CHAPTER – 1

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA –
GEOGRAPHIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC FRAMEWORK.
Geography of Sub-Saharan Africa

Sub-Saharan Africa is the second largest continental region after Asia. It has the great Sahara desert on its north that stretches from the Atlantic in the west to the Red Sea in the east. To the south and the south-east lies the Indian Ocean. There are over fifty distinct states in Sub-Saharan Africa, including two groups of small islands in the Atlantic, as well as Madagascar in the Indian Ocean.1

With 550 million inhabitants, Sub-Saharan Africa had almost 10 percent of the world's population in 1993. In 2025 it is expected to have about 1.326 million people, 16 percent of the world's population that year. The region is about 24.5 million square kilometres in area. With an annual average Gross Domestic Product (G.D.P.) of about 500 dollars per head in the early 1990s it has only about half of the average for all the developing countries in the world, about one eighth of the world average. However, if South Africa is omitted from the calculation the average for the rest of Sub-Saharan Africa drops considerably.2

Sub-Saharan Africa is a region of plateaux occupied by thick forests, extensive grasslands and vast deserts. It lies over tropical and warm temperate zones. The climate varies consistently in the region. The region is rich both in flora and fauna. The region is also rich in natural resources such as forests, minerals and hydropower.

1 The Sahara desert, which stretches across northern Africa from the Atlantic in the west to the Red sea in the east, roughly between 15 degree and 20 degree North of the equator. It separates the northern part of Africa from the rest of the continent. The region lying to the south of the Sahara and the six North African countries (Western Sahara, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya and Egypt), is the Sub-Saharan African region.

Physically Sub-Saharan Africa gives the appearance of one huge plateau though it consists of several plateaux. The plateau is higher in the south and the east. A few volcanic peaks rise above the plateau in the eastern part near the equator. In fact, the highest peak, Mt. Kilimanjaro is located in the eastern highland region. It remains snow covered throughout the year. In the west and north lie the lowland areas.

One of the most significant features of the region is the Great Rift Valley. The Rift runs from the south of Lake Malawi northward to the Red Sea and then to the Gulf of Suez and the Gulf of Afula to the Dead Sea. The Great Rift Valley actually comprises of a long chain of rift valleys. Lakes occupy many of these valleys. There are several lakes especially on the highland regions of Africa. Lake Victoria, which is one of the sources of river Nile, is the largest lake.

**Physiographic Regions**

Africa may be divided into three major Physiographic regions:

- the Northern Plateau,
- the Central and Southern Plateau and
- the Eastern Highlands.

In general, elevations increase across the continent from north-west to south-east, the average being about 560 m (1,900 ft). The coastal plains, with the exception of the Mediterranean and the Guinea coasts, are generally narrow.

The outstanding feature of the Northern Plateau is the Sahara, the great desert that occupies more than one-quarter of Africa. At the fringes of the Northern Plateau are several mountainous regions. To the north-west lie the Atlas Mountains, a chain of rugged peaks linked by high plateaux, extending from Morocco into Tunisia. Other prominent uplands are the
Fouta Djallon, in the south-west, and the Adamawa Massif and the Cameroon mountain range, in the south. The Lake Chad basin is situated in the approximate centre of the Northern Plateau.

The Central and Southern Plateau is considerably higher than the Northern Plateau, averaging more than 900 m (3,000 ft) in height. It includes west-central and southern Africa, and contains several major depressions, notably the Congo River basin and the Kalahari Desert. South of this plateau are the folded chain of the Drakensberg Mountains of South Africa, which run some 1,100 km (700 mi) along the south-eastern coast of the continent. In the extreme south is the Karroo, an arid plateau covering about 259,000 sq. km (100,000 sq. miles).

The Eastern Highlands, the highest part of the continent, lie near the eastern coast, extending from the Red Sea south to the Zambezi along the fault line of the Rift Valley. The region has an average elevation of more than 1,500 m (5,000 ft), although in the Ethiopian Plateau it rises in stages to about 3,000 m (10,000 ft). Ras Dashan (4,620 m/15,157 ft) in northern Ethiopia is the highest point of the plateau. To the south of the Ethiopian Plateau lie a number of towering volcanic peaks, including Mount Kilimanjaro, Mount Kenya, and Mount Elgon. The most distinctive feature of the Eastern Highlands is the Rift Valley, the vast geologic fault system which begins in Anatolia, in eastern Turkey, stretches through the Jordan Valley and the Dead Sea, and then follows down the length of the Red Sea to Lake Turkana (formerly Lake Rudolph). At the southern end of Lake Turkana, the rift divides around Lake Victoria, but joins again at the head of Lake Nyasa, from where it runs down the Shire and Zambezi rivers, and finally out to sea. Altogether the Rift Valley extends around almost one-fifth of the earth, and contains some of its deepest lakes. West of the Rift Valley is the Ruwenzori Range, which rises up to 5,119 m (16,795 ft.) above sea level. The topography of the island of Madagascar features a rugged...
central highland extending in a generally northern-southern direction near
the eastern coast.

Except for a few incursions from the sea, Africa has been a land
area since Precambrian times. Its soils have therefore developed locally,
chiefly by weathering. A few areas have alluvial soils laid down by rivers or
ocean currents. Sub-Saharan soils, for the most part, have irregular
drainage and no definite water tables. Being typical tropical soils, most soils
are relatively infertile, lacking humus and subject to mineral leaching from
heavy rainfall and high temperatures. Desert soils (aridisols and entisols),
that have the least organic content, cover a large area. The most fertile
soils include the mollisols, also known as chernozems and black soils, of
eastern Africa, and the alfisols or podzolic soils, of parts of western and
southern Africa.

Relief and Drainage

The Sub-Saharan plateau extends uninterruptedly from the Guinea coast
to Somalia and from the northern margins of the Sahara to the central
districts of Cape Province. It has no modern fold mountains and the only
important folded system of greater antiquity which is still prominent in relief
is that in extreme south, which includes the east-west trending
Zwartebergen and Langebergen of the Cape.

