

Book Reviews

Survey of SubSaharan Africa: A Regional Geography. Roy Cole and H. J. De Blij. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2007. xx and 748 pp., maps, figs., tables and bibliog. \$92.95 cloth (ISBN-10: 0-19517080-6).

Reviewed by Calvin O. Masilela, Department of Geography and Regional Planning, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Indiana, USA.

Finding a suitable textbook for an African Geography course is a major challenge for instructors of this least-understood region. The ideal text would be comprehensive in coverage, detailed, well written, and contemporary in content, ideas, and organization. *Survey of SubSaharan Africa: A Regional Geography* by Roy Cole and Harm J. de Blij fills this void with its timely publication as an alternative to two excellent but dated texts: Robert Stock's *Africa South of the Sahara: A Geographical Interpretation*; and Samuel Aryeetey-Attoh's *Geography of Sub-Saharan Africa*. These texts had become the foundation for undergraduate geography courses on Africa since their publication in 1995 and 1997, with second editions in 2004 and 2002, respectively. The textbook under review is a total makeover of Alan C. G. Best and de Blij's *African Survey* published in 1977. Cole and de Blij have painstakingly assembled a volume which reflects their profound knowledge of the region.

Organizationally, the textbook consists of nine chapters focused on the entire continent of Africa (the sub-region title designation notwithstanding), and 21 chapters addressing sub-regional country issues. The first nine chapters take a systematic approach to the study of Africa's geography and are organized under the section titles as follows: The Physiography of Africa; Climate, Vegetation and Soils of Africa; African Cultural and Political Hearths: A Historical Geography; The Colonial Interlude; The Contemporary Map of Africa; The Population of Africa; The Geography of Health and Disease; Land Use in Africa; and African Development, Manufacturing, and Industry. In each of these chapters the authors are meticulously thorough in their analysis and treatment of the subject matter. Each chapter is capped with a sum-