



African Union



Committee Summary

Since the African Union's inception in 2002 (having evolved from the OAU), its ultimate goal has been to show a united front of African nations addressing some of the continent's most pressing concerns. Indeed, the central commitment of the Union is to have African nations working together to solve African problems to eventually create a self-sustaining continent. Its 54 member states include every nation on the continent, with the AU's newest member being South Sudan (who joined in 2011). At each gathering of the African Union, nations discuss the best possible solution to the continent's problems and leave with recommendations as to what steps individual governments should take to resolve the problem that was discussed. This meeting of AU states will follow that same model.

Topic I: Promoting Democracy

Introduction

On the African continent, colonization defined much of the 17th, 18th, 19th, and even 20th centuries, and thus Africa has deep colonial roots with European nations. In the past century, however, many African nations have become independent sovereign states who have been tasked with self-government. The legacy of authoritarian colonial rule is sadly still visible in many of these nations, and as a result, one of the biggest issues facing the continent



has been the promotion of a fair and well executed democracy that ensures justice and civil liberties for all. Africa has been relatively successful regarding the quantitative use of democracy, as 44 of the 54 African states are recognized by the United Nations as free democracies. However, the larger problem that has faced the African continent has been ensuring the integrity and equality of those democracies. For many years, African nations have ranked among some of the lowest in the world in the United Nations democracy index. As a result, the focus of efforts with regards to promoting democracy has rightfully shifted to making existing democratic systems fairer and representative of the people. For these reasons, the focus of promoting democracy in this assembly of the African Union will be on addressing corruption (specifically in the public sector) and vote buying.

Current Situation

Today, as a continent, corruption in Africa is worse than almost anywhere else in the world. Recently, the UN released corruption rankings that saw five African states in the top 10. South Africa, one of the most influential nations on the continent, was ranked as the most corrupt nation in the world. Sudan, South Sudan, Eritrea and Libya were not far behind ranking 3rd, 5th, 8th-T, and 8th-T respectively. Sadly, according to the United Nations, the situation is only getting worse. Only 15 years ago, South Africa was the 35th most corrupt nation in the world, but, as previously mentioned, it has recently declined to become the globe's most corrupt country. A similar trend can be observed for the rest of the continent. One of the biggest issues with regards to corruption has been in the government, also known as the public sector. Investigations by the South African social Studies Survey show that there is a significant amount



of public sector funds being diverted into private interests. While it is impossible to generalize for every case, much of this stealing of public funds can be attributed to politicians simply attempting to make extra money for themselves. Furthermore, citizens are noticing, and are unhappy – a study released in November of 2013 polling 34 African states showed that citizens of Africa are beginning to see corruption within their countries as cause for concern. Corruption in the government goes beyond money simply being diverted away from it, however. The 2013 Afrobarometer showed that 63% of Sierra Leonean citizens reported paying a bribe for a public service, with many African countries also posting percentages in the 50s and 40s. What has become clear in Africa is that despite many countries having democratic systems of government, the integrity of those governments once they are elected is often compromised.

It is evident that once many African governments are elected, they in many cases handle public money inappropriately, but what is perhaps even more concerning is the controversy around whether or not the right people are elected to office. This brings into focus the issue of vote buying, an increasingly prevalent problem in African democracies. Vote buying – paying citizens for votes – is by nature completely undemocratic, however some would argue that its effect overall on an emerging democracy is actually more positive than negative. Vote buying has been shown to improve voter turnout, especially in some of the most impoverished regions of nations. There are those that would argue that the uptick in citizen involvement in democracy is more important than the arguably small and almost impossible to track difference vote buying can make in any given election. Furthermore, in secure, private, and anonymous elections (which a majority African nations have) it is nearly impossible for the party buying the vote to tell if that person did in fact vote according to his or



her agreement. Despite these assurances, it is impossible to deny that the existence of vote buying compromises the integrity of elections, and in some nations the assurances detailed above simply do not apply. Afrobarometers released in recent years have shown that the most likely targets of vote buying are those affected by poverty, generally in swing states during extremely close elections. It is for this reason that vote buying can be closely linked to extreme levels of poverty. Indeed, as citizens get more desperate for money, it becomes easier for corrupt candidates to buy their way into power. Therefore, it would appear that possibly the most effective way to combat vote buying would be economic development.

Role of the African Union

The role of the African Union in this issue will be to come out with a clearly defined plan as to how to address both of these problems with democratic justice, and perhaps others that threaten the freedom of African people. Although the African Union has no material power regarding forcing any independent, sovereign state to do anything they do not wish to do, strong recommendations can be made and it is presumed that nations will follow suit with the requests of the union. The onus falls on representatives of the present nations to debate, negotiate and come up with a solution that will benefit their own state as well as others to gain support from other delegates. Questions to consider are as follows:



Questions to Consider

1. How can those guilty of corruption within government be rooted out and exposed?
2. What can be done to prevent further abuse of power within government?
3. How can the African Union ensure that public funding of nations goes to the right place?
4. Is vote buying beneficial or not, and if not, what can be done to stop it?
5. Can the improvement of the economic situation of impoverished people in Africa help maintain the integrity of democracy? If so, how can their situation be improved?
6. Has your government ever engaged in any of these practices? How does that affect what solutions you hope to see recommended by the African Union?