Most of the highest land of the plateau, apart from isolated and
comparatively rare peaks, owes its existence and eminence to its own
greater resistance. While in certain elevated regions such as Ethiopia and
the East Sub-Saharan plateau, the pouring of lava in recent geological
times has raised the surface level over wide areas. Within the limits of the
plateau the highest summits and almost invariably volcanic masses piled

up on the surface of an already high plateau. Mt. Kilimanjaro (5,895 m or 19,340 ft), Mt. Elgan and Ras Dashan (4,620 m/15,157 ft), all of which are in East Africa, are examples. Mount Ruwenzori also in the East Sub-Saharan Plateau represents a different origin, and is a block mountain left in lofty isolation apart from East Africa, the only peak which exceeds 12,000 feet in western Africa is the volcano of Cameroon mountains. Mount Cameroon, an active volcanic peak, in south-western Cameroon, near the Gulf of Guinea is the highest mountain in western Africa, with an elevation of 4,095 m (13,435 ft).4

Another characteristic of Sub-Saharan Africa is the rarity of extensive alluvial lowlands. Great flood plains opening to the sea and of high agricultural productivity, which are common in the Americas and Asia, are absent in Africa. Usually the plateau edge is closer to the seaboard and the great rivers of the interior - the Nile, Congo, Niger, and Zambezi - in making their way to the ocean drop in successive stages over ledges of the tableland. Therefore, the navigability of these rivers' lower or lower middle courses is greatly impeded. The term 'coastal plain' when applied to Africa should be used in a relative term, as very commonly, a line of cliffs rises to the plateau behind from the limits of high tide.

The usually straight shore is not well endowed with natural harbours and on nearly every margin of the continent there are to be found coastal stretches, which are virtually harbour-less. Lack of adequate protection and of inshore anchorage for shipping, together with the difficulties involved in navigating the lower courses of the principle rivers, have delayed the commercial development of the Sub-Saharan interior. These negative influences are still apparent even today when the science of transport is able to provide in ample measure the facilities which nature

4 Ibid
has withheld. It is difficult for ships to approach the coast on account of the existence of sand bars deposited by currents flowing parallel to the shore and by rivers in their lower courses, for example, the Guinea coast has no first class natural harbour between Freetown and the Niger delta. Only one of the great rivers of Africa—namely the Congo, has an estuary of deep water.

The most notable feature of the Sub-Saharan plateau surface is the remarkable uniformity of level between 2000 and 4000 feet over vast areas. Sharp contrasts in altitude, such as are common in Americas and Eurasia are not a usual feature of Africa and within the limits of the plateau proper, area almost entirely confined to the vicinity of the East Sub-Saharan rift valleys.

Major rivers
There are a few rivers flowing through various regions of Sub-Saharan Africa, of which, the larger and important ones are the following:

The Orange River basin: in the southern Africa the plateau slopes in general from the high eastern edge (Drakensberg) to the west. The Orange River, the chief tributary of which is the Vaal, drains nearly all the surface. The southern half of the Kalahari lies in the same basin, but the water-courses are nearly always dry. True to the Sub-Saharan type the Orange passes over the Great Falls on its way to the Atlantic ocean, but its bed is usually dry before the ocean is reached through the coastal desert belt of the Namib. Even in the damper parts of the high Veldt, the streams are frequently non-perennial, so that the whole system has no use for navigation and limited use for irrigation.

The Limpopo Basin: for much of its course the Limpopo forms the borders between South Africa on the south, Botswana on the west and Zimbabwe on the north. It is one of Africa's lesser rivers, but it drains well-watered country eastward to the Indian Ocean and its basin includes lands of much economic importance.

The Zambezi Basin: the Zambezi's upper course drains a huge shallow basin, floored with alluvial deposits, in the heart of the Sub-Saharan plateau. The head streams that drain the western drier parts are non-perennial streams. But the main river is constant and navigable by native craft over much of its plateau course, then the river cascades over the world famous Victoria falls (343 feet high), and passes through a narrow zigzag gorge excavated in the crushed rock of successive fault lines. There are long navigable stretches in lower courses before the river is joined by the Shire, draining the water of Lake Nyasa to the sea. The plateau courses are navigable over large stretches. The various waterfalls and changes in level provide an enormous potential for power. The lower reaches are valuable for local navigation, though interrupted by gorges and rapids.

The Congo Basin: even more than the Zambezi, the Congo is the river of the tropical Africa. It also has a great shallow basin on the surface of the plateau, but the river's spread over the equatorial region ensures high precipitation. As a result, all its mainstreams and tributaries are perennial, most are navigable for long stretches by country boats and the main stream and major tributaries, except for rare interruptions; are navigable by river steamers. The deep sheltered mouth of the Congo has proved to be more useful than those of other rivers and provides excellent porting facilities.

The Niger Basin: the Niger repeats some of the main features of the Zambezi. It has a long plateau course with many tributaries from the
northern side, which are normally dry. Its mainstream is valuable for navigation until the chief rapids and falls, a long way from the shore are reached. Below the falls there are again long navigable stretches. The important tributary of the Niger, the Benue, invites comparison with the Shire. The main headwaters of the Niger are in the very wet Futa-Jallon highlands of the Sierra Leone border, less than 200 miles from the Atlantic Ocean, but the river transports this water 2600 miles before discharging it into the Ocean. In doing so, it swings in a great loop into the arid Sahel and so confers an immensely valuable gift of irrigation water on land well suited to receive it.

The Nile Basin: the Nile is fed by two head streams, the White Nile and the Blue Nile. The White Nile originates from Lake Victoria spilling over the Owen falls and is joined by a stream from Albert Lake. Thereafter, the Fola falls it enters the great Bahr-el-Ghazal basin. At Khartoum, the Blue Nile joins the White Nile. The Blue Nile originates from the vicinity of Lake Tana in the Ethiopian highlands. Thereafter, the river moves out of Sub-Saharan Africa into Egypt.

Geology

In its structure as its relief Africa is the continent of simplest form. By far the greater part of Sub-Saharan Africa consists of a plateau of marked geological stability, whose foundation of ancient (Archaen) rocks has resisted compressional and tensional movements of the earth’s crust. Within the limits of the plateau there is an absence of recent from the compression of crustal strata.

The Archaen base or platform is actually exposed at the surface over areas which, in the aggregate, equal about one third of the surface of Africa. Such intermittent outcroppings of the continental core have been mapped from the Guinea region to Somalia in the east and from South Africa to Sudan.

Palaeozoic rocks older than Devonian is rare in Africa and the system, which corresponds to the Devonian of Europe, is the earliest, which includes extensive fossiliferous beds. Such sediments occur in Cape Province of South Africa and western Sudan. Carboniferous system contains very extreme land deposits; especially notable of which are those of the lower Karo beds in South Africa, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Tanzania and Malawi.

At the close of the Triassic times the Sea reached the East Sub-Saharan Littoral as is indicated by the occurrence of Jurassic marine beds on the coasts of Tanzania, Kenya, and Somalia. At this time a sea-gulf intervened between the mainland and Madagascar, which like the parent continent consists fundamentally of Archaen gneisses and schists. On the western side of the island as on the opposite mainland shore, marine Jurassic deposits indicate the existence of an ancient Mozambique Channel.

