Country: Eritrea

Committee: African Union

Delegate Name: Archie Burton Smith

“The Camel keeps on marching while the dog keeps on barking.” The sentiment behind this simple statement has rung true in Eritrea for years.[[1]](#footnote-0) The nation of Eritrea is a resilient one. Despite being often attacked with false claims about the government from the US, baseless accusations from the United Nations about completely unrealistic human rights violations[[2]](#footnote-1) and bullying from neighboring states, Eritrea remains steadfast in the fight for a better quality of life for its citizens, and governing a safe, peaceful, and happy society. And despite the egregious insults that fellow member states have used against it, Eritrea still strives to be active in both the United Nations and the African Union as it has a strong belief in working for the greater good of the people throughout the world. Eritrea believes that the topics the African Union have set for this committee to speak on are critical, not only to Eritrea itself, but also to the rest of the world. Education for women and girls, investment in foreign development, and combating government corruption are three things Eritrea has worked on extensively and Eritrea looks forward to sharing its expertise and experience on these issues with the committee.

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

In order to help build a more successful African Union, member states must first work towards promoting the rights of those who reside within their own nations. The most important of these formerly overlooked groups is women. Eritrea has worked tirelessly to improve the quality of life of its female citizens by passing important legislation, and it has promoted gender equality through the establishment of the National Union of Eritrean Women (NUEW for short), an organization the works closely with the UNDP[[3]](#footnote-2). Eritrea has made great strides to empower women, and knows that one of the best ways to empower women is to ensure they have access to quality education.

Eritrea is an outstanding example of a society working towards gender equality in the schooling system. Education statistics reported by UNICEF, such as Literacy and Primary Education Enrolment, at no point reach a difference between genders of more than 10 percent, which is far less of a gap than in many other African Nations. Eritrea's literacy rate is quite high, with 92.6 percent of tested male youths (aged 15-24) being confirmed as literate and 87.7[[4]](#footnote-3) percent of the female version of the demographic. Eritrea was even far closer than many of the countries in the surrounding region to reaching the millennium goal for education. And even though it is already on the forefront of increasing women’s access to education, Eritrea continues to work on new initiatives to work toward the Sustainable Development Goal of education in the agenda for 2030.

A large part of Eritrea's effectiveness in this aspect of its society, has been working both with the United Nations, as well as NUEW[[5]](#footnote-4), and it advocates that other governments either work with the UN or internal organizations in their countries. The people in a country who best understand its citizens are the citizens themselves, and that’s why, under the assistance and watch of the government, citizen-run organizations can work wonders. The Eritrean government works closely with NUEW and has allowed it to possess regional offices in all the zones of the country[[6]](#footnote-5), and hopes that the rest of the committee will try and mirror this positive example that Eritrea has set. Working with the UN is also greatly beneficial, as it opens the floor to discussion amongst other nations on this matter, and as all member states are working toward the millennium goals, Eritrea is happy to provide assistance in campaigns.

It is also greatly important for the governments of African Nations themselves to take action to help improve general quality of life for women within its borders, as often there are sexist views in some cultures, and showing that the government will not stand for this helps educate citizens, and makes success for women far more prevalent. Eritrea’s government has taken action against this[[7]](#footnote-6), and has promoted sustainable awareness-raising programs to ensure that people understand the effect that sexist cultural practices have on women. Eritrea would like to see similar programs enacted in other African Union countries and would hope for organizational-wide programs to be proposed by the committee. It is important that women can feel safe in the society they live in, and this feeling of safety, as well as the dissolution of damaging practices, will lead to more girls being able to go to school, bringing Africa closer to the SDG of gender parity in education.

Eritrea hopes to see, over the course of this committee, a comprehensive resolution developed to work towards reaching the SDG for education continent wide. Such a resolution would include clauses that encourage African Union member states to establish women's organization within their national borders; propose the creation of an African Union internal organization designed to promote equality in education establish a union-wide set of education guidelines in order to promote international unity and literacy among African citizens; and finally, promote cooperation with UN bodies such as UNDP. Working together amongst many countries on this issue will promote unity amongst our nations, and through the empowerment of women, specifically through education, it will bring the development rate of African countries to an all time high.

