Dear Delegates,

My name is Kai Choi, and I would like to welcome you to the African Union. I am currently a junior at St. George’s School and this is my fifth year in the world of Model UN. After sitting through my first two conferences in a deeply-uncomfortable silence, I finally warmed up to what MUN could offer me: a chance to learn more deeply about the world that I live in and the ways that people can collaborate to solve problems.

The African Union has always held a special place in my heart; other than being the first committee I participated in, I also happened to live in Lagos, Nigeria for several years. Although I wasn’t explicitly aware of many of the continent’s issues while I was there, they certainly resonated with me in the context of Model UN.

With that in mind, I hope that all of you walk away from this experience with a better understanding of Africa, which can be a very easy place to caricature or generalize. Although the issues that the continent faces, such as the prevalence of political instability, are certainly real and devastating, it also has the potential to become an economic powerhouse in the coming years, perhaps via increased agricultural investment or foreign investments. Africa has had an interesting past, but I would like for you to consider its future.

Regardless of whether this is your first conference or your fiftieth, I, along with your Chair Jeffery Luo and your Assistant Director Asha Paranjpe, hope that you enjoy your time in this committee. If you are ever in need of answers, feel free to contact the Dais team at au@vmun.com.

Sincerely,

Kai Choi
AU Director
Position Paper Policy

What is a Position Paper?

A position paper is a brief overview of a country's stance on the topics being discussed by a particular committee. Though there is no specific format the position paper must follow, it should include a description of your positions your country holds on the issues on the agenda, relevant actions that your country has taken, and potential solutions that your country would support.

At Vancouver Model United Nations, delegates should write a position paper for each of the committee's topics. Each position paper should not exceed one page, and should all be combined into a single document per delegate.

For the African Union, position papers are not mandatory but highly recommended, and required for a delegate to be considered for an award.

Formatting

Position papers should:

— Include the name of the delegate, his/her country, and the committee

— Be in a standard font (e.g. Times New Roman) with a 12-point font size and 1-inch document margins

— Not include illustrations, diagrams, decorations, national symbols, watermarks, or page borders

— Include citations and a bibliography, in any format, giving due credit to the sources used in research (not included in the 1-page limit)

Due Dates and Submission Procedure

Position papers for this committee must be submitted by midnight on February 7th, 2020. Once your position paper is complete, please save the file as your last name, your first name and send it as an attachment in an email, to your committee’s email address, with the subject heading as your last name, your first name — Position Paper.

Please do not add any other attachments to the email or write anything else in the body.

Both your position papers should be combined into a single PDF or Word document file; position papers submitted in another format will not be accepted.

Each position paper will be manually reviewed and considered for the Best Position Paper award.

The email address for this committee is au@vmun.com.
# Agricultural Investment and Technology

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Agricultural Investment and Technology

Overview

Africa is primarily comprised of developing nations that lack the prosperity of developed nations like the United States, China, and the majority of Europe. Although analysts have recently observed that Africa’s potential for growth in its agricultural sector is nearly unrivaled by the rest of the world, its current performance is less than ideal. For example, more than 60 percent of all Africans are subsistence farmers, reducing the extent to which crops are sold regionally or exported abroad for profit.¹ Other impeding factors include the lack of technological development and the high likelihood of droughts. However, in recent years, Africa has made notable progress towards reversing this trend; the observation that African agriculture yields much potential economic growth has led African nations to consider greater investment in their agricultural sectors.² However, Africa is not working alone; foreign powers such as the European Union (EU) and China have substantially increased their involvement and investment in Africa since the beginning of the 21st century.