Throughout the Palaeozoic Era the Sub-Saharan plateau formed a large interior fragment of a vast continent called Gondwanaland which included on the west South America and on the east, the Deccan plateau of India and the greater part of Australia. By the early phases of the Mesozoic era Gondwanaland had begun to undergo gradual disruption and thus there ultimately came into existence the Atlantic and the Indian Oceans, which occupy the wide intervals between the great fragments of Gondwanaland that appear on the map of the modern world.
Although remarkably stable throughout much of the greater part of geological time the Sub-Saharan plateau in its eastern region, has undergone extensive faulting and fissuring comparatively recently. There has formed in consequence a continuous series of deep narrow troughs termed Great Rift Valley by Prof. JW Gregory.7

Climate

Climate is the most important physical factor affecting Sub-Saharan Africa. Sub-Saharan Africa mostly falls between the tropics giving the region the maximum expression of tropical conditions. This results in a certain symmetry in the pattern of climate, vegetation and soil regimes, and hence to a considerable degree, in land use regions.

The temperature is high over most of Sub-Saharan Africa and precipitation as an element of climate assumes the utmost importance. Worthington states that precipitation is scanty in about 75 percent of Sub-Saharan Africa. Not only is there inadequate precipitation but also there are great fluctuations within individual seasons and from year to year.8

Moving from the arid and semi arid areas towards the equator, we find the savannah type of climate occupying a large area of Sub-Saharan Africa. Characterised by a long rainy season and a short dry season, climate is not so severe. But regions in this climate type are once again plagued by uncertainties and the torrential character of precipitation is another disadvantage.

Sub-Saharan Africa lies roughly between the tropics, with the result that, excluding the highland areas and mountainous areas, the whole of

7 Ibid, p.16.
Sub-Saharan Africa has average temperature over the crucial 42 degree F for plant growth throughout the year. Despite the elevation in East Africa, frost is virtually unknown to the region throughout humid inter-tropical Africa. Furthermore, violent fluctuations of temperature, which are associated with the movements of the fronts for example in the North American continent, are absent. Thus, Sub-Saharan Africa has a regular temperature regime, which permits plant growth throughout the year. In Sub-Saharan Africa climatic interests depend on precipitation rather than temperature. But, as far as precipitation is concerned Sub-Saharan Africa has a sorry tale to tell. Viewed over the averages of a span of years the rainfall may appear regular enough, but few places enjoy an average rainfall. Instead there are violent fluctuations from year to year, serious differences in the arrival of rains, and violent spasmodic downpours rather than steady falls.

Gradual transitions from one type of climate to another are the general rule over Sub-Saharan Africa. There are no great mountain chains to act as climatic divides. The elevation of the great Sub-Saharan plateau, especially since its higher peaks are in the east towards the windward modifies both temperature and rainfall. The July temperature of the East Sub-Saharan plateau actually on the equator is 20 degree lower than it would be on sea level and actually 10 degree lower than the coastlands of the south east, outside the tropics, in the same season. The moderate rainfall of the East Sub-Saharan Plateau is due in part to the lifting of moisture-bearing winds so that the heavy equatorial rainfall and equatorial climate do not extend across the continent. The East Sub-Saharan Plateau, right on the equator is thus suited to European crops and farm animals, and the equatorial rainfall is absent.9

The oceanic currents considerably influence climatic conditions around the coasts. Along the West Coast of Northern Africa, the cold Canaries current flows southward. The low sea temperatures are due partly to the northern origin of the water, partly to the upwelling of cold bottom waters to replace surface waters constantly propelled towards the southwest by the dominant Northeasterly winds. Coastal fogs are frequent, but hot seasonal temperatures are relatively low. With offshore winds, the coastlands are very arid. Similar effects are associated with the cold northward flowing Benguela current off the shores of Southwest Africa, where conditions resemble those of northern Chile. The Canaries and Benguela currents both swing westwards while between the eastward flowing Equatorial counter current or Guinea current brings very warm waters to the West Sub-Saharan coast. Because the air currents are offshore the coastlands are constantly bathed by very warm and moist air masses, with a resultant heavy rainfall south of Dakar to Libreville.

The East Coast of Africa with its onshore winds driving warm surface currents toward the land is entirely different. South of the equator, Madagascar splits the main South Equatorial current of the Indian Ocean and the Mozambique current flows southward of Mombassa to about Lourenco Marques, where it merges into the Aghulhas current. The presence of these warm surface currents results in sea surface temperatures 15 degree to 20 degree Fahrenheit higher than on the west coast, and the warm moist air masses associated with them afford a moderate to good rainfall along the coastlands. In the north Indian Ocean, circulation of waters is reversed according to the Asiatic monsoons. In the season of the ‘Northeast monsoon’ (November to April), the drift of water is from north-east to south-west along the coast a cool current flowing towards the equator. In the season of the ‘Southwest monsoon’, the air movement is offshore, and the current is along shore
from south-west to north-east. Because neither condition favours precipitation, the coast is arid from the equator northward.

Looking at the main features of the atmospheric circulation over Africa, we see that the continent is dominated by the world distribution of pressure - the two extra-tropical high-pressure belts and the equatorial low pressure belt. These pressure belts move eastward in the northern summer and southward in the southern summer. For the month of January, the Azores high pressure system extends over the relatively cool Sahara, the south Atlantic high pressure belt lies to the south of the continent, and the equatorial low is south of equator. In July, the January conditions are largely reversed. The Sahara, which has become extremely hot, gives rise to a huge low-pressure area, whereas South Africa comes under the influence of the extra-tropical high-pressure belt. During this season the conditions over north-eastern Africa are complicated by the Great Asiatic monsoon. These pressure systems give rise to the movements of air masses, which in turn are responsible for the distribution of rainfall over the continent.\textsuperscript{10}

There are several systems of climatic classification for Africa. Here the scheme shown is derived from Finch and Trewartha, which is used in the Atlas of world maps.\textsuperscript{11}

\begin{itemize}
\item[A] **Tropical Rainy Climate**
\begin{itemize}
\item[1)] Tropical rainforest climate, better called the Equatorial climate. This is limited to areas within 10° of the equator, but the similar climate characterises the eastern coastlands of Madagascar.
\item[2)] Tropical Savannah or summer Rain Climate, covering more than a third of all Africa.
\end{itemize}
\item[Af]
\item[Aw]
\end{itemize}

