

Southern Regional Model United Nations XVIII
Fostering a Culture of Peace for International Development
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Email: uneca@srmun.org



Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the Southern Regional Model United Nations XVIII and to the Economic Commission for Africa. My name is Gilbert Abraham and I am eager to meet and work with each of you over the next few months. This is my sixth year participating at SRMUN and my third on staff. I am originally from Nigeria and the son of a former-Nigerian diplomatic official. I graduated in May 2004 from St. Andrews Presbyterian College in North Carolina with a Bachelor of Arts in Politics and a Minor in Creative Writing. I currently live in Laurinburg, North Carolina where I am a World History Teacher and graduate student at the University of North Carolina at Pembroke. Serving as the Assistant Director for the UNECA is Morgan Gibson. Though this is Morgan's first year on staff, she brings many years of Model UN experience to the committee.

Both Morgan and I are excited about the topics chosen for debate in our committee, and we hope you share the same enthusiasm. The topics for the UNECA are:

- I. Enhancing Partnerships through Economic Policies
- II. Food Security and Sustainable Development
- III. Gender Inequality

All of these topics are focused around the central idea of fostering a culture of peace for international development in support of the theme for SRMUN XVIII. In order to deal with the great urgency that is upon the international community, it is imperative to aid the under-developed world. Therefore, there must first be a peaceful environment in which development can occur.

Morgan and I have invested much time and energy writing these topics, which we believe are both interesting and informative. These guides should serve as a starting point for your research, providing structure for debate and sources for further reading. While you should consider the topic guides a thorough foundation and introduction to the topics, they are *not* intended to provide all the necessary information for productive debate. It is critical to the success of the committee that each delegation's research extends far beyond the scope of the background guides.

The research you will conduct will help you to build a strong body of knowledge, and enhance your ability to contribute in committee. Each delegation is expected to submit a position paper. The position paper should employ and reflect knowledge of your state's foreign policy regarding the topics, and should be no more than two pages in length. **All position papers must be submitted to UNECA@srmun.org no later than MIDNIGHT EST on Friday, October 26, 2007.** Late and/or improperly formatted position papers will not be eligible for awards. For further format specifications concerning position papers, please consult the SRMUN website, www.srmun.org.

We hope that SRMUN XVIII provides you with a memorable and educational experience in policy making and diplomacy. If you have any questions or concerns about the conference or our committee, please contact myself, Morgan or Sarah. We look forward to meeting each of you and to seeing the wonderful work of the committee.

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History of the Economic Commission for Africa

The General Assembly noted in resolution 1155 that “regional economic commissions [have] been extremely useful to the economies of under-developed countries in Asia and Latin America,” and that Africa should benefit from such a system.¹ Therefore, on April 29, 1958, at the 25th session of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), resolution 671A (XXV) was adopted, thus mandating the establishment of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA).² The ECA is one of the five regional commissions of the United Nations that were created to reinforce the economic relations among the countries of the region and work in collaboration with outside organizations and nation-states for the advancement of sub-continental regions.³

The success of previous regional commissions, such as the United Nations Economic & Social Commission for Asia and the South Pacific (ESCAP) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America & the Caribbean (ECLAC), promulgated the creation of the ECA. During the formative years of the ECLAC, a pioneering method was developed entitled “historical structuralism” that focused on the ways a region’s institutional legacy and inherited production structure influences the economic dynamics of that country.⁴ Subsequently, the analysis continued and evaluations of the behaviors that are generated were measured against those of developed nations.⁵ It was through the successes of the ECLAC in implementing innovative analysis of development, which led to the ECOSOC’s creation of sub-regional commissions that serve the world.

The ECA reports directly to the ECOSOC and is authorized to support the economic and social development of its Member States, foster regional integration, and promote international cooperation for Africa’s development.⁶ These goals are achieved through a pooling of resources and collaboration from several organizations. These organizations include the African Development Forum (ADF), African Information Society Initiative (AISI), African Water Information Clearinghouse (AWICH), the Commission on HIV/AIDS and Governance in Africa, ECA Science and Technology Network (ESTNET), Information Technology Center for Africa (ICTA), African Knowledge Networks Forum (AKNF) and the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers-Learning Group (PRSP-LG).

The ECA was formed not only with the objective of being active in the economics of Africa, but to be active on several social fronts. ECA programs such as the Gender and Development Program and the Sustainable Development program, combined with a focus on enhancing partnerships, communication and knowledge sharing, and supporting sub-regional activities, the ECA helps foster social development in which economic policy can flourish.⁷

A recent application of enhancing partnerships occurred in February 2007 when the ECA and UNDP signed the “Compact for Collaboration.” The Compact states that, “the two institutions agreed to exploit synergies arising from their mandates and enhance collaboration in a more structured and systematic manner through functional rationalization, strengthened programme coherence and complementarity; efficiency in programme delivery, and effective mechanisms of coordination and consultation at national, sub-regional, and regional levels.”⁸ Partnerships such as these strengthen each organization through the sharing of resources and information, and thus benefiting Member States directly.

The ECA is structured in six divisions: Economic and Social Policy; Gender and Development; Information for Development; Sustainable Development; Trade and Regional Integration.⁹ Subsequently, utilizing the model of the six divisions, the ECA mobilizes five sub-regional activities to serve their Member States: policy analysis and

¹ “Overview of the ECA.” Economic Commission for Africa. 2000. <http://www.uneca.org/overview.htm>

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ “About ECLAC.” Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. 2000. http://www.eclac.org/cgi-bin/getprod.asp?xml=/noticias/paginas/3/21713/P21713.xml&xsl=/tpl-i/p18f-st.xsl&base=/tpl-i/top-bottom_acerca.xsl

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ “Overview of the ECA.” Economic Commission for Africa. 2000. <http://www.uneca.org/overview.htm>

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ “ECA, UNDP form a partnership to scale-up capacity development in Africa.” Economic Commission for Africa. February 2, 2007. http://www.uneca.org/eca_resources/news/2007/070202eca-undp.htm

⁹ Ibid.

advocacy; enhancing partnerships; technical assistance; communication and knowledge sharing; and supporting sub-regional activities.¹⁰ With the commission's headquarters located in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, there are five other sub-regional offices located in the central, northern, eastern, western and southern regions of Africa.

The current members of the Economic Commission of Africa are: Algeria, Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Republic of Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Libyan, Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritius, Mauritania, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sao Tome-et-Principe, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, Swaziland, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.¹¹

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ "ECA Member States." Economic Commission for Africa. http://www.uneca.org/member_states.htm

I: Enhancing Partnerships through Economic Policies

“Millennium Development Goal Eight: Develop further an open tradition and financial system that is rule-based, predictable and non-discriminatory, includes a commitment to good governance, development and poverty reduction - nationally and internationally.”¹²

Introduction

In order for Africa to meet the UN Millennium Development Goals by 2015, all countries must make legitimate steps towards eliminating corruption through increasing transparency and economic partnerships.¹³ The Economic Commission for Africa will address the role that economic partnerships play in reducing corruption and facilitating trade in Africa and in the process, serve as a vehicle for development. A lack of transparency and underdeveloped partnerships between local and regional economic bodies must improve for the countries of Africa to achieve sustainable development. Core weaknesses of African development remain economic instability and corruption.¹⁴

For example, African nations have the potential to excel economically through harnessing their natural resources. The continent is arguably the wealthiest in the world in natural resources, yet there is squalor due to underutilization, poor management and weak infrastructure.¹⁵ Despite being wealthy in highly desirable raw materials, the lack of infrastructure or the existence of a weak infrastructure in African states will continually fail to produce results for its people.¹⁶

Taking a proactive approach to eradicate corruption will yield an opportunity to initiate change for the continent. Forming a regional trading block is seen by many as Africa's best chance for promoting sustainable development and becoming a viable trading partner in the global economy.¹⁷ If successful, this change will be evident within all of the major areas that are plagued by stagnation.

