AREC445 Final Project
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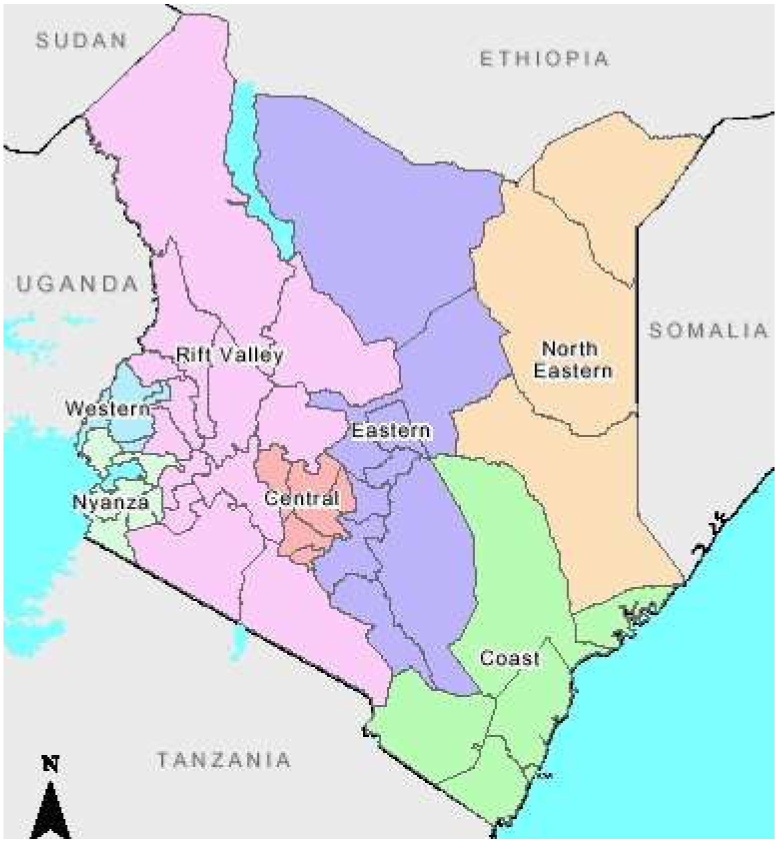
Kenya – Profile of a nation

Kenya is perceived as a wild and beautiful land, famous for its National Parks and as a key destination for African tourism, Kenya is one of the best known African nations. However corruption and economic woes have left Kenya in a situation it had not anticipated at the onset of independence in 1963. Once seen as the investment darling of Africa, it presently is experiencing annual decline in per capita GDP, and deteriorating terms of trade. Meanwhile, AIDS and its unlikely bed fellow TB pose increasing pressure on the new government to fix domestic affairs, while continuing to address the problem of Kenyas trade deficiency.

Kenya is a East African nation, with a surface area of 580,367 km^2 located between the western shores of Lake Victoria, and the Indian ocean. Most of the population is concentrated in the south west regions of the country, where a high plateau and old volcanic soils give good land and climate for agriculture. The coastal region, while essential for trade via shipping lines is less suited to agriculture, and shares low levels of rainfall with northern regions.



Kenya's vegetation can be split up into three broad areas of analysis, forest and mountain areas, grassland communities, and semi-desert and desert regions (Ojany and Ogendo 1973). The regions to the north are almost entirely space arid grassland, with some patches of true desert categorized by thicket and thornbush vegetation. In contrast the eastern and central regions contain denser grassland and highland forest around the high altitude areas of Mt. Kenya. The coastal region is largely covered by long grass and bush vegetation, with significant patches of mangrove forest along the seafront (Ojany and Ogendo 1973). However Kenya's land area is in total only 2% forested (UN 2001). This is despite a significant afforestation scheme started in the 1940's, in 1963 forested land represented approximately 3.4% of land use.

Rainfall across the country is very varied, and accounts for a great deal of the variety in vegetation found between the west and north east. Precipitation is highest in the central district, where it peaks at 1700mm a year, and but falls under 300mm for very large portions of the country away from the west and central regions including almost all of the North Eastern province. In general rainfall is highest towards the west of the country in Western and Nyanza provinces, which experience monsoon like conditions called the long rains from March to September (Ojany and Ogendo 1973). Rainfall along the coast peaks in May, but is generally low for most of the year.

