

EPREUVE ORALE D'ANGLAIS

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9. Cost of Conflict in Africa

Conflict imposes heavy social and economic costs in the countries where it occurs. It also imposes costs on neighboring countries by generating refugee flows, increasing military spending, impeding key communication routes, and reducing trade and investment (domestic and foreign). The resources diverted from development used by conflict – over and above any additional assistance provided by the international community – are estimated at \$500 million for Central Africa alone.

These estimates do not include the costs of environmental degradation occasioned by disruptive movements of huge numbers of people. With an estimated 400,000 refugees, Guinea has suffered severe deforestation. Sudan's high military spending – more than three times the African average may have caused investment to fall by 16 percentage points of GDP. Its civil war may have reduced growth by up to 8 percentage points.

Less dramatic but also significant in many countries has been an increase in violence and crime. One survey of South Africa put the cost of crime and violence at about 06 percent of GDP. This is not out of line with estimates for a number of countries in Latin America.

In addition to its direct economic and human costs, violence inhibits development in many ways. Farmers in predominantly agrarian economies cannot cultivate and harvest in bandit – infested regions. Vendors cannot operate beyond limited hours because of the security risks. Factories cannot operate more than one shift because employees cannot commute safely to work high and in some cases growing criminal violence has many causes, including unemployment, high inequality, and the limited legitimacy and responsiveness of police forces and public structures.

Adapted from Sunday Time, February 1999.