Taking into consideration these principles, Robert Okello noted in his 2005 speech to the ECA that: “stable monetary and financial systems are fundamental...if African states are to achieve sustained economic growth.”¹⁸ He went on to say: “Revitalized regional integration offers the most credible strategy for tackling Africa's development challenges.”¹⁹ A better organized and cohesive Africa will allow the continent to rely on its neighbors rather than the global community. Although the continent faces many challenges, “collective efforts, with dynamic political commitment to integration, can help overcome the daunting challenges.”²⁰

Africa's problems are multifaceted and complicated, however they cannot be addressed unless the issues facing financial and regional cooperation are addressed first. This guide discusses the enhancing of partnerships through economic policy by outlining the history of the African Economy, Corruption in Africa, Economics & Trade in Africa, and Regional/ International Partnerships. The historical African economy is centered upon the traditional market place, and the transition out of that market place that took place with the influence of colonization will be

¹² “The UN Millennium Development Goals.” The UN Millennium Development Goals. September 2000.
<http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/#>

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ “Programme of Work.” African Development Forum. October 2004.
[http://209.85.165.104/search?q=cache:3uMRXsLumjMJ:www.uneca.org/adfiv/programme-
adf.htm+core+weaknesses+of+African+development&hl=en&ct=clnk&cd=6&gl=us](http://209.85.165.104/search?q=cache:3uMRXsLumjMJ:www.uneca.org/adfiv/programme-
adf.htm+core+weaknesses+of+African+development&hl=en&ct=clnk&cd=6&gl=us)

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ “African Infrastructure Development Efforts Get a Boost.” African Development Bank Group. May 2, 2007
[http://www.afdb.org/portal/page?_pageid=293,158705&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL&focus_item=18132235&fo
cus_lang=us](http://www.afdb.org/portal/page?_pageid=293,158705&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL&focus_item=18132235&fo
cus_lang=us)

¹⁷ “Accelerating Regional Integration in Africa.” Economic Commission for Africa. August 17, 2004.
<http://www.un.org/ecosocdev/geninfo/afrec/newrels/ecaintegration.htm>

¹⁸ Robert Okello. “The role of governance and transparency in achieving the development goals for Africa.” Economic Commission for Africa. March 7-8, 2005.
http://www.uneca.org/eca_resources/Speeches/2005_speeches/030705speech_robert_okello.htm

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

examined in the context of today's problems. With regard to corruption in Africa, a clear scope will be drawn of the more egregious cases of tyranny and embezzlement that have impacted Africa collectively. The ECA will take a close look at Africa's current Economic and Trade system as well as the regional and international partnerships that have been established. Through out the process, the members of the ECA should begin to identify positive steps toward sustainable development.

History of African Economy

Many African scholars have noted that "for all of human history, the source of success has been the control of natural resources - land, gold, oil. And Africa is no exception."²¹ However, with the dawn of the Information Age, it has become equally critical to have access to communications technologies to share information. This is especially important to participate in the global marketplace of today. Understanding the continent's former trading networks can help in developing successful economic partnerships of today.

The pre-colonial African trade network stretched throughout central Africa, the Mediterranean region, and into China.²² The Atlantic Slave Trade (Middle Passage) declined in the 1820s and prompted an economical shift in Africa.²³ New items of trade were developed to compensate for the end of the slave trade. Some of the different items of trade included palm oil, cocoa, sugar cane, rice, timber and gold.²⁴ These items were exported in great volumes and still are major components of Africa's modern export trade.²⁵ At this time the, "markets served as local exchange points or nodes, and trade was the vascular system unifying all of Africa."²⁶ Market places were a chief form of communication and allowed for the intermingling of many cultures.

Commerce was successful and Africa was prosperous and mostly independent, until the "Scramble for Africa" in the late 19th Century. The "Scramble for Africa" was the European empires' aggressive struggle for domination of the continent. Colonization can be defined as an extension of political and economic control over an area by a state whose nationals have occupied the area and usually possess organizational or technological superiority over the native population.²⁷ This is what occurred throughout the African continent during from the late 19th to early 20th centuries.

The outside presence of the colonialists introduced more efficient tools to be used with already existing institutions - both good and bad.²⁸ For example, in pre-colonial Africa natives gathered under a tree or at the village market square and debated an issue until they reached a consensus.²⁹ Subsequently, when colonialists arrived they made significant changes to the native way of life - particularly government. They built "parliament," which means a "place to talk" and called it democracy.³⁰ Prior to the colonist's arrival each tribe and regional group had their own method of governance and then they were imposed with western style of government. These western styles of governance and economics replaced the continents former trading networks. The early accomplishments of Africa's tribal groups are important to note, because rectifying much of Africa's problems will involve resurrecting its legacy. This legacy that is grounded in democratic principles and free trade but not necessarily the western version of these terms which may not have been conducive for the nations within the Africa.

Under colonial rule, African nations had little opportunity for development, as the primary focus for the colonists was to create the maximum financial gain for their home nations. Therefore, as the colonists exited Africa through out the mid-20th century there was little infrastructure to support the economic systems that had been active for the past fifty years. For example, Ghana in 1951 was the largest exporter of cocoa in the world but did not have a single

²¹ G. B. Ayittey. *Africa Unchained*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005. p. 412.

²² M. Meredith. "The Fate of Africa." The Washington Post. January 20, 2006.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wpdyn/content/discussion/2006/01/11/DI2006011101372.html>

²³ Julian L. *Simon State of Humanity*. Blackwell Publishing, 1995. p. 175.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ G. B. Ayittey *Africa Unchained*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. 2005. p. 117

²⁷ "Colonisation." Columbia Encyclopedia. May 7, 2007. <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/colonisation>

²⁸ G. B. Ayittey. *Africa Unchained*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005. p.116.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

cocoa-processing factory in the country.³¹ This economic relationship allowed Europe to maintain economic control over the continent and prohibited the opportunity for long-term economic development.

In the 1950s African nations began fighting back against their colonial oppressors and many won their freedom. At this time many freedom fighters and revolutionaries emerged. These individuals were gifted in fighting and leading revolts but were not equipped to deal with the aftermath of independence. With Africa free of its colonizers, intellectuals, economists, administrators, lawyers, and the like were needed to rebuild Africa. However, these types of people were not present. Africa's economic status could be substantially different had qualified professionals played a role in post-colonization. The lack of trained experts from the 1950s to the present in Africa's economic sustainability has had adverse effects on the future of several African nations.

Corruption in Africa

According to the World Bank, more than one trillion dollars have been paid in bribes each year across the globe.³² For Africa, corruption costs the region more than \$148 billion dollars each year, increasing the cost of goods by as much as 20 percent. This also prevents governments from using these funds for investments toward meeting the Millennium Development Goals and thus, contributes to the lack of development throughout the continent.³³

Several cases of corruption have occurred in Africa in recent decades. Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of Congo) accumulated over \$12 billion in debt on behalf of his country and diverted the public funds to his personal accounts during the mid-1980s.³⁴ Subsequently his personal assets reached \$4 billion.³⁵ In the same era, the apartheid regime of South Africa borrowed funds from several private banks and used the monies to finance the military and police in executing the regime's opponents, with no intention of repaying the funds.³⁶

Despite the fact that many African countries have made great strides against corruption and better governance, these notable examples have created a lasting impression on donors and foreign direct investors.³⁷ Understandably, these potential investors are primarily interested in transparent and stable economies. Investors and businesses find it difficult to perform business in an economically volatile environment and often loose money doing so. Foreign Direct Investment drastically helps developing nations by fueling the local economy with more jobs and opportunities. This type of investment helps to jump start the development process and often leads to a quicker building of critical infrastructure such as paved roads and telephone lines. Therefore, if a country proves to have corrupt practices, or is perceived that way by the international community, it is missing out on potential investment opportunities.

Countries that have an array of resources many times find it difficult to find the most productive means to cultivate their economy, and thus can prove difficult to foster economic responsibility and transparency. Several African nations serve as an example, such as Nigeria, Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Their very wealth in resources seems almost to work against them because mineral wealth provides opportunities for politicians and government officials to take bribes, kickbacks, and generally enrich themselves with funds that could be developing the countries. Many African states find themselves susceptible to bribery and monetary gifts due to the collective extreme poverty seen throughout much of the continent. Those seeking to keep resources cheap or monopolize a product often devote finances to promulgate conflict. In Sierra Leone, a country that is vastly rich in natural resources like diamonds and lush agriculture, civil war has gripped the country over those very resources. As an example, an investor may pay Sierra Leone *rebel fighters* or *liberation fighters* to battle the government and

³¹ Ibid.

³² "Cost of corruption is \$1 trillion: WB." Odious Debt.

<http://www.odiousdebts.org/odiousdebts/index.cfm?DSP=content&ContentID=11139>

³³ Elizabeth Blunt. "Corruption 'costs Africa billions'" Sept 2002. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/2265387.stm>

³⁴ Michael Kremer and Seema Jayachandran. "Odious Debt." The Brookings Institution. July 2002.