Annual temperatures also vary greatly, Nairobi for example sees mean temperatures vary from 9.1°C to 26.8°C over the year. Generally variations in temperature are even across the whole country, and the relief means that altitude has the biggest influence on temperature, rather than distance from the equator which runs through the center of the country. The influence of wind and air masses has an important effect, wind from the NE over land in the winter has a cooling effect, and during the summer wind comes from the Indian Ocean when the water mass is coolest. This has a large effect in regulating temperature for most of the country, although Garissa, low lying to the East experiences maximum temperatures of 46°C.

Kenya has very interesting and varied geology, from flat plain lands in the north, to mountainous regions in the central south. The most significant feature in the west is the rift valley system that runs in a narrow band from the southern shore of Lake Rudolf in the north to the southern border with Tanzania. This is a tectonic feature caused by the moving apart of two crustal plates which form part of the Great African Rift system. The region around Nairobi has a particularly interesting geology, with impressive tors and inselbergs showing extensive weathering in previous eras.

As far as natural mineral resources are concerned, Kenya does not have an extensive supply of commonly extracted materials, although there are some quantities of rubies and garnets in the Coastal province (Arnold 1981). By value Kenya's biggest mineral export was heavy petroleum oil, worth US$128 million in 2000 (ITC 2003), however it imports almost three times this value of crude oil.

The temperate climate in Kenya means that malaria levels are much lower than many other African nations, a good reason why it was one of the few parts of Africa to be partly colonized after it was claimed as a British protectorate in 1895. However Kenya had seen large periods of foreign involvement, especially from Greek and Arab nations, long before the Portuguese first visited the area in 1498. There was considerable attempt by the Portuguese to establish rule in coastal regions of what is now Kenya over the Arab settlers that had been in the region for hundreds of years (Ojanay and Ogendo 1973).

British involvement came about largely as a desire to set up a secure trade route between landlocked Uganda and the coast trading location of Mombasa at the end of the 19th Century. It was through pressure from the Imperial British East Africa Company that the British government set up a large portion of land that today forms Kenya as a British protectorate. Administrative regions were set up haphazardly and without properly defined boundaries. However some fertile regions of the country soon attracted the interest of white European settlers, who started to set up farm lots. In 1902 the boundary of the protectorate was extended to the West out towards Lake Victoria, ostensibly due to the fertile farmland in the region (Ojanay and Ogendo 1973). It was also around this time that the railway was built across the country from Mombasa to Lake Victoria using Indian labor (Gov. of Kenya 2003). From this time until independence, pressure from white farmers in the area to protect their interests over the native population was very influential on racial discrimination in government.

In 1920 Kenya was declared a British colony, and despite strong interest from native Kenyans to take part in government, the first African to sit on the administrative council was not appointed until 1944. Previous to this the best farmland in the country had been defined as the 'white highlands' and black persons were restricted to cultivation of so called 'native reserves'. Even at this time organized political parties were growing with the intention of making the countrys' administration more indicative of the needs of the native population. Various small concessions were made by the British government to increase the number of ethnic representatives, but this was happening too slowly for a majority of people in Kenya, which lead to the formation of the Mau Mau, a radical group who used armed and bloody conflict to bring attention to the dissatisfaction of native Kenyans to white colonial rule. Many people objected to the continuing settlement of both European and Indian farmers in their lands. During this period in the early 1950's 32 Europeans were killed but over 13,000 Africans, mostly Kikuyus who were slaughtered by the British (Gov. of Kenya 2003).

In 1959 the policy of racially determined access to farmland was rejected, causing great upset from white farmers. With Independence looming, racial groups within Kenya formed into administrative districts that today closely match the regions still in existence today, with the admission of what today forms the North Eastern district. Kenya was finally granted independence in 1963, and joined the Commonwealth soon after.

Kenya has a diverse ethnic population, the four largest tribes being Luo, Kikuyu, Luhya and Kamba. There are also small numbers of non-African racial groups, the largest of which is Asian and European. Arab numbers are the smallest of all groups despite their colonial legacy (Ojany and Ogendo 1973).

Kenya's political system follows the British system of directly electing Members of Parliament for particular areas, but the president is directly elected, and appoints a vice president. There are 210 MP's who serve a 5 year period, and an additional 12 appointed MP's who are based on the proportion of elected officials. Kenya has a constitution which has been frequently added to, and even during the era of one party rule debate was open, and elections have been very free and fair, especially compared with other African nations (Kenyan Embassy 2003).