Sources

<http://africannewsupdates.com/2016/09/21/un-declares-sa-corrupt-country-world/>

<http://www.corruptionwatch.org.za/why-is-corruption-getting-worse-in-south-africa/>

http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/polisci/wgape/papers/17_Kramon.pdf

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/259992513_Poverty_and_vote_buying_Survey-based_evidence_from_Africa



Topic II: Economic Development

Introduction

African cities are growing at a rapid pace, and in 2009, 395 million Africans (40% of the continent's population) resided in urban areas. This number is expected to triple by 2050, when the number of people living in urban areas will reach more than 1.2 billion (60% of the continent's population). While Africa is currently considered to be the least urbanized continent in the world, it currently has the highest rate of urbanization and urban growth. Consider that in 1950, the urban inhabitants in Africa numbered only 33 million. Although the rate of urbanization has declined, Africa's urban population still grew 1.7 times faster than the world average from 1950 to 2005. And perhaps most pertinently, most African cities will double their population within the next 15 years. This large movement of people from rural to urban areas has had a significant impact on Africa's economy. Over the past 50 years, the center of Africa's economy has changed from the agrarian countryside to cities. Now, 55% of Africa's GDP comes from urban areas. African cities are on track to become drivers of domestic growth as well as technological innovation. This all being said, currently Africa's cities suffer from low-quality infrastructure and services, which hinder both its economic growth and social development. It is estimated that the current demand for investment in basic urban infrastructure is between 15-20 billion USD per year, and demand for urban housing is between 20-25 billion USD. Due to this large demand for economic growth, foreign direct investment reached a record 60 billion USD in 2015. Countries are greatly benefiting from this foreign aid: in 2013, foreign investment accounted for 2% of Ethiopia's GDP.



Africa is currently experiencing unprecedented population growth, with the population expected to nearly double by 2040 and triple by 2070. This rapid shift has caused a large bulge in youth populations on the continent. Within the next 20 years, Africa is projected to see more people joining the labour force than the rest of the world combined. Although Africa's overall workforce is increasing, currently the number of skilled workers is not. The ratio of scientists and researchers in sub-Saharan Africa is just 79 per million, whereas the world average is 1,081 per million. Moreover, only 22% of people in Africa are emerging with a degree in a "STEM" field, quite a low number by world standards. This lack of skilled workers will greatly limit the ability of the African economy to grow throughout the 21st century. As the African Union, it is your job to determine how to increase the number of skilled workers in Africa, in order to ensure the future of the continent is safe in the hands of your youth.

Even though Africa is gaining more attention from investors, one of the largest limits on growth is the lack of infrastructure. Sub-Saharan Africa needs an infusion of 93 billion USD for infrastructure over the next decade in order for them to be able to compete with other providers. As the volume of trade with other countries increases, a lack of ports, roads, and other means of transportation greatly limit the capacity of Africa to compete with foreign markets, as the cost and time to move products is significantly detrimental. According to the African Development Bank, the demand for container trafficking will increase by 6-8% in Africa over the next 30 years. Another large issue with the infrastructure in Africa is electricity. It is estimated that 1-4% of Africa's entire GDP is lost each year due to power outages. Additionally, it is estimated that only one in three Africans have access to electricity, and those who do can pay up to 7 times more than consumers in other areas. Currently,



due of the volatility of the region, investors are mostly investing in short term projects, where returns are quick. Foreign investors are generally unwilling to devote their resources to projects such as infrastructure, where the returns come over longer periods of time, even though the rate of return on investments in Africa is greater than that of any other developing region. It must also be said that some African nations have experienced serious hostility from their citizens regarding foreign involvement in their economies, despite the jobs foreign investment provides. Ensuring foreign investors respect citizens' rights and do not take advantage of the very poor continent is key to the African citizens' well-being. Finally, it is important to note that no African country wants a return to the colonial days of centuries past, where Africans were dominated by other masters. Ensuring the economy is truly run by Africans is key to both the Africa psychology and development moving forward, and should be a primary goal of the African Union. It is your job to decide how to increase spending on infrastructure - without it, Africa will not be able to reach its full potential economically. This being said, it is also very important to keep in mind the concerns of your citizens, even as you make these difficult economic decisions.

Finally, agriculture still employs 60-70% of Africa's workforce, but only amounts to 20% of the total value added to the continent. Even though there have been large policy commitments made, the productivity of the agriculture sector remains less than adequate. It is vital that smallholders get access to larger markets through investment and advances in technology, as without these they simply will not stay competitive. Regardless, African agriculture is expected to be a \$1 trillion USD industry by 2030 – ensuring that it is an efficient and valuable use of the African workforce is vital.



A good case study in African economic growth is Kenya. Kenya aspires to be an upper-middle income country (a group that includes Mexico and Turkey), yet the country's job growth simply cannot keep pace with its economic growth. It has the highest youth unemployment rate in East Africa, and from 2008 to 2013, the disparity between job growth and the growth in the working age population was 300,000. Ultimately, it is clear that the creation of well-paying, stable jobs is the key to economic growth on the continent, whether it is through investment, the agricultural sector, or an increasingly service based urban economy. In order to affect real change, multi-national partnerships and co-operation will also likely be required on the continent.

Questions to Consider

1. How can the African Union increase the number of skilled workers in Africa?
2. How can the African Union incentivize investors to help improve infrastructure in Africa?
3. How much foreign influence should there be in the continent's economic development?
4. What sectors should be focused on for economic development in the future?
5. Is an agriculturally focused economy detrimental to Africa's development?
6. What economic areas require development in your nation? How can this be done?



Sources

<http://www.mckinsey.com/global-themes/middle-east-and-africa/the-case-for-investing-in-africa>

<http://www.un.org/en/ecosoc/integration/pdf/economiccommissionforafrica.pdf>

<http://www.economist.com/news/business/21640327-private-equity-investors-are-getting-hot-africa-businesses-there-need-all-capital>

<http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/opinion/2015/06/30/africa-still-poised-to-become-the-next-great-investment-destination>