**Council: African Union**

**Representing: South Africa**

**Delegate Name: Sawsan Haider**

**From: Appleby College**

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

In sub-Saharan Africa, over 28 million girls are at risk of never receiving an education (Mundy, 2015). This is not just a statistic, these are 28 million futures; 28 million possible doctors, teachers, or even politicians that will never have the ability to become more than just a statistic. The access to education is essentially providing an open door or an opportunity for all girls to have the ability to go to school, but although it is a fundamental right, many children and adults are still deprived of this vital component of their life. The access to education is so powerful that even if it impacts just one girl, it can impact society as a whole. Every day, girls continue to suffer severe disadvantages and exclusion in education systems throughout their lives. An example of this is sexual assault in the learning environment; in fact, the rate of sexual violence in South Africa is among the highest in the world with over 100,000 rape cases each year (Institute for Security Studies, 2015). Other factors include transportation and the distance to school, gender norms and cultural expectations (which can put pressure on a young girl to marry young and take care of their household rather than attend school), and socio-economic status. Providing hope and education for these 28 million inspiring girls is truly an important piece to Africa's future and is a topic that can have a large impact that is often discussed in the United Nations.

Education for women in South Africa, and Africa as a whole has fought a tough battle as it clashes with a history of conservative patriarchal customs which at one point had marginalized or downgraded girls’ education, placing it at the bottom of the list. In the past, South Africa’s history had made it difficult to inspire and empower change, but since the birth of the new democracy in 1994, the country’s economy has grown significantly and has now become a middle-income economy. On top of this, the South African Constitution, which was built on a keen awareness of the injustices of the past, is now widely regarded as the most progressive in the world. South Africa is currently putting a considerable amount of effort in order to fight against this problem and to grasp a position where girls' and boys' education is considered equal. They hold many conferences, such as the annual Women’s Parliament Conference in Cape Town, to address the importance of girls’ education. In terms of access to education, according to United Nation statistics, South Africa, of all African regions today, has the highest percentage of children who are given greater access to education at the primary level. Schools in South Africa receive a grant from the government for their operational costs, such as maintaining the grounds, administrative costs, salaries, books and educational materials, and extramural activities. Most schools supplement the government grant with other streams of income, such as school fees paid by parents (there is no limit to the amount of the fees that a school may set). Children attending school at the primary level go from 96% to 70% at the secondary level, then on to a drastic and devastating drop of 7% at the college level (Women News Network, 2007). Where the problem lies is that there is ultimately a much lower number of girls and women participation as there are many key barrier and challenges to a girl’s education. South African society is to a large extent patriarchal. Girls and women are often accorded lower social status and find themselves under the control and authority of men. Another significant factor is the impact of HIV/AIDS. Almost a million children under the age of 15 have lost their parents or caregivers to AIDS. Girls often drop out of school to look after sick family members and younger siblings. These and many other issues that South African women have to face in order to attain an education are pressing problems that must be addressed and resolved in order to reach systematic change and equality for all global citizens. As the Deputy President of South Africa had once said: “when you educate a woman, you educate a nation” (Women News Network, 2007).

By breaking down the issue into smaller problems and situations, it becomes easier to target the situation as a whole. This can be completed through creating a program that is part of the United Nation which tackles each of the challenges girls face when attending school through a set of rules and regulations. For example, a small yet significant issue that girls face is that in many schools throughout Africa, they do not have separate bathrooms for girls and boys; this leads to great vulnerability for girls in school as they are in the face of the dangers of sexual harassment and assault. One of the rules and regulations of the program would state that all bathrooms in African schools should be separated by gender. On top of this, each school that is part of the program would be regularly monitored through performance indicators to be evaluated in order to create more goals which would improve the quality of education. Another issue is that of distance and how far children often have to walk in order to get to school. In most cases, these students have to make a dangerous 10 miles (around 16 km) journey every single morning. Schools that are situated far from homes often expose girls to danger and leave them vulnerable when they walk to and from school. There have been many cases of children getting robbed, sexually assaulted, and even kidnapped on their journey. It is truly evident and clear that in order to allow more girls to attend school, there would need to be a law that determines how far apart from each other schools can be or even by creating a network of United Nation school buses. These buses would stop in front or near the student's house and provide them with a safe method of reaching school. Lastly, one of the most important issues is teachers. In order to have an effective education, it only makes sense that there are effective educators. The unsettling and horrifying 2006 Report of the Public Hearing on the Right to Basic Education states that it is often that teachers will take advantage of their positions of authority and coerce sex from girls. A shocking example was given of a student coming late and having to exchange sex with a teacher in order to be allowed onto the school premises that had been locked. This is why it is vital for the United Nations to develop and improve a teacher training exchange program between developed and developing countries under the watch of the UN in cooperation with UNESCO. These teachers who would not only be employed and watched under the United Nations but would also undergo background checks and be qualified to accurately be there to not only teach these young girls of the future generation, but also guide them. Teachers part of the program would be exchanged from a developed country such as here in Canada would be sent to a country such as Niger and other developing countries. Here, for example, the teacher from Niger would receive a basic training in the curriculum and how to educate their students until they are qualified enough to return and resume teaching for themselves. These teachers could then pass on their training locally. This creates an endless cycle of opportunities for teachers in developing countries. This not only tackles the issue of violence and sexual harassment from teachers but also will ensure efficient and accurate teachings and schoolwork.

