

18. Africa – Tropical and Subtropical zone

Distribution and climate

Tropical

N and SW Africa (Saharan states – Western Sahara, N part of Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Chad, Sudan, then S part of Algeria, Libya, Egypt, SW part of Namibia, W part of RSA)

Very dry climate with *precipitation <250 mm*.

Subtropical

= coastal areas of Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, region around Cape Town in RSA, 2 seasons: *long, dry, hot, sunny summer* and *mild, mostly wet winter* (rainfall)

Soils and Hydrology

- *sandstone, sand dunes* with no or very thin topsoil cover and large *water deficiency* except of *Nile r.*

Fauna and Flora

Tropical = deserts and semi-deserts

- Fauna: camels, snakes, scorpions, rodent species
- Flora: cactuses, thorny bushes, problems with desertification

Subtropical

Vegetation is adapted to drought => *drought-resistant plants*, but also soft deciduous forests

- Fauna: lizards, sea-gulls, squirrels, chameleon, mouflon, crocodiles (Nile)
- Flora: olive tree, pine, cedar, cork oak

Population and settlements = Concentrated mainly to *coastal areas* (Mediterranean sea) or besides *rivers* (Cairo) or to *oases*. Deserts are almost without inhabitants (only Nomads). Arabic, Hotentot, Nile-Saharan languages = language diversity. RSA – Zulu tribe.

Largest cities: *Tetouan, Alger, Tunis, Tripoli, Alexandria, Cape Town*.

- *Literacy rate* very low especially in Saharan states, e.g. Mali 26%, Niger 16%
- *Life expectancy* in Mali 38 yrs., Niger 35 yrs., Zimbabwe 34 yrs., Mauritania 44 yrs.

Agriculture = nomadic and subsistence agriculture in the Tropics. Field are irrigated along river Nile a lot => Fertile Crescent (both with SW Asia)

- *citrus fruits, olive oil*
- *vine, tobacco, wheat* (RSA)

Industry = least economically DCs, without foreign economic aid = mostly no existence. Some countries specialize to tourism (Tunisia, Egypt – famous destinations). Most developed country = RSA.

- iron ore (Western Sahara)
- leather industry (Morocco) and fishing in Mediterranean Sea
- oil drilling (Libya)
- mining of diamonds and gold (RSA)

Social problems:

- malnutrition + famine => high death rate ⇔ diseases
- problems with irrigation => droughts => fires
- large urbanisation of (coastal) cities
- apartheid, influences of former colonization

Keywords:

desertification, sandstone, low literacy rate, primitive industry, Mediterranean Sea, squirrel, pine, oak, conurbation, destination

Natural Vegetation in Africa

