

Geog. Gill

Central Africa

Central Africa lies b/n $23^{\circ}30'N$ — $15^{\circ}30'S$ and $8^{\circ}E$ — $32^{\circ}E$.
It covers 22% of Africa's total area possessing 9 countries.
It is the second largest region. Nearly $\frac{2}{3}$ of it is a vast depression drained by the Congo basin. The highland areas include the Cameroon mts and Ruwenzori Range.

It experiences all types of climate of the continent, except the Mediterranean type. Its diverse climatic conditions make it rich in bio-diversity. Equatorial rain forests, Savanna woodland, Gallery vegetation, Desert and Semi-desert vegetation are the common ones.

It accounts 12.5% of Africa's total population. The region is characterized by low population density due to climatic conditions. 41% of the population is urban. Life expectancy is 51 years.

Agriculture, forestry, mining and manufacturing constituted the main part of the economy. However, subsistence agriculture supports the majority of the population. It consists 30% of Africa's tropical woods. It has copper, zinc, aluminium, diamond, gold and oil. Angola, Gabon and Cameroon are the richest in petroleum resources.

Southern Africa

- lies b/n $18^{\circ}S$ — $34^{\circ}52'S$ and $7^{\circ}E$ — $32^{\circ}E$.

- accounts 8.9% of Africa's total area

- is the smallest of all the regions

- The topography is dominated by high plateaus (300m)

Drakensberg mts are the highest areas

- is drained by river Limpopo, Orange and Vaal.

- Ngami, Kalharé, Makarikari and Okavango are the major basins.

- has diverse climate of tropical, desert, alpine and Mediterranean climates. The Mozambique and Benguela currents produce

- impacts on the climate of the region. It is endowed with different species of flora and fauna.

- accounts 5.8% of the total population

- is the least populated region

- life expectancy is 52 years

It has the most diverse economy in the continent. Agriculture, mining, manufacturing and tourism form the major occupation. Agriculture is highly mechanized and commercialized. It is rich in gold, diamond and coal.

Relief structure of Africa.

Its relief is made up of mts, plateaus, valleys, gorges, plains, etc. Much of Africa is plateau. It consists 71% plateaus, 25% plains and 4% mountains. It is the only continent that is predominantly covered by plateau lands and small percent of plains.

The relief ranges from 5895m (Kilimanjaro) to 132m ~~Qattara~~ (Qattara in Egypt). This makes the maximum relief of Africa to be 6027m.

Plateaus

Areas (in Africa) above 300m of altitude are considered to be plateaus. Its maximum is in Eastern Africa and Ethiopian plateaus reach over 2,000m above sea level. 700m is the dividing line for plateau types. It is divided into two types of plateaus (1) high plateau (2) low plateau

High plateaus are extensive plateaus that lie above 700m. Their general elevation is above 2000m found in southern and eastern Africa. East African plateau, Bihe plateau, the southwest African highlands and the Malagasy highlands. The Kalahari and the Great Karoo in the south are the major basins.

Low plateau lie b/w 300 and 700m. The northern and western parts of Africa are areas of low plateaus. They form inland basins such as the Chad, Libyan and Sudd basins. The Fouta Djallon mts, Jos (Bouchi) plateau and the Adamawa uplands, Ahagar mts, Tibesti and the Red sea hills form the inland basins.

Mountains - high lands with steep slopes and a peak. Africa is dominated by volcanic and fold mountains. Volcanic mts are formed in the Tertiary period of Cenozoic era. Many are above 4000m and concentrated in Eastern Africa - (see Table 3.5)

- Fold Mts are found in northern and southern extremes of Africa. They are young and old. The young fold mts are located in NW of the Maghred region (Morocco, Algeria & Tunisia) called Atlas Mts which are contemporary to the Alps of Europe and Himalayas. They are formed during the Alpine Orogenesis in the Cenozoic era.

The ^{old} fold mts of South Africa were formed during the Hercynian Orogeny in Mesozoic era, contemporary to the Australian Alps (Cape Ranges) - [See Figure 3.6]

Plains are areas of low relief with flat surface configurations. They are places that lie below 300m which are confined to the Coastal areas of eastern, northeastern, southeastern and Western Africa. They account for 25% of Africa's relief. They are hot, dry, poorly vegetated and sparsely inhabited.

Northern and Western Africa are known as Low Africa b/c they have much lower mean elevation. The south and East is called High Africa.

Great East African Rift Valley.

- is part of the world's Great Rift Valley which stretches from Syria to Mozambique overing 7,200 km
- is formed in the Tertiary period
- extends a distance of 5600 km in Africa touching 15 countries. It has 4 trenches (branches)

1. Ethio-Eritrea-Djibouti-Somalia

2. western branch 3. Eastern branch (Gregory)

4. Malawi Rift Valley

1. Ethio-Eritrea-Djibouti branch.

- runs through the 4 countries extending ~~for~~ From lake Turkana
- branches into 3 at the Afar Triangle forming the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden.

- ~~also~~ includes Ethiopian Rift Valley lakes - Lake Hawasa, Langano, Shalla, Abijata and Ziway, Abaya and Chamo.

Western Branch

- runs from Uganda southwards through DRC, Rwanda and Burundi to Tanzania
- hosts the continents block (Horst) mt, Mount Ruwenzori, Lake Edward, Kivu and Tanganyika

Eastern (Gregory) branch runs from Lake Turkana crossing Tanzania East of L. Victoria. L. Turkana, Naivasha, Norton, and Eyasi are located in it.

Malawi Rift Valley - exists where the western and Eastern branches converge. It runs through Tanzania and Mozambique to end at port Biera of Mozambique. L. Malawi, Rukwa and Chilwa are the major lakes.

Figure 3.8 should be copied and studied

L. Victoria ($83,000 \text{ km}^2$) is found trapped b/n the Western and Eastern branches.

Characteristics of the Rift Valley

1. bounded by steep escarpments
2. has active and dormant volcanoes
3. affected by earthquakes and volcanism and landslides
4. has hot and dry climate
5. Structural lakes occupy its floor.

Climate of Africa

Controls of weather and climate

Africa has varied climatic conditions due to the intervention of weather and climate controls. These are latitude, altitude, distance from the sea, mountain barriers, Ocean currents, Planetary winds and pressure belts.

Latitude shows the distance places have from the equator. Latitudinal location affects the amount of incoming solar radiation and thereby its temperature. Due to its latitudes, Africa is the hottest of all continents.

Altitude - Africa's plateaus and mountains have great impacts to the Continent's climate. Eastern Africa, despite its closeness to the equator, experiences highland climates.

Distance from the sea - Water bodies adjacent to the land have great impacts on the temperature and rainfall. Its smooth coastlines also reduces the impact of the sea in the interior areas. As a result, interior Africa experiences continental climate.

Ocean currents - Ocean water moves vertically and horizontally. The horizontal movement of ocean water is called Ocean current. Warm Ocean currents have high temperature and high moisture and thereby have warming effect and bring moisture.

Cold Ocean currents have cool temperature and low moisture. They have cooling effects and bring no rain to the areas. Canary (cold), Benguela (cold) and Mozambique (warm) Ocean currents affect African continent. Canary and Benguela ocean currents make northwestern and southwestern parts of Africa dry. Mozambique Ocean current makes SE Africa warm and wet.