Kenya still has a long way to go in terms of female representation in parliament, only 3.6% of seats are held by women (HDR 2002). Generally gender equality in Kenya is reasonably good, even for African standards, women work longer hours in both urban and rural areas than men. Demographic sex ratios are a little low, but life expectancy and primary school enrollment are fairly unbiased. One important organization in the role of furthering woman's development in Kenya has been the Maendeleo Ya Wanawake Organization (MYWO). Founded at the time of the Mau Mau crisis, it was originally used partly as a tool to promote colonial rule through the education of women (Aubrey 1997). Post independence the organization was a powerful non-governmental organization (NGO) which advocated womens rights and education.

Kenya has also been a stabilizing force for it's neighboring countries, despite some tensions with Somalia, generally Kenya has peaceful borders, and has even acted as mediator between Tanzania and Uganda during their conflict in 1972 (Arnold 1981). In many disputes Kenya has played a neutral role, although there have been a number of disagreements between her neighboring countries, particularly with Tanzania. Kenya has also been active in many multi-national East African groups, and applied effective pressure on South Africa to end apartheid. Links with other Commonwealth countries have been important for Kenya, especially trade with the UK.

Kenya receives a small amount of technical and financial assistance from Britain, but most significant is the effect of the Lomé agreement, which allows former European colonies preferential trade treatment. When the EU began large scale import barriers and tariffs in the 60's and 70's, this was crucial to allow Kenya to keep selling certain food products to Britain. However the Lomé agreement has been accused of contributing to neo-colonialism, where developing countries are encouraged to concentrate on production of primary agricultural crops rather than manufactured goods which are worth more.

From independence to the present day, governance in Kenya has been dominated by the Kenya African National Union (KANU). Although for many years Kenya was effectively a one party system with all other political groups prohibited, it is not a static system, for was is a great deal of dissent and debate tolerated from within the party ranks (Arnold 1981). In elections members stood against each other despite belonging to the same political party, and often represented very different viewpoints. At independence Jomo Kenyatta became the first president, who was replaced by Daniel arap Moi in 1978. Kenyatta's rule is perhaps best summarized as being stern but stable. During his rule political opposition was banned, and several outspoken opponents of his government were killed in questionable circumstances.

After Kentatta's sudden death, Moi followed many of Kenyatta's styles of governance, and it was not until the huge election in 1979 that he began to change government from the system he inherited (Arnold 1981). Moi had spoken out publicly against corruption in his government as scandals came to light, but despite this governmental siphoning of public money was frequent. In 1991 a KANU former finance minister, Mwai Kibaki left to form the Democratic Party which stood against KANU throughout the 1990's, and eventually Kibaki won the 2002 election by a large margin against Kenyatta's son, Uhuru. He fought on an anti-corruption stance, spurred on by discoveries of huge false subsidies made to Goldenburg International in 1991 for shipments of gold and gems that did not exist (Daily Nation 2003).

Kibaki's National Rainbow Coalition has recently passed several anti-corruption bills that aim to clamp down on widespread governmental corruption, crucial as the IMF and World Bank suspended much aid to Kenya in 1997 due to financial mismanagement (BBC 2003). However, there have already been criticisms of Kibaki's ruling, amid pay hikes to governmental members and accusations of ineffective rule. The granting of free primary education for all has been greatly received, although schools are currently unable to cope with capacity, and many children have been turned away (BBC 2003). It is too early to say whether the new government will be successful in solving Kenya's problems, but the fact that the IMF are said to be considering new loans seems to bode well for long term trust in the new government.

Corruption was voted in a recent domestic opinion poll to be a more serious issue for Kenya that poverty or unemployment, and it seems that Kenyans quite rightly consider good government to be the solution to other economic problems (IMF 2002). On top of this bribery is thought to be common in local authorities and law enforcement, the former perhaps having a great deal to do with the inability of courts to successfully persecute corrupt officials. A report by Transparency International suggested that Kenyans living in urban areas may make as many as 16 bribes a month mostly to police and council authorities (IMF 2002). This seems to be inherently wrong at first glance, although considering the low amounts of money that many public workers are paid, bribery forms a sort of unofficial extra tax on extra services. In a country where a great majority of people are employed in service industries this is very important. But with respect to public service officials, it should be noted that between 1995 and 2000 average monthly wages doubled (IMF 2002).

