

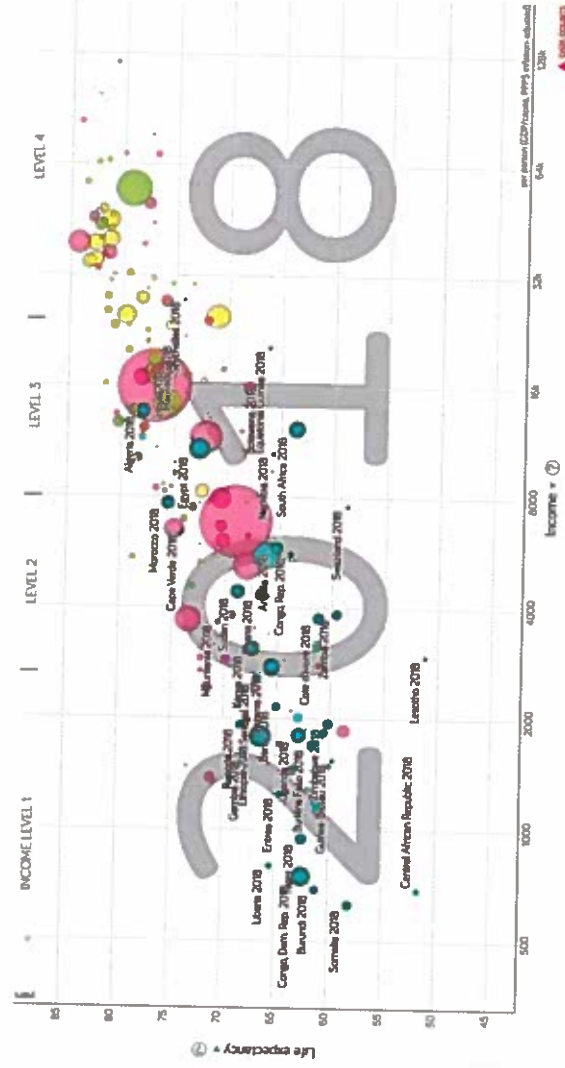
## How developed are African countries?

### Learning objectives

- To understand the differences in levels of development across African countries.
- To consider different points of view about development in African countries.

Much of the world believes Africa is poor. In 2013, the Aid agency Oxfam conducted a survey of 2,000 people across the UK. When asked what they think of Africa, more than half said 'poverty', 'famine' and 'hunger'. Only a small percentage said 'growth', 'business', 'education' or 'beautiful landscapes'. You studied the causes of poverty and development in Unit 7 (pages 122–141), and applied this to Asia in Unit 10 (pages 182–201). In Lesson 12.1 (A) on page 202, you were introduced to the dangers of a single-story view of Africa and stereotyping the continent. Is this world view of Africa a single-story view, or reality? In this and future lessons in this unit you will consider evidence and ask questions as a geographer, to reach your own conclusions.

### A Gampinder graph for Africa is not a country



As you discovered in Unit 7, reasons for the global distribution of development and poverty are complicated. Diagram D in Lesson 7.6 (page 132), summarises the key causes of poverty. People around the world have different and often conflicting ideas. To determine the situation in Africa you need to consider different points of view, see B–G.



**B** David Attenborough's introduction to the television series, *Africa*

*Africa* The world's greatest wilderness. The only place on Earth to see the full majesty of nature. It includes immense deserts, a vast rainforest, and for thousands of miles the most fertile savanna in the world.



**C** An aid worker's view on his first visit to North Africa

*Going into our trip, I knew that the Human Development Index ranks countries like Mali and Niger at the very bottom of the list, but I wasn't really sure what that meant ... I discovered families that were not talking about development or the future. Their only priority was figuring out how to get through the year. Have enough food. Keep their loved ones healthy. Keep their babies alive till the age of five, when statistically their chances of dying from water-related disease decrease dramatically. For people who don't have access to clean water, food – the most basic needs – survival alone is progress.*

I was asked to investigate why it is that the vast majority of African countries are poor. In South Sudan it became clear. The people – most of whom are from the Murle ethnic group – are crippled by tribal conflicts related to disputes over cattle, the traditional store of wealth in South Sudan. Earlier this year several hundred people, many of them women and children, were killed in deliberate attacks on villages. And so the answer is: war makes you destitute.



**E** Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, former President of Liberia

*Africa is not poor, it is poorly managed.*



**D** A TV journalist's investigation into poverty in Africa

*Africa is blessed with abundant natural resources but plagued by poverty. The colonial period caused considerable damage to the self-confidence of the people, stifled economic development and choked off growth in entrepreneurial skills. Manufacturing was vigorously discouraged so Africa would not compete with factories in the countries of the colonial powers, such as France, Great Britain. For centuries, even up to now, Africa has been primarily an exporter of raw materials and natural produce.*

**G** Joseph Amamoo, a Ghanaian author



*The gap between the rich and the poor in Africa is still growing. Our leaders, they just want to keep on being rich. And they don't want to pay taxes.*

**F** Local fisherman on Lake Victoria

## Activities

- A good place to start your investigation is Lessons 7.2 and 7.3 (pages 124–127). Use the data here to build up an evidence file.
  - Look at Lesson 7.2, Table B. How many of the bottom ten countries are African?
  - Look at Lesson 7.2, Map C. Draw a table dividing all the countries of Africa into three income groups: upper middle; lower middle; low. Use Lesson 12.1, Map C, to help you.
- Look carefully at Map A for this lesson.
  - What two indicators are being used on the graph?
  - Go to the Gampinder website, scroll down the home page and select Africa is not a country. Play the animation.
  - Write a paragraph to explain what the graph shows about poverty and development for countries in Africa.
- Read carefully the views expressed about Africa in B–G.
  - Categorise the views into two groups: positive and negative views of Africa.
  - Draw a Development Compass Rose (see Lesson 7.1, D, page 123).
  - Decide which category each viewpoint fits on the rose, and label the view on your rose.
- Think about what you have learnt so far about Africa in this unit. Match these thoughts to Lesson 7.6, Diagram D (page 132), showing the causes of poverty. Make a copy of the diagram with the headings and then write in examples you have studied in Africa.
  - Do you think the world view of Africa is a single-story view, or reality? Justify your answer using evidence.