**Committee:** African Union

**Delegation:** Spain

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**Topic 1: Access to Education for Women and Girls**

Although huge strides have been made towards women’s empowerment by the United Nations, the global community and the African Union, Spain recognises that there is still a large scope for improvement in the welfare of women and women’s affairs (Europa, 2015). Spain has worked towards consistently improving the status of women in the country over the last decade, and continues to take steps towards the further development of women’s education and empowerment (Europa, 2015). Spain has successfully managed to incorporate women into the education system in an attempt to reduce the education gap between genders (Europa, 2015). Secondary education attainment rates for women in Spain hovers at around 41%, which is only 5% less than men, while literacy rates amongst Spanish women are very high as well (Europa, 2015). Tertiary educated women in Spain have a 20% earnings advantage over their male counterparts (Europa, 2015). Beyond the field of education, women have more broadly attained a respectable stature in Spanish society (Europa, 2015). In 2008, the Spanish government inducted more women ministers into its cabinet than men, a remarkable achievement even by European standards (Europa, 2015).

With respect to Africa, the Spanish government has maintained active involvement in promoting the empowerment of women and women’s education in the continent through a variety of programs, including under the purview of The New Partnership for Africa's Development, an African Union Initiative promoting general socio-economic development (Europa, 2015). In particular, The NEPAD Spanish Fund for African Women Empowerment, funded by the Spanish government, has been helping provide education and economic grants to African women for years, and continues to do so (Europa, 2015).

Spain has also worked towards integrating the UN 2030 SDG goals and learning from the mistakes of the past (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, 2013). The government has held two broad national consultation processes to determine strategies that can help to eradicate extreme poverty in the world, and especially takes into account the conditions of the poor in Africa as a priority in the vision (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, 2013). The failures in the past, like over reliance on statistical approaches to solving poverty, could instead be replaced with a more holistic, local approach, that involves NGOs and local parties coordinating with governments to set realistic development goals (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, 2013).

Similarly, as a proud member of the European Union and a great proponent of European values, Spain commends efforts towards reinforcing the statutes of the African Charter on Human’s and People’s Rights, much fo which is based on original European human rights legislation (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, 2013). Spain is proud to advocate for the spread of European values throughout the world, and the enshrining of respect for humanity and especially women is important step in Africa’s development (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, 2013).

In general, the delegation of Spain believes that although huge strides have been made towards opening up education to African women, there is still room for improvement, which can be achieved through a cohesive policy of cooperation between governments and local NGOs that can help facilitate funding and direct resources towards solving the pressing issues in regards to women’s education across the continent.

**Topic 2: Foreign Direct Investment in Africa**

Spain, as a leading promoter of free trade and globalization, heartily welcomes the prospect of further investment into Africa as an opportunity for more links to be established between the continent and the rest of the world.

Although Spain has always had historic ties with Morocco, Algeria and the other nations of the Maghreb, due to historical and geographical proximity, the Spanish business community has made significant inroads into the rest of the continent as well, with more than 40,000 Spanish businesses selling their goods to African buyers, and over 1500 establishing a permanent presence on the continent (Marca Espana, 2016). Over 16% of Spanish exports in 2013 went to Africa, and the number has been growing steadily over the past decade (Marca Espana, 2016). South Africa in particular has emerged as a major destination for Spanish investment in the recent past, as Spanish companies seek to establish a foothold in the growing renewable energy sector of the country (Marca Espana, 2016). The government is also looking forward to holding a series of promotional events all across the continent to affiliate Spanish businesses with the economic climate in sub-Saharan Africa and orient them with local business opportunities (Marca Espana, 2016).

African nations should aspire to further progress in establishing political accountability with its leaders, by subjecting governments to institutional scrutiny so as to increase the confidence of foreign investors (Marca Espana, 2016). Spain encourages mutual dialogue between African nations and European countries like our own to adapt Western standards of democratic stability to Africa (Marca Espana, 2016). Spain already promotes a policy of Dynamic Stability with the nations of the Maghreb North Africa, and advocates exporting this approach to other nations (Marca Espana, 2016). Overhauling African nations by rapidly introducing reforms only serves to exacerbate instability, and hence only the gradual introduction of reforms that do not upset the political balance of African nations can create permanent success in a tumultuous environment (Marca Espana, 2016).

As a result of growing ties between Spanish businesses and the African economic community, Spain would like to reiterate its commitment to promoting free trade amongst the African Union, and would also emphasize the continuous improvement of the business environment in Africa and the gradual easing of archaic regulations and business stifling bureaucracies and environments in the continent through joint dialogues that can establish and recommend measures and reforms that could further improve and liberate the sleeping African continental economic giant.

**Topic 3: Promoting Integrity and Transparency in Democratically Elected Governments**

In an increasingly globalized world, it is imperative that nations of the African Union adapt to and embrace the values of democracy and continue to promote accountability in governance in order to maintain their steadfast development. Spain itself has been taking crucial steps towards eradicating opacity and corruption in government through an all-encompassing transparency legislation that will guarantee access to information for citizens and institute a culture of disclosure and accountability (Africa Platform for Development Effectiveness, 2012). Despite this however, there is still considerable room for improvement in terms of strengthening the judicial system and making electoral funding more transparent (Africa Platform for Development Effectiveness, 2012).

Likewise, Spain has been promoting similar steps towards transparency and good governance in African nations as well, especially through the Support for Inclusive Public Policies in Sub-Saharan Africa Programme or APIA programme, which helps support initiatives for the greater involvement of civil society groups in formulating public policy in African countries, while also promoting greater accountability and democratic practices through funding from the Spanish Cooperation Agency (Africa Platform for Development Effectiveness, 2012). Spain has also consistently pursued a policy of dynamic stability towards the Maghreb nations of North Africa, ensuring that gradual progress towards democracy is made without destabilizing the institutional foundations put in place by local governments (Africa Platform for Development Effectiveness, 2012).

As a consistent supporter of the NEPAD program, of which the Africa Peer Review System stems from, Spain wholly supports any and all endeavours to standardize and coordinate efficient governmental operation between the nations of Africa, so no individual African nation is left behind in the continent’s push towards globalization and progress (Africa Platform for Development Effectiveness, 2012).

Spain would like to reiterate its continuing dedication towards promoting transparency in Africa, and would recommend that the African Union as a whole recognise the importance of civil society in holding democratically elected governments accountable to their actions, while also facilitating funding and protection to civil society groups that need the support of external organisations.

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