

Specimen Response for Study Theme 3E

STUDY THEME 3E: THE POLITICS OF DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA (With the exception of the Republic of South Africa)

Question

Government domestic policies have been the main obstacles to economic and social development.

Discuss.

(15 marks)

Response

It is very easy to blame African governments for the hunger and poverty of the people. Corrupt governments called Kleptocracy and civil war in many countries such as Sudan have played an important part in preventing economic and social development. However climate, disease such as HIV - Aids and debt are also reasons.

Corruption within a government can lead to problems when a government steals money from its budget for bribes or illegal use. Expensive cars and mansions are bought and some leaders put money in European Banks. They spend millions of pounds on their families and friends. They come to London and spend millions of pounds. This money could be used to build hospitals and schools. They also give top jobs to their families and friends and they make a mess of it. The government may also decide to spend most of its money on cities (because this is where they live) leaving the rural areas i.e. farmers to suffer. Without money it is difficult for farmers to grow the food needed for the population.

Also if a country was to go to war it could have a devastating effect on its citizens. Even worse is a civil war when different tribal groups attack each other. In Sudan there is a fight between the Arabs and the Christian Farmers are taken away to become soldiers, leaving women and children to run the farms. Rebel soldiers destroy farms or lay mines to stop the government from catching them, this destroys fertile land. Many people flee to the cities as they are afraid and they end up in refugee camps or go to other countries. If these countries lived in peace and there were less soldiers then they could improve farms and maybe even spend money building factories and train workers.

In Zimbabwe the land was mostly owned by white farmers. The government decided that the land should be owned by the Black People of Zimbabwe and took it from the white farmers. The result of this was that food production failed. Also there was so much unrest that the government had less money to spend on social and economic development.

However many African countries also suffer because of the policies of Western governments when they make it hard for them to sell their goods. So it is not always the domestic policies that cause problems.

The debt of a country can cause great problems where a country has bought aid and now has to pay it back. At the G8 summit in Scotland countries of the wealthy were asked to cancel African debt. This would mean that these poor countries could improve health care and education. Instead of spending money on schools or hospitals African governments have to pay large debt. Many African countries suffer from drought and climate change which stops development. In the Sahel region of Africa the desert is spreading making it more difficult for people to grow crops. Famine is the outcome and this is happening in Niger at the moment. Its government claims that there is no food shortage and that they have done nothing wrong. But starving people cannot work.