Often times, it is the solution that comes from the most unexpected of places that yield the biggest influence. One major factor that influences whether a girl will attend school is her access to sanitary products or pads. A study recently proved that in Kenya, sanitary pads were a girl's second biggest cost each month, after bread. Many girls are often faced with the detrimental decision between buying pads and having dinner. In fact, 4 in 5 women across east Africa (and 1 billion around the world) cannot access these sanitary products. Often times when girls are asked what they do when they don’t have pads, they respond with that they stay home from school. Every year, 1 million girls miss around 6 weeks of school each because they lack these essential sanitary products. It might not seem like much, but in reality, this creates negative cascading effects; they start falling behind and by the age of 16, 2 in 3 girls are not in school (this is 2x the rate of boys). Fundamentally, by the United Nations creating a free package or kit filled with the necessary sanitary products, such as pads and health education pamphlets, and provide them to girls who once couldn’t afford it. This can serve hundreds of girls for only $0.82 a month; it is an affordable way to keep girls in school. Small non-profit organizations have started to pick up on this and so far have been able to serve almost 12,000 girls.

South Africa would agree to resolutions that further increase gender equality and provide further access to education through limiting violence and sexual assault. South Africa, at the least, would barely agree with resolutions that bring awareness and improve funding.

**Council: African Union**

**Representing: South Africa**

**Delegate Name: Sawsan Haider**

**From: Appleby College**

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

Just like the mitochondria to the cell, foreign direct investment is the powerhouse to economic development and growth. To put it simply, foreign direct investment occurs when a company purchases and invests in a foreign country. For example, to put it into context, if a US multinational company, such as Nike, built a factory in South Africa, this would be considered a foreign direct investment. Attracting FDI into Africa is essential and plays a key role in Africa's future. It not only has a countless amount of advantages that lead to a more improved continent as a whole, but also has tremendous positive impacts. The numerous reasons for wanting to attract FDI in a region can range from developing a more competitive workforce to improving the global positioning of your region. It also has the ability to create more direct jobs and economic spillover and can attract more businesses to the continent. In order for a company to make a foreign direct investment, they need to be attracted and interested to the area. There are many factors and things that are examined for when determining where to place their investment. These factors almost always establish how some countries are more successful in attracting foreign direct investments than others. When making an investment, companies often look for factors such as lower corporation tax rates, low working wages but high labor productivity, and wage rates (average wages in the US are $15 an hour, but $1 in India so the cost can be reduced when making an FDI in India). Sub-Saharan Africa has low wages but this is often outweighed by other costs so many companies are reluctant to invest there. Other factors include commodities (a major reason for growth in Africa) and political stability. Africa's has 4.4% share of the world's FDI which is still-low but improved. There also seems to be much room for improvement and Africa seems optimistic. In fact, according to the Financial Times, Africa is the world's fastest-growing region for foreign direct investment. In 2014, the number of FDI projects in the continent rose 6 per cent. Unfortunately, compared to other regions such as Asia (the largest beneficiary of FDI in the world). Africa is still lacking when it comes to being a major recipient in FDI and has a lot of room for growth. Due to foreign direct investment having many impacts and holding so much power over a countries growth, it has become an important and significant topic that is often discussed in the United Nations (Mwiti, 2015).

South Africa plays a large and important role in the FDI of Africa and in terms of numbers and statistics, South Africa is the country with the highest project numbers (a total of 116 projects in 2014) in all of Africa. Foreign direct investment has a long and complex history in South Africa. In reality, foreign corporation have been present since Britain established a colony in the early 19th century. At that point it mainly focused on agricultural exports to Europe. As time went on, there grew to become more than 450 foreign firms with direct investments in the 1990s. At that time, 85% was from Europe and 13% from North America. Currently, there has been considerable success in attracting FDI in South Africa and the country is putting a lot of effort towards attracting these investments. As reported by the South African Reserve Bank, FDI in South African increased by US$144 billion in the second quarter of 2016. Between 1995 and 2002, South Africa received two-thirds of gross market-based capital flows to Sub-Saharan Africa (Gelb & Black, 2016). Although had been doing significantly well, South Africa's FDI strangely seemed to have plunged in 2015. It is key for South Africa, and the rest of Africa as a continent to realize what it is that investors are attracted in when making a FDI and to make sure they successfully portray and advertise this. For example, developing countries that have been successful in attracting continued FDI are those with high economic growth rates, large population, strong demographics and which are benefitting from structural reforms or are in the process of reforms (such as India and Mexico) (News24, 2016). In the end, South Africa has a mixture of both strong arguments (such as a high market potential, well developed infrastructure and a reasonable competitive domestic economy) but also many weak points (such as an increase in labour strikes, violent crime and corruption, and high skilled labour is in short supply). The government of South Africa has also taken many measures in order to motivate FDI. Its utilized the Foreign Investment Grant, a cash grant, which provides up to 15% of the value of new machinery and equipment and due to the slow economic recovery, President Zuma announced that the government will provide up to USD 303 million to support business leaders and employees who have faced difficulties due to the financial crisis. In conclusion, The SA economy has been growing, but not fast enough to keep abreast with the world economy. The SA economy is diverse and the leaders of the country have made it their goal to achieve a higher FDI share in the world.

