

5. People with special talents

Sports personalities, music stars, fine artists and fashion designers have special talents. If these talents are well utilised, they contribute to economic development.



Fig. 9.9: Uganda's 2012 gold medalist Stephen Kiprotich is an example of a person with special talent.

Problems faced in the utilisation of resources

Utilisation of resources means using them to satisfy our needs or to process them into other products that are useful to us. As we use the resources, there are problems we face which make it difficult for us to benefit from the resources or to use them well. These problems are:

1. Problems of technology

Technology refers to the means which we use to produce, to work, provide machines and equipment. For example, to use water to generate hydro-electric power, we need turbines and generators. Although African countries have many rivers, the rate at which we use them to generate power is low. This is due to poor technology in Africa.

2. Lack of skills

Utilising some resources require us to have special skills. Where we do not have such skills, it may not be possible or may be difficult to utilise these resources.

3. High cost of resources

Some resources such as minerals cost a lot of money. When they are used in production or processed into products, the products are expensive. Many people cannot afford them. For example producing electricity out of uranium is expensive. This is why, it is used by very few industrialised countries to produce power. Many African countries rely on imported oil which is very costly.

4. Poverty

Some people are too poor to provide for their basic needs. Many people are not also able to access clean water because they cannot afford. Dirty water is not good for consumption. It makes us sick, when we drink it. Purifying it requires a lot of money.

5. Poor quality resources

Poor soils yield poor harvests. We need to improve the soil fertility by using fertilisers and modern farming techniques. This makes utilisation of poor quality land useful.

6. Insecurity

Some resources are in insecure areas. Such resources are difficult to access. For example, forests, game parks and water bodies which are in insecure areas cannot be easily utilised. In countries where there is war, it becomes very difficult to use the resources available for example Sirte in Libya during civil war ousting Muammar Gaddafi.



Fig. 9.10: Explosions in Libya during the civil war of 2011.

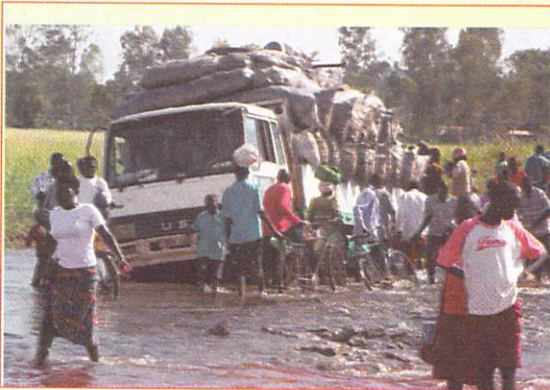


Fig. 9.11: A truck stuck on a poor road.

7. Poor infrastructure

In order to use resources well, we need good infrastructure. For example, we need good roads to access the resources and to easily transport the raw materials and finished goods we get out of them. Where such infrastructure is poor or unavailable it becomes difficult for us to make good use of the available resources.

8. Cultural obstacles

Sometimes, culture makes it difficult for people to utilise resources around them. Culture sometimes demands that some activities are done by either men or women only. For example it is only men who hunt. Where culture stops people from carrying out some activities, it becomes difficult to put all the human resource to full use.

9. High cost of exploitation compared to the value of the resources

Sometimes resources exist in quantities that would be uneconomic to exploit. This is because the cost of setting up machinery and hiring skilled labour to exploit the resources would either exceed the money to be earned from them or the profits

would be too small. In many countries, minerals are not mined or they are mined using small scale traditional methods, for example gold in Uganda.

10. Lack of information or awareness

In some cases, resources are under utilised or are not exploited at all because we lack information or knowledge about them. For example, some countries do not have adequate data about the mineral deposits they have. Carrying out thorough surveys for the presence of minerals is very expensive.

Caring for our resources

Caring for our resources involves keeping them in good condition and also ensuring that we use them sustainably. As we learnt in Primary Six, sustainable use of resources requires using them for our current need while keeping them safe for future generations to use too.

We can take good care of our resources by:

1. Caring for our animals

Livestock requires good pasture and clean water. They also need proper housing and regular treatment when they fall sick. Healthy animals require vaccination against diseases and dipping to kill vectors like ticks.

Wild animals ought to be protected from poachers. Laws against poaching and banning human activities in wildlife protected areas help to keep the animals safe. Banning trade in wild animal products like ivory also helps to keep animals safe.

