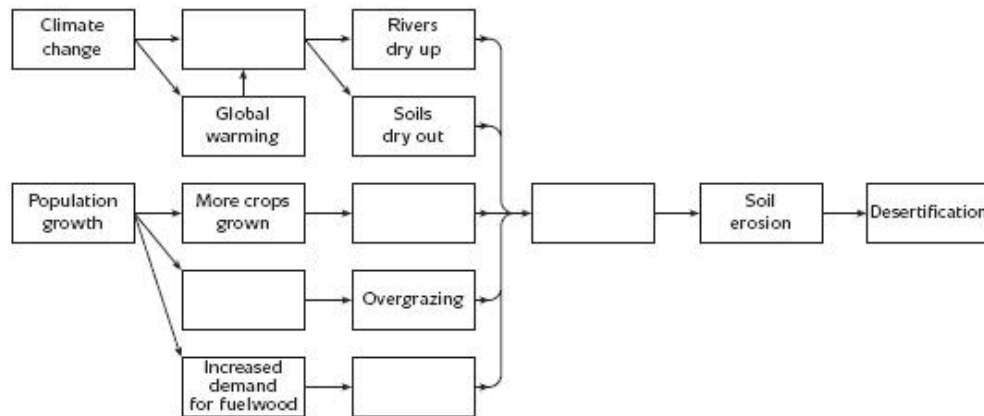


# Desertification

1 Complete the five empty boxes in Figure 1 using these words once to show the causes of desertification:

- increased number of animals
- overcultivation
- less rainfall
- loss of vegetation
- deforestation.



▲ FIGURE 1 The causes of desertification

2 Read the article in Figure 2, about desertification.

- a) What does the term 'dogma' mean?
- b) What is meant by 'desert margins have a fixed "carrying capacity" of humans and animals'?
- c) What does the director of UNEP claim to be one of the main causes of desertification?
- d) Which two countries provide the evidence against this?
- e) State evidence which suggest that the director of UNEP is incorrect.

Amid the shimmering sands of the desert margins, dogma often stands in for reality. One such dogma holds that desert margins have a fixed 'carrying capacity' of humans and animals. According to a recent executive director of UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme), 'when the number is exceeded, the whole piece of land will quickly degenerate. Population pressure is definitely one of the major causes of desertification'.

True? New research suggests not. Long-term studies show that in the desert margins of two of Africa's largest and fastest-growing countries – Nigeria and Kenya – the opposite has happened. Rapidly increasing populations emerge from these studies as saviours of the landscape, rescuing it from rampant soil erosion, and protecting trees and conserving water.

▲ FIGURE 2 What are really the causes of desertification?