The Political Divisions of Africa
Continent Introduction

• Continent home to nearly 1.1 Billion people (2015 Population Reference Bureau estimate)
  – Population growing rapidly
• Over 2000 different languages spoken
  – Mix of local, European, and Arabic languages
• Africa does not have a resource problem, it has a resource distribution problem
• Whenever a resource of value is found the people suffer
  – Ex. Oil in Sudan, Diamonds in Sierra Leone, Gold in South Africa, etc...
The Current Political Map

• With creation of South Sudan on July 9th, 2011, Africa now has 56 Countries
  – Numerous independence movements in process
  – Status of Western Sahara is disputed
Colonial Africa

- Berlin Conference 1884-1885
  - Meeting of European Imperial leaders to divide African lands amongst themselves

- During the colonization era Africa’s people and land were used for the benefit of European states
  - Used human and natural resources

- Superimposed borders created problems in colonial and post-colonial era
Problems of Superimposed Borders

• Country boundaries largely established by Europeans
  – Little consideration for pre-existing ethnic and cultural divisions
  – Some estimates of the number of ethnicities in Africa number in the 1000s

• States left with problem of ruling Multi-ethnic states
  – Often after European antagonized ethnic divisions

African Ethnicities Map
Map from Center for Geographic Analysis, Harvard University
Governmental Systems

• Most African systems have some type of democratic government set up
  – Mostly some form of Republic
• Growing importance of the African Union
• Helping to promote stability and development in Africa
  – Encourages democratic governance
  – Increased cooperation and communication
    • Building of Infrastructure
  – Increase living standard of all
• Reliance on outside assistance
United Nations Africa Geoscheme

**Northern Africa**
Algeria, Egypt, Libyan Arab Jamahinya, Morocco, Sudan, Tunisia, Western Sahara

**Western Africa**
Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo

**Central Africa**
Angola, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, São Tomé, Príncipe

**Eastern Africa**
Burundi, Comores, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mayotte, Mozambique, Réunion, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe

**Southern Africa**
Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland

**UN Subregions of Africa**
- Northern
- Western
- Central
- Eastern
- Southern
West Africa

• Large Population Center
  – Nigeria is continent’s most populous country
    • 181.8 (2015 Population reference bureau estimate)
• Stable growth
  – Economic growth backed by relative political stability
**North Africa**

- Most developed region of Africa
  - Strong connections to Europe and the Middle East
- Recent political turmoil
  - Arab spring revolutions began in Tunisia and continue to impact countries of North Africa
Central Africa

• Incredibly wealthy in resources
  – Congo basin source of wood
• Severe Governmental issues destabilize area
  – Particularly in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Central African Republic
East Africa

• Beneficial proximity to Indian Ocean
  – Historical and current trade
  – Many cultural influences

• Recent instability threatens peace
  – Ineffective governments in Somalia, South Sudan, and nearby DRC lead to refugee crisis
Southern Africa

• Relatively stable
  – Countries like Botswana and South Africa are attractive to people from all around Africa
  – Zimbabwe potentially destabilizing

• Advantage from access to Atlantic and Indian Ocean