**Topic 2: Foreign Direct Investment**

For years now, Foreign Direct Investment has played a large role in helping African nations develop themselves, and work towards a better future. Eritrea itself has received investment from foreign bodies, with our accumulated inflow stock above 438 million US dollars in the year 2010 (Eritrea staunchly believes in its sovereignty and national security and will not release details from more recent periods as to ensure it retains its safety and independence and so that foreign actors cannot try to paint Eritrea in a negative light) and it understands the importance of foreign direct investment. More FDI means that African nations can jumpstart their economies and improve national services and infrastructure, and in order to attract more FDI the committee will need to work together to find a solution.

First, in order to divert FDI from other nations, African Union members will need to ensure that workers within their countries are trained well and have a good variety of useful skills. Eritrea has a large workforce under the employ of its military and while they are excited and prepared to work on any project to better their nation, but highly skilled workers are unfortunately not as prevalent through the country. A way to solve this issue and prevent it from arising in other nations would be to establish a worker sharing program amongst nations. This program would be used to exchange personnel with important skills amongst nations, in order to help educate the general workforce. This would also help to improve relations between African nations, as it will require cooperation amongst all of the African Union to ensure that we begin gaining more FDI than other developing nations outside the organization. Eritrea also has one University that is split into five colleges, and the government has made great investments into developing these colleges into full sized universities in their own right.[[8]](#footnote-7) Expansion of the Education system should be encouraged amongst all AU member states, as working from the ground level and training new workers is also essential in the process of building a better workforce.

Another essential factor needed to attract FDI is developed infrastructure. Eritrea has developed its infrastructure greatly[[9]](#footnote-8), as it believes that when investors are selecting nations to invest their money in, they need to see a country that has the proper infrastructure to thrive. Believing that everything can be improved, Eritrea invests some of its funds in working on new infrastructure projects and continues to look for new ways to develop itself. And throughout Eritrea, smaller projects are being worked on at a local level, such as the recently constructed Afentara dam[[10]](#footnote-9), and the government of Eritrea suggests other governments encourage their citizens to work on local projects to help improve national infrastructure. When both the government and the people work together, great things can be achieved and this rings true in this case as well. Additionally, an increase in infrastructure quality is beneficial in almost every facet of society and there is no reason for nations not to work on infrastructure.

An increase in transparency regarding the use of FDI has also been cited as being important for demonstrating that countries will effectively use FDI and while Eritrea understands the importance, it believes it’s own security supersedes this and for that reason will continue to keep important records secret from neighboring governments. Eritrea has been at odds with its neighbor Ethiopia for as long as Eritrea has been independant and for that reason Eritrea will not simply present its financial records to the AU as some countries may suggest. It would rather see an independent economic body formed to oversee FDI use within nations, as long as the information shared with the body remains confidential between the nation presenting it and the body itself. The body could then give information on FDI within the nation, but would not present the actual numbers presented by each country.

Eritrea also understands the importance of not fully relying on foreign investment and aid, and it’s belief is that, as stated by president Isaias Afwerki, “Aid is like a pill that numbs the pain, if you take it too often you get addicted.” While FDI is important for development, and Aid is sometimes necessary, countries must not become too dependant on foreign intervention. Eritrea requested that the US would stop supplying aid to it[[11]](#footnote-10), as it felt that the US was becoming too involved in Eritrean affairs, and it advocates that other nations in the AU will do the same if they feel that larger nations are becoming too much of a force in their internal politics. Working to ensure that countries also do not solely rely on FDI is also important, and investing FDI into building up their economies is important as well.

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

One of the issues that is most troubling in the African Union is that of corruption. Corruption is rampant through Africa, with 6 of the 10 most corrupt nations on the planet being located on the continent. And while Eritrea has as said by the US state department “historically suffered less from corruption than many other nations on the African continent”[[12]](#footnote-11), Eritrea has experienced some instances of corruption and understands why it occurs.