\item[B] **Dry Climates**
\item[B]

\textsuperscript{10} Stamp, n.2, p. 67.
\textsuperscript{11} Ibid., pp. 70-1.
Low Latitude Dry Climates

3a Desert
3b Steppe

Mid Latitude Dry Climate
4b Steppe

C Humid Mesothermal
5) Mediterranean
6) Humid Sub-tropical

- f - no dry season
- w - winter dry
- s - summer dry
- k - cold (mean annual temperature below 18° C or 64.4° F)
- b - mean temperature of warmest month below 22° C or 71.6° F

Mineral Resources

Sub-Saharan Africa is very rich in mineral resources, possessing almost all types of the known minerals of the world, many of which are found in significant quantities, although the geographic distribution is uneven. Fossil fuels are abundant, including major deposits of coal, oil, and natural gas. Africa has some of the world's largest reserves of gold, diamonds, copper, bauxite, manganese, nickel, platinum, cobalt, radium, germanium, lithium, titanium, and phosphates. Other important mineral resources include iron ore, chromium, tin, zinc, lead, thorium, zirconium, vanadium, antimony, and beryllium. Also found in exploitable quantities are clays, mica, sulphur, salt, natron, graphite, limestone, and gypsum.

Mineral extraction provides the bulk of Sub-Saharan export earnings, and extractive industries are among the most developed sectors in most Sub-Saharan economies. Almost half of Africa's mineral income comes from South Africa, mainly derived from gold and diamond mining but also from chromium, asbestos, coal, and copper.
Other leading mineral-producing countries include Libya (oil), Nigeria (oil, natural gas, coal, tin), Namibia (diamonds, uranium), Algeria (oil, natural gas, iron ore), and Zambia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (copper, cobalt, lead, zinc), Zimbabwe (gold, asbestos, coal, chromium, iron ore, and nickel), and Ghana (gold, bauxite, and diamonds). Oil is also found along the western Sub-Saharan coast, in the Gabon basin, the Republic of the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Angola. About one third of the uranium in the non-communist world is mined in Africa, chiefly in South Africa, Niger, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Central Sub-Saharan Republic, and Gabon. The largest radium supply in the world is located in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Some 20 per cent of the world's copper reserves is concentrated in Zambia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Africa, and Zimbabwe. The Democratic Republic of the Congo and Zambia also possess about 90 per cent of the world's known cobalt, and Sierra Leone has the largest known titanium reserves. Africa produces some three-quarters of the world's gold; South Africa, followed by Zimbabwe, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Ghana, are the major producers. The mines of Botswana, South Africa, Namibia, Angola, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo produce the majority of the world's gem and industrial diamonds. Iron ore is found in all parts of the continent.

Most of Africa's mineral wealth has been and is being developed by large, multinational concerns. Increasingly, in recent years, Sub-Saharan governments have become substantial shareholders in the operations within their own countries.12

12 Encarta 98, n.2
Patterns of Economic Development

Traditionally, the vast majority of Sub-Saharan have been farmers and herders who raised crops and livestock for subsistence. Manufacturing and crafts were generally carried on as part-time activities. Most markets were local, although numerous states over the centuries developed long-distance trade systems, and in these places complex exchange facilities as well as industrial specialisation, communication networks, and elaborate governmental structures maintained the flow of commerce. They included the medieval West Sub-Saharan kingdoms and empires of Ghana, Songhai, Kanem-Bornu; and of great Zimbabwe in southern Africa; trans-Saharan trade, which began before the Romans, continued until well into the 19th century.

Gold, slaves (on a small scale), kola, copper, kola nuts, ostrich feathers, and salt, were all items in Africa's export trade for many hundreds of years before the advent of Europeans. With the Europeans, initially there came increased demand for one of the traditional (inhuman) staples of Sub-Saharan trade—slaves. The numbers required, however, were vastly more than had ever been traded before, leading to distortions and disruptions in Sub-Saharan politics and society, and robbing the west and centre of the continent of millions of its people.

Colonisation brought overseas demand for new agricultural and mineral products and internal labour migration; new and faster communication systems were constructed; European technology and crops were introduced, not always, by any means, beneficially; and a modern exchange economy evolved. Cheaper or more prestigious European goods for example—frequently undermined local industries and crafts—textiles and iron making. Modern processing industries developed, as did new ports and administrative centres. A variety of consumer
industries sprang up to fill newly created local consumer needs. A feature of the Sub-Saharan economy is the side-by-side existence of both subsistence and modern exchange economies. Future growth depends on a number of variables such as: the availability of investment funds, the world demand for local raw materials (fair world prices for these raw materials), the availability of energy sources, the size of local markets, a solution to the foreign debt problem crippling Sub-Saharan Africa, and the willingness of the industrialised economies to reduce trade barriers for processed and manufactured Sub-Saharan goods.

Agriculture

Despite the expansion of commerce and industry, most Sub-Saharan remain farmers and herders; although the majority of these are producing for the market, at least in a small way, and many are highly market orientated. In northern and north-western Sub-Saharan Africa, wheat, oats, maize, and barley are the important grain crops. Dates, olives, and citrus fruits are the main tree crops; a variety of vegetables are also grown. Goats, asses, sheep, camels, and horses are the most significant livestock kept.

In the region bordering the Sahara region, nomadic herders raise camels and goats, and a few farmers, situated in oases, grow dates and grains. South of the Sahara, in the Sahelian region, and in the most fertile areas north of the coastal forests, shifting agriculture—a method in which small areas were burned, cleared, and planted and then allowed to revert to bush—has given way to settled farming. Grains, especially maize, sorghum, millet, and rice, are the main crops outside the rainforests. Yams, manioc, okra, plantain, and banana are important crops, especially in the coastal hinterlands and forested areas of central Africa. In Sub-Saharan Africa Cattle cannot be raised in tsetse fly-infested areas, which cover
more than one-third of the continent. Outside the tsetse fly areas and dense forests, cattle are raised; many are still kept for traditional reasons of social prestige and wealth, but commercial stock rearing is increasing. Dairy farming is limited, located primarily around urban centres in eastern and southern Africa.

