



[Africa image.](#)

Somewhere Called Africa?

By [Dr. Diana Rangaves](#), PharmD, RPh

The Atlantic Ocean, the Mediterranean Sea, the Red Sea, and the Indian Ocean all encircle Africa, the second-largest continent. The Equator divides it approximately evenly in half. The islands of Cape Verde, Madagascar, Mauritius, Seychelles, and Comoros are all part of the continent. Africa is the continent with the most countries in the world today.

Africa's political leadership changed after its nations gained independence from European invaders in the late 1950s and early 1960s. However, the economy of African countries remained intertwined with those of their former colonies, presenting issues about the management of resources and the national sovereignty of these nation-states.

In this article, you will learn more about the countries within Africa, its land and economic system:

The countries within Africa.

Africa's continent has 48 countries, plus six island nations. There are 54 independent African nations, together with the disputed territories of Western Sahara (occupied by Morocco and claimed by the Polisario) and Somaliland (a portion of Somalia).

The region of Africa along the Mediterranean Sea's coast is referred to as North Africa or Northern Africa (as used by the UN) (except for Sudan). The Atlas Mountains dominate the region to the northwest. The Sahara runs from the [Atlantic Ocean](#) in the west to the Red Sea in the east, south of the Mediterranean coastal strip. Northern Africa consists of six nations and Western Sahara, a contentious region. Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Sudan, Tunisia, and Western Sahara are all included in North Africa. The United Nations Population Division estimates that 250 million people live in Northern Africa.

The term "West Africa" or "Western Africa" typically refers to the nations in the northwest of the continent located north of the Gulf of Guinea. The Sahara desert and the Sahel region encircle West Africa's northern border, which is in the southern portion of the continent's so-called hump. In addition to Saint Helena, a British Overseas Territory, West Africa consists of sixteen nations. Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde (Cape Verde), Côte d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast), Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Saint Helena, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo are all countries in Western Africa.

The tropical central region of the African continent is referred to as Central Africa or Middle Africa (as used by the UN). Sao Tomé and Príncipe, an island nation, is one of the nine nations that make up Central Africa. Angola, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Congo-Kinshasa), Equatorial Guinea and Gabon are all part of Central Africa.

Madagascar and other smaller islands are part of East Africa, often known as Eastern Africa, the eastern part of the African continent. In a more restricted sense, the word "East Africa" may apply to the modern-day nations of Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda, which were once British colonies. Eastern Africa comprises the following nations: Burundi, Comoros, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Ethiopian Southern Territories, French Southern Territories, Kenya, Malawi, Mauritius, Mayotte, Mozambique, Réunion, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, South Sudan, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

The South Atlantic and Indian Ocean form the western and eastern boundaries of Southern Africa, the southernmost region of the African continent. The UN geoscheme has listed five countries in Southern Africa, with a combined population of 68.3 million. Botswana, Eswatini (Swaziland), Lesotho, Namibia, and South Africa are all part of Southern Africa.

Africans' land

Africa's land and natural resource ownership is a significant source of contention for people worldwide, with implications for prospects for rural economic development, human rights and dignity, cultural survival, political stability, environmental preservation, and efforts to combat climate change. Land ownership is one of Africa's main barriers to wealth accumulation and increased economic development.

In Africa today, there are three different types of land tenure: common law, state law founded on colonial rule, and, in some places, Islamic law. Rural households, who possess around 11% of the continent's total land area, are another significant source of land ownership in Africa. Families can acquire land by inheritance, employment of customary tenure, purchase, and other non-agricultural types of tenure.

None of these could they regard as being a regional or national power. Land is now more than ever viewed as a precious resource because of the increase in population, the significant investment in development, and the full use of the land's potential.

In the past, some African communities believed that the community should own land for the benefit of the community rather than by an individual. This tradition effectively halted the development of personal property rights in the late 1800s and early 1900s since it essentially went against pre-existing cultural norms in Africa.

Colonialists prohibited large-scale freehold systems for indigenous peoples, and only "customary" systems—where they may use the land but not own it—were typically tolerated. As a result, different methods of property ownership govern land in many African nations today. Due to the absence of a comprehensive freehold system, there is little official documentation of land ownership. They have only accorded 10% of Africa's rural land, and only 4% of nations have done the same for the land in their respective countries.

Africans' economics

“When it [comes to ownership](#), the economy plays a significant role. Most of Africa has a mixed economy; this system has elements of capitalism and socialism. A diverse economy protects private property and permits some economic freedom in the use of capital, but it also allows government intervention in the economy to further social objectives.

During the five decades of post-colonial governance, the state-controlled many African economies. During this time, the state formed big state-owned companies, enacted trade restrictions, began industrializing import substitution, created agricultural [marketing](#) boards to regulate prices, and built a sizable public sector.

The private sector was damaged and hindered by these policies. Most African countries liberalized their economies during the 1970s and 1990s by implementing structural adjustment programs because state-led planning failed to produce many results. The reforms that they implemented gave the private sector considerable room to grow. The private sector's role in the development agenda is to stimulate economic activity because it produces goods and services that contribute to national income and finance development. The private sector is now universally acknowledged as Africa's primary driver of growth and progress.

You can categorize industries as public, private, or joint sectors depending on who owns them. In contrast to private [enterprises](#), which are owned and operated by [businesses](#), public sectors are owned and managed by the government. Government and private parties work together to operate joint sectors.

The private sector significantly impacts the continent's GDP and export earnings. According to AfDB (2011), Africa's private sector is responsible for more than 80% of the continent's overall production. This means that the success of the private sector will determine how healthy the African economy is. The gross domestic product of a country, which calculates the value of all products and services generated there in a given year, is a typical way to describe the size of its economy.”

Wrap up.

There are many myths about who owns Africa, yet it is much more than the sum of its misconceptions. The most crucial fact to understand is that Africa is not a single nation but a geographically and culturally varied continent of 54 countries with abundant natural resources. To ensure long-term sustainability, they need to maintain Africa due to its plenty of natural resources adequately.

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