<http://www.brookings.edu/comm/policybriefs/pb103.htm>

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Note: Foreign Direct Investors are individuals or companies based outside of a nation that wish to pursue business interests within a different nation's borders. An easy example is a multi-national corporation, such as Nike, building a new manufacturing plant in Thailand.

protect the diamonds that earn them money abroad, and pay the government also to do the same. This in-turn keeps the resources cheap and forces those that own resources (the inhabitants of the state) from profiting from the resources.³⁸ This also damages the development process because the financial profiteers of these deals acquire personal wealth although some of them may be employees of the state, the monies do not profit the nation.

The head of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Antonio Maria Costa said investors should stop exploiting Africa's rich resources, polluting its environment, undermining the rule of law and fuelling conflict through corrupt practices.³⁹ Historically, resources in Africa have benefited the former colonial powers, or investors that originate from the colonizers. Costa is pointing out that although Africa is rich in resources, those resources have not been a benefit to the people of Africa. For example in Nigeria, large amounts of monies have been recovered from corruption thanks to the UNODC.⁴⁰ The UNODC partnered with the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission of Nigeria - in a \$30 million project - to work against effects of corruption.⁴¹

Transparency and Strategic Planning

Transparency is the idea that the more information that is disclosed about an economic activity the better.⁴² It is common belief amongst economists that transparency is one of the most effective methods of regulation.⁴³ Many economists assert that the Asian economic crisis of the late 1990s would not have been as severe, or even occurred, had Asian economic organizations made more available their data about their financial condition.⁴⁴ Africa has a severe lack of transparency, with several states missing billions of U.S. dollars. There have been several attempts to make Africa more accountable for its mismanagement of monies. Organizations as well as states do not want to have economic partnerships where there is no accountability, because of the possibility of losing monetarily.

For example, in 2002, then current British Prime Minister Tony Blair launched the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI).⁴⁵ Under the regulations of this initiative, countries rich in minerals and oil, as well as the companies extracting the resources, would have to publicly publish payments received and made.⁴⁶ Currently, 14 of 23 oil-producing countries in Africa are members of the EITI.⁴⁷ According to Mary M'mukindia, an independent Kenyan analyst for the oil industry, there are three steps of compliance in order for EITI to function:

“First: governments should “want to have” a transparency model. Second: extractive companies should be keen. In this regard, governments can implement laws which force companies to comply. Third: Civil society organizations (CSO) should be involved. They represent the people who are the real owners of the resources.”⁴⁸

M'mukindia insists that for CSOs to be effective “they need to be brought up to speed with international standards and ... understand ... what happens on the markets in Europe and America.”⁴⁹ The success of these programs is complex in regards to Africa because of the role of corruption and the approach of the methodology. While Western ideology may be applied in African states, but the economic policy and intent of organizations must be tailored to fit each state and their people.

With regard to natural resources, other countries and regions have had success, although there may be fewer resources for the state or region to benefit from. In 2006, oil and gas revenues accounted for three percent of

³⁸ “African governments willing to tackle corruption but more needs to be done, UNODC chief says.” United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. June 13, 2007. http://www.unodc.org/unodc/press_release_2007_04_04.html

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² “Economics A-Z.” The Economist. <http://economist.com/research/Economics/alphabetic.cfm?term=tobinjames>

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Stephanie Nieuwoudt. “TRADE-AFRICA: How to Turn The Curse of Oil Into a Blessing.” IPS-Inter Press Service. <http://ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=37902>

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

Dubai's gross domestic product (GDP), which is 46 billion US dollars.⁵⁰ It is anticipated that Dubai's oil reserves will be depleted within 20 years, however the economy is booming thanks to the promotion of tourism and the positioning of the country as a shoppers' paradise.⁵¹ African natural resources are generally perceived to be a blessing, however, instead of being exploited for the benefit of the people.⁵² Africa's mineral resources have been so mismanaged and plundered that they are now the source of its misery.⁵³ For example, although Hong Kong is described as a "barren rock," the people have made a success of it financially.⁵⁴ Hong Kong has legitimized itself as a technologically savvy state, despite its deteriorating environment and lack of resources, the nation thrives.⁵⁵ States and regions like Dubai have realized that oil is a finite resource, and have diversified their economies.⁵⁶ This is important to note, and has initiated some critics to assert that Africa would be better off with out its wealth of natural resources, because collectively the states have not been in a position to capitalize on their wealth. African nations have not been able to make such economically savvy decisions, due to colonization, corruption and overall poor economic planning. Generally nations within Africa have not made economic decisions or progressive planning in the 20th and 21st century which is a major point of concern in the continent's current state and future.

Economic Sovereignty

A combination of factors has made the ability of developing countries to make decisions about their own development plan and economic future difficult. These factors compel developing countries to adopt specific development strategies rather than giving them the freedom to try a different approach that may suit their unique characteristics or make decisions based on empirical evidence that has been proven to be effective.

One of the major pieces of interest that directly affect economic development and regional support is economic sovereignty. Economic sovereignty may be interpreted in two ways: supporters assert that economic and financial discipline is necessary, and that constraints should be tied to monetary aids or loans. The argument also holds that many developing countries lack the bureaucratic capacity or are corrupt, and without outside requirements in place, the money may be siphoned off for personal use or be used inefficiently due to mismanagement. According to the ideology, it is perceived that the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and international bodies such as the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the G8, have encroached on developing countries' economic sovereignty and hold dominant influence over the economic affairs of the countries to which they lend money. This viewpoint remains heavily debated within the international community. Despite their flaws, the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) have allowed developing countries oportunities that would not have been possible without this type of monetary, policy and programmatic support.

It is important to note, that the purpose of the IMF and World Bank remain different. The IMF is charged with the promote international monetary cooperation and cooperative monetary policy.⁵⁷ This is an outgrowth of the currency crises of the 1930s and part the monetary era known as Bretton Woods. In addition, as an outgrowth of war-torn Europe after World War II, the mission of the World Bank remains to fight poverty with passion and professionalism for lasting results.⁵⁸

Development Successes in Economic Partnerships

The Grameen Bank

⁵⁰ "Dubai." World News Network. <http://www.dubainews.com/>

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² G. B. Ayittey. *Africa Unchained*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005. p.1

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ "Economics A-Z." Economist. <http://economist.com/research/Economics/alphabetic.cfm?term=tobinjames>

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Stephanie Nieuwoudt. "TRADE-AFRICA: How to Turn The Curse of Oil Into a Blessing." IPS-Inter Press Service. <http://ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=37902>

⁵⁷ Articles of Agreement of the International Monetary Fund. The International Monetary Fund. 1947, <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/aa/aa01.htm>

⁵⁸ "Mission Statement." The World Bank Group. June 30, 2003. <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/EXTABOUTUS/0,,contentMDK:20040565~menuPK:34563~pagePK:5112364~piPK:329829~theSitePK:29708,00.html>

Economic Reconciliation

In order for economic partnerships to take hold there also must be a reconciliation process. There have been many efforts by way of organizations and institutions developed, however a true healing process has not taken place amongst African states and trading partners. The forgiveness of debt, especially odious debt, would be the main issue in economic reconciliation. If this were to occur nations could spend their resources for the benefit of their people and utilize funds instead of pay them away.

Debt that is considered odious occurs when a tyrannical power that is in power of a nation gains a debt against the interest of the state it serves.⁵⁹ Once the debt is acquired and the regime that acquired the debt is gone, the new regime is not responsible for repaying it, and the populations of the state are not responsible for the debt.⁶⁰ The debt is considered the personal obligation of the power that has incurred it.⁶¹ Presently, the debt not under the protection of this ideology is the burden of the populace and is considered *odious* or evil. However, as one side argues for repayment and accountability, the opposition is for total debt forgiveness. Many ethical questions have been raised, whether debt that is considered odious be forgiven. What various groups or persons should be held accountable? Who would govern this? Moreover supporters argue that if a nation and its people are ignorant of the debt and do not benefit from it than they should not be held accountable for it. Debt remains a barrier to strengthening economic partnerships and development.

Regional Integration and Partnerships

Regional integration of trade and resources is vital for the stability of states within Africa. There are several examples of regional cooperation and partnerships. A few examples include the Southern and Eastern Africa Mineral Centre (SEAMIC), Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). All of the listed organizations work in collaboration with the UNECA, and work collectively for the betterment of the continent.