Although some 60 per cent of all cultivated land is in subsistence agriculture, commercial or cash-crop farming is common in all parts of the continent. Foodstuffs are grown for local urban markets, but cloves, coffee, pineapples, cotton, cacao, sugar, tea, maize, rubber, sisal, groundnuts (peanuts), palm oil, and tobacco are among the long-established crops grown by Sub-Saharan for export. In the past fifteen years there has been significant development of new export crops, aimed at the high-value end of the Western, primarily European market, including green beans, roses, other flowers, and kiwi fruit. For certain traditional Sub-Saharan agricultural exports, such as cacao, groundnuts, cloves, and sisal, the continent produces the majority of the world supply. Large-scale plantations and farms, often owned by foreign companies or Europeans, and found mainly in eastern and southern Africa, concentrate on citrus, tobacco, tea, and other export crops. 13

Forestry and Fishing

Although more than one-quarter of Sub-Saharan Africa is covered by forest, much of the timber has little value except as local fuel. Gabon is a major producer of okoume, a wood used in making plywood; Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia (before the civil war), Ghana, and Nigeria are major exporters of hardwoods. Inland fishing is concentrated in the Rift Valley lakes and in the increasing numbers of fish farms. Ocean fishing is

widespread for local consumption; it is commercially important off the coast of Morocco, Mauritania, Namibia, Mozambique, and South Africa.\textsuperscript{14}

**Mining**

Mineral extraction provides the bulk of Sub-Saharan export earnings, and extractive industries are among the most developed sectors in most Sub-Saharan economies. Almost half of Sub-Saharan Africa's mineral income comes from South Africa, mainly derived from gold and diamond mining but also from chromium, asbestos, coal, and copper. Other leading mineral-producing countries include Libya (oil), Nigeria (oil, natural gas, coal, tin), Namibia (diamonds, uranium), Algeria (oil, natural gas, iron ore), and Zambia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (copper, cobalt, lead, zinc), Zimbabwe (gold, asbestos, coal, chromium, iron ore, and nickel), and Ghana (gold, bauxite, and diamonds). Oil is also found along the western Sub-Saharan coast, in the Gabon basin, the Republic of the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Angola.

About one third of the uranium in the non-communist world is mined in Sub-Saharan Africa, chiefly in South Africa, Niger, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Central Sub-Saharan Republic, and Gabon. The largest radium supply in the world is located in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Some 20 per cent of the world's copper reserves is concentrated in Zambia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Africa, and Zimbabwe. The Democratic Republic of the Congo and Zambia also possess about 90 per cent of the world's known cobalt, and Sierra Leone has the largest known titanium reserves. Sub-Saharan Africa produces some three-quarters of the world's gold; South Africa, followed by Zimbabwe, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Ghana, are the major producers. The mines of Botswana, South Africa, Namibia, Angola, and

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid.
and the Democratic Republic of the Congo produce the majority of the world's gem and industrial diamonds. Iron ore is found in all parts of the continent. Most of the region's mineral wealth has been and is being developed by large, multinational concerns. Increasingly, in recent years, Sub-Saharan governments have become substantial shareholders in the operations within their own countries.\textsuperscript{15}

**Manufacturing**

Stemming from mineral and oil extraction are processing industries, such as refining and smelting, which are located in most mineral-rich countries with adequate energy. South Africa is the most industrialised of African countries, but virtually all other countries have developed a manufacturing base of some sort; Zimbabwe and Nigeria as well as the North Sub-Saharan countries have very sizeable industrial sectors. Heavy industry, such as metal producing, machine making, and transport equipment, is concentrated in southern Africa and Nigeria.

Significant industrial centres have also developed in Kenya, Egypt, Morocco, and Algeria amongst others. Mineral-related industries are well developed in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Zambia; Kenya, and Côte d'Ivoire have developed primarily in textiles, light industry, and building materials. In many other countries manufacturing is limited to making or assembling consumer goods, such as shoes, bicycles, textiles, food, and beverages. Such industries are often confined by the relatively small size of the consumer market. Sub-Saharan countries' attempts to develop their manufacturing bases further, particularly by processing their agricultural exports to increase their added value, have been very much hindered by protectionism in the industrialised countries, which impose

\textsuperscript{15} Encarta 98, n.3.
heavy tariffs on such goods. Poor intra-Sub-Saharan trade connections have also been a problem.16

Energy

Nigeria, Libya, Algeria, and Angola are major world producers of oil, and several other Sub-Saharan countries are also oil exporters, including Gabon. Africa’s natural-gas exports are centred in Algeria. Coal production is concentrated mainly in Zimbabwe and South Africa, although many other countries have sizeable reserves (such as Botswana), which await development because of a lack of markets. The bulk of Sub-Saharan coal production is used internally.

Most Sub-Saharan countries must import fuels, especially petroleum and oil. The oil price rises of the 1970s were disastrous for many of them, precipitating many of the balance of payments and debt problems which have undermined their economies in the 1980s and early 1990s. Although Africa has some 40 per cent of the world’s hydroelectric power potential, only a relatively small portion has been developed due to high construction costs, inaccessibility of sites, and their distance from markets. However, since the 1950s a number of the world’s largest hydroelectric installations have been built in Africa. These include the Aswan High Dam on the River Nile, the Volta Dam on the River Volta, and the Kariba and Cabora Bassa dams on the Zambezi; the huge Highlands Water Scheme under construction in Lesotho also has a hydroelectric power component.17

16 O’Connor, n.2. 17 Encarta 98, n.4
Transport

The economic development of virtually all Sub-Saharan nations has been hindered by inadequate transport systems. Most countries rely on road networks, which are frequently composed largely of dirt roads, which become impassable during the rainy seasons. Road and rail networks built during the colonial era tended to link the interior of a country to the coast; few provided cross-country links internally, or links with adjacent countries. Since independence, however, a number of important trans-Sub-Saharan routes have been built providing road and rail links, notably for the landlocked countries. Most Sub-Saharan nations support a national airline and there has been much improvement in recent years in co-ordinating timetables. Rail and shipping systems are best developed in southern Africa.18

Trade

The economies of most Sub-Saharan states rely heavily on one or a few export commodities. The bulk of trade occurs with industrialised nations, which require raw materials and sell industrial and consumer goods. Trade between Sub-Saharan states is limited by the competitive, rather than complementary nature of their products. It is also limited (to a decreasing extent) by trade barriers, such as tariffs and the diversity of currencies, and the fact that most are not “hard”, that is, they are legal tender only within their own countries, so most trade is carried out in US dollars or pounds sterling.

