to Well-Being

Developing African nations faced many challenges to well-being. These included rapid population growth, disease, the migration of people from rural areas to cities, and damage to the environment and wildlife.

Drought Brings Starvation In the late 1900s, long droughts contributed to famine in parts of Africa. Livestock died, and farmland turned to dust. The Sahel, a semi-desert region just south of the Sahara, was especially hard hit. There, overgrazing and farming removed topsoil and sped up desertification, or a change from fertile land to desert. The loss of so much farmland and pasture led to famine. Food shortages continued despite huge international relief efforts.

AIDS Kills Millions Since the 1980s, the devastating disease AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) has taken a heavy toll on Africa's people. AIDS is caused by a deadly virus commonly called HIV. HIV damages the body's ability to fight off infections.

AIDS spread rapidly across Africa. In nations such as South Africa and Botswana, up to one third of adults were infected with HIV. In the early 2000s, the UN estimated that more than 2 million Africans died of the disease each year. Their deaths left millions of orphaned children. The loss of so many skilled and productive workers also damaged many countries' economies.

People Move to Cities Africa is the most rural continent, but it has a very high rate of urbanization, or movement of people from rural areas to cities. This shift has meant hardship for many. However, in much of West Africa, the growth of cities has benefited women. Historically, West African women dominated urban markets as traders. The growth of urban markets increased opportunities for these women. Urbanization also brought people from different ethnic groups together in cities and helped to replace ethnic loyalties with a larger national identity. However, modern urban lifestyles weakened traditional cultures and undermined ethnic and kinship ties. Many educated Africans took pride in those traditions. Yet young urban dwellers often scorned traditional ways.

Vocabulary Builder

subsidize—(SUB suh dyz) *v.* support with government spending

Displaced by Drought

A Sudanese mother and children escape famine caused by years of drought. *How can geography affect migration patterns?*



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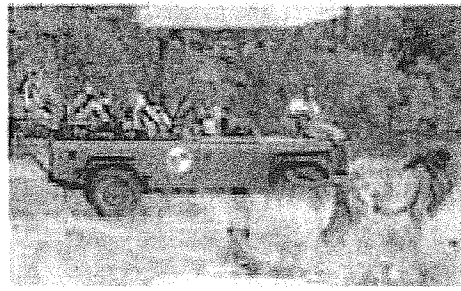
ENDANGERED SPECIES

The threats to Africa's endangered species include a loss of habitats and poaching, or illegal hunting. The map below shows that most of Africa's forests have been disturbed or cut down. However, Africans have taken steps to save their rich wildlife. Earnings from tourism have given local people a stake in saving these animals' lives.



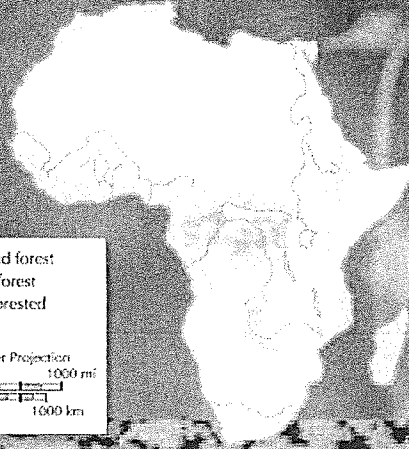
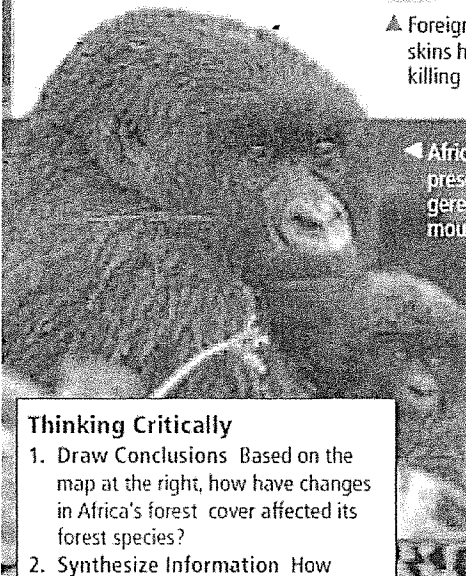
▲ Foreign demand for leopard skins has encouraged illegal killing of leopards.

