southeastern Nigeria into a confederation. Both Oyo and the Aro confederacy were major trading partners of the slave traders from Europe and North America.

In the first decade of the nineteenth century, two unrelated developments that were to have a major influence on virtually all of the area that is now Nigeria ushered in a period of radical change. First, between 1804 and 1808 the Islamic holy war of Usman dan Fodio established the Sokoto Caliphate, a loose confederation of emirates centered in northwestern Nigeria. By the middle of the nineteenth century, when the Sokoto Caliphate was at its greatest extent, it comprised 30 emirates and the capital district of Sokoto. All the important Hausa emirates, including Kano, the wealthiest and most populous, were directly under Sokoto. Second, in 1807 Britain declared the transatlantic slave trade to be illegal, an action that occurred at a time when Britain itself was responsible for shipping more slaves to the Americas than any other country. Although the transatlantic slave trade did not end until the 1860s, other commodities, especially palm oil, gradually replaced it. The shift in trade had serious economic and political consequences in the interior, which led to increasing British intervention in the affairs of Yorubaland and the Niger Delta.

**Colonial Nigeria:** In 1885 at the Berlin Conference, the European powers attempted to resolve their conflicts of interest in Africa by allotting areas of exploitation. The conference enunciated the principle, known as the “dual mandate,” that the interests of both Europe and Africa would best be served by maintaining free access to the African continent for trade and by providing Africa with the benefits of Europe’s civilizing mission. Britain’s claims to a sphere of influence in the Niger Basin were acknowledged formally, but it was stipulated that only effective occupation would secure full international recognition. In the end, pressure from France and Germany hastened the establishment of effective British occupation and the creation of protectorates in northern and southern Nigeria.

Frederick Lugard, who assumed the position of high commissioner of the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria in 1900, was occupied with transforming the commercial sphere of influence inherited from the Royal Niger Company into a viable territorial unit under effective British political control. His objective was to conquer the entire region and to obtain recognition of the British protectorate by its indigenous rulers, especially the Fulani emirs of the Sokoto Caliphate. Lugard’s campaign systematically subdued local resistance, using armed force when diplomatic measures failed. Lugard’s success in northern Nigeria has been attributed to his policy of indirect rule, which called for governing the protectorate through the rulers who had been defeated. If the emirs accepted British authority, abandoned the slave trade, and cooperated with British officials in modernizing their administrations, the colonial power was willing to confirm them in office. Lugard’s immediate successor, Hugh Clifford (1919–25), introduced a diametrically opposed approach emphasizing Western values. In contrast to Lugard, Clifford restricted the power of the northern emirs by scaling back indirect rule, while in the south he saw the possibility of building an elite educated in European-style schools.

British colonialism created Nigeria, joining diverse peoples and regions in an artificial political entity with little sense of a common Nigerian nationality. Inconsistencies in British policy reinforced cleavages based on regional animosities by attempting simultaneously to preserve the indigenous cultures of each area and to introduce modern technology and Western political and
The largest tributary, flows 1,400 kilometers from Cameroon into Nigeria, where it empties into the Niger River. The country’s other river system involves various rivers that merge into the Yobe River, which then flows along the border with Niger and empties into Lake Chad.

**Climate:** Nigeria’s climate is arid in the north, tropical in the center, and equatorial in the south. Variations are governed by the interaction of moist southwest monsoon and dry northeast winds. Mean maximum temperatures are 30º C–32º C in the south and 33º C–35º C in the north. High humidity is characteristic from February to November in the south and from June to September in the north. Low humidity coincides with the dry season. Annual rainfall decreases northward; rainfall ranges from about 2,000 millimeters in the coastal zone (averaging more than 3,550 millimeters in the Niger Delta) to 500–750 millimeters in the north.

**Natural Resources:** Nigeria’s primary natural resources consist of natural gas, petroleum, tin, iron ore, coal, limestone, niobium, lead, and zinc. Nigeria has proven oil reserves of 36.2 billion barrels, the tenth largest reserves in the world. Proven natural gas reserves are estimated at 182 trillion cubic feet, the seventh largest reserves in the world and the largest in Africa. Estimates for oil and natural gas reserves are as of January 2007. The country also has an abundance of arable land.