Most former British colonies in Africa continue to have loose trade relations with the United Kingdom and keep monetary reserves in London. Most former French colonies have maintained closer ties with France, and

18 O'Connor, n.3.
the majorities are members of the Franc Zone. In addition, most Sub-Saharan states have economic ties with the European Union through the Lomé Convention, and benefit from some tariff barrier reductions. Few successful intra-Sub-Saharan economic systems have also emerged. The most durable are the Economic Community of West Sub-Saharan States and the Economic Community of Central Sub-Saharan States; the most successful are the Southern Sub-Saharan Development Community, and the Preferential Trade Area for Eastern and Southern Sub-Saharan States. The Organisation of Sub-Saharan Unity also promotes intra Sub-Saharan trade and economic development.¹⁹

¹⁹ Ibid.
Demographic Structure of Population

In Sub-Saharan Africa population growth has continued to be high since the late 1940s and there seems no sign of its coming down in the next few decades or so. The race between population growth and economic growth in Sub-Saharan Africa has gone against economic development. High rates of population increase and slow growing or stagnating economies throughout much of the region has thwarted modernisation and development efforts. The pace of population growth is expected to become slow in Sub-Saharan Africa, either through lower birth rates or tragically through higher death rates. Fertility has declined already in a handful of Sub-Saharan countries, but an increasing number of countries face an HIV/AIDS epidemic that is reversing hard-won gains in life expectancy.

Inspite of this, Sub-Saharan Africa is likely to more than double in population size by 2050 according to various estimates. The nations are struggling to provide education, housing, jobs, and health care for their ever increasing populations, while trying to develop their economies, cope with international trade, and solve their internal conflicts as well as international political conflicts, and contain epidemics.

Most countries in Sub-Saharan Africa have adopted policies that acknowledge the important role that demographic trends play in the development process, but these policies are carried differently among the region's diverse cultures. Following the international conference on population and development held in Cairo in 1994, many countries are now trying to shape their population policies from a broader perspective of reproductive health.
WORLD POPULATION

PROJECTED POPULATION GROWTH 1990-2025

Source: United Nations
Sub-Saharan Africa’s population was growing at the rate of 2.7 percent per year in the mid 1990s. At this rate, the population would double in just 25 years.\textsuperscript{20} The Sub-Saharan population is growing faster than that of any other region in the world because of the vast gap between birth rates and death rates. Death rates in Sub-Saharan Africa fell significantly in the past decades, although they are still high by world standards. At the same time, birth rates remained high and population surged as more people survived to reproduce.

In Sub-Saharan Africa there are more than 800 different ethnic groups and more than 1000 languages or dialects. In many cases national boundaries do not correspond to the geographical distribution of tribal groupings. Rather, the boundaries reflect the colonial division of Africa in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, when some European countries established Sub-Saharan colonies that left the entire Sub-Saharan region, except Ethiopia and Liberia, under foreign rule. Most countries in Sub-Saharan Africa have been independent for less than 40 years. The linguistic diversity, along with the national boundaries imposed by colonial powers, contributed to the adoption of English, French, or Portuguese—the languages of the former colonial powers—as the official languages of government and education in most of these countries.

Sub-Saharan Africa’s ethnic diversity and colonial heritage has divided the continent into a number of relatively small countries. Out of the 43 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa (including Madagascar but excluding the smaller islands), only four had population greater than 30 million in 1997.\textsuperscript{21}


\textsuperscript{21} Ibid.
Nigeria is the demographic giant of the region. The countries' 1997 population estimates varied from 107 million to 118 million, but even at the lowest figure, Nigeria is twice as large as the second largest country, Ethiopia. Nearly one of every five Sub-Saharan citizens is a Nigerian. In 1997, the estimated population was 58.7 million for Ethiopia, 47.4 million for the Congo, and 42.5 million for South Africa, the economic giant of the region. These four countries accounted for 43 percent of the Sub-Saharan population. Another four countries - Kenya, Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda had populations of 20 million to 30 million.22

There is disparity in economic situations in the region. About 13 percent of the region's population live in countries that are extremely poor and whose natural resources hold few prospects for development. Chad, Mali, and Niger (part of the Sub-Saharan sub-region known as the Sahel) fall into this category. But most Sub-Saharans live in countries rich in minerals, gems, or other natural resources to support socio-economic development, especially if their population growth stays less than the economic growth.23 Nearly all countries lack adequate human skilled labour to generate and sustain economic development. Dismal economic performance, irregular business and government practices, and political instability have done nothing to save Sub-Saharan Africa from becoming the world's poorest region. Despite rapid urbanisation in Sub-Saharan Africa, three out of every four people live in rural areas, where many eke out a living through subsistence farming. Agriculture remains the mainstay of the subcontinent's economy. In the cities, the formal economic sector has been unable to absorb the ever-increasing numbers of job seekers. Many urban residents rely on earnings from the informal sector activities.

22 Ibid.
such as selling wares on the streets.

Illiteracy although declining is widespread among the populace. The quality of education for children is often low because of inadequate funds for schools and higher dropout rates. Death rates are higher here than nearly anywhere else in the world and are rising in many places because of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Malnutrition is common, especially among children under five years of age.

Despite all these restrictions and anomalies, Sub-Saharan Africa's political, economic, and social circumstances are not static, and the governments are willing to experiment. Will this dynamism break the hold of poverty and under-development, remains a crucial question in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Population Change

Population growth through natural increase (the birth rate minus the death rate) increased in Sub-Saharan Africa after 1960, when most countries gained independence. The rate of natural increase for the region jumped from 2.3 percent per year in the 1950s to 2.6 percent in 1960s. The rate probably peaked at 2.8 percent per year in the early 1990s before falling back to 2.7 percent during the mid 1990s.24

Such sustained high population growth rates were historically unprecedented. In the 1990s the rate of natural increase has fallen slightly as birth rates have declined in some countries and death rates have either stabilised or have increased because of the HIV/AIDS virus. The estimated rate of natural increase of population for Sub-Saharan Africa in 1997 was 2.7 percent, compared with 1.8 percent for Latin America and the

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SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA
POPULATION GROWTH 1997

Population Growth Per Annum
Percentage
- 2.8 to 16.1 (13)
- 2.7 to 2.8 (7)
- 2.6 to 2.7 (5)
- 2.4 to 2.6 (11)
- 1.2 to 2.4 (13)
Caribbean, and 1.9 percent for Asia, exclusive of China. In contrast, Europe’s rate has slipped below 0 (0.1 percent in 1997) because deaths outnumber births in that region.25

Declining Mortality and High Fertility

After World War II, treatment for infectious diseases such as malaria and yellow fever, inoculations against smallpox, and other improvements in health services became available in Sub-Saharan Africa. This drastically reduced mortality. In the 1950s, life expectancy at birth was about 36 years, and ranged from 30 years in Angola, Gambia, and Sierra Leone to 45 years in South Africa. In some countries, more than 200 of every 1000 newborn babies died before reaching their first birthdays. By the late 1960s, life expectancy had risen above 41 years, and infant mortality had fallen below 140. Although life expectancy in Sub-Saharan Africa has slowly risen since the 1960s they are still lower than in any other part of the world. Life expectancy at birth was 51 years in 1997, compared with 69 years in Latin America and the Caribbean, and 63 years in Asia, exclusive of China.26

It is very unfortunate that infectious and parasitic diseases cause more than half of the annual deaths in Sub-Saharan Africa. In contrast these diseases cause only 5 percent of the deaths in the developed world and about 20 percent of these deaths in Latin America. Because most deaths from infectious and parasitic diseases can be prevented through public health measures, immunisations, and adequate health care, this heavy death toll is a testament to the depth and breadth of the region’s poverty and the low level of economic development. Less than half of the population has access to safe drinking water; unsanitary drinking water promotes the spread of such water born diseases as cholera, dysentery.