MP's recently justified themselves 20% pay increases on the grounds that if officials are better paid, they are less likely to be tempted by bribes. How this justifies a $40,000 personal car allowance for every MP is however a little more questionable (BBC 2003).

Kenyans are generally well informed through a fairly impartial media, there are excellent newspapers and especially radio stations which are well listened to, offering a mix of music and news. As a result of this Kenyans are generally very interested in the political process, and turnout at elections is excellent. There are six major daily newspapers, although newspaper circulation is very low, at only 9 per 1000 citizens (UN 2001). In contrast there are almost 3 times as many television sets per 1000 people. This is often an indicator of poor literacy in developing regions, but Kenya has an 82% adult literacy rate and rising (HDR 2002), excellent in comparison to many other nations.

Economically Kenya is one of the strongest countries in Eastern Africa, and has been since before independence. Total GNI (Gross National Income) was US$10.7 billion in 2001, up 0.1bn on the previous year. Yet this is less than a quarter of the total income of Hewlett Packard for the same year (Business Week 2002). On a per capita basis Kenya's GDP is US$355 in 2000 and again in 2001, representing almost no increase (World Bank 2003). Between 1990 and 2000 Kenya saw a drop in per capita GDP of 0.5% representing a serious stagnation of economic growth. Very few countries in the world have declining GDP per capita, although the phenonemon is most common in Sub-Saharan Africa. Kenya's economy seems to be fluctuating considerably however, indeed in 2000 **total** GDP for the country actually decreased, although growth rates had recovered to 1.2% in 2001 (CBS 2002).

Tanzania in contrast has much lower per capita GDP of US$245 (UN 2001) but has a much higher rate of growth of total real GDP, at 5.6% in 2000 at the same time that Kenya's economy was in recession. Uganda's per capita GDP is only slightly lower than that of Kenya at US$301, but real GDP is growing at 6% a year. One should note at this point that AIDS prevalence in these two countries is more than half the level in Kenya, and as will be noted later in this paper, this could go a long way to explain this trend.

Income inequality is also high in Kenya, even for a developing African nation. The richest 20% of the population have over 50% of all income, and the nation has a moderately high Gini index of 44.9 (HDR 2002). Terms of trade improved overall from 1980 to 1999, but more recently have been deteriorating. Kenya currently imports a greater value of goods and services as a percentage of its GDP than it imports.

Kenya's economy is definitely in need of assistance, or even a major overhaul. Kenya in general seems to be in a period of serious decline. In the last decade she has become one of the very few countries in the world to experience a decrease in its Human Development Index ranking; in this level of analysis even troubled countries like Ethiopia and Côte d'Ivoire are improving (HDR 2002). Poverty is high, with 62% of the population living on less than $2 a day. Per capita GDP was US$1,022 in 2001 when adjusted for purchasing power parities. This is very low for Kenyas health care and education provision, indicating that Kenyans are at least getting a good quality of life for their money. However per capita GDP is declining along with much of Sub-Saharan Africa, at a rate of 0.5% per year. While population is increasing at a rate of a mild 1.9% per year, real GDP is only growing at 1.3% a year (UN 2001).

Exported Commodity	1999 Value millions of US$	2000 Value millions of US$
Tea	476	467
Coffee	171	153
Heavy Petrol	134	123
Crude veg materials	109	117
Vegetables	62	103
Fish	28	36
Preserved Fruit	38	34

Biggest exports by value, IDC and UNSD

Kenya is facing real difficulty in finding something to produce, 79% of the population are involved in agricultural production, while output did not increase at all during the last decade. Couple this with huge drops in the global prices of tea and coffee, Kenya's biggest exports by value, and one has painted a very grim picture indeed. Looking at the table to the left it is clear that biggest exports are all primary products, and no labor intensive goods such as textiles and manufactured products. It is also alarming that all but two of the products have seen a decline in value recently, although it is difficult to tell whether this is due to bad harvests, decline in production or dropping market prices. However the global price of tea does seem to be falling (FAO 2003) and this trend is predicted to continue. It should be noted that it is dangerous to assess world prices on the basis of just one years difference, but it is definitely a bad year when six of the largest exports have seen their value decrease.

Another crucial factor in Kenya's export economy is that two of its largest export customers are the neighboring countries of Uganda and Tanzania, both of which are poorer nations. Together these countries purchase 26% of Kenya's total exports, the other major importer being the UK (UN 2001).