The Southern and Eastern Africa Mineral Centre (SEAMIC) is an independent regional centre of knowledge and information for southern and eastern Africa.⁶² It was established in 1977, under the umbrella of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA).⁶³ SEAMIC offers its services through its two departments namely: Geo-information Services and Laboratory Services.⁶⁴ SEAMIC provides the following services which include: Training, Analytical Services, Mineral Applications, Grading and Certification, Research and Development, and Geo-information.⁶⁵

Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) replaced the former Preferential Trade Area (PTA), which existed since 1981.⁶⁶ COMESA was established as an organization of free independent sovereign states that have agreed to co-operate in developing their natural and human resources for the good of all their people.⁶⁷ Its main focus is on the formation of a large economic and trading unit that is capable of overcoming some of the barriers that are faced by individual states.⁶⁸

New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) is designed to address the current challenges facing the African continent.⁶⁹ Issues such as the escalating poverty levels, underdevelopment and the continued

⁵⁹ Patricia Adams. "The Doctrine of Odious Debts." Except From *Odious Debts: Loose Lending, Corruption, and the Third World's Environmental Legacy*. Odious Debts.

<http://www.odiousdebts.org/odiousdebts/index.cfm?DSP=subcontent&AreaID=3>

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² "Services." Southern and Eastern Africa Mineral Centre. <http://www.seamic.org/services.php>

⁶³ "Services." Southern and Eastern Africa Mineral Centre. <http://www.seamic.org/services.php>

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ "Common Market of Eastern and Southern Africa" Common Market of Eastern and Southern Africa.

<http://www.itcilo.it/actrav/actrav-english/telearn/global/ilo/blokit/comesa.htm>

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ "NEPAD: In brief." NEPAD. <http://www.nepad.org/2005/files/inbrief.php>

marginalization of Africa, needed a new radical intervention, spearheaded by African leaders, to develop a new vision that would guarantee Africa's Renewal. NEPAD's primary objectives are to eradicate poverty; to place African countries, both individually and collectively, on a path of sustainable growth and development; to halt the marginalization of Africa in the globalization process and enhance its full and beneficial integration into the global economy; and to accelerate the empowerment of women⁷⁰

These are just three of the many organizations working towards sustainability amongst the nations in Africa whose memberships are comprised of multiple states. Economic integration from a regional standpoint and through partnerships will involve organizations like these. Therefore, a pooling of resources of these organizations, as well as proper coordination and communication between these groups is necessary to better aid the African people. The UNECA currently serves as the conduit for communication and collaboration amongst the other UN organizations. Although collaborative efforts as well as communication is used how can the system be improved and where do non-governmental organizations fit in?

Conclusion

At the midway point between their adoption in 2000 and the 2015 target date for achieving the Millennium Development Goals, sub-Saharan Africa is not on track to achieve any of the Goals. Although there have been major gains in several areas, and the Goals remain achievable in most African nations, even the best governed countries on the continent have not been able to make sufficient progress in reducing extreme poverty in its many forms.⁷¹ Therefore the continent's future looks bleak. Without harnessing debt and corruption, and addressing the legacy of colonization, African nations will continue to struggle to develop. Success has been seen in promoting transparency through regional and international economic partnerships. In order for most African states to truly become financially successful it is going to take change not only in the affected nations, but also from the international community to promote successful and lasting economic policies.

Committee Directive

In your research it is important to note the Pan-African movement, and the potential economic implications of viewing Africa as one nation. Also, what would the economic implications be if there was limited Western involvement in Africa? How could the states rebuild themselves and facilitate their own infrastructure, utilizing their own resources and using their own method of governance: "Unless we put our act together... and start pooling our resources together, we will never, ever prosper from any aid from any source outside Africa."⁷² What changes will need to be made internally and externally? Regionally and from a continental approach what are the ramifications of a unified and economically progressive Africa? Also, within the UNECA how effective are the regional offices? Do they meet the needs of their constituents? Overall, in what ways can new economic partnerships be developed to end conflict, harness resources and create sound economic policies?

II: Food Security and Sustainable Development

Introduction

The necessity of solving the problems of food security and sustainability is perhaps best expressed through Millennium Development Goal one, which seeks to reduce by half hunger and extreme poverty by 2015.⁷³ Collectively the eight Millennium Development Goals seek to reduce poverty by attacking the chief causes and factors. The international community has a keen understanding that these issues directly impact one another. Furthermore, efforts to address these issues must be jointly crafted and implemented, or progress will stagnate. Understanding these important principles, the global leaders that crafted the Millennium Development Goals placed

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Africa and the Millennium Development Goals, 2007 update, Published by the UN Department of Public Information. DPI/2458 — June 2007. <http://www.uneca.org/index.htm>

⁷² "Summit debates future of Africa" BBC News. July 3, 2007. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/6260274.stm>

⁷³ Kerry Albright and Richard Mkandawire. "Achieving Food Security: What next for sub-Saharan Africa?" *id21 Insights* #61. April 2006. p. 1. http://www.nepad.org/2005/files/agriculture/insights_61final.pdf

issues of hunger and food security at the top of their list of goals by design. They understood that until the basic needs of an individual are met, all other wants become secondary.

In order to fully understand the steps needed to reach a sustainable supply of food, it is necessary to define food security. Although the history of the phrase “food security” has shifted over time, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations currently presents the following as a comprehensive definition of food security: “Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food which meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.”⁷⁴

Conversely, “food insecurity exists when people do not have adequate physical, social or economic access to food as defined above.”⁷⁵ According to a 2006 report from the FAO, 33 percent of people in sub-Saharan Africa are undernourished.⁷⁶ That number represents nearly 500 million individuals who lack the access to basic nutrition. In the short-term, this may affect an individual’s ability to focus or s/he may feel weak. However in the long-term, lack of access to one’s basic nutritional needs can affect mental and physical development, cause various forms of disease, such as scurvy and permanently impact the body’s immune system, thus making the individual more susceptible to infectious disease.

Additionally, it is important to remember that temporary food security does little for the development of African economies. As stated by K. Y. Amoako, Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa, “sustainability is a direct function of institutional development, human and physical capital accumulation as well as productivity.”⁷⁷ Essentially, Mr. Amoako is remarking on the necessity of developing sustainable means of producing and distributing food to meet the nourishment needs of the African populous. If food security is a fleeting accomplishment in Africa, economic success will be just as fleeting. It is necessary to provide means for sustainability through building partnerships, communication and technology sharing, and supporting sub-regional activities within Africa.⁷⁸ These sustainable developments must not come at the expense of the environment. Because of growing population rates in sub-Saharan Africa and shifting climate patterns, it is imperative to conserve abundant natural resources and protect those resources that are scarce.

With the help of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and its subsidiary bodies, Africa can reach the ultimate state of economic sovereignty by first meeting and sustaining the food needs of its people. However, complicated and far-reaching obstacles lay in the way of obtaining sustainable food security.

The Agriculture Sector

Agriculture “contributes to the livelihoods of the majority of the population [of Africa]” - between 40 and 90 percent according to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in 2004.⁷⁹ Even considering the impact of agriculture at the lowest percentage, that still means 40 percent of Africans depend on agriculture. For our purposes, the agriculture sectors of Africa can be viewed in two main groups: subsistence farming and export crops. Subsistence farms are typically located in rural, impoverished areas. The crops from subsistence farms are rarely grown to sell but, if taken to market, are not often profitable. The key distinction of subsistence farms is that their crops are used to provide the basic food needs for the people who farm the land and for the people of that community. Conversely,

⁷⁴ “Food Security: Concepts and Measurement.” *Trade Reforms and Food Security: Conceptualizing the linkages*. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. Rome: United Nations Press, 2003.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ “Food Security Statistics: Prevalence of undernourishment in total population.” Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. 2006. http://www.fao.org/es/ess/faostat/foodsecurity/index_en.htm.

⁷⁷ K. Y. Amoako. “Harnessing Technologies for Sustainable Development in Africa.” International Livestock Research Institute. April 10, 2003.

⁷⁸ “Overview of the ECA.” UN Economic Commission for Africa. 2000. http://www.uneca.org/eca_programmes/sdd/default.htm.

⁷⁹ Hakim Ben Hammouda, Stephen Karingi, Nassim Oulmane, Rémi Lang, and Mustapha Sadni Jallab. “African Trade Policy Centre: Can Market Access Help African Agriculture?” Economic Commission for Africa. October 2006. http://www.uneca.org/eca_programmes/trade_and_regional_integration/atpc/Work_percent20in_percent20progress/42.pdf

the export crop farmer's main goal is to raise crops to sell on a wide market.⁸⁰ Whether exporting nationally or internationally, the export cropper faces a different set of challenges than the subsistence farmer.

