**Discuss the factors that can hinder economic development**

There are a number of factors that can hinder economic development such as rapid population growth, climate change and war and conflict. Sierra Leone is a country that has been affected by a number of these problems.

In Africa especially along the Sahel region, south of the Sahara Desert it is very hot (+30 degrees) and it is very dry (-100mm). With climate change rainfall is becoming even scarcer. This can lead to dire conditions with long periods of drought and desertification. When this happens the soil becomes overused and infertile, this is very hard to reverse, especially for poor farmers. This has led to an unproductive agricultural sector with animals dying and crop failing which causes famines and the death of thousands of people.

War has also prevented development in the region. Vast sums of government money is spent on weapons. This leave little for vital services such as health and education. Because of a civil war that lasted 11 years 67% of children did not attend school but were made to fight as child soldiers. Over 1500 schools were destroyed during the conflict and even though the war is now over it has been difficult for the country to recover and grow.

The population of Sierra Leone is 5.2 million. It has a very high birth rate at 38 per 1000. This is due to the low status of women who are also uneducated. Children are seen as economic enefit to a family as they are needed to work on farms and to care for their parent when they grow old. At 38 years life expectancy is one of the lowest in the world