Africa South of the Sahara Today
Chapter Objectives

- Describe how people make a living in Africa south of the Sahara.
- Examine environmental challenges and their effect on life in the region.
Living in South Africa South of the Sahara

Section 1
Objectives

- Describe the most common farming methods in Africa south of the Sahara.
- Explain how mineral resources benefit the peoples of the region.
- Identify the reasons industrial development has been slow in Africa south of the Sahara.
- Describe how transportation and communications are changing in the region.
Terms to Know

- subsistence farming
- shifting farming
- sedentary farming
- commercial farming
- cash crop
- conservation farming
- infrastructure
- e-commerce
A Geographic View

Ariaal people, Kenya
Geographic Literacy

Four of the world’s five largest-capacity water reservoirs are in Africa—one each in Uganda, Zimbabwe, Egypt, and Ghana. Uganda’s Owen Falls reservoir has the greatest capacity of all; it can hold nearly 205 billion cubic meters of water. This is nearly ten times the capacity of Lake Mead, located on the Nevada-Arizona border, which is the largest reservoir in the United States.
Agriculture

- More than 66 percent of the region’s population is engaged in agriculture, mostly on the subsistence level. Single cash crop economies still characterize some countries of the region.
Agriculture

- **Farming Methods and Export Crops**
  - **Shifting Farming**—In forest areas, farmers clear land, farm it, and move on in one to three years when the soil is exhausted.
  - **Sedentary Farming**—Where the soil is good, farmers remain settled in one place.
  - **Commercial Farming**—Most commercial farms are owned by foreigners who employ a small percentage of the local population.
  - Crops such as oil, peanuts, cacao, and sisal are the main exports of the region.
Agriculture

• **Zimbabwe: Conflict Over Land**  Because commercial plantations have taken over most of the best land, subsistence farmers are in trouble.

• In Zimbabwe, a tiny percentage of the population owns 40 percent of the land.

• Violence between landowners and small-scale farmers has reduced crop production and threatened Zimbabwe’s economy.

• **Meeting Challenges**  Irrigation and improved farming methods are helping to overcome soil damage from clear-cut logging, overgrazing, and other practices that lead to desertification.
Logging and Fishing

- Despite a small output, commercial logging creates serious consequences for the region’s forests.
- Commercial fishing also represents a small portion of the region’s economic activity, although some coastal areas and island countries depend on fish exports.
Logging and Fishing
Mining Resources

- **Mineral Wealth** South Africa’s mines produce gold, diamonds, coal, and other minerals.
- Foreign investors of companies owned by white South Africans reap the most benefits.
- Little money reaches black South African mine workers.
Mining Resources

• **An Imbalance of Riches**  Rich mineral resources are unevenly distributed throughout the region and rarely benefit most of the people.

• Government mismanagement and the sending of profits abroad are partly responsible for this situation.
Industrialization

• **Development of Manufacturing**  Even though governments have encouraged industrial expansion, manufacturing still accounts for only 15 percent of the region’s gross domestic product.

• **Overcoming Obstacles**
  - A shortage of skilled workers, political instability, and poverty all pose obstacles to the region’s efforts to industrialize.
  - Trade with countries outside the region has grown since World War II.
  - Various countries also have formed regional trading associations to advance trade within the region.
Transportation and Communication

- Geographical obstacles contribute to transportation difficulties. Variable terrain, vast distances, lack of harbors, and lack of navigable rivers impede efficient transportation systems.
Transportation and Communication
Transportation and Communication

- **Communications** Radio is the main form of mass communication in the region.

- Satellite technology may eventually improve access to television.

- Print media have limited impact because of low literacy rates.

- Telephone service is limited, but wireless technology is expected to bring improvements.
Transportation and Communication

- **Internet Commerce**  People throughout the region have access to the Internet in public places where they pay small fees to use it.

- Some people are able to participate in e-commerce, running businesses over the Internet.
Transportation and Commerce
People and Their Environment

Section 2
Objectives

- Examine why food shortages have occurred in parts of Africa south of the Sahara.
- List steps the African countries south of the Sahara are taking to protect their environment.
- Discuss the outlook for the region’s future development.
Terms to Know

- Habitat
- extinction
- poaching
- ecotourism
A Geographic View

Village meeting in Madagascar
Geographic Literacy

- During the late 1970s and 1980s, Ethiopia suffered from a series of droughts that steadily lowered food production. As the droughts became prolonged, the country faced widespread famine. A brutal civil war and obstacles imposed by the government hindered global efforts to provide food and medical aid to Ethiopia. During the 1980s, about 1 million Ethiopians died from starvation and disease.
Hunger is one of the leading concerns of people living in Africa south of the Sahara. Drought and wars have contributed to famine in many parts of the region.

Desertification The Sahel, a semiarid region of land in West Africa, once supported nomadic herding and farming.

Today a wide area of the Sahel has become desert.

Among the primary causes of this change are a drier climate and the stripping of the Sahel’s vegetation by people and animals.
Shadows of Hunger

- Severe droughts in other parts of Africa have helped turn farmland into wasteland.

- **Conflict and Hunger**
  - War is a major cause of hunger and malnutrition.
  - Regional conflicts have slowed economic growth and caused starvation and death.
  - Millions of Africans have become refugees and face an uncertain future.
  - Peace is critical to resolving the hunger problem.
  - Conflict in Sudan, for example, placed millions of Sudanese at risk because food aid often could not reach the people who needed it.
Shadows of Hunger
Shadow of Hunger

• **Farming in Peace** Farmers in Ethiopia and Eritrea were productive until their two countries went to war over a disputed border.

• Then they were hit by one of the worst droughts in years, increasing their dependence on aid organizations for food.
People in Africa south of the Sahara are struggling with problems of land use. The environmental impact of economic development, urban growth, hunting, and tourism has raised difficult questions about how the land is to be used.
Land Use

- **Destruction of the Rain Forest**  In 1990, rain forests covered about 1.5 billion acres in Africa south of the Sahara.
- On the African continent as a whole, almost half of the original rain forests are now gone.
- Responding to the alarm, several countries have set aside forest preserves.
- Some logging companies have begun replanting forests and using modern methods of tree farming.
Land Use

- **Endangered Animals**
  - As people cut down forests for farming, grazing, and timber, many plant and animal species are put at risk.
  - Deforestation destroys animal habitats, or living areas, and many species unique to the region face extinction.
  - European hunters reduced the animal population during the colonial period.
  - Today poaching continues to threaten the region’s wildlife.
Land Use

• **Conservation and Tourism** Several countries in the region have created huge animal preserves, and ecotourism has become a source of income for the region.

• People living in the region, however, often object to the preserves, feeling that human needs outweigh the needs of animals.

• Governments are trying to resolve this conflict.
Land Use
Toward the Future

- People in Africa south of the Sahara are working to overcome the region’s social, political, and environmental challenges.
- Rain forest protection has become a priority in the region.
Africa south of the Sahara has taken action to break its dependence on old trading patterns, and manufacturing is gaining strength in the economies of some countries in the region.

New transportation networks and new forms of communication are changing the lives of Africans south of the Sahara.
Desertification, drought, and conflict have contributed to hunger in Africa south of the Sahara.

Deforestation, hunting, tourism, and meeting the basic needs of people are all issues in the debate over land use in the region.

Africans south of the Sahara are working toward political stability and economic independence in the twenty-first century.