POST-VIEWING ACTIVITIES

1. Ask groups to meet and summarize what they learned from the video. Provide time for groups to report to the class as a whole.

2. The video shows how Mali now manufactures textiles instead of sending all its raw cotton abroad to be manufactured. Ask students: What kinds of capital — human, financial, and material — were needed for this change to happen?

3. In Cameroon, uncontrolled logging in the rain forests threatens to deplete important natural resources and displace ethnic groups such as the Beke, a pygmy tribe. Ask students to imagine that they are in charge of managing Cameroon’s natural resources. How would they ensure that the country’s need for timber was met without causing irreparable damage to the environment and the lives and livelihood of its citizens?

4. Mali’s government has adopted a “hands off” economic policy, eliminating price controls on grains to “let the free market work.” As a class, outline some of the advantages and disadvantages for buyers and sellers of grain when market forces are allowed to prevail.

5. Ask students to evaluate and explain the role that each of the following plays in a country’s economic development: sound macroeconomic policies, health care, education, good governance, privatization of industries, entrepreneurial activity, a strong legal system, infrastructure improvements, and the expansion of domestic markets.

6. Liberalized trade policies have spurred entrepreneurs in West Africa to diversify. In Cameroon, an abandoned coffee plantation has been reborn as a green bean factory. The beans are grown and harvested using modern techniques, then flash frozen for quick sale on the European market.

RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

1. Foreign investment is important to a country’s development. Ask students to research and report on an industry that was bolstered by foreign investment and the effect that this had on the country’s overall economic development in the decades immediately following the investment.

2. Have students use the Web sites listed in this Guide to research and report on how the economy of one of the featured countries fares over the course of a month. Students may wish to review articles in local and international newspapers, access reports from international organizations, or use email to contact a university economics department in one of the countries to communicate with students or professors.