



**Africa is not a country**

**Francois Brits  
(Uhuru Worlds & Digital Matter Files)**

ESTHER MHLANGU 2008

# What will we cover:

1. How to refer to African nations in debates
2. Is the African Union even functional (or real)?
3. The African Continental Free Trade Agreement and Monetary Union
4. Modern Warfare: A brief look at the most important regional conflicts



# How to refer to African nations in debates

- Problem at the moment:
  - Western media's over-simplification of complex issues
  - The brevity needed for debate references
  - Anti-colonial resistance v History
- Judges and speakers are too easily accepting of lack of specificity (e.g. "Many countries in Africa have corrupt governments and suffer under-development as a result")

# How to refer to African nations in debates

- Diversify the media you consume
  - Avoid The Economist's view on Africa
  - Instead, follow: (AllAfrica.com) <http://www.allafrica.com/> , (The New Humanitarian) <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/> , (The Africa Report <https://www.theafricareport.com/>)
  - International News sources: BBC Africa, Council on Foreign Relations
  - Don't underestimate Wikipedia
- Acknowledge the complexity of Africa's issues

# Is the African Union even functional (or real)?

- The AU is a representative body made up of 55 member states (incl. Western Sahara) that govern over 1.3 billion people.
- Diversity of languages represented: Arabic, English, French, Spanish, Portuguese and Swahili
- The Assembly of the African Union makes all of the most important decisions:
  - Set policies and budgets of the Union
  - Decide on the action that should be taken based on reports from other bodies
  - Monitor implementation of policies

# What important decisions has the AU taken?

- Diplomacy and research:
  - Easing Tensions during the 2019 Madagascar elections
  - Commencing negotiations in the Central African Republic
  - The Peace and Security Council's work on curtailing child marriages and illicit financial flows
- AU COVID-19 Response Fund
  - Raise funds to support the Africa CDC and member states' public health initiatives
- Silencing the Guns 2020

# African Continental Free Trade Area

- The ACFTA is the largest by number of participating countries (54/55) and has three main aims:
  - Creating a single market and customs union
  - Achieve sustainable growth and food security
  - Enhance competitiveness on the global stage
- Merit: 6 out of the 10 fastest growing economies in the world (Rwanda the HQ, has the most consistent growth)
- Comparison to Europe: Vastness of the continent makes trade more challenging (Africa is 7 ½ times larger than the European Union)



# Single currency

- As per the Abuja Treaty, it would be implemented by the African Central Bank (yet to be established) by 2028
- The difficulty of monetary union without effective fiscal union (i.e. Nigeria's initial concerns over the AFCTA)
- Debt Crises: \$503 Billion in foreign debt due before 2023 (IMF) while loans increase after COVID-19
- 24 countries have surpassed the 55% debt-to-GDP ratio (necessary for supporting citizens during recessions)
- ECOWAS has a common currency
  - Integrated Labour market
  - Price and wage flexibility
  - Centralized fiscal transfers
  - Similar business cycles

# AU implementation crisis

- “The curse of consecutive crises”
- Sectarian and political divides (Anglophone/Francophone conflicts)
- Infrastructural issues
- Leadership stagnancy
- Military enforcement

# The largest geopolitical conflicts

- Morocco and Western Sahara  
<https://theconversation.com/morocco-and-western-sahara-a-decades-long-war-of-attribution-122084>
- Sudan and South Sudan:  
<https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2019/country-chapters/south-sudan>
- Tigray:  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/05/world/africa/ethiopia-tigray-conflict-explained.html>
- The North African split:  
[https://ecfr.eu/publication/a\\_return\\_to\\_africa\\_why\\_north\\_african\\_states\\_are\\_looking\\_south/](https://ecfr.eu/publication/a_return_to_africa_why_north_african_states_are_looking_south/)
- Cabo Delgado:  
<https://mg.co.za/africa/2020-10-21-the-natural-resource-curse-in-cabo-delgado/>

# Cabo Delgado, Mozambique



# Tigray



# ChinAfrica: Belt and Road Initiative

- Reading recommendations:
  - <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/19186444.2020.1795527>; -
  - <https://saiia.org.za/research/chinas-belt-and-road-plan-how-will-it-affect-africa/>
- Targets on the Horn of Africa to build seaports, trains and roads.
- The relationship precedes the BRI
- Since 2000 it has provided \$143 Billion in loans to Africa, with an unknown number of direct investments estimated at \$60 Billion since 2018

# China's Vision