Agriculture represents the largest component of Kenyas economy, representing 54% of total exports (UN 2001). Kenya also has a good infrastructure to process the goods it produces, with extensive tea and coffee processing facilities. This is crucial as profit margins are higher on processed goods than for raw materials. It is interesting then to note that only about 20% of land in Kenya is suitable for farming, although this land is among some of the best in Africa. An extensive program of land reform through the 60's and 70's was very successful in redistributing land from white farmers, who were compensated by the British government, and give many people small plots of land of their own (Arnold 1981). Small land holders are still an important feature of land in Kenya today, with government policies to encourage small holder investment. Although use of mechanization is generally advanced for an African nation, this small plot size may be reducing Kenyas overall farming capacity due to the economies of scale which are present in larger farm units. Despite this the role of co-operatives in Kenya is very strong, and goes some way to alleviate the disadvantages of small scale production.

Subsistence cattle grazing is still an important source of food for many people, especially in the more arid northern regions. Although cattle numbers seem to be relatively stable in this region, there is some evidence that wooded areas are being encroached on, and that desertification is occurring (Jacobs and Coppock 1999). It has been postulated that climate change is having a significant impact on these marginal areas, although drought in the area is not inherent. Nevertheless, 30% of the land area is classified as having severe or very severe land degradation (TERRASTAT 2003). It is therefore possible that increasing population pressure in these areas may shift many people from rural lands to move to the cities as subsistence farming becomes untenable.

Tourism is a big earner for Kenya, and saw 728,000 visitors in 2001 (Kenyan CBS 2003). In the late 1970's tourism was the second biggest earner for Kenya after coffee exports, at which time some 400,000 visitors a year at its peak in 1976 (Arnold 1981). Beach holidays and safari tours are popular, including the famous restaurant 'Carnivore' where visitors can sample meats including crocodile and gazelle. Today revenues from tourism are estimated at US$307 million per year, making it worth 8% of total GDP (All Africa 2003). But some observers feel that tourism does not benefit Kenya as much as it perhaps should; most of this money goes to foreign owned travel agents and hoteliers, and despite providing significant employment, few profits go back into Kenyan pockets.

Debt is a serious issue for Kenya, and at present owes US$4.4bn (World Bank 2003). Currently debt service costs Kenya 4.6% of her GDP, almost three times government expenditure on health care (HDR 2002). There have been three major periods of borrowing in recent decades, the first two were granted to see Kenya through periods of global oil crisis, and the most recent was granted to implement programs of structural readjustment (Were 2001).

Were claims that periods of high external debt levels have historically been linked to poor economic growth and low levels of private investment, although notes that the most recent round of borrowing seems to have encouraged private investment, no doubt due to the opening of internal markets to foreign investment as stipulated by structural readjustment. However the most recent indicator available for 2001 shows that foreign direct investment (FDI) plummeted from US$111 million in 2000 to just $US5.3 million (World Bank 2003). So although Kenya seems to be loosing an important potential source of income and development, it is still burdened with debt from structural readjustment. When considered next to declining per capita GDP, it seems that structural readjustment has not benefited Kenya so far.

The official IMF take on this is that governmental corruption is largely to blame for poor economic performance over the last decade (IMF 2002). These two opposing opinions are difficult to differentiate, and to a certain extent both probably have a negative effect on Kenya's economic development. Corruption has definitly had a negative effect on the banking sector. Several banks have gone into liquidation due to financial scandals, the most recent being Euro Bank in February 2003 (BBC 2003). However Kenya is fortunate to have a large number of powerful domestically owned banks that are able to provide financial assistance to small businesses.

Industry in Kenya is dominated by chemical and refining processes, and this area forms 18% of exports (UN 2001). With few mineral resources of its own, Kenya does much processing of raw goods especially food products which are largely destined for the African market. In terms of value, the largest manufactured exports are toys, plastics, footwear, cement, paper, pressed iron and steel (ITC 2003). These large numbers of small diverse industries make for a fairly stable manufacturing market. However, rising labor costs are blamed for declines in many manufacturing areas, and for reducing levels of foreign investment (IMF 2002). Export processing zones (EPZ's) have also been setup in some regions, these are areas designed to attract investment by making a tax haven where foreign factory operators may exploit cheap labor. Often these zones are not subject to environmental or labor regulations, and employers are exempt from local taxes. Often a condition of structural readjustment, these zones make life easy for foreign multinationals, but provide low wages, poor working conditions and no contribution to local government expenditure.