Some see this new willingness to connect with Africa as manipulative or even potentially harmful. For example, the general sentiment against Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) held by EU citizens is reflected in the GMO policies of some African nations, a direct result of close trading ties and cultural connections.³ A case can be made for this attitude stunting the economic stability and food security of African nations; for instance, although some African countries' economies depend on their access to the European food market to remain afloat, avoiding the usage of GMOs resulted in African nations exacerbating a famine in 2002.⁴ Elsewhere, China’s recent involvement in international infrastructure projects has been criticized for being examples of “debt-trap diplomacy,” where China supposedly develops costly projects solely to use the recipient nation’s accumulated debt as political leverage.⁵ However, this perceived threat does not discredit the ways in which China has improved African agriculture projects, like the Regadio do Baixo Limpopo irrigation scheme, whose yields have increased from 1-2 tons to 10 tons of rice per hectare with the help of Chinese companies.⁶

Regardless of whether or not agricultural investments in Africa involve the widespread adoption of GMOs or strengthening ties with Europe and China, the general consensus is that investing in African agriculture is a

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highly effective way of improving the continent’s economy.\(^7\) In essence, a resolution to the changing landscape of agricultural investment in Africa addresses two points: the structures or policies a nation wants to implement to improve agriculture and the extent to which foreign aid is involved in this plan. It is important to notice that these points, although related, are independent of each other; for example, valid resolutions exist regardless of whether a country is for or against GMOs, and regardless of a delegation’s stance on foreign collaboration. By considering the advancement of its agriculture, the African continent as a whole will likely see rapid economic growth throughout the 21st century.

Timeline

1881 – 1914 — The Scramble for Africa takes place. During this period, the majority of the African continent is annexed and colonized by European nations.

1950s – 1960s — Most African nations gain independence from their European colonizers.\(^8\)

May 1997 — South Africa passes the *Genetically Modified Organisms Act*, thus authorizing genetically modified (GM) crops to be planted in Africa.

September 16, 2002 — The UN World Food Programme warns Zambian president Levy Mwanawasa that their relief supplies could run out in two weeks; however, Mwanawasa refuses to use genetically modified crops, an action taken in what he believed was in the best interest of his nation.\(^9\)

2002 – 2003 — A wide-spread famine occurs in Africa, caused by a combination of drought and poor food management. The United States, as per their foreign policy, offers food aid to African nations, but many of them ultimately decline because of the prevalence of GMOs in the food supplies.

2003 — The Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) is held for the first time in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. It is then held every three years in various locations.\(^10\)

2008 — Burkina Faso and Egypt become the second and third African countries to authorize the use of genetically-modified crops.

June 2012 — The growth of Bt cotton, a genetically-modified variant of cotton, is legalized in Sudan, signalling a reversal of the country’s previously-held anti-GMO stance.\(^11\)

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2015 — The African Union publishes the Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP), a framework under Agenda 2063 that outlines how the continent plans on furthering its agricultural development.12

2018 — The European Union establishes the Task Force Rural Africa (TFRA). Consisting of both European and African members, this organization is dedicated to fostering dialogue and collaboration between the two continents and their agriculture over the coming decades.13

Historical Analysis

Colonialism and European Influence in Africa

Before 1880, the interior of Africa remained relatively free of European influence. Explorers avoided venturing past the sparse trading posts established at the coast due to the difficulty of transportation and the possibility of contracting foreign diseases. Gradually, however, explorers made their way into the center of Africa. King Leopold of Belgium hired explorer Henry Morton Stanley to claim land by the Congo river, which, along with factors such as Germany’s new and aggressive foreign policy, sparked what is now known as the Scramble for Africa. Following in Belgium’s footsteps, European nations such as Britain, France, Spain, Portugal, and Germany quickly became interested in claiming territory on this resource-filled continent. In the winter from 1884–85, the Berlin Conference saw these nations partitioning the continent to reduce conflicts between European colonizers and maximize European progress in conquest of the continent.14 The Scramble for Africa continued until 1914—the start of World War 1. At this time, nearly all of Africa was colonized by Europe, with the exception of Ethiopia and Liberia.

