

# CENTRAL & SOUTHERN AFRICA

## DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

Renamed Zaire  
1965 by Mobutu

### GEOGRAPHY

- Africa's 3rd largest country
- 4 geographic regions
  1. Congo basin
    - thick rain forests
  2. Northern uplands
    - savanna
  3. Eastern highlands
    - grasslands
    - thick forests
  4. Southern Uplands
    - high plains
    - grasslands
    - wooded areas

### RESOURCES

- Copper - open pit mining (huge hole - terraces on sides)
- gold, diamonds, forests, water, wildlife
- 2/3 of people are farmers
- potential to develop hydroelectric plants

### ECONOMIC & POLITICAL CHALLENGES

- 1960 won independence from Belgium
- 1965 - foreign mining companies helped Joseph Mobutu (military leader) take power
- Mobutu set up an authoritarian government.
  - nationalized foreign-owned industries
  - borrowed money
  - his economic policies failed
- mid-1970's copper prices fell sharply
- Mobutu imprisoned or killed his opponents

### RESHAPING NATION

- other African countries have been involved with rebellion
- 1996 - rebellion against Mobutu
- 1997 - Mobutu fled to Morocco (died 4 months later)
- Laurent Kabila new president (rebel army)
- 1998 - another rebellion
- 2001 - Kabila killed

### TODAY

- Many subsistence farmers
- Joseph Kabila (son) president in 2002
- peace agreements signed but not always followed