Kenya still has an attractive workforce, being highly literate, well organized, and within a country that has seen excellent political stability since independence. The high unemployment rate of 14.6% (Kenyan CBS 2003) means that there is a large potential workforce, and good communication networks, especially by train between major urban areas and the port of Mombasa. And yet despite a proud domestic tradition of small locally owned factories, large foreign trans-national corporations are glaringly absent.

Kenya has a population of 31 million people (UN 2001), and was considered in the 1980's to be an excellent example of how a Sub-Saharan African country can achieve demographic transition. Even as late as 1977 rural Total Fertility Rates (TFR) in rural areas were 8.4, representing huge family sizes and massive population growth rates. At this time rural birth rates were still very high, at 6.17 per woman (Brass and Jolly 1993), and overall the country had birth rates of 8.2 births per woman. In just 10 years this had fallen to 6.7, and massive change had taken place in both rural and urban areas. Today TFR is at 4.6, and the rate of change has slowed considerably.

Success has been achieved here largely thanks to the role of national family planning campaigns. Prior to the introduction of these fertility rates were falling at much slower rates, especially in some rural districts which were more detached from current influences and had more traditional cultures. As soon as local people began to perceive population control as being a Kenyan rather than foreign concept, cultures were much more willing to take note (Watkins 2000).

It seems now that fertility rates are stabilizing, greatly before Kenya has completed the demographic transition with TFR well above replacement. At present levels it is estimated that Kenyas population will increase by 10 million people before 2015 (UN 2001), representing a doubling time of 38 years. This is comparatively lower than neighboring countries such as Tanzania, which will see population double in 30 years, and Uganda in just 20. Nevertheless Kenya is the most developed of the East African nations, and it is somewhat worrying that despite the very rapid fertility drop during the

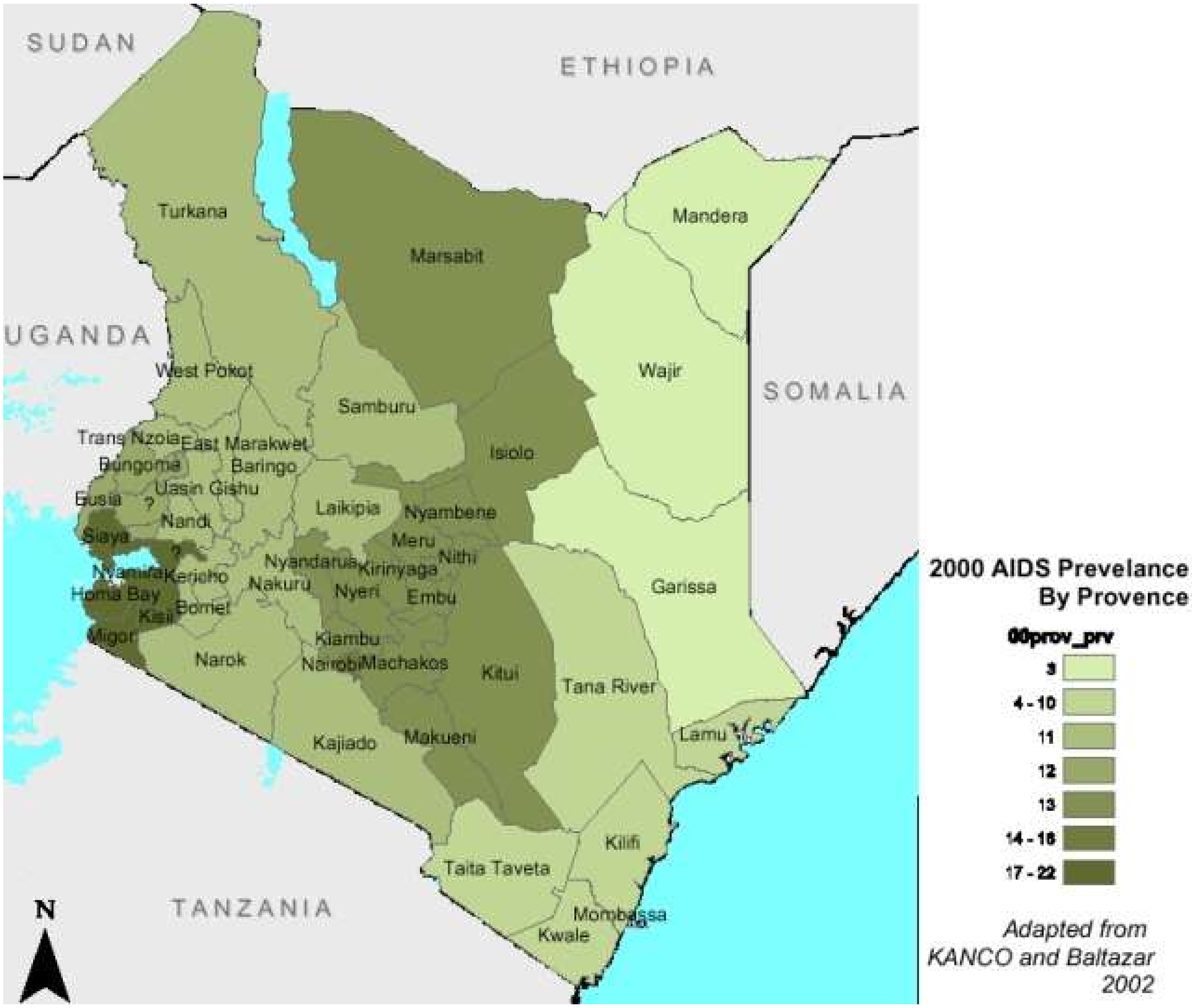
70's and 80's, demographic change has stagnated.

