

The Exploitation of Natural Resources in Africa

*Special Political and Decolonization
Committee (SPECPOL)*

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Introduction to chairs:

Hi, I'm Salman AlRomayan, a finance student at KSU. I've always loved debates and public speaking and after finding out about MUNs I knew this was the best outlet for me and I've now participated in 12 MUN conferences. I spend my free time watching movies, or video essays and riding horses. you'll often find me playing padel or driving around and listening to music.

Hi, I'm Zeina Badran, an Electrical Engineering student at Alfaisal University. I love working on all sorts of electronic gadgets in my free time. Apart from that, I'm really into music, Formula 1 racing, and dystopian movies. But here's something interesting about me: I've been involved in Model United Nations (MUN) since high school, and I'm thrilled to be chairing for the third time now. It's a role where I get to lead discussions and help others develop their diplomatic and public speaking skills. I'm excited to be a part of this MUN journey once again!

PSUMUN

WELCOME ADDRESS TO PSUMUN 2023

Dear Delegates,

We are very happy to have you all with us at PSUMUN'23. This year we have the largest event we have had at PSUMUN since its beginning and we are honored that you are a part of it.

This year we have a large number of committees and a plethora of delegates from all around the Kingdom and beyond. We hope you use this opportunity to research the topics that will help you learn more about the past, present, and future of our world. We would also like you to learn from the other delegates that may come from completely different backgrounds.

Model UN conferences are very fun and entertaining, but we hope that PSUMUN becomes more than that to you. We hope that you leave our conference taking a step into the right direction of your future. Everything we learn in life is one step further on the ladder of success and PSUMUN aims to help you with that.

We strive to help educate our delegates to learn more about world issues and learn all the amazing skills that come with joining Model UN conferences. We wish you all the best in the conference and in all your future endeavors.

With that, we hope you have fruitful and constructive debates. The SG yields the floor to you.

Good luck!

*Best regards,
Hend Moughrabiah, Secretary - General*

COMMITTEE OVERVIEW:

The Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) considers a broad range of issues covering a cluster of five decolonization-related agenda items, the effects of atomic radiation, questions relating to information, a comprehensive review of the question of peacekeeping operations as well as a review of special political missions, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), Israeli Practices and settlement activities affecting the rights of the Palestinian people and other Arabs of the occupied territories, and International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space.

(Source: [un.org](https://www.un.org))

Introduction

The Exploitation of Natural Resources in Africa

Overview:

Africa is a treasury of natural resources, around some 30 percent of the world's mineral reserves, 8 percent of the world's natural gas and 12 percent of the world's oil reserves. However, an intriguing economic paradox comes into play – the Resource Curse

***The Resource Curse** is an economic phenomenon often observed in countries abundant in export-driven natural resources, such as oil, gas, minerals, and more. Historically, these countries often find themselves grappling with economic, social, and political stability despite their valuable resources.*

Africa serves as a vivid example of this contradiction. The continent is blessed with a wealth of natural riches yet simultaneously harbors some of the world's poorest countries. The utilization of its natural resources involves a complex web of activities, including the exploitation of a wide array of valuable assets such as mining minerals, oil, gas, and timber. Historically, Africa has been a significant supplier of these resources, drawing the attention of international entities, including multinational corporations. Nevertheless, resource utilization has risen to many issues, and concerns.

Some of these issues and concerns may include:

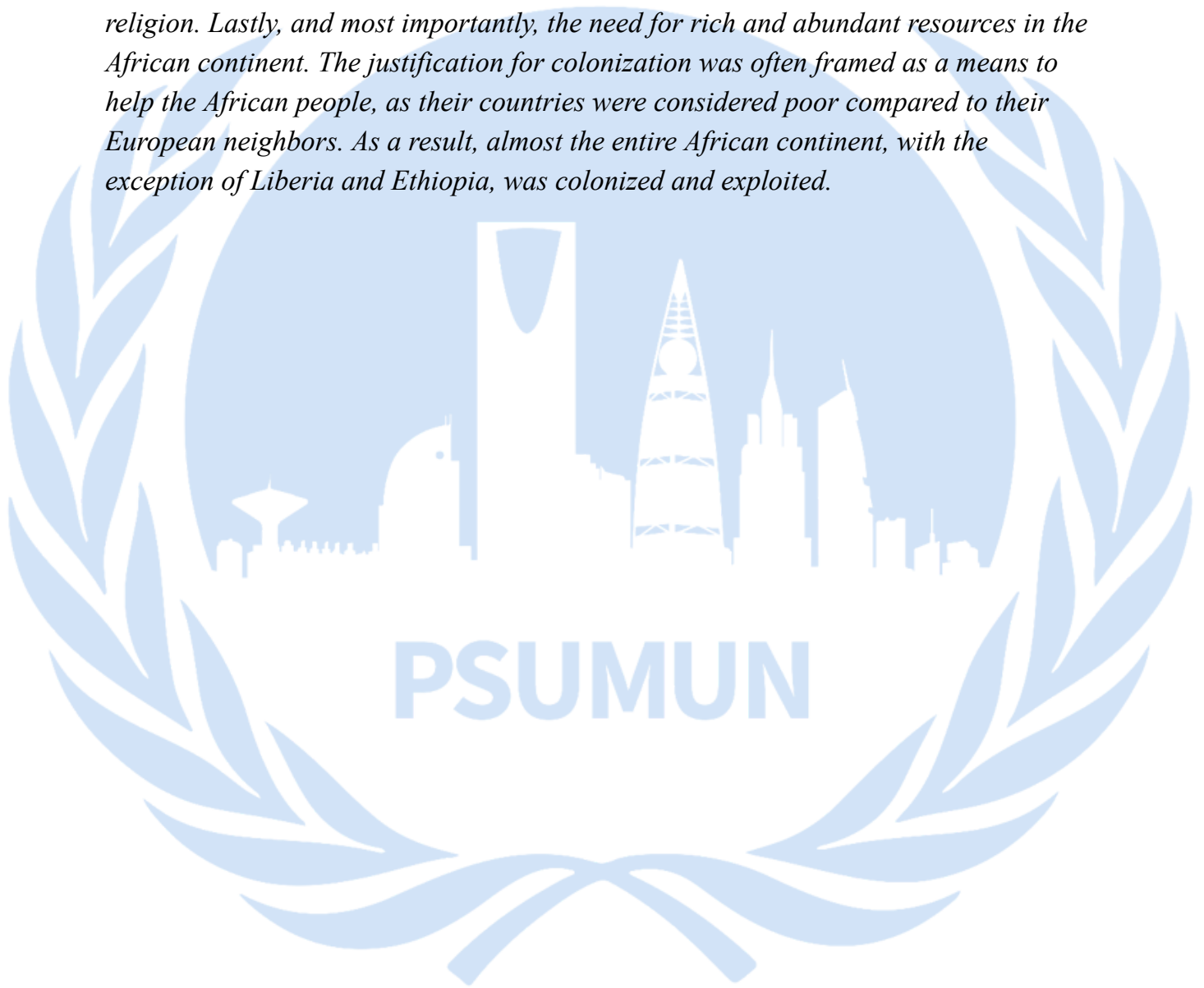
- *Economic Dependency:*
- *Inequality*
- *Environmental Degradation*
- *Corruption and poor governance*
- *Conflict*

These problems highlight how difficult it is to manage important resources for the general welfare of African communities to achieve long-term economic, social, and political stability.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

A number of variables have affected the exploitation of natural resources in Africa, with colonial powers playing a significant role in this process and contributing to the resource curse. The Scramble for Africa is a term used to describe the partition of Africa, which involved the invasion and colonization of African countries by European powers. In 1887, the European powers were motivated to expand their empires,

leading them to extend their territorial claims across Africa. Most of the imperial powers gathered at the Berlin Conference, where they agreed upon certain rules that aligned with their imperialist ambitions. During the conference, they discussed various topics. Firstly, the valuable geographical positioning of many African cities, which provided lands suitable for ports, mining, and trade. Secondly, the desire to spread Christianity and establish more Christian territories. The colonial powers, with their Christian background, were interested in Africa as a means to spread their religion. Lastly, and most importantly, the need for rich and abundant resources in the African continent. The justification for colonization was often framed as a means to help the African people, as their countries were considered poor compared to their European neighbors. As a result, almost the entire African continent, with the exception of Liberia and Ethiopia, was colonized and exploited.



MAJOR COUNTRIES INVOLVED:

The exploitation of Africa's natural resources has been an ongoing issue involving numerous countries. Some of the countries that have been involved in this exploitation include:

- **Colonial Powers** including the United Kingdom, France, Belgium, and Poland exploited Africa's natural resources during the colonial era. They extracted minerals such as diamonds, gemstones, and oil which have later have affected sustaining the African economies and environmental degradation.
 - During the early 1900s, Belgium established a colony in the Congo, and it is widely regarded as a stark example of the European leaders' ruthless exploitation of Africa, particularly in the case of Congo's abundant rubber resources.
- The **United States** has been involved in the exploitation of African natural resources, including mining for minerals, oil and gas extraction, and timber logging.
 - Several U.S. companies have invested in the exploration, drilling, and production of oil and natural gas resources in Equatorial Guinea. This investment has contributed to the country's economic development and has increased the U.S.'s energy supply. However, this involvement has also faced criticism for its impact on governance and human rights in the region.
- **China** has been actively engaging in the exploitation of African natural resources. Some of the involvement includes mining for materials and securing access to oil and gas resources .
 - In Zambia, Chinese-operated copper mines have faced allegations of worker abuse. These mining companies have raised concerns about the treatment of their workers, who have reportedly experienced labor and human rights abuses. Additionally, there have been concerns regarding safety regulations, which have resulted in accidents and injuries among the labor force.
- **India** has been engaged in the exploitation of Africa's resources in the coal mining industry. Some of their activities involve mining for various materials and securing access to oil and gas resources.
 - Indian companies have invested in Botswana, a key global supplier of rough diamonds, responsible for around 30% of the world's supply. However, diamond extraction in Botswana has raised concerns about labor conditions and environmental impacts, reflecting issues seen in other African resource exploitation.

TIMELINE :

From 1520 until 1888 European slave-traders transshipped 15 million Africans as slaves to the Americas. Twelve to fifteen generations lived as slaves in the Americas. The total slaves deployed over the 370 years in the Americas may have been considerably more than 100 million at a time when the world population was less than 1 billion.

African countries became “decolonised” from 1957 until 1974 during the height of the Cold War as rather “vulnerable” entities when President Eisenhower pressurized European countries to get out of Africa hurriedly (when Khrushchev displayed interest in Africa, Eisenhower feared communist- inspired anti-colonial wars). France's economic interests in Africa have remained important since the end of the Cold War. More than 40,000 French companies are active in Africa, dozens of which are large multinationals such as TotalEnergies, Areva, or Vinci.

In fact, France's exports to Africa have increased from 13 billion dollars to 28 billion in the last 20 years, while French foreign direct investment has increased tenfold, from 5.9 billion euros in 2000 to 52.6 billion in 2017. However, it is important to note that while these investments and economic flows have increased, France's market share has drastically decreased since the early 2000s. Indeed, while French exports to Africa have doubled, the total size of the market has quadrupled (from 100 billion dollars to 400); France's market share has therefore been divided by 2 in 20 years. While France remains a crucial player in the African market, its position has been compromised by other foreign investors such as China, who have recently showcased their interest in the continent. From 2010 to 2015, Chinese investors granted \$2.5 billion in loans for infrastructure to Côte d'Ivoire alone. And their sights are set on the entirety of Francophone Africa as they seek new opportunities for development in the private sector. By the end of 2017, China's capital increased at a rate of 332% throughout the region. This leaves China in an economically advantageous position, thereby making their monetary gain a legitimate threat to French investors.

SOLUTIONS:

ATTEMPTED SOLUTIONS IN THE PAST:

- 1. Final report of the Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic extended pursuant to Security Council resolution 2588 (2021) (S/2022/527)*
- 2. United Nations General Assembly Resolution 1803 established the principle of permanent sovereignty over natural resources*
- 3. Final report of the Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth of DR Congo (S/2003/1027)*

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS:

- 1. The creation of a legal framework that will protect African resources.*
- 2. Providing African countries with financial and economic support to end the cycle of neo-colonialism*
- 3. Creating a UN oversight committee to regulate the use and extraction of African resources*

Conclusion

The use and control of natural resources has historically generated inequality in Africa. Climate change and the responses to it have exacerbated these inequalities. The dominance of the market, representing corporate interests over social

and environmental interests, is clearly socially, economically and environmentally unsustainable. Instead of the current production system which emphasizes market mechanisms to allocate the costs and benefits of nature, what is required is

a social structure of accumulation that places economic justice over profit and, more practically, institutes an inclusive, sustainable model for growth (Tabb, 2012). With reference to climate change, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) notes that 'equitable socio-economic development in Africa may strengthen its resilience to various external shocks, including climate change' (2013, p. 1121).

- 1. Is the already existing legal framework adequate? If not, should Member States discuss legal reforms concerning the exploitation of African resources?*
- 2. Which measures must be taken in order to ensure the elimination of unjust exploitation?*
- 3. How much influence should non-African countries have on natural resource policy in Africa?*
- 4. Should the international community have oversight over African resources?*
- 5. Should governments and entities that have exploited African resources pay reparations to African countries?*

Useful links:

<https://medium.com/illumination/neocolonialism-how-western-corporations-are-exploiting-africa-d0e197af1950>

<https://press.un.org/en/2007/sc9060.doc.htm>

<https://repository.uneca.org/handle/10855/42354>

<https://www.wider.unu.edu/publication/rethinking-african-debt-and-exploitation-natural-resources>

<Ecosoc6831.doc.htm>

<https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/africaatlse/2017/07/12/the-cfa-franc-french-monetary-imperialism-in-africa/>



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