While both subsistence and export crop farmers are plagued by a lack of government subsidies, underdeveloped or total lack of infrastructure, and antiquated technology, export croppers must also deal with external issues. On the global market, already established agricultural powerhouses make it very difficult for new, smaller scale farms to break into the market.⁸¹ Because of this unintentional bias towards countries with very large agriculture sectors, market access is a huge barrier for small-scale export croppers. High tariffs on commodities being shipped within Africa and to foreign ports also inhibit market access to small export farms. Perhaps most importantly, the economic divide between developed countries and lesser-developed countries continues to widen. This divide can potentially increase in such a way that the lesser developed nations of Africa, especially those in sub-Saharan Africa, could sink deeper into economic depression as a result of market inaccessibility.

Obstacles to Obtaining Sustainable Food Security

The nations of Africa suffer from serious problems, which directly correlate to each other. It is impossible to isolate specific problems because they are intertwined. Addressing the problems that lead to food security remain critical to more deftly navigate the road to sustainable food security. The obstacles to reaching food security generate from a wide range of natural, social and economic issues.⁸²

First, Africa faces a number of natural inadequacies or naturally occurring circumstances that put nations at a disadvantage. Natural inadequacies such as lack of arable land, decreased soil fertility, water scarcity, and natural disasters such as drought and flood are present in Africa and at least one form of these natural issues occur in each of the member state of the ECA.⁸³ Because of these occurrences, countries face the particularly difficult task of mastering a problem that is not man-made. Although these inequitable problems pose threats to the livelihoods of farmers and the general health of Africans, many of these already existing inadequacies have been exacerbated by mismanagement of vital resources such as land and water.⁸⁴ This mismanagement is due in many cases to lack of access to or mistrust of new technologies.⁸⁵ Inadequately protecting or conserving scarce natural resources is especially dangerous when considering the vast population growth expected in sub-Saharan Africa, the current high fertility rates in women,⁸⁶ and gradual climate change's "serious social and economic impact."⁸⁷

Many scientific and technological advances are expensive and ultimately inaccessible to many farmers, namely those subsistence farmers living in impoverished rural areas.⁸⁸ Many subsistence farmers are uneducated and raise their crops based on methods passed down through generations which are now outdated. When technology does reach these farmers, some are reluctant to change the way they raise their crops because of cultural beliefs. Although the ECA does recognize the cultural rights of these farmers, it is important to emphasize the potential good

⁸⁰ Josué Dioné. "Why Has Africa Failed to Achieve Food and Nutritional Security?" Assuring Food and Nutrition Security in Africa by 2020: Prioritizing Action, Strengthening Actors, and Facilitating Partnerships. April 1, 2004.

⁸¹ Hakim Ben Hammouda, Stephen Karingi, Nassim Oulmane, Rémi Lang, and Mustapha Sadni Jallab. "African Trade Policy Centre: Can Market Access Help African Agriculture?" Economic Commission for Africa. October 2006. http://www.uneca.org/eca_programmes/trade_and_regional_integration/atpc/Work_percent20in_percent20progress/42.pdf

⁸² Josué Dioné. "Why Has Africa Failed to Achieve Food and Nutritional Security?" Assuring Food and Nutrition Security in Africa by 2020: Prioritizing Action, Strengthening Actors, and Facilitating Partnerships. April 1, 2004.

⁸³ K. Y. Amoako. "African Food Security in the Knowledge and Information Era." Annual Meeting of the American Agricultural Economics Association. July 31, 2000. http://www.uneca.org/eca_resources/speeches/amoako/2000/082100speech_es_florida_usa.htm

⁸⁴ Josué Dioné. "Why Has Africa Failed to Achieve Food and Nutritional Security?" Assuring Food and Nutrition Security in Africa by 2020: Prioritizing Action, Strengthening Actors, and Facilitating Partnerships. April 1, 2004.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ "Sub-Saharan Africa: Overview." United Nations Population Fund. <http://www.unfpa.org/africa/overview.cfm>

⁸⁷ "Measuring Good Governance." UNECA Food Security and Sustainable Development Division. April 19, 2007. http://www.uneca.org/eca_resources/news/2007/070419climate.htm.

⁸⁸ Hakim Ben Hammouda, Stephen Karingi, Nassim Oulmane, Rémi Lang, and Mustapha Sadni Jallab. "African Trade Policy-Centre: Can Market Access Help African Agriculture?" Economic Commission for Africa. October 2006. http://www.uneca.org/eca_programmes/trade_and_regional_integration/atpc/Work_percent20in_percent20progress/42.pdf

new technologies can allot to rural farmer. New technologies do not mean that these rural farmers are buying computers and digitizing their crop output. Technologies disseminated to these farmers include new irrigation systems which help conserve water and new crop rotation patterns which allow for maximum usage of scarce land resources. However, it is sometimes difficult for these subsistence farmers to gain access to these new technologies because of the lack of disposable income to purchase new materials and poor infrastructure in many African nations. Lack of infrastructure manifests itself in the form of poor or nonexistent roads, lack of or inconsistent electricity, and poor or nonexistent alternate modes of transportation such as railroads or air transportation. These conditions also affect export farmers who benefit from more advanced technologies like machinery and other items that often entail expensive initial investment. Because these machine technologies are often imported from different countries, poor infrastructure drives the cost of technology even higher.

The toll of civil strife and corrupt governance is particularly staggering as both breed and thrive off of instability and confusion. These conditions fare worst for furthering sound infrastructure to promote sustainability of food security as well as sustainable market trade. Market accessibility remains the largest problem for the growing agriculture and aquaculture sectors of the African market.⁸⁹ Significantly breaking into the international market proves difficult for a number of reasons including regional export subsidies, international tariffs and competition with the policies and markets of developed countries.⁹⁰

Another aspect of the difficulties in gaining African food security is best worded by Josué Dioné of the ECA Food and Sustainable Development Division: “Actions in the above areas will hardly yield tangible long-term impact on poverty and food insecurity if the central issue of the very survival and the preservation of the human capital of the poor...In this regard, the HIV/AIDS pandemic probably constitutes the greatest threat to food security and poverty alleviation in Africa.”⁹¹ Specifically in countries located in sub-Saharan Africa, the toll on human capital alone is astounding. According to a 2006 report by UNAIDS, “2.1 million AIDS deaths in sub-Saharan Africa represent 72 percent of global AIDS deaths.”⁹²

Clearly, the challenges facing African are large and often abstract in nature. The path to securing and sustaining food for the people of Africa will not prove easy, but by understanding the economic and international aspects of food insecurity, the international community can understand how best to aid Africa in its time of need.

Information and Technology Sharing in Agriculture and Food Sciences

In statements made to the ECA in 2003, “[P]riority should be placed on at least five domains: human resources development; increased investments; establishment of appropriate institutions; formulation and adoption of appropriate policies; and inter-country cooperation and partnerships within and outside Africa.”⁹³ As an aide to both export and subsistence farms, addressing the preceding five issues could prove invaluable to Africa’s ability to gain food security and alleviate poverty rates while doing so. As stated by Dr. George Ayittey, “the key to economic growth in Africa is investment, both domestic and foreign.”⁹⁴ Finding investors within Africa and abroad to invest in new technologies and the spread of those technologies would certainly accelerate the progress to African food security. Especially rural subsistence farmers who often provide food for whole villages could benefit greatly from invested money or subsidies from the government to learn new technologies. However, because of the dire situations involving AIDS, population growth, corrupt governance, and the instability bred by those situations,

⁸⁹ K. Y. Amoako. “African Food Security in the Knowledge and Information Era.” Annual Meeting of the American Agricultural Economics Association. July 31, 2000.

http://www.uneca.org/eca_resources/speeches/amoako/2000/082100speech_es_florida_usa.htm

⁹⁰ Hakim Ben Hammouda, Stephen Karingi, Nassim Oulmane, Rémi Lang, and Mustapha Sadni Jallab. “African Trade Policy-Centre: Can Market Access Help African Agriculture?” Economic Commission for Africa. October 2006.

http://www.uneca.org/eca_programmes/trade_and_regional_integration/atpc/Work_percent20in_percent20progress/42.p

⁹¹ Josué Dioné. “Why Has Africa Failed to Achieve Food and Nutritional Security?” Assuring Food and Nutrition Security in Africa by 2020: Prioritizing Action, Strengthening Actors, and Facilitating Partnerships. April 1, 2004.