Elephants have been killed ▶ for their valuable tusks.



▲ Africa's wildlife draw foreign tourists, who provide a steady income to local guides and tour operators. This gives Africans a stake in preventing poaching.

◀ African nations have set aside preserves to protect endangered species such as these mountain gorillas in Rwanda.



Thinking Critically

1. Draw Conclusions Based on the map at the right, how have changes in Africa's forest cover affected its forest species?
2. Synthesize Information How might wildlife tourism discourage poaching in Africa?

Facing Environmental Threats Urbanization, farming, and logging have devoured nearly 70 percent of Africa's animal habitats. Destroyed habitats have caused many kinds of animals to become endangered species, or species threatened with extinction. Other animals are being killed off. Foreign demand for elephant tusks to make ivory, for example, or for rare pelts, or furs, has encouraged impoverished Africans to kill endangered animals, even when laws make this illegal.

In Kenya, an environmental activist named Wangari Maathai (mah THY) challenged government policy by starting the Green Belt Movement. She worked with local women on projects of sustainable development. This is economic development that aims to provide lasting well-being for future generations rather than short-term gains.

✓ **Checkpoint** What are some advantages and disadvantages of urbanization in Africa?

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Tanzania: A Closer Look

Tanzania has been very poor since it gained independence in the early 1960s. Fifty percent of its population lives below the poverty line. This means that half of Tanzanians do not make enough money to meet their basic needs. In 2003, the per capita income was estimated at \$290 per year.

When the country gained independence, most Tanzanians were farmers or herders. To improve life, the new government embraced what was called "African socialism." This was based on African village traditions of cooperation and shared responsibility. The government took over banks and businesses. Farmers were encouraged to move to large villages and farm the land collectively. The goal was to increase output and sell surplus crops to towns or for export.

The government's experiment failed, partly because farmers refused to leave their land. Farm output did not rise. This experiment also resulted in a huge and inefficient government bureaucracy. The expense of this huge bureaucracy and high oil prices plunged Tanzania into debt. In 1985, new leaders introduced economic reforms, including cutting the size of government, promoting a market economy, and encouraging foreign investment.

Today, Tanzania remains overwhelmingly agricultural. About nine tenths of Tanzanian workers work in agriculture. Over half of Tanzania's GDP comes from agriculture. The government continues to make attempts to develop a more profitable, mixed economy. However, the country has had to rely on loans from international lenders to avoid economic crisis.

Although Tanzania remains poor, its economy also received a boost in the early 2000s from the opening of a huge new gold mine. The government planned to use profits from gold, along with foreign aid, to reduce poverty and improve services such as clean water, schools, and health care.

- ✓ **Checkpoint** What economic experiments did Tanzania try after independence, and why?

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BIOGRAPHY

Wangari Maathai

While working with a women's rights group, Kenyan activist Wangari Maathai (born in 1940) came up with the idea of getting ordinary women involved in tree-planting projects. In 1977, she launched the Green Belt Movement (GBM). This grassroots organization promotes reforestation and controlled wood cutting to ensure a sustainable supply of wood fuel. The group also sought jobs for women in Kenya, Tanzania, and other East African countries. In 2004, Maathai became the first African woman to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Today, Maathai continues to work with the GBM. She is also a member of Kenya's government. In what ways might planting trees help improve women's lives?



Progress Monitoring Online

For: Self-quiz with vocabulary practice
Web Code: naa-3321

2 Assessment

Terms, People, and Places

1. For each term or person listed at the beginning of the section, write a sentence explaining its significance.

Note Taking

2. **Reading Skill: Identify Main Ideas**
Use your completed concept web to answer the Focus Question: What challenges have African nations faced in their effort to develop their economies?

Comprehension and Critical Thinking

3. **Summarize** What obstacles kept many African nations from developing strong economies?
4. **Synthesize Information** Why have African nations had trouble feeding their people?
5. **Draw Inferences** Urbanization is a problem for many developing nations. Why do you think this is?
6. **Summarize** Why did Tanzania's economic reforms fail?

Writing About History

Quick Write: Gather Information
Review the material in this section on social issues in Africa. For each problem, list the causes, the effects, and any actions that have been taken to solve that problem.