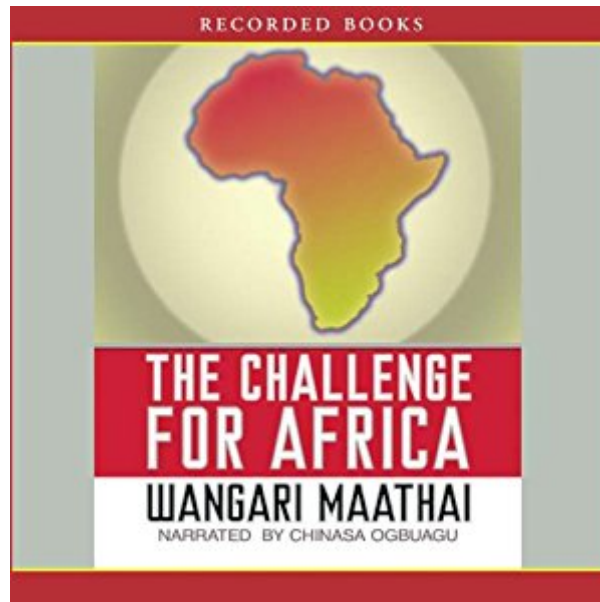


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# The Challenge For Africa



## Synopsis

Nobel Laureate and founder of the Green Belt Movement, Wangari Maathai has campaigned for environmental activism and democracy in Africa for more than three decades. In *The Challenge for Africa*, she delivers an insightful call to action, presenting a realistic look at the diverse problems facing Africans today. Taking a view far from the dependent Africa typically portrayed by Western media, Maathai lays bare the complex and multi-layered culture of the continent, offering optimistic yet feasible ways to improve the quality of life that literally start from the ground up. Maathai analyzes the major impediments to development at three key levels - international, national, and individual. By stressing personal responsibility, Maathai focuses on what Africans can do for themselves to empower individual change at the community level.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Of the three of four books I have consumed so far for an introduction to Africa's current condition, this one is by far the best, and if you buy only one, this is the one. The other two, each valuable in its own way, are: *The Trouble with Africa: Why Foreign Aid Isn't Working* *Dead Aid: Why Aid Is Not Working and How There Is a Better Way for Africa* *Tomorrow I will plow through Africa* *Unchained: The Blueprint for Africa's Future* and post a review. The author, a Nobel Peace laureate for the Green Belt Movement, delivers a very straight-forward, practical "woman's voice" account of both the past troubles, present tribulations, and future potential of Africa. This book is replete with "street-level" common sense as well as a real sense of nobility. Early on the author addresses the reality that uninformed subsistence farming, what 65% of all Africans do, is destroying the

commons. I find that ignorance--and the need to educate and inform in their own local language (no easy task when speaking of thousands of local languages)--is a recurring theme in this book. I see \*enormous\* potential for the application of what the Swedish military calls M4IS2 (multinational, multiagency, multidisciplinary, multidomain information-sharing and sense-making).

I was very impressed with Dr. Maathai's book, "The Challenge for Africa". This was not just a book of complaints about Africa but also a book of solutions, ideas and suggestions for a greater and more inclusive populace. Africa's problems are numerous and complex and should be solved by Africans. The book reiterated that some nations are on the brink of collapse due to corruption, gross mismanagement and lack of the peoples' trust and faith in African leadership--this is one of Africa's biggest challenges. I was particular pleased to read the juxtaposition of the "tradition" vs "modern" culture and how African culture was obliterated by the Europeans causing untold psychological and emotional damage. The lines drawn by the Europeans, in the late 19th century, to designate their domain, divided ethnic groups and destroyed family ties that existed for centuries. After the colonial period, the European system of governance was not suited for nor appropriately designed for African nations to use as a political template. The vivid description of the micro-nation she described was extremely interesting. The "ethnic typing" correlates to the "kinship corporation" identified by Dr. Peter Ekeh where allegiance and loyalty are more associated with the "micro-nation"(tribes) than with the nation-state or "macro-nation". Monetary gifts sent to assist African leaders in resolving the myriad of issues and problems have not worked. Dr. Maathai calls for African leaders to reject these "handouts". Further, she advocated that the political process include rural people to assist in building stronger infrastructures; economic, social and political. One of the key highlights of the book is Dr.

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