

**Council: AFRICAN UNION**

**Representing: GAMBIA**

**Delegate name: LAUREN GOOD**

**From: ST. JOHN'S-KILMARNOCK**

**Topic: (1) ACCESS TO EDUCATION FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS**

Access to Education is the ability that people have to attend school or gain an education. While the United Nations has adopted treaties such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as well as the African Charter on Human and People's Rights which both state that 'every individual shall have the right to education', access to education continues to be a predominant issue in Africa. General access to education is a significant problem in Africa due to barriers such as societal and cultural expectations or circumstances, however, women and girls often face more barriers than males with regards to their access to education. It is important to address the specific issues that females face with their access to education that can be contributed to their identification as a female.

In the past, access to education has been an issue that has not been extensively acted upon by Gambia specifically concerning females. However, it is nonetheless a prevalent issue that should be recognized in order to uphold gender equality in education and minimize gender bias in access to education. Discussions have taken place to formalize and initiate the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative in Gambia which will target some of the barriers faced by females when considering pursuing an education. Collaboration between Gambia and the UNGEI to promote education for girls could potentially diminish barriers such as the expectations that females work within their household as well as work to combat the negative beliefs surrounding not only a woman's mental capabilities but also their physical capabilities. In the past, the African Charter on Human and People's Rights ensured effort to elimination of discrimination against females and guaranteed equal access to education and protection in educational institutions. While this charter expressed the idealistic goals of what Africa should aim for, it has been growing outdated and requires reevaluation.

Education gives independence and opportunity and allows people to become contributing members of intellectually demanding industries as well as more easily adapt to the ever-changing society of the world. By restricting the access to education that women have, the amount of talent and ability recognized in the population has been immediately limited since not all citizens are given equal access to develop and learn. Gambia would like to remind delegates that all countries in this committee agreed upon the right of every individual to access to education in The African Charter on Human and People's Rights. This article in the treaty must now be upheld by addressing the issue of gender inequality in accessing education. Gambia is going to propose that an emphasis is placed on having an increased amount of competent women in positions of power and respect. These women would potentially serve as role-models to young girls and examples to adults of the capabilities of educated women. By doing so, this would allow for the deterioration of some cultural expectations that disallow or dissuade girls from pursuing an education. The presence of the barriers against women is considered to be the issue with gender biased access to education and Gambia looks forward to working collaboratively with other countries of the African Union to consider solutions and resolve this issue.

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**Topic: (2) FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT IN AFRICA**

Foreign direct investment in one of the potential options in developing and improving the African economy. FDI is investments made by large multinational corporations directly into purchasing buildings, machinery, or equipment outside of the company's home country. High FDI flows are a sign of a stable economy and can attract even more investors. While increasing FDI would be a good strategy for creating jobs or increasing income, Africa is one of the regions in the world with consistently low FDI inflows and has grown to be considerably dependent on the little FDI that it has flowing into the country.

In the past, Gambia has not had significant FDI inflows or outflows. As Gambia is the smallest country of Africa, and the 34th smallest country in the world, it does not require as much foreign investment inflows to maintain a stable economy as a large country in size and population would require. However, there is no doubt benefits to increasing the FDI inflows in a country. In 2002, not only did the Gambia take advantage of a U.S initiative to provide sovereign credit rankings to increase transparency and attract FDI, but the country also created The Gambia Investment Promotion and Free Zones Agency which was later revised to become the Gambia Investment and Export Promotion Agency. This agency and the laws it stated were created to attract investors. Gambia sees the potential in the private sector however they have taken advantage of their ability to more easily operate in executive branches of industry. In the recent years, the majority of investments in Gambia have gone towards funding for power generation, financial, and IT sectors. This proves potential is secondary, tertiary, and even quaternary business sectors which tend to provide higher profit margins than businesses engaging in activity solely in the primary business sectors collecting raw materials. Gambia's notable economic and political stability can give some credit to their forward integration in business.

Foreign direct investment provides countries with the potential for employment growth, higher incomes, and increased economic stability. With combined efforts within Africa and between nations, the countries of the African Union can work to use foreign direct investments to increase the economy and financial independence of the region. A solution that Gambia proposes is an emphasis on forward integration into new business sectors and industries. Many countries within Africa currently depend on their natural resources and must adapt to in order to be successful and consider what developed economies have done. While demand for raw materials is constantly growing, African countries must consider that services are also in high demand. Expanding into the service industry can create jobs as well as attract foreign investors. African countries could also choose to expand into the secondary sector of business and process the raw materials from their country themselves. Currently, many foreign multinational corporations that invest in the raw materials of Africa often have them transported and processed elsewhere in the world for cheap labour costs. If African countries were to process their own materials, the price of the goods would increase and many more jobs would be created as a result. Gambia looks forward to collaborating with other countries to develop these ideas and discuss alternative methods of increasing FDI with other African nations.

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**Topic: (3) PROMOTING INTEGRITY AND TRANSPARENCY IN DEMOCRATICALLY ELECTED GOVERNMENTS**

Corruption is a significant problem in Africa. Whether it be encouraged by opportunity or ability, governments and officials are taking advantage of their countries resources for personal gains. Integrity and transparency in democratic governments gives citizens reason to trust and cooperate with the governing bodies of the country. Corruption affects a country's development and growth and while it is so prevalent in Africa it is necessary that it be addressed to disallow further hinderance on the development of the economy.

While Gambia is no exception to governmental corruption, President Yahya Jammeh has been strict about enforcing regulations against corruption and punishing those found guilty. In late June of 2016 27 government officials were fired from their positions under suspicion of fraudulently acquiring items while in power. This event was public and enforced Gambia's belief of integrity within the government as well as the enforcement of consequences for fraud and corruption. While Gambia considers corruption to be a serious offense, complete transparency is not supported by the representatives of the country. Citizens trust their president and have faith in his decisions, therefore they do not feel the need to be involved in all the decisions he makes. Some circumstances or decisions could be misinterpreted if transparent and while not being 'hidden' from public eye, not all choices need to be publicized. If total transparency was enforced, it would be difficult to then limit other countries from acquiring information on sensitive topics to Gambia that could cause concern to the safety and well-being of those protected by the modesty and confidentiality within the government.

Governmental integrity is key to forming trust with citizens. Without trust a government lacks control and is limited in their development. One proposal Gambia is going to suggest is the requirement of the formation of a supervisory branch within a country's government to enforce rules, laws, and morality. This branch would also enforce the consequences of disregarding any laws or expectations. With a supervisory branch such as this corruption would be limited and decisions could be made with input from multiple parties and perspectives further allowing for the most appropriate actions and decisions to be undergone. Another solution that Gambia is going to propose is the formation of a determined list of qualifications of corruption and the appropriate punishment to the crime. With specific consequences, the risk of committing fraud or being found to be corrupt would be clear and enforced. The development of such a document within the African Union would work to dissuade people from committing fraud, knowing the consequences of being caught and would lessen any controversy in which the government deals with the situation. Gambia feels strongly towards the promotion of integrity and the effort against corruption in Africa and looks forward to discussing resolutions with other countries.