*Delegation from The Republic of Mali*

*African Union*

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**Position Paper**

The first democratic election of the Republic of Mali was in 1992, twenty-nine years after joining the African Union. Since then, the Republic of Mali has greatly developed, yet there are still pressing issues at hand. The current government has begun making improvements to the education system and economy, while creating a more transparent government. Unfortunately, civil war and societies resistance to change slowed this process.

**I. Topic One: Access to Education for Women and Girls**

Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states, “Everyone has the right to education.” For women and girls, their education does not continue after primary school, or they do not have the opportunity to attend school at all. This basic right has been taken away by gender inequality and society’s beliefs. In 2013, it was estimated that 31 million girls of primary school age and 32 million girls of secondary school age did not attend school around the world. Sub-Saharan Africa has the lowest proportion of gender equality: only two out of thirty five countries. When women are educated, there is a delay of marriage and childbearing, they are less vulnerable to diseases such as HIV and AIDS, and the women and girls obtain knowledge leading to an increased earning power.

In Mali, 48.2% of males over the age of fifteen can read and write. However, only 29.2% of females over the age of fifteen can read and write. Schools in Mali do not challenge society’s roles for women and girls: stay at home to help with housework and working in the gold mines. However, the barrier women and girls face is one Mali has not attempted to overcome. The improvement of education for women and girls is imperative, but this also applies to education for boys, as they are necessary to create a successful society.

Multiple organizations and resolutions have been created to combat the injustice towards women and girls not having the ability to obtain an education. The most effective solution, however, is the assistance of organizations such as Plan International, UNISEF and UNESCO. Plan International’s “Because I am a Girl” works to promote that an educated girl is more likely to be literate, healthy, and continue into adulthood, as are her children. As stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, “Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.” To strengthen the respect of human rights, and humans in general, education is imperative.

**II. Topic Two: Foreign Direct Investment in Africa**

Foreign Direct Investment is the share of foreign ownership of a company or institution in another economy than that of the investor. Africa is the major recipient of FDI compared to the rest of the globe. Foreign aid directed to Africa is dependent on the World and International Monetary Fund. Mali is among the 25 poorest countries in the world and its economy depends on gold mining and agriculture. Around 80% of the export earnings are made up by cotton and gold exports. While the economic performance has improved, variables such as corruption and weak infrastructure have hindered that growth. Therefore, foreign aid and foreign direct investment is vital to the Malian economy.

The Malian government wants to promote foreign direct investment to facilitate competition in all sectors of the economy. Gold, oil and the textile industry attract foreign investors such as France, China, Thailand and South Africa. The Republic of Mali proposes the continuation of foreign direct investment as it assists the country in supporting other initiatives such as women education and eradicating corruption. The Malian government believes that there are other issues, which take presidency over the dependency on FDI due to the pressing issue of establishing a long-lasting democratic government.

**III. Topic Three: Promoting Integrity and Transparency in Democratically Elected Government**

José Ugaz, the chair for Transparency International stated, “Corruption creates and increases poverty and exclusion. While corrupt individuals with political power enjoy a lavish life, millions of Africans are deprived of their basic needs like food, health, education, housing, access to clean water and sanitation.” In Sub-Saharan Africa, approximately 75 million people are estimated to pay a bribe in the last year. Corruption, detrimental to the integrity of a democratic government, is common in most African countries and many have not made an attempt to stop this.

The Malian government first drafted the Constitution in 1991, and it was established in 1992.The semi-presidential republic has faced multiple challenges in the process of establishing their government. While experiencing a civil war, in which the Constitution was shortly suspended in 2012, the Malian government was in turmoil as the president at the time, Amadou Toumani Touré, was overthrown in a coup. The next elected president was Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, who promised “zero tolerance” for corruption. Due to corruption, the nation was unable to fight against the Islamists located in the north of the country. While organizing an army and preparing to defend the north, it was discovered that most of the money sent to a development agency had been distributed to the northern elite. Soumana Sako, a former prime misiter who ran for president in the 2013 election, said, “I hear I.B.K. saying he’s going to give Mali back its dignity, but this can’t happen without the elimination of corruption. When we see the political forces that are aligned, there are reasons to be uneasy.”

African leaders created the African Peer Review Mechanism in 2003 with the mission to push for good governance. Working as a self-monitoring instrument, the committee works with the government and civil society groups in reviewing a country’s democracy governance, socioeconomic development, corporate governance, corruption, human rights, conflicts and judicial independence. However, there are multiple flaws with this solution. Over the past 10 years, thirty-three African countries have joined APRM, while 17 of those countries have been reviewed. As well, after being reviewed, countries are unable to implement the recommendations made, as the expenditures are not in the country’s budget. APRM was the first step the African Union has made in promoting transparency and integrity within governments, however, the Delegation of Mali believes that revisions should be made and new policies established. One revision is the mandatory participation of all countries in the continent of Africa, ensuring each country is aware of the severe consequences of corruption the importance of establishing a government, which is honest with their citizens. The second measure is the education of citizens and governments about transparent governments and the significance of understanding the actions made by the government.

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