26 Ibid.
SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA
BIRTH RATES, 1997.
SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA
GROWTH OF BIRTH RATE, 1990-1997

Growth in Birth Rate
- 19.1 to 25.5 (10)
- 16.3 to 19.1 (10)
- 13.2 to 16.3 (10)
- 11.6 to 13.2 (8)
- 5.1 to 11.6 (11)
hepatitis A and E, and Schistosomiasis. Malaria is endemic in the region and kills an estimated one million children every year. Common childhood diseases such as measles and whooping cough also claim the lives of thousands of Sub-Saharan annually.27

Most Sub-Saharan countries are committed to improving health care and they collaborate on public health campaigns with international organisations such as the World Health Organisation and UNICEF. Universal immunisation of children against measles, whooping cough, tuberculosis, and three other major childhood diseases has been a major thrust of international health efforts in the region. This effort could bring down death rates despite the prevailing economic condition of the region. Unfortunately, the HIV/AIDS epidemic may reverse the gains in life expectancies in some Sub-Saharan countries over the next few decades.

While mortality rates have come down considerably in Sub-Saharan Africa, fertility rates have remained stubbornly high, which is responsible for the rapid population growth in the region. The total fertility rate (TFR), or total number of births per woman (at current birth rates), was about 6.6 in the 1950s. In the 1990s, the region still has the highest birth rates in the world, with TFR at about 6 children per woman. Fertility rates vary very dramatically, however, among the countries of Sub-Saharan Africa. In western Africa, Nigeria had an estimated fertility rate of 6.2 children per woman in 1997. Ghana had a fertility rate of 5.5 children per woman in the early 1990s down from 6.9 in the 1950s. Fertility rates also vary in eastern Africa. In the late 1990s, the TFR was about 6.6 children per woman in Ethiopia, 6.9 in Uganda, and 5.8 in Tanzania. In Kenya, the fertility rate peaked at more than eight children per woman in the 1970s, according to some estimates, but demographic surveys indicate the rate was down to

5.4 by 1994. Middle Africa, dominated demographically by the Congo, had a fertility rate of 6.5 children per woman in 1997, despite extraordinarily high rates of infertility in this part of Africa.

Southern Africa, where nearly 87 percent of the population resides in South Africa alone, has the lowest birth rates in the Sub-Saharan region. South Africa’s TFR was down to 3.2 births per woman in 1997, closer to rates in developing countries in other parts of the world than to rates elsewhere in Africa. These birth rates have kept the countries of Sub-Saharan Africa very young, as evidenced by the broad base of the age pyramid. Because each couple has about 6 children on average, each generation is larger than the previous one, creating a pyramid that tapers to the top with a large base.28

For Sub-Saharan Africa as a whole, 45 percent of the population was under 15 years of age in 1997. The population under 15 exceeds 40 percent in every country except in Gabon and South Africa, which have relatively low fertility. In contrast, 34 percent of the population in Latin America was under 15 years of age, as were 32 percent in Asia and 22 percent in USA.29

This youthful age structure has a negative effect on economic development. A disproportionately large share of resources must be allocated to meet immediate needs of these young people for years before they can contribute to the national income. The large number of persons under age 15 or children also create a momentum for future population growth because this age group will eventually marry and produce children. “Even if women were to have only slightly more than the

28 Goliber, n.2, p.10.
29 Ibid.
SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

CHANGE IN DEATH RATE - 1990-1997

Kilometers

Change in Death Rate
-6.4 to -2.1 (13)
-2.1 to -1 (12)
-1 to 0.7 (13)
0.7 to 7.6 (10)
two children needed to replace themselves and their husbands, births
would still outnumber deaths in Sub-Saharan region for another 40 to 50
years."³⁰

Urbanisation

Sub-Saharan Africa is the least urbanised region of the world. But it is
urbanising at the fastest pace in the world today. In 1950, 11 percent of the
population lived in urban areas, which has increased to 32 percent in 1996.
According to the United Nations projections, nearly one-half (49 percent)
of Sub-Saharan Africa's population will be urban by 2025.³¹

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table: Urbanisation in Sub-Saharan Africa Regions, 1950 - 2025</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent of population in urban areas</td>
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<tr>
<td>1950  1975  1996  2025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Saharan Africa                      11  21  32  49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Africa                          5   13  23  39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Africa                           14  27  33  50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Africa                         38  44  48  62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Africa                          10  23  37  56</td>
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³⁰ Ibid, p.11.
³¹ United Nations, n.2.
During the colonial period, law in eastern and southern Africa suppressed migration from rural to urban areas, apparently to ensure white dominance in the cities. Only about 5 percent of East Sub-Saharan lived in urban area in 1950. After independence, the cities began to grow and attract thousands of rural residents. By 1975, 13 percent of eastern Africa’s population was urban, and by 1996, about 23 percent were urban. Urban levels were much higher in southern Africa because of the trade and industry generated by mining, and because of the non-black population, most of which lived in urban areas. About 38 percent of southern Africa’s population lived in urban areas in 1950, but the number grew to 48 percent by 1996. By 2025 that number is expected to reach 62 percent.\(^{32}\) In colonial western Africa, black Sub-Saharan could move freely into and between cities, own property, and build homes. However, most remained in the countryside. Only about 10 percent of western Africa’s population were urban in 1950, as was about 14 percent of the population in middle Africa. By 1996, these percentages had grown to 37 percent and 33 percent, respectively.\(^{33}\)

The growth in urban population started in earnest in the 1960, after most countries gained independence. This urban growth is driven by a constant flow of migrants from the countryside and persistently high birth rates within cities. The urbanisation in Sub-Saharan Africa is unlike urbanisation in any other region of the world, because it has taken place in the absence of any significant industrial expansion. The movement from rural to urban areas can only be explained as happening due to the push factors provided by the stagnant agricultural growth and poverty in the rural areas. Agriculture has been deteriorating in many rural areas because of frequent droughts and soil degradation caused by years of over grazing.

