



Africa from Space

Africa is going to be an increasingly important area in the future, if only because a higher percentage of the human race will be living there. Here are some key things you should know about sub-Saharan Africa:

- **Population growth.** The African population will reach *1.2 billion* by 2025, and *1.9 billion* by 2050. Currently, 40% of the population is under 14, which guarantees high population growth as these children grow up and have children of their own.
- **Water.** Only 58% of the population in sub-Saharan Africa has access to safe drinking water, and urbanization is making the problem worse. In eight countries, under a third of the population has access to safe water.
- **Food.** About 64 percent of Africans rely on water that is limited and highly variable, and crop lands are concentrated in dry regions with tenuous future irrigation supplies. Food imports have increased sharply.
- **The economy.** Economic growth has been good in the past decade (in the ballpark of 5%), only part of which is due to high commodity prices for oil exporters and others.
- **Climate change.** Sub-Saharan Africa will experience a strong warming trend over

the 21st century (3.6-6.2° F), above the global average. Precipitation impacts are less clear.

The current situation obviously poses significant problems and fixing them will be harder because of climate change and high population growth. Obviously, we need to undertake intelligent steps to mitigate climate change and moderate population growth through programs like educating women. Then we need to do what we can to assist Africans in addressing the other problems.

Sources:

1. Christopher Muller, Climate Change Impact on Sub-Saharan Africa? An Analysis of Models and Scenarios (German Dev. Inst. 2009).
2. Christopher W. Tatlock, Water Stress in Sub-Saharan Africa (CFR 2006).
3. Tukufu Zuberi and Kevin J.A. Thomas, Demographic Projections, the Environment and Food Security in Sub-Saharan Africa (UNDP 2012)