⁹² *AIDS Epidemic Update: Special report on HIV/AIDS*. United Nations AIDS and World Health Organization. Geneva and New York: United Nations. December 2006.

⁹³ “Emerging Issues in Science and Technology for Food Security and Sustainable Development in Africa.” Economic Commission for Africa: Sustainable Development Division. August 2003.

http://www.uneca.org/estnet/Ecadocuments/Emerging_percent20Issues_percent20in_percent20ST_percent20FS.htm

⁹⁴ George B. N. Ayittey. *Africa Unchained: The Blueprint for Africa’s Future*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005. p. 238.

investors are unwilling to give their money because they lack confidence in private investors have been wary of investing in public works projects in countries experiencing civil strife, corrupt governance, or mismanagement of natural resources or funds.

Although distribution and funding efforts to bring new technologies is a challenge in some countries, there are many benefits to implementing new strategies, especially in irrigation technology and water and land management.

Conclusion

Through the Economic Commission for Africa, the United Nations provides numerous resources to Member States directly concerning food security and sustainable development. Directly under the ECA is a sub-programme which was created specifically for addressing the issues of food security and sustainable development - The Food Security and Sustainable Development Division (FSSDD).⁹⁵ Using the ECA's resources, combined with the greater network of UN organization, African states have a better opportunity to address the challenges of food security and promoting development.

Committee Directive

Although solving food security is a multifaceted solution and requires serious thought and research, do not become overwhelmed. Africa presents a special and intricate challenge which requires time, thoughtful problem solving, and preparedness. In order to prepare for discussion of food security and sustainable development, it is necessary to understand the preliminary concepts of food security, sustainable development, the present food security situation in the delegate's own country. Documents such as The African Green Revolution, documents from the Commission for Sustainable Development's 4th meeting (CSD-4) in 2005, as well as documents found on the ECA's website will prove to be invaluable during your research.

III: Gender Inequality

"...equality between women and men is just, fair and right - it is a worthy goal in and of itself, one that lies at the heart of human development and human rights."

UNDP Agenda, Women's Empowerment⁹⁶

Introduction

The disadvantageous status of women has serious implications for the well-being of society as a whole.⁹⁷ As one of the causes of underdevelopment, gender inequality is closely linked to poverty, overpopulation, illiteracy, malnutrition and disease.⁹⁸ This makes gender of particular interest to African nations because sustainability therefore hinges on gender equality.

Gender discrimination and inequality is tolerated as a result of cultural practices and has been condoned by many African governments. The UN's goal is to help end this social disparity.⁹⁹ Although African states have made several advancements in the treatment of women, issues surrounding gender inequality still remain unresolved. Many social and economic norms prohibit women from advancing in many African societies. Some norms in African culture and religion have been practiced for centuries, thus making change difficult and in many case

⁹⁵ "Programme Overview." UN ECA Food Security and Sustainable Development Division. 2000.

http://www.uneca.org/eca_programmes/food_security_and_sustainability/programme_overview/index.htm.

⁹⁶ "Women's Empowerment." United Nations Development Programme. <http://www.undp.org/women/mainstream/index.shtml>

⁹⁷ "Technical Assistance." United Nations Economic Commission for Africa.

http://www.uneca.org/about_eca/overview_of_eca.htm#TechnicalAssistance

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ "UN must take lead in eradicating violence against women Ban Ki-moon says." UN News Centre. March 8, 2007.

<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=21806&Cr=women&Cr1=day>

unwanted. Examples of this include the issue of matriarchal v. patriarchal societies, Shariah Law, and female genital mutilation.

Utilizing regional bodies, such as the UNECA, to deal with the issue of gender equality brings hope for development and change. Gender mainstreaming is the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) corporate strategy on gender.¹⁰⁰ The ECA's has developed a gender mainstreaming initiative as a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the policies and programs in all political, economic and societal spheres.¹⁰¹ The hope is that both women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated.¹⁰²

Some of the views in respect to gender equality are viewed through a lens of Western ideology and culture. It is the focus of this committee to examine gender issues objectively from an international perspective, and specifically as it pertains to Africa. The global interpretation of gender equality is very different from what may be perceived as the Western world view. Therefore the perspective on gender equality needs to be viewed upon from an objective vantage point and from the international perspective. To that end, this topic examines gender issues specific to the member states of the ECA and work towards tailoring solutions specific to African nations.

Matriarchal and Patriarchal Societies

Africa has a long-standing tradition of both male and female leadership. Although, the societies within the continent are currently predominantly patriarchal, they all share matriarchal roots. These roots are evident throughout the continent in present day African societies: "We consequently find that maternity is viewed as sacred in the traditions of all African societies. And in all of them, the earth's fertility is traditionally linked to women's maternal powers. Hence the centrality of women as producers, providers and the reverence in which they are held. These are factors of ancient African matriarchal systems, residues of which can still be traced, if sought, even in the most patriarchal African societies today."¹⁰³

The respect for women correlates directly to the woman's position in African society as provider and producer.¹⁰⁴ Additionally, child birth is viewed as a maternal power, subsequently women are considered divine in many African cultures.¹⁰⁵ Women are revered in African culture because of the role that they serve in their societies as nurturer and creator, this respect also carries with it political power and sway. The consensus among most anthropologists and sociologists is that a strictly matriarchal society never existed.¹⁰⁶ Although there were several Queens and Chieftains, particularly in Egypt, Southern, and West Africa, there is no conclusive evidence of a completely matriarchal society in Africa, or the world for that matter.¹⁰⁷ Historically, either as a daughter or wife, women were considered legally dependent on a father figure or husband, even in cultures where custom granted liberty of behavior.¹⁰⁸ Regionally, Africa has had a unique history in its matriarchal and patriarchal leadership. North, East, West, and South Africa have all had predominant male leadership.

5,500 years ago the patriarchy in Northern Africa rose and women maintained positions of power within the community, although there was a cultural shift in gender dominance.¹⁰⁹ Women were recognized in Ancient Egyptian societies as embodying an identity and power originating from the female.¹¹⁰ It was a power

¹⁰⁰ "What Is Gender Mainstreaming?" United Nations Development Programme.
<http://www.undp.org/women/mainstream/whatis.shtml>

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ifi Amadiume. "Male Daughters Female Husbands: Gender and Sex in an African Society(1987)." London: Zed Books Ltd.1998. p.191

<http://books.google.com/books?pg=PA191&lpg=PA191&dq=matriarchal+african+societies&sig=mUCKkUavQAeMw9q18Dk7iMbUoY4&id=5f3OFZFYy4C&ots=ETeZkV-G5n&output=html>

¹⁰⁴ Ibid

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Christopher L. C. E. Witcombe. "Women in Egypt: Egyptian Queens and Pharaohs."
<http://www.arthistory.sbc.edu/imageswomen/egyptmatriarchy.html>

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Balandier, Georges & Maquet, Jacques, "Dictionary of Black African Civilization." New York: Leon Amid. 1974

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

acknowledged and respected by men, which resided in the female and could be claimed by all women.¹¹¹ In Nubian, as well as Ancient Sudanese and Southern Egyptian Cultures, ceramic images honor the priestess-queens saving their countries from foreign invaders.¹¹² Northern Africa boasts several accounts of female leadership with the reign of the several Cleopatra's, Nefertiti, Nefertari, and Hatshepsut of Egypt and Makeda the Queen of Sheba (Ethiopia).¹¹³ In regards to East Africa clans, age-sets and age grades formed the basis of government and women were not prevalent in leadership roles. In West Africa there were accounts of queens succeeding queens, and female religious leaders in present day Togo, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea and Senegal.¹¹⁴ Regionally, Africa has had a variation of leaders both male and female. Currently, Africa is led by male leadership with the exception of Liberia, who is led by president, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf who won presidential elections in 2005.¹¹⁵ She serves as the only head of state in Africa, which otherwise is patriarch dominated continent.

