

African Union

Topic 1: Access to Education for Women and Girls

Access to education is a fundamental right for all humans. Education promotes empowerment, individual freedom, many children and adults are still deprived of this right. Education is a powerful tool that can be used by those who access to it to lift themselves out of poverty and fully participate as citizens. Not granting the same access of education to women and girls as opposed to boys and men have been the biggest obstacle that civil servants, national officials, government officials, and international organizations have been trying to solve. The problem with the lack of access to education is the inequality of opportunities for girls and women pertaining to education. As a result of this, girls and women are faced with challenges such as employment, lack of empowerment to address health issues and more.

Topic 2: Foreign Direct Investments in Africa

In a globalized world, foreign direct investment (FDI) and foreign aid are key drivers of development, employment, productivity improvement, technological progress and economic growth. The FDI facilitates the integration of the continent into the global economy, increases employment generation and growth, enhances production efficiency, raises skills of local manpower. The problem is that Africa still fails to be a major recipient of the FDI compared other regions such as Asia. Foreign aid has created an African dependency on institutions such as the world bank and the International Monetary Fund. Larger countries attract the FDI, however, regardless of their size, countries that are more open, politically stable and offering higher return to investment strongly attract FDI. Countries that create a proper investment climate for investors are more likely to succeed. Threats to regional peace and security along with the lack of governance institutions jeopardize Africa's intentions to attract more FDI. These big investors play a fundamental role in Africa's economic development. However, this can lead to African economies becoming deeply dependant on their investors. This can result in a loss of bargaining power when cutting deals with powerful multinationals. In order to attract more FDI, properly manage investments and foreign aid and progressively slow indebtedness to financial institutions, there are three main recommendations. In order to attract more FDI, countries need to collaborate with their current investors to promote their economies to other potential investors.

Topic 3: Promoting Integrity and Transparency in Democratically Elected Governments

*When discussing integrity in a government, the term refers to a government that holds itself consistent with a set of moral or ethical principals and standards, its internal operations and its dealings with private companies. Integrity means that the government uses its resources and funds in the interest of helping its people, which makes misappropriation of resources for personal gain easier to identify and more likely to be reported. Transparency concerns the governments ability to be open in the clear disclosure of information, rules, plans, processes and actions. With greater transparency, citizens better understand what the government is doing with their resources and taxes. This also extends to citizens that being provided with clear information of government services, such as the requirements for a small business license. In 2002, the African union established a program called the African Peer Review Mechanism, that aims to encourage the adoption of policies and programs that foster political stability, economic growth and sustainable development. Following certain assessments, the APRM gives

recommendations to the government and how to address the issues that they have identified in their review. The APRM is an African way of improving governance, resulting in less infringement on sovereignty and more suitable accommodations for individual countries. This effort demonstrates an excellent start by the African Union to promote transparency and integrity in governments across the continent.