2. Taking care of land

Practising proper methods of agriculture such as crop rotation and applying manure maintains soil fertility. We also need to avoid over cultivation, that is using the land without allowing it to rest. Bush fallowing is one way of resting the land. Mulching helps to reduce the loss of moisture from the soil.

We can control soil erosion by maintaining vegetation cover on the land, planting wind breaks, using terracing and contour ploughing. We should also avoid overgrazing as it leaves the land bare.

Garbage and industrial waste should be carefully disposed off to avoid the pollution of the land.

After mining, quarrying and extraction of minerals from the land, we should fill up the deep pits left. This restores land to its original form and enables it to be useful in other ways.



Fig. 9.12: Terracing in Kabale District.

3. Taking care of vegetation

- **Irrigation:** Plants need water to grow well. In case of dry weather, we need to irrigate our plants to keep them healthy.
- **Adding manure to the soil:** Adding manure to the soil helps the plants to get nutrients they need to grow well.
- **Pruning trees and slashing grass:** Lawns need to be slashed to keep the grass short. Pruning trees helps them to grow taller and straight. Pruning involves cutting extra branches off a tree.
- **Controlling crop pests and diseases:** Crops are attacked by pests and diseases. Crop pests can be contained by spraying them with pesticides. Crops affected by diseases which spread from one plant to another should be removed from the garden and destroyed.
- **Avoid bush burning:** Bush burning destroys all vegetation in the affected areas. It should therefore be avoided.

4. Taking care of our water resources

- **Protecting water sources:** We can protect water bodies by planting grass along river banks and around lake shores. This prevents soil from getting washed into them when it rains. Cultivating close to rivers and lakes should also be discouraged for the same reason. Springs which provide us with water for domestic use should be cleared of mud. We can also build concrete barriers around them.
- We should not use dirty containers to draw water from springs.
- Latrines should not be constructed near water sources as they contaminate the water.
- **Avoiding water pollution:** We should not pour domestic and industrial waste into our water sources. Bathing, washing clothes and vehicles in water sources is wrong. Laws should be enforced to deal with those polluting water sources.
- **Improving quality of water:** Purifying water can be done by removing solids and adding safe chemicals to kill germs.

5. Taking care of our climate

- **Planting trees:** Trees absorb carbon dioxide which is one of the gases responsible for global warming. They also help in rain formation through evaporation. This can help us to avoid drought.
- **Using environment friendly energy sources:** Wood fuel and thermal power release carbon dioxide and cutting down trees leads to desertification. However, solar power, hydro-electricity, geothermal power and wind power are clean energy sources. They do not produce green house gases that affect the climate.

- **Reducing the emission of fumes from vehicles:** Exhaust fumes from vehicles contain greenhouse gases, which lead to global warming. We can reduce on them by using more large buses which transport more people than the many small cars which lead to accumulation of exhaust gases. Using means of transport like bicycles which do not emit gases is also useful.

6. Taking care of the human resource (people)

- **Training:** People are more useful as a resource if they have knowledge and skills. We therefore need to provide education and training in special skills to get skilled labour.
- **Taking care of the people's needs:** People can serve best if their quality of life is good. This requires taking care of their needs like proper feeding, clothing and housing. They need to have services like proper medical care, clean water and recreation.
- **Motivation:** Motivation means putting a person in a mood where he or she is eager to work. People should be motivated by being paid good salaries and working in a safe and conducive environment.

Work to do

1. Explain the meaning of the following terms:
 - Resource
 - Natural resources
 - Mineral
2. In which two ways does agricultural production contribute to development?
3. How can we take care of our climate?
4. Which of the following is not a contribution of animals to development?
 - A. Supporting tourism
 - B. Development of infrastructure and services
 - C. Provision of food
 - D. Construction
5. Explain two ways in which human resources are important to the economy of Uganda.
6. Give two problems faced in the utilisation of mineral resources in Africa.
7. (a) Domestic animals can be cared for by _____ and _____.
 (b) Wild animals can be cared for by _____ and _____.
8. Describe two ways each of the following can be cared for:
 - Land
 - Vegetation
 - Water resources
9. Which of the following countries does not have timber as a major export?
 - A. Uganda
 - B. Gabon
 - C. Cameroon
 - D. Liberia.
10. Explain two ways Uganda exploits its climate as a resource.