Female Genital Mutilation

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) or Female Genital Cutting (FGC), is openly practiced in East Africa when young girls reach puberty.¹¹⁶ Female genital mutilation (FGM) also known as female circumcision involves removal of the external female genitalia.¹¹⁷ The historical reasons as to why this practice occurs vary amongst societies, as FGM is administered for cultural, religious, and other non-therapeutic reasons.¹¹⁸ There are four common forms of which FGM occur:

- Type I includes the excision of the prepuce, with or without excision of part or all of the clitoris;
- Type II - excision of the clitoris with partial or total excision of the labia minora;
- Type III - excision of part or all of the external genitalia and stitching/narrowing of the vaginal opening (infibulation);
- and Type IV - pricking, piercing or incising of the clitoris and/or labia; stretching of the clitoris and/or labia; cauterization by burning of the clitoris and surrounding tissue.¹¹⁹

It is important

There is no exact data on the prevalence of FGM in Africa, however it is clear that the majority of the cases take place in North and East Africa specifically in Egypt and Sudan.¹²⁰ The most prevalent form of female genital mutilation is excision of the clitoris and the labia minora, responsible for 80 percent of all cases.¹²¹ Long-term consequences include cysts and abscesses, keloid scar formation, damage to the urethra resulting in urinary incontinence, dyspareunia (painful sexual intercourse) and sexual dysfunction and difficulties with childbirth.¹²²

In cultures where FGM is an accepted norm, it is practiced by followers of all religious beliefs as well as animists and non believers. FGM is usually performed by a traditional practitioner with crude instruments and without anesthetic. Among the more affluent in society it may be performed in a health care facility by qualified health

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² "Women in global perspective: AFRICA" Suppressed Histories Archives.

<http://www.suppressedhistories.net/catalog/africa.html>

¹¹³ Balandier, Georges & Maquet, Jacques, "Dictionary of Black African Civilization." New York: Leon Amid. 1974

¹¹⁴ "Women in global perspective: AFRICA" Suppressed Histories Archives.

<http://www.suppressedhistories.net/catalog/africa.html>

¹¹⁵ Deborah Block. "Sirleaf-Johnson to Become Liberia's President." Voice of America. November 23, 2005.

<http://www.voanews.com/english/archive/2005-11/2005-11-23-voa7.cfm?CFID=96890169&CFTOKEN=24713166>

¹¹⁶ "Uganda: Women petition court to outlaw FGM" IRIN Africa. April 30, 2007.

<http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=71867>

¹¹⁷ "Female Genital Mutilation." World Health Organization. <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs241/en/>

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ "Prevalence of Female Genital Mutilation in Africa" AFROL

News. <http://www.afrol.com/Categories/Women/FGM/netscapeindex.htm>

¹²¹ "Female Genital Mutilation." World Health Organization. <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs241/en/>

¹²² Ibid.

personnel. FGM may be performed on infants from a few days old, to female children and adolescents, and mature women.¹²³

The reasons given by families for having FGM performed include psychosexual, sociological, hygiene and aesthetic, religious, and myths.¹²⁴ The psychosexual reasons encompass elimination of the sensitive tissue of the outer genitalia in order to attenuate sexual desire in the female and increase male sexual pleasure.¹²⁵ Sociological reasons include identification with the cultural heritage, initiation of girls into womanhood.¹²⁶ In regards to the hygiene and aesthetic reasons the external female genitalia are considered dirty and unsightly and are to be removed to promote hygiene and provide aesthetic appeal.¹²⁷ The myths and religious reasons are that there is a believed enhancement of fertility and promotion of child survival. Some Muslim communities believe that FGM is demanded by the Islamic faith, though the practice predates Islam.¹²⁸

The reasons why FGM is practiced is important to note because this reveals how the status of women is viewed in cultures that practice FGM. FGM is a very dangerous problem and it should be addressed because it is a procedure that creates a plethora of health problems, both mental and physical. The more severe physical ramifications of this procedure are the formation of cysts and abscesses, damage to the urethra resulting in urinary incontinence, painful sexual intercourse, complications during childbirth hemorrhage, urine retention, which all have the potential to cause death.

The practice of FGM limits the ability of Africa to have an equitable society for the genders. In addition to the physical complications that FGM inflicts upon women, the social implications of this practice are demeaning and damaging. Sustainability in the continent of Africa is unswervingly linked to gender equality. One group of the population cannot suffer a demeaning and painful procedure at the expense of another. The second class citizen status of women in African allows for this brutal act to occur, raising not only issues surrounding gender but human rights as well. Young girls and women are subjected to a painful procedure, against their will, that is not justifiable for any reason whether they be cultural, religious or societal.

Islam and Sharia Law

Islam is of particular interest to Africa because in at least 13 states Islam is the religion of 90 percent of the nation's population.¹²⁹ Today, Islam is most prevalent in northern and western Africa.¹³⁰ In Nigeria, the most populous nation in Africa with 64 million people, 50 percent of the state shares the Islamic faith, many of which are women.¹³¹

The Islamic faith has a universal body of law entitled Sharia Law, one of the oldest forms of human law. The Quran is the sacred holy book of the religion of Islam. Sharia Law is derived from the Quran and literally means "path," or "path to water," and covers all aspects of life, ranging from relations of the sexes, ethics and every day life.¹³² Sharia law has multiple interpretations, but generally gender inequality is apparent in the law.¹³³ There are cultural and religious factors that are preventing women from gaining equal status in different sects of the Islamic faith. Muslims consider obedience to the Sharia to be a crucial religious duty. Historically, however, there has been no unanimity on what the Sharia consists of or on how to define it.¹³⁴ The term Sharia has meant different things to

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ "Religion Statistics: Islamic Population in Africa." Nation Master.

http://www.nationmaster.com/graph/rel_isl_in_afr_isl_pop_in_afr_and_pop_per_pop-islam-africa-islamic-population-percentage

¹³⁰ "Islam in Africa." Info Please-Encyclopedia. <http://www.infoplease.com/ce6/society/A0825603.html>

¹³¹ "Nigeria-Religion Statistics." Nation Master. <http://www.nationmaster.com/country/ni-nigeria/rel-religion>

¹³² "Religion & Ethics-Islam-Sharia." BBC. http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/islam/beliefs/sharia_1.shtml

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Clark Benner Lombardi. *37 Colum. J. Transnat'l L. 81*. Columbia Journal of Transnational Law Association, Inc. 1998.

different people in different countries, and even within one country it has meant different things over the centuries.¹³⁵ Five separate schools of Sharia developed after the death of the Prophet Mohammed.¹³⁶ Four in the Sunni tradition and one in the Shiite tradition, Muslims in different geographical regions favored different Sharia schools.¹³⁷ The two major tribes are the Sunni and Shiite these two groups interpreted the treatment of women from the Quran differently and derived their version of Sharia Law.¹³⁸ This is important to note because the treatment of women varies with the interpretation of the Quran.

North Africa, which is Shiite Muslim, prefers the Maliki doctrine version of Sharia law, where the law of the Quran is viewed not metaphorically but literally.¹³⁹ The Shiite groups in Africa interpret female circumcision or Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) to be acceptable.¹⁴⁰ Commonly quoted from the Quran is verse 4:34, which asserts that “men have authority over women because Allah has made the one superior to the other, and because they spend their wealth to maintain them. Good women are obedient.” It is debatable to the extent women are discriminated against in all Muslim societies but it is however an issue in Africa where FGM is openly practiced and women are generally in submissive roles to men in most facets of society. Also important to note is the social demeaning of women and the lack of female political figures in African Muslim societies. Benazir Bhutto of Pakistan became the first woman to head a modern Muslim state, although this does not occur in Africa it is essential to note because she was elected to an Islamic state and it exemplifies the possibilities of that occurring in Africa.¹⁴¹ The intertwining of faith and the traditional role of women makes it difficult to promote gender equality while still remaining culturally sensitive.

