

**Chapter 36 Viewpoint Activity**



Economic development and wildlife conservation seem to be on a collision course in many parts of Africa (textbook pages 932). For many people, saving Africa’s rare and beautiful wildlife from poachers and hunters is the main goal, but others realize that there are other factors. In these two excerpts, a journalist who has lived in Kenya and two environmental experts from the World Wildlife Fund look at these conflicts. ♦ *As you read, think about the points each piece makes. Then, on a separate sheet of paper, answer the questions that follow.*

**Saving Africa’s Environment?**

**Raymond Bonner**

I have felt the thrill of going for a morning walk and coming upon a long line of elephants ambling across the grasslands. . . . It is painful, the thought of killing one of these creatures just to make a profit from its ivory. But the poverty of Africans is just as painful, so I could accept an ivory ban if the world community compensated African countries for what they lost in ivory revenues, and if the developed world came up with money for conservation. . . .

Elephants and rhino, lions and leopards, are not like whales living in international waters. For the most part, these land animals live within the borders of a specific country. . . . Do we have more right to tell the Zimbabweans what to do with their elephants than we do to tell Saudi Arabia what to do with its oil? It is surely more noble to argue for saving elephants than for conserving oil. . . .

If the wildlife of Africa is a priceless world heritage, if it belongs to all of us, . . . then the world has an obligation to pay for its preservation. It is an obligation we haven’t met; it’s too easy to impose bans—and make the Africans pay.

**Jonathan Adams and Thomas McShane**

Conservation has long operated on the comfortable belief that Africa is a paradise to be defended, even against the people who have lived there for thousands of years. The continuing reluctance to accept the link between vigorous indigenous culture and the survival of wildlife has led to conservation programs doomed to eventual failure. . . .

The most tenacious of all the old-fashioned ideas among conservationists holds that development is the enemy because of the technology it produces—roads, dams, irrigated farms, and the like. . . . That approach had some success before human population growth and human needs began to press

in on even the remotest areas. Success lies instead in understanding that conservation and development, long at loggerheads, are two parts of a single process. Conservation cannot ignore the needs of human beings, while development that runs roughshod over the environment is doomed.

“*Conservation cannot ignore the needs of human beings.*”

Sources: (1) *At the Hand of Man: Peril and Hope for Africa’s Wildlife*, by Raymond Bonner (Knopf, 1993); (2) *The Myth of Wild Africa*, by Jonathan S. Adams and Thomas O. McShane (Norton, 1992).

**Questions to Discuss**

1. For Bonner, the first writer, what consideration balances out against the beauty of Africa’s wildlife?
2. What “old-fashioned” idea do the two writers from the World Wildlife Fund criticize? What approach would they substitute?
3. **Making Comparisons** If these writers were to have a discussion, what points would they agree on? Which piece do you think is more strongly pro-environment?