This could be due to several reasons, periods of economic downturn are sometimes linked to higher birth rates, and rising mortality from AIDS may be leading people to have more children in order to achieve desired family sizes. Child mortality has been falling since 1945 around which time widespread vaccination was introduced from developing nations (Brass and Jolly 1993). This represents a very large lag of some 25-30 years in which mortality was falling, but birth rates remained high – a very long period of rapid population increase. Although birth control methods were introduced by foreign NGO's as early as the 1960s, fertility control was not widely adopted until much later.

Crucially, although child mortality under age 5 fell from 250 deaths per 1000 live births to roughly 130 per 1000 in 1980, since then death rates have plateaued, and are presently at 120 more than 20 years later (HDR 2001). When one considers this trend, it is not surprising that fertility rates have also leveled off, as parents have not seen a significant drop in infant mortality for several decades.

Adult mortality has also seen very little change in the last 25 years, in 1975 life expectancy was high for Kenya's level of development, at 51 years of age. But in 2000 life expectancy had only increased by one year, showing that there had been very little progress in health care.

At this point it is impossible to proceed without mentioning the impact AIDS has had on Kenya. In 2001 the adult AIDS prevalence rate was just over 15% for the adult population



and was predicted to be causing 190,000 deaths per year (UNAIDS 2002). AIDS rates are highest in urban areas, especially to the west. Kisumu to the very west has a 1999 AIDS rate of 27%, while the capital Nairobi has a much lower prevalence of 17%.

AIDS has a significant economic and demographic impact on countries, as it diminishes the ability of an infected workforce to be active in the economy, and puts a great drain on health care systems. In 2000 it was estimated that 51% of hospital bed allocation in Kenya was used for the treatment of AIDS (NASCOP 20001), and that AIDS was costing employers 8% of profits. One estimate suggests that Kenya's GDP is 15% lower than it would be without the impact of AIDS (DFID 2001), putting into perspective accusations that Kenyas economic woes are due to debt or corruption. In June 2001 Kenya allowed the import of cheap generically produced drugs for the treatment of AIDS symptoms, much to the disquiet of pharmaceutical companies in the developed world.

AIDS rates in Kenya appear to have peaked in the late 1990's and are now seen to be falling considerably (UNAIDS 2001). Rates in Kisumu for example fell by 8% between 1997 and 1999. This is thought to be largely due to successful government intervention and education campaigns to spread awareness of AIDS, and once cheaper treatments become available on a wider scale, one would expect life expectancy and the ability of people to be economically active to increase significantly.

So what of the future?

While this paper may have painted a grim portrait of a nation, it must be realized that Kenya is still one of the most developed nations in Sub-Saharan Africa and its people are lucky to have experienced great stability since independence. She has an active, well educated and peaceful people, and yet despite this has not escaped the troubles the today's global economy has implanted on many developing nations. AIDS is also having a heavy toll on Kenya, the price to pay for having a mobile and interconnected population. But listening to Kenyan radio or reading news from the region, the outlook of the nation is optimistic as always and Kenya rightly feels she has much to be proud of. Kenya remains a shining example to the rest of Sub Saharan Africa.

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