Lack of Development

The effect of gender inequality as it pertains to the lack of development is substantial because as women improve their positions in African societies they are simultaneously strengthening African society as well as enhancing the continent's broader development prospects.¹⁴² Although leadership abilities are prevalent in Africa there is a great lack of training for women.¹⁴³ One of the pivotal steps in African development involves advancing the position of women in Africa. By strengthening the capacities and skills of women and girls, and expanding their opportunities, women will fully develop their leadership roles.¹⁴⁴ Soukeyna Ba of Senegal stated that “If you want to develop Africa, you must develop the leadership of African women.” This reality becomes clearly evident because 80 percent of women work in the agricultural labor force and serve as 47 percent of the total agricultural labor force.¹⁴⁵ Conversely, labor for female farmers presents a dilemma as many men have left rural economies in search of better monetary opportunities. The result is that women have lost access to male help on farms. Additionally, the socioeconomic and physical conditions in which most women live and work in many African states is deteriorating. The deterioration persists because of economic and social decline, wars and conflict, and the spread of AIDS.¹⁴⁶ Women make up the majority of the poor and the illiterate in both urban and rural areas in Africa.¹⁴⁷ Subsequently, many young women between the ages of 15 and 25 have been pushed into sex work and face the risk of HIV/AIDS infection.¹⁴⁸

The Spread of AIDS & Violence and discrimination against women and girls

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ “Religion & Ethics-Islam-Sharia.” BBC. http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/islam/beliefs/sharia_1.shtml

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ “Female Genital Mutilation.” World Health Organization. <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs241/en/>

¹⁴¹ “BBC World Service-Women in Power: Benazir Bhutto.” BBC.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/people/features/wiwp/dyncon/bhutto.shtml>

¹⁴² Takyiwa Manuh. “Women in Africa’s Development.” Africa Recovery, Department of Public Information, United Nations. April 1998. <http://www.un.org/ecosocdev/geninfo/afrec/bpaper/maineng.htm>

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

The spread of AIDS affects gender inequality very acutely because violence and discrimination against women and girls is fueling Africa's AIDS crisis.¹⁴⁹ Among the many misdeeds perpetrated against women is violence: "Violence against women and girls makes a hideous imprint on every continent, country and culture, it is a threat to all women, and should be unacceptable to all humankind."¹⁵⁰ According to Human Rights Watch, "African governments must make gender equality a central part of national AIDS programs if they are to succeed in fighting the epidemic."¹⁵¹ AIDS and human rights violations against women are linked because girls face sexual abuse and violence, inside and outside of school.¹⁵² This is all exacerbated by the second class status that women have, subsequently this makes them vulnerable to violence and unsafe sex.¹⁵³ The human rights abuses against women allow for them to contract diseases and viruses. This is explicably linked to the governments ability to enforce the rule of law, and not social norms which openly discriminate against women. While African governments' response to HIV/AIDS among women and girls is slow, states inability to protect women and girls from such abuses is fueling the AIDS epidemic in Africa.¹⁵⁴ Consequently, women and girls represent 58 percent of people living with HIV in sub-Saharan Africa.¹⁵⁵ And in some countries, women and girls are seven times more likely to be HIV positive than their male counterparts.¹⁵⁶

The UN and ECA's Role and Initiatives

Within the modality of gender and social development lies the African Center for Gender and Development (ACGD).¹⁵⁷ The ACGD is one of many groups working towards an equitable status of the genders within the ECA. The objective of the ACGD is to inform and influence the content, as well as the direction of economic and social development within Africa, with a view to making development more gender-responsive.¹⁵⁸ As a sub-group within the ECA, the ACGD seeks to attain gender equitability in Africa in a plethora of ways. Outlined methods implemented by the ACGD are to cooperate with African and non-African non-governmental organizations (NGOs), which include a training workshop on mainstreaming gender in programs of international cooperation for development.¹⁵⁹ Implementing a consultative workshop between the ECA, MOI University School of Medicine and Baleares University based partnerships for capacity building in gender and health.¹⁶⁰

The expected accomplishments of the ACGD are to gain a greater awareness and commitment from decision-makers and national experts in regards to the recognition of the economic value of women's contributions.¹⁶¹ ACGD also aims to strengthen national gender machineries to promote gender policies, as well as evaluate Member States based on the various tools developed by ECA/ACGD to monitor the status of women in Africa and measure the impact of gender mainstreaming.¹⁶²

Africa has not solved its crisis as it pertains to its treatment of women. However, there have been advancements that cannot be overlooked. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which was adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly is an organization specifically created to fight

¹⁴⁹ "Policy Paralysis: A Call for Action on HIV/AIDS-Related Human Rights Abuses Against Women and Girls in Africa." Human Rights Watch. December 2003. <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2003/africa1203/>

¹⁵⁰ "UN must take lead in eradicating violence against women Ban Ki-moon says." UN News Centre. March 8, 2007. <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=21806&Cr=women&Cr1=day>

¹⁵¹ "Policy Paralysis: A Call for Action on HIV/AIDS-Related Human Rights Abuses Against Women and Girls in Africa." Human Rights Watch. December 2003. <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2003/africa1203/>

¹⁵² "*Africa: Gender Inequality Fuels AIDS Crisis*" Human Rights Watch. December 1, 2003. <http://hrw.org/english/docs/2003/12/01/africa6544.htm>

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ "Programmes" African Center for Gender and Social Development. http://www.uneca.org/eca_programmes/acgd/Programmes.htm

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ "Programmes" African Center for Gender and Social Development. http://www.uneca.org/eca_programmes/acgd/Programmes.htm

¹⁶² Ibid.

discrimination against women.¹⁶³ The preamble and the 30 articles of CEDAW are described as an international bill of rights for women, defining discrimination against women and outlining an agenda of national action to end discrimination against women.¹⁶⁴

Discrimination against women according to CEDAW is defined as:

“...any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.”¹⁶⁵

States that join membership with the convention commit to end discrimination against women in all forms.¹⁶⁶ These nations bind themselves to incorporate the principle of equality of men and women in their legal system, and abolish all discriminatory laws.¹⁶⁷ They also agree to establish tribunals and other public institutions to ensure the effective protection of women against discrimination, and they must ensure the elimination of all acts of discrimination against women by persons, organizations or enterprises.¹⁶⁸

Presently, there are 185 countries which are members of the CEDAW, which is over ninety percent of the members of the United Nations.¹⁶⁹ Besides being bound to keep the provisions of the CEDAW convention nations are bound to submit national reports, at least every four years.¹⁷⁰ In South Africa’s first CEDAW report then current-President Nelson Mandela affirmed that “...freedom will not be fully attained unless women have been truly emancipated and empowered in all spheres of life.”¹⁷¹ The government of Zimbabwe became a member state to CEDAW in 1991, in their report they outlined advancements legislative measures taken in the equitable distribution of matrimonial property, the removal of sex discrimination in public political life, and employment.¹⁷²

Additionally the African Union (AU) collectively signed a Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa, which is important because their decision on gender parity is a historic achievement that does not yet exist in any other continent or regional organizations.¹⁷³ The AU committed to continue the expansion and accelerate efforts to promote gender equality at all levels, determined to build on already achieved progress in addressing issues of major concern to the women of Africa.¹⁷⁴

Conclusion

Regarding the issue of gender inequality, fiscal and employment opportunities are not yet available to many African women. The state of gender inequality in many African nations hinders social solidarity. In Africa there are multiple reasons for the lack of gender equality, many of which are regional, and cultural. Through partnerships and specialized regional bodies that understand the cultures, much can be done to eradicate gender inequality. It is imperative that the ECA combat the quandary of gender inequality from a regionally and culturally specific vantage point to combat gender discrimination in all of its forms.

¹⁶³ “Text of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.” Department of Economic and Social Affairs: Division for the Advancement of Women. <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/cedaw.htm>

¹⁶⁴ “Overview of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.” Department of Economic and Social Affairs: Division for the Advancement of Women. <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/>

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ “Text of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.” Department of Economic and Social Affairs: Division for the Advancement of Women. <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/cedaw.htm>

¹⁷⁰ “Overview of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.” Department of Economic and Social Affairs: Division for the Advancement of Women. <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/>

¹⁷¹ “South African Republic Initial Report.” Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/reports.htm>. p.2

¹⁷² “Zimbabwe Republic Initial Report.” Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. 1998. <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/reports.htm>. p.17

¹⁷³ *African Union - Gender Equality in Africa: SOLEMN DECLARATION ON GENDER EQUALITY IN AFRICA*. African Union. <http://www.un.org/ecosocdev/geninfo/afrec/bpaper/maineng.htm>

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

Committee Directive

Although violence against women was briefly discussed in the guide it would behoove delegates to further research and analyze the atrocities of all forms aimed at specific genders. The international community has spoken against violence against woman, and Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon stated that the impunity for violence against women – for too long tolerated under the cover of cultural practices and silently condoned by governments – must end, and the United Nations must spearhead the effort to eliminate the pandemic.¹⁷⁵ Subsequently, the ECA’s role is to support governments' efforts in designing and implementing gender-responsive policies and programs that will combat atrocities aimed at women.¹⁷⁶ So begin to examine how the ECA can come up with constructive policies that support gender equality while addressing culturally sensitive issues such as safe sex, FGM, the Islam faith, and other “social norms.”

¹⁷⁵ “UN must take lead in eradicating violence against women Ban Ki-moon says.” UN News Centre. March 8, 2007.
<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=21806&Cr=women&Cr1=day>

¹⁷⁶ “Programmes” African Center for Gender and Social Development.
http://www.uneca.org/eca_programmes/acgd/Programmes.htm