In order to expand Africa's FDI investments and attract more attention from investors all around the world, Africa needs to be able to showcase its strong points and desired capabilities while at the same time trying to resolve or conceal its weak characteristics Africa has always been seen as an investment liability and not an investor safe haven. It is clear that Africa has to take charge of its own future in relation to FDI and it should do so along the following terms. As seen in South Africa and Angola, Africa should develop its own investment laws that would be understood by all 53 states of the AU as well as investors and develop a multilateral investment strategy in Africa. Africa would also make an effort to create a climate of investment and credit ratings, thus creating laws that would appeal to and generate interest from the multinational corporations (NEPAD, 2016)

South Africa would agree to resolutions that further increase the amount of FDIs in Africa through specific laws and regulations. South Africa, at the least, would barely, agree with resolutions that prevented a decline in the foreign investments made.

**Council: African Union**

**Representing: South Africa**

**Delegate Name: Sawsan Haider**

**From: Appleby College**

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

From the poorest of communities to the richest of society, corruption and transparency are greatly capable of affecting the entire world. It is a pressing global issue that has influential impacts. In short, corruption is the misuse of public power; often by an elected politician or public servant. Transparency concerns the government’s ability to be “open in the clear disclosure of information, rules, plans, processes and actions” It is essentially how much understanding the citizens have of what their government is doing Here in Africa, it is an especially critical issue as one of the most corrupt countries in the world (Somalia) lies within the continent. Although this problem is almost impossible for it to completely disappear from society, efforts need to made in order corruption and to protect as much as possible the poor and weak in our societies. In the end, all corruption costs are paid by the consumer and the taxpayer. They need protection. It is key for both the United Nations and the rest of Africa to put an end to this urgent problem with a greatly-needed compelling solution.

The world remembers the passing of global South African icon Nelson Mandela and the fact that was a man of principle is a clear element of his success as a leader and overall greatness. He was able to understand the vital importance of the constitutional principles of accountability and the rule of law. Although, since this time, South Africa has strayed far from the example set by this great man. In this day and age, it is truly saddening to realize how far many African governments have strayed from the example set by this great man. Compared to other countries throughout the continent, South Africa is actually ranked as one of the highest scoring countries in Africa when it comes to government transparency and integrity; although it does seem to be deteriorating and getting worse. Only 15% of South Africans said that they had paid a bribe in the previous year compared with an average of 30% of Africans who had paid a bribe. The worst performer was Sierra Leone, where 63% said that they had paid a bribe. In the South African government, a large extent of corruption is the growing public sector corruption, where public funds are being diverted away from the public good towards private interests. According to the 2013 Afrobarometer Survey, perceptions of the office of the president being corrupt more than doubled, from a low of 13% in 2002 to 35% in 2011. Today, South Africa is working to combat this by developing and utilizing a code of conduct for public servants. It includes key ideas such as 'do not abuse their positions in the Public Service' and 'not to use their official positions to obtain private gifts or benefits for themselves.' (Newham 2014).

It is key for the United Nations to construct a design of structures and practices that promote accountability and integrity in African governments. This could be done by utilizing 'UN Mediators' to act as "Integrity indicators" not only to evaluate but to also to validate and regulate the corruption in the government. Their job would be to send detailed progress reports outlining both the improvements made and areas that could be developed on; each country would have a specific panel of these mediators and facilitators. On top of this, many other minuscule laws that surround government integrity and transparency should be created which in turn would allow the government to grow and advance as a whole. These would include paying civil servants well and appropriately because when often when they are underpaid, it clearly affects their motivation and incentives. They find themselves under pressure to supplement their incomes in "unofficial ways". Essentially, South Africa is proposing to create an establishment of ethics infrastructure in government departments overseen by the United Nations.

South Africa would agree to resolutions that create circumstances and suitable punishments for governments who don’t comply to have integrity and transparency. South Africa, at the least, would barely agree with resolutions that create laws and regulations in order to control the situation.