**Understanding the Characteristics of High, Middle & Low Income Countries**

Use your textbook to describe each of the following characteristics of high, middle and low income countries.

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|  | **High Income Countries** | **Middle Income Countries** | **Low Income Countries** |
| **Economic Characteristics are -** | | | |
| **Range of Industries** | High-income countries often have a wide range of industries including mining, processing, manufacturing, education, healthcare, scientific research and technology. | Middle-income countries often reflect aspects of both high- and low-income countries in relation to trade and many are in a transition period, experiencing increasing trade opportunities and growing economies. | Low-income countries, on the other hand, often have a limited range of industries, usually centred on farming and primary production. |
| **Levels of Poverty** | Have only a small proportion of their population living in poverty. | Often have a large proportion of their population living in poverty, but to a lesser extent than low income countries. | Low-income countries often have a large proportion of their population living in poverty |
| **International Debt** | Can afford to take it out, since they can take it therefore it is higher, but it fluctuates. | Take it out but can’t usually pay it back, therefore stuck in infinite loop. | Take it out but can never pay it back and therefore are stuck in an infinite loop. |
| **Average Incomes** | High average incomes. | Middle average incomes. | This lack of opportunities for global trade prevents the economics of low-income countries from growing and contributes from growing and contributes to the low average incomes they experience. |
| **Global Trade** is affected by infrastructure and knowledge and experience, which assists in buying from and selling to other countries around the world. | High-income countries generally have access to these resources, so they can transport goods from the place of production to an overseas destination, and benefit most from trading opportunities as a result. | Many middle-income countries are in the process of building infrastructure and developing trading links around the world. | Low-income countries often lack the infrastructure, knowledge and production capabilities to produce a range of goods and services to trade on a global scale. This prevents the economics of low-income countries from growing and contributes from growing and contributes to the low average incomes they experience. |
| **Social Factors are -** | | |  |
| **Birth Rate & Population Growth** can be affected by the access to contraception, choice in family planning, career choices, education, gender equality and culture contribution to this difference. | Low birth rates ad slow rates of population growth are characteristics of many high-income countries compared to middle-income – and especially low-income – countries. | High birth rates in many low-income countries can limit the ability of parents to care for all of their children and provide them with the resources required to live a healthy life. High population growth rates limit the ability of governments to provide services for its citizens such as education, healthcare and social security. | High birth rates in many middle-income countries can limit the ability of parents to care for all of their children and provide them with the resources required to live a healthy life. High population growth rates limit the ability of governments to provide services for its citizens such as education, healthcare and social security. |
| **Employment Rates and levels of education** | High rates of employment and education are characteristics of most high-income countries. People often have choices about the level of education and type of career they pursue. | Moving from limited education and employment to a situation where there are higher education and employment rates. Governments usually contribute significant funds to provide education opportunities. | Many low-income countries do not have a developed education system, so career options are often limited. Families in low-income countries usually have to pay for their children to attend school, as opposed to middle- and high-income countries, where governments contribute to significant funds. |
| **Social Security Systems** | High levels of economic development and relatively stable political systems increase the ability of governments in high-income countries to provide social security payments for those in need. Individuals who are unemployed, or unable to work due to illness or disability, are often provided with financial support to assist in promoting their health and wellbeing. | Middle-income countries often do not have the means to provide assistance to their citizens, and those who are unemployed or unable to work are driven further into poverty. | Low-income countries often do not have the means to provide assistance to their citizens, and those who are unemployed or unable to work are driven further into poverty. |
| **Health Care Systems** | High-income countries generally have public health systems. People are usually able to access basic healthcare when they need it regardless for their ability to pay. | Those middle-income countries often lack access to sustainable healthcare, which affects the level of health and wellbeing they experience. | Those low-income countries often lack access to sustainable healthcare, which affects the level of health and wellbeing they experience. |
| **Access to Technology** includes communication systems, the internet and medical technologies. It can be used to assist countries in developing their economies, building trade opportunities, furthering education and treating ill health. | Technology is more accessible in high-income countries due to a combination of economic resources, infrastructure, and education. | Often lack access to technology yet are moving towards making technology available to people. | Low-income countries often lack access to technology, and this impacts on the ability of citizens to gain an education and earn an income. |
| **Gender Equality** is when males and females have the same opportunities in society in relation to the goods and services available. | High income countries often experience relatively high levels of gender equality. In these countries, both males and females have opportunities and choices in education, employment, community participation, family planning and recreation. | Many middle-income countries are benefiting from greater levels of gender equality as more females in paid employment help to reduce levels of poverty and contribute to the country’s productivity and economy. | In many low-income countries, females do not have the same opportunities as males in society. Females have limited opportunities for education and often work in fields tending crops and/or spend significant time collecting water and preparing meals. |
| **Legal Systems** | Most high-income countries experience strong political and legal systems. A strong legal system is important for ensuring that human rights, such as the right to education and the right to live safely, are upheld. | Unstable governments and political unrest are characteristics of middle-income countries and increase the risk of civil conflict. To a lesser extent, middle-income countries lack a strong legal system, and the health and wellbeing of their citizens can be affected as a result. | Unstable governments and political unrest are characteristics of low-income countries and increase the risk of civil conflict. Many low-income countries lack a strong legal system, and the health and wellbeing of their citizens can be affected as a result. |
| **Environmental Factors -** | | |  |
| **Infrastructure** | High-income countries often have adequate roads and transport systems, piped water, sewerage systems, electricity grids and telecommunication systems. | People living in middle-income countries often lack access to such facilities, especially in rural and remote areas and urban slums. | People living in low-income countries often lack access to such facilities, especially in rural and remote areas and urban slums. |
| **Housing** | Housing in high-income countries aren’t overcrowded, have good ventilation, heating and cooling, good resistance to infestation of disease-carrying organisms such as insects, include cooking facilities and running water, good protection from the elements. | Many middle-income countries lack access to adequate housing. They often live in substandard housing with poor ventilation, lack of heating and cooling, poor resistance to infestation of disease-carrying organisms such as insects, lack of cooking facilities and running water, and poor protection from the elements. Urban slums are also a common feature of cities. | Many low-income countries lack access to adequate housing. They often live in substandard housing with poor ventilation, lack of heating and cooling, poor resistance to infestation of disease-carrying organisms such as insects, lack of cooking facilities and running water, and poor protection from the elements. Urban slums are also a common feature of cities. |
| **Water and Sanitation** | Safe water and sanitation are characteristic of high-income countries. | Safe water and sanitation are characteristics of middle-income countries. | Poor to no water and sanitation are characteristics of low-income countries. |
| **Food Security** | People in high-income countries generally have access to quality food supply. | Unstable access to quality food supply. | Those in low income countries often lack food security. Natural disasters, such as floods and droughts, tend to have a more pronounced impact on the availability of food for those in low-income countries, as they lack the financial resources to purchase food in emergency situations. |
| **Levels of Carbon Dioxide Emissions** have been linked to climate change and the associated effects on sea levels and changing weather patterns. | Due to the range of industries in high-income countries, these countries emit greater amounts of carbon dioxide per person into the atmosphere. | Middle-income countries are often the most affected by climate change as they lack the economic resources to effectively deal with the associated impacts. | Low-income countries are often the most affected by climate change as they lack the economic resources to effectively deal with the associated impacts. |