While corruption has occurred in Eritrea, it is quite rare as Eritrea has multiple attributes that makes it a perfect environment to help create a corruption free state. The first of these attributes is the great national pride felt by Eritreans. Eritrea has been built on the struggle for freedom of its proud citizens, and because of this, they less likely to commit corrupt acts as the vast majority of Eritreans feel a sense of patriotism and have a belief that it is better to benefit one's nation than oneself. The second, is that since it’s foundation, the Eritrean government has actively fought against corruption with anti corruption campaigns being run, and due to internal transparency within Eritrea's government, corruption is easy to sniff out and uproot. As The idea of sharing information amongst the government works well in it’s own affairs, Eritrea would suggest that other nations also create framework to increase transparency within their own government. This leads to increased overall accountability and it ensures that corruption will be uncovered quickly. Thirdly, Eritrea is incredibly strict in how it deals with corruption, and it believes that if a government sets a strong example of dealing with corruption it will help deter later corrupt acts from occurring. Finally, Eritrea is ensures to monitor all digital communication occurring within the country. This makes it far easier to monitor the actions of government officials who are suspected of misdeeds, and it again deters officials from considering corruption as an option.[[13]](#footnote-12)

Eritrea also has an excellent state run information ministry that spreads important information across the country. The lack of possibly incorrect and non government approved media means that Eritrean citizens can easily see what is occurring inside the government and have no worries of false information being reported to them.[[14]](#footnote-13) This increases transparency and allows more Eritreans to get essential information that will affect their daily lives and that the information they receive is truly fair and balanced. The Eritrean government advocates for AU nations to take a stronger stance on their media, in order to ensure that falsehoods are not spread through their nation by unrecognized media sources that do not undergo the rigorous fact checking that state run media is subjected to.

Eritrea hopes that resolutions passed on this issue ensure that corruption investigations done within nations are done by respective organs of the government of those nations. National Sovereignty is essential, and forcing countries to submit to inspections done by an outside force that could be corrupt itself is not an ideal solution to corruption. Instead governments should work from the ground up, by creating anti corruption legislation within their own jurisdiction.

**Conclusion:**

Through history, Africa has often been disregarded by other nations who seem themselves as being in the so called first world. But Africa has a great amount of potential, and if resolutions are passed to encourage an increase in cooperation, new internal legislation being passed and giving new purposes to the African Union organization itself, the continent will be able to thrive. Eritrea has proven time and again to be an excellent example of strong and intelligent governance, and it hopes that it can guide the rest of Africa towards a better future. For too long Africa has been overlooked but that is going to change. By the end of this committee Africa will be heading down the road to a bright future.

1. Administrator, Shabait. "Camel." Shabait. Eritrea- Ministry of Information, n.d. Web. [↑](#footnote-ref-0)
2. Administrator, Shabait. “Statement of Eritrea’s Delegation at the UNHRC - 32nd Session" Shabait. Eritrea- Ministry of Information, n.d. Web. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
3. "Women’s Empowerment" United Nations Development Programme. UNDP in Eritrea, 03 Nov. 2015. Web.  
    [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
4. "Eritrea - Statistics." United Nations Children's Fund. UNICEF, 24 Dec. 2013. Web. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
5. "About NUEW - National Union of Eritrean Women." National Union of Eritrean Women [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
6. Ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
7. Administrator, Shabait. “Decision to stop harmful practices" Shabait. Eritrea- Ministry of Information, n.d. Web. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
8. Administrator, Shabait. "Eritrea at a glance V" Shabait. Eritrea- Ministry of Information, n.d. Web. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
9. "About Eritrea" United Nations Development Programme. UNDP in Eritrea, 03 Nov. 2015. Web. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
10. "New Afentera Dam to Improve Access to Water for Irrigation and Livestock." United Nations Development Programme. UNDP in Eritrea, 03 Nov. 2015. Web. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
11. "U.S. Relations With Eritrea." U.S. Department of State. U.S. Department of State, 2015. Web. 08 Nov. 2016. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
12. "2013 Investment Climate Statement - Eritrea." U.S. Department of State. U.S. Department of State, n.d. Web. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
13. Administrator, Shabait. "Eritrea free from corruption thanks to its noble national values: President Isaias" Shabait. Eritrea- Ministry of Information, n.d. Web. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
14. Administrator, Shabait. "Eritrea at a glance VI" Shabait. Eritrea- Ministry of Information, n.d. Web. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)