Along with technological advancements that allowed for more effective agriculture, medicine, and transportation, colonialism brought European culture to Africa; for example, Africans would be able to communicate with their colonizers and the developed world through the languages they would learn. However, the implementation of European culture and technology came at the cost of African economic sovereignty and cultural traditions. Most notably, European colonial leaders created African borders without regard for the different existing cultural groups, resulting in arbitrarily-defined countries susceptible to ethnic conflict.15 In addition to this, the bulk of resources found in Africa would be sent to Europe because African leaders almost always held positions inferior to Europeans in colonial administrations. Forcing European culture, food, and religion upon the people of Africa would eventually dilute and fracture African culture and traditions.16

Colonization and its subsequent reversal in the 1950s and 60s paved the way for large European agriculture companies to make connections with African nations. Without these colonial roots, Europe would not have achieved the depth of involvement in African agriculture that exists today, for better or for worse. For example, because many African policy makers have been educated in Europe, this engenders an inclination to adopt systems that parallel Europe’s—such as anti-GMO policies—over those tailored for to benefit Africans.\textsuperscript{17} In discussion, delegates should consider balancing the needs of their country’s citizens with their relations to the European market.

**China**

African relations with China began in the 1950s, when both the People’s Republic of China (PRC, more commonly known as China) and the Republic of China (ROC, also known as Taiwan) attempted to convince African nations to recognize one of them as the only legitimate government of China.\textsuperscript{18} Although Taiwanese involvement in Africa was initially greater than that of mainland China, the latter increased its support for Africa in subsequent decades. A large portion of the PRC’s early involvement with Africa included infrastructural developments such as agricultural projects and railways.\textsuperscript{19}

In the 1980s, Chinese Premier Ziyang Zhao coined the Four Principles: equality and mutual benefit, an emphasis on practical results, diversity in form, and economic development.\textsuperscript{20} These principles acted as a set of guidelines for how China should proceed with their contributions to African development. They also symbolized a notable shift in Chinese foreign policy: rather than focusing on distributing aid, Chinese projects in Africa now sought to improve African infrastructure as well. For example, in the 1970s, the Tanzania-Zambia railway was constructed, connecting Zambia to the Indian Ocean. To finance the project, China spent an estimated USD 1.6 billion on interest-free loans.\textsuperscript{21}

Neocolonialism can be defined as the indirect control of less-developed countries by developed countries; it connotes technological and infrastructural advancements at the price of losing economic and cultural sovereignty.\textsuperscript{22} As Chinese cooperation with Africa has continued into the 21st century, critics have been quick to cite neocolonialism.\textsuperscript{23} One recent instance of this is the Regadio do Baixo Limpopo irrigation scheme, where the Mozambican government offered the Chinese company Hubei Lianfeng 12,000 hectares of abandoned rice fields; possession of this area was eventually transferred to the company Wanbao.\textsuperscript{24} In terms of increasing productivity, the project has succeeded: under the control of both Chinese companies, yields have increased from

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\textsuperscript{19} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{20} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{21} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{24} Ibid.
1-2 tons to 10 tons of rice per hectare. However, the project has also been met with criticism for its treatment of the local population. For example, local NGOs allege that the project has displaced about 80,000 people—primarily subsistence farmers—from their nearby crop lands. An ancient graveyard was also reported to have been transformed into agricultural land with the approval of the Mozambican government, forcing families to relocate the deceased. Although China’s shift from distributing aid to developing infrastructure in Africa has brought economic prosperity, it is important to recognize that the existing power dynamic is not perfect.

Genetically Modified Crops

Although humans have been genetically modifying crops and animals for over 30,000 years, modern biotechnology began in 1973 when Herbert Boyer and Stanley Cohen created the first genetically engineered organism: a strand of bacteria that was given antibiotic resistance from another strand. Not long after, interest in the potential of genetic modification permeated the scientific mainstream. The first genetic modification experiments on food were performed in 1987; Calgene’s Flavr Savr tomato—genetically modified for increased shelf life—reached American consumers in 1994. Although there were initially doubts about the safety of consuming genetically-modified products, in 2002, the Director-General of the World Health Organization stated that “WHO is not aware of scientifically documented cases in which the consumption of these foods has negative human health effects.”