**Land Use:** In 2005 Nigeria’s land use was as follows: arable land, 33 percent; permanent crops, 3 percent; and other, 64 percent.

**Environmental Factors:** Urbanization and industrialization have led to a waste management crisis, resulting in widespread air, water, and soil pollution. Oil spills, natural gas flaring, automobile emissions, the open burning and dumping of waste, and improperly constructed landfills all contribute to serious environmental damage. Nigeria plans to phase out natural gas flaring by 2008 by converting natural gas into liquefied natural gas. Another major environmental issue is deforestation and the attendant loss of arable land as a result of logging, burning, and overgrazing by livestock. The area occupied by forests has been cut roughly in half since 1990.

**Time Zone:** Nigeria observes Nigeria Standard Time, which is Greenwich Mean Time plus one hour.

**SOCIETY**

**Population:** As of mid-2008, Nigeria’s population was estimated at 138 million, and the annual population growth rate was about 2.38 percent. Provisional results of the 2006 census indicate a total population of 140 million. Like its predecessors, this census has been controversial, given Nigeria’s ethnic and religious rivalries, in particular the divide between the Muslim north and Christian south. Many observers, and southerners in particular, do not accept census results indicating that the north is more populous than the south. The significance of census data for political power and resource allocation exacerbates the controversy. When the last census was held in 1991, Nigeria’s population was only 88.5 million according to official results, but many observers, including the World Bank, projected a total population of at least 120 million.
During 2003–7 Nigeria attempted to implement an economic reform program called the National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (NEEDS). The purpose of NEEDS was to raise the country’s standard of living through a variety of reforms, including macroeconomic stability, deregulation, liberalization, privatization, transparency, and accountability. NEEDS sought to address basic deficiencies, such as the lack of freshwater for household use and irrigation, unreliable power supplies, decaying infrastructure, impediments to private enterprise, and corruption. The government hoped that NEEDS would create 7 million new jobs, diversify the economy, boost non-energy exports, increase industrial capacity utilization, and improve agricultural productivity. A related initiative on the state level is the State Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (SEEDS).

A longer-term economic development program is the United Nations (UN)–sponsored National Millennium Goals for Nigeria. Under the program, which covers the years from 2000 to 2015, Nigeria is committed to achieving a wide range of ambitious objectives involving poverty reduction, education, gender equality, health, the environment, and international development cooperation. In an update released in 2004, the UN found that Nigeria was making progress toward achieving several goals but was falling short on others. Specifically, Nigeria had advanced efforts to provide universal primary education, protect the environment, and develop a global development partnership. However, the country lagged behind on the goals of eliminating extreme poverty and hunger, reducing child and maternal mortality, and combating diseases such as human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immune deficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS) and malaria.

After taking office in May 2007, President Umaru Musa Yar’Adua embraced a policy known as Vision 2020 to transform Nigeria into one of the world’s top-20 economies by 2020. Vision 2020 envisaged the enactment of a “Seven Point Agenda,” consisting of the following points: power and energy infrastructure; food security and agriculture; wealth creation and employment; mass transportation; land reform; security (including bringing stability to the Niger Delta); and education.

A prerequisite for achieving many of these worthwhile objectives is curtailing endemic corruption, which stymies development and taints Nigeria’s business environment. Former President Olusegun Obansanjo’s campaign against corruption, which included the arrest of officials accused of misdeeds and the recovery of stolen funds, won praise from the World Bank. In September 2005, Nigeria, with the assistance of the World Bank, began to recover US$458 million of illicit funds that had been deposited in Swiss banks by the late military dictator Sani Abacha, who ruled Nigeria from 1993 to 1998. However, broad-based progress has been elusive and has not yet become evident in international surveys of corruption. In fact, Nigeria ranked 147 out of 179 countries in Transparency International’s 2007 Corruption Perceptions Index and placed 108 out of 178 countries in the World Bank’s 2008 Ease of Doing Business Index. Corruption mostly harms Nigerians themselves, but the country is widely known around the world for a fraudulent activity known as the “419” scam, which seeks to extort money from foreign recipients of letters and emails with the promise to transfer a nonexistent windfall sum of money.