\(^{32}\) Ibid.
\(^{33}\) Goliber, n.3, p.13.
over-cutting of trees and scrub for firewood, and traditional agricultural
techniques. Therefore, many residents of rural areas moved to cities pulled
by the amenities of urban life, even though there was a dearth of jobs in
the cities.

The cities of Sub-Saharan Africa grew by close to 6 percent between
1960 and 1990, and they are expanding by at least 5 percent annually in
the 1990s. At these rates the cities will double in population every 12 to 14
years.34

Many Sub-Saharan nations, especially the smaller ones, have a
dominant, or Primate City that serves as the administrative, economic, and
political centre of the country. These primate cities account for 30 to 40
percent of the urban population of the region. About 40 percent of
Somalia's urban population live in the capital city Mogadishu, and 38
percent of Mozambique's population lives in Maputo, the country's only
urban agglomeration with more than 750,000 inhabitants. Over 90 percent
of Liberia's urban dwellers live in Monrovia in the last half of the 1990s,
according to the UN estimates. Nigeria and South Africa are notable
exceptions to this pattern. Experts estimate that Nigeria has at least a half
dozens cities with more than 1 million inhabitants each. South Africa has
eight urban agglomerations with 1 million or more inhabitants each.35

Impoverished Sub-Saharan countries have been unable to meet the
basic needs of these burgeoning urban populations. Sanitation,
transportation, education, health care, energy, and a host of other urban
amenities are inadequate or lacking in most Sub-Saharan countries.
Furthermore, most cities are unable to provide housing to its residents.

34 Ibid.
35 United Nations, n.3, Table A.15.
forcing them into slums and shantytowns or into already overcrowded urban areas.

Migration

Population migration or population movement is another important element of demographic change. There is substantial movement within and among countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, but there is hardly any emigration out of the continent during this century. Political strife, natural disasters, and economic booms have generated some of the world's most dramatic population movements. The most consistent flow of people in Sub-Saharan Africa is from rural to urban.

The demographic, economic and political situation in Sub-Saharan Africa signals the possibility of increased migration in the years ahead. This is expected as unemployment, underemployment, inequality and poverty have worsened. Because a large number of workers have been retrenched from both the public and the private formal sectors, the ability of the informal sector to absorb excess labour has been stretched to the limit. A major development issue during the 1990s is the productive employment of the millions of educated youths who will scramble for work in the informal and agricultural workforce, or join the lengthening queue of potential emigrants, ready to do any kind of odd jobs anywhere, but increasingly outside their countries.

A growing majority of Sub-Saharan people no longer have access to (productive) land, a basic production factor and, as a survival strategy, seek waged labour or engage in non-farm activities. The land as the natural resource base has deteriorated due to problems of skewed land distribution, environmental degradation and demographic insecurity especially in regions threatened by desertification. This coupled with
demographic pressure and chronic poverty, has meant that the little available arable land is subject to intense disputes, as in Mali, Mauritania and especially Rwanda and Burundi.

Increasingly, political and economic crises are triggering migrant labour and refugee flows to destinations without any historical, political or economic links with the countries of emigration. As political and economic crises intensify, both refugee flows and undocumented migrations are increasing in both quantum and impact. Structural adjustment and the current economic downturn are also accelerating emigration.

A significant recent aspect of the emigration of high-level manpower has been the participation of women increasingly drawn to the wage labour market as a survival strategy to augment meagre family income. The traditional pattern for males to migrate leaving their wives and children at home has changed in recent years; a significant proportion of women - single and married - now emigrate alone in search of secure jobs in developed countries. Such female migration is likely to intensify as a result of the fluctuating socio-economic conditions in the region.

Since the recent economic slump has reduced the opportunities within the region, the Gulf States have become particularly attractive to highly skilled professionals. But these countries, especially Saudi Arabia, have themselves shown signs of economic depression in recent years. As political and economic crises continue to affect adversely conditions in the traditional countries of immigration outside Sub-Saharan Africa, the lure of Botswana and South Africa waxes strong: highly skilled professionals now find South Africa and Botswana viable alternatives to Europe, the USA and the Gulf States. However, South Africa has its own domestic problems: unemployment is one of the thorniest. Perhaps no more than 7 per cent of the young people who complete their education in the South Africa find
work, and an estimated 40 per cent of the country's workforce, or 6 million persons, mostly black, were unemployed in 1995, up from 30 per cent in 1980. Economic growth of 7 per cent would be required merely to create jobs for new school leavers, leaving untouched the backlog of unemployed.

While the prospects for intra-regional migration for skilled persons remain precarious, demand for unskilled labour has declined in erstwhile resource-rich countries. As economic conditions worsened and unemployment among nationals intensified, immigrants were targets for reprisals through expulsion. Illegal migrants have indeed been rounded up and deported from Gabon and South Africa in recent months. Increasingly, undocumented migrants find their way clandestinely to the North through intermediate countries and to new destinations - southern Europe, the USA, the Middle East, and Central and Southern Africa

**Conclusion**

Africa is a land of great diversity as well as disparity in natural, economic and human resources. There is abundance of land and resources overall. However, within Sub-Saharan Africa in different areas the situation is varied. The natural resources that may appear to be abundant are under stress and giving way under threat from humans. This is more pronounced in the case of land - and in particular arable land. The land in Sub-Saharan Africa is mostly less fertile with pockets of good fertility. The scarcity of water for long periods in a year also causes problems for agricultural productivity. For its water needs the people of Sub-Saharan Africa are dependent on rainfall – which is seasonal in character and very unreliable.

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36 Goliber, n.4.
Rainfall has a great influence on the region and is the life of the region. However, the rainfall in Sub-Saharan Africa is very unpredictable and most of the region is thirsty for water for most of the year. Absence of precipitation can be very damaging to the region resulting in droughts. Even though the Sub-Saharan region has the largest land area after Asia, the land available for cultivation is very low. Given this backdrop, the rapidly growing population along with civil strife and resulting refugees put tremendous pressures on the land. This frequently results in famine and streams of emigration to neighbouring regions or regions not suffering from famines. These exodus to neighbouring regions causes stress on the already scarce resources of the immigration areas resulting in economic as well as political instability in the region.