



The African Continent

An Introduction

Who Wants Africa?

“There has been great debate in recent years about the marginalisation of Africa and it is often argued that the end of the Cold War and a long era of dismal economic performance have combined to make the continent irrelevant. To count Africa out, however, is to ignore two critical factors: demographics and resources.”

David Hale, *African Analyst* 2006



African Demographics

- Population = 800 million
(expected to grow to 2 billion by 2050)
- 4 million children under 5 years die every year
- Africa will have the youngest population in the 21st century (only 10% over 60 by 2050)

Consequences?

- Cities like Rome & Madrid will consist largely of elderly women cared for by young people from Africa/the Middle East
- Global companies will shift production to Africa because of its younger population and large supply of labor.



Africa's Raw Materials

- Nigeria, Angola, Equatorial Guinea & Gabon produce 3.4 million barrels of oil per day.
- South Africa has 88% of global platinum reserves, 72% of chromium, 80% of manganese, 30% of titanium, 40% of gold, 44% of vanadium, and 19% of zircon.

Raw Materials cont.



- Guinea has a third of the world's bauxite
- Botswana has 25% of the world's diamonds
- Zimbabwe has 12% of the world's chromium & large deposits of platinum
- Niger is the world's 3rd largest supplier of uranium

Commodity Market Consequences:

China

- now consumes 22% of global copper output (compared to US's 16%)
- 21% of global aluminum output (compared to US's 20%)
- Since 2005 has displaced Japan as the world's 2nd largest consumer of petroleum

In the 19th & early 20th centuries, Britain, France, & Germany competed for African commodities.

In the 21st century, China is going to emerge as a major power on the African continent because of her need for African commodities.

Looking Forward



- The IMF is projecting 5.8% output growth in Africa during 2006 (highest in over 30 years)
- The critical factor to spur economic growth will be political governance – South Africa, Kenya, Senegal, & Ghana and 9 other countries have elected presidents from parties not in power since the 1990s.

landscapes

- African continent 2nd largest to Asia
- Mt. Kilimanjaro is one of highest in world
- Sahara Desert may be the world's largest
- River Nile is 2nd longest in the world
- Rift Valley (E Africa) unique geological phenomenon
- Congo Basin rain forests last refuge of gorillas & chimpanzees – our closest relatives

RELIGIONS

- Islam
- Christianity
- Traditional belief systems

For an excellent overview of traditional religions of Africa see this BBC transcript:
www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/africa/features/storyofafrica/6chapter1.shtml