In 1997, South Africa became the first African nation to allow the cultivation of GM crops; the nation passed a bill that year detailing the creation of a council dedicated to the responsible development of GM technology. At the time, other African nations were reluctant to embrace GM technology, fearing possible adverse health effects. This deviation from the status quo has established South Africa as a leading figure in African biotechnology; only a few other African nations have since followed suit, such as Sudan and Egypt.

Case Study: US Food Aid in 2002

In early 2002, famine struck nations in southern and eastern Africa. The UN Security Council believed that this famine was a product of an ongoing drought, difficult weather conditions, and weak economic policies, among other factors. The United States offered to donate food to the nations in need via the United States Agency for

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25 Ibid.
26 Ibid.
27 Ibid.
International Development; however, the recipient nations of this aid, among them Zambia and Zimbabwe, refused the offer upon learning they were receiving genetically-modified products.

The decision to decline the aid was detrimental to the wellbeing of the population, as they would now have limited access to food in a time of considerable food scarcity. However, the nations that refused to accept the donation argued that the consumption of genetically modified foods had long-term health risks, and that refusing the food would be in the best interest of the people, despite the mainstream scientific community agreeing that GM crops do not pose health risks.34

A more compelling reason for certain countries to refuse GM food aid was the need to continue a strong economic relationship with the European food market. Africa has historically exported a large portion of its crops to Europe, where anti-GMO sentiments are common.35 African countries believed that by accepting American food aid, they would run the risk of these GM crops cross-pollinating with local varieties, thus jeopardizing their trade relationship with European nations, and consequently, threatening their economic stability.36 However, contrary to this argument, South Africa has seen continued food sales in the EU despite using GM crops.37

The US may have seen the famine as an opportunity to establish closer agricultural ties with Africa. At that point, the US had recently been deprived of its agricultural connections with the EU because of many European nations’ articulated distaste for GM crops; Africa’s plight would have been a propitious opportunity for the US to establish new agricultural ties. Among other evidence, the US’ decision to leave the GM grain that they donated unmilled may have indicated their desire for Africa to adopt and accept GMOs into their agricultural industry.38 This move would have made many African nations dependent on GMO-producing companies—as the patented seeds of GMOs have to be bought yearly—many of which are headquartered in the US.39

Ultimately, the affected African nations were forced to decide between food security and economic survival because of their heavy dependence on foreign aid. Had Africa not been in such a vulnerable position, superpowers like the US would not have been able to use the famine as an opportunity to accomplish their foreign policy objectives. In terms of the larger topic at hand, the events of this famine suggest that African nations may want to reevaluate their relations with foreign donors—like China, the US, and the EU—to ensure the well-being of their agricultural sectors.

35 Ibid.
Past UN/International Involvement

Case Study: African Viewpoints on GMOs
In 1997, South Africa passed the *Genetically Modified Organisms Act*, making it the first African country to endorse the usage of genetic modification in crops. The policy specifies the precautions necessary to allow for a GMO to be planted or to enter the market. At this point in time, GMOs were relatively new to the global food market. Most countries, including several in Africa, chose to avoid the implementation of GMOs due to the lack of research surrounding the potentially adverse effects of GMOs.

One reason that many African countries refused to use GMOs was the potential loss of their close ties to the European market. Generally, EU consumers have negative attitudes towards GMOs, which can partially be attributed to negative media coverage of the topic; shortly after the widespread emergence of GMO issues in 1996, the discourse surrounding it became influenced by ongoing food safety issues like Bovine spongiform encephalopathy—more commonly known as Mad Cow disease—and listeriosis, likely causing the public to associate the subjects with one another. In addition to this, many European consumers are financially in a position to choose organic and non-genetically modified produce, contributing to the lack of success of GMOs in Europe.

However, passing the Genetically Modified Organisms act has resulted in a net gain for the South African economy: the nation’s agricultural income was augmented by USD 156 million from 1998 to 2006 once GMOs were adopted across the nation. Arguably, the risk that South Africa took with its first GMO policy has proven that the adoption of GMOs could potentially be beneficial for all African nations. However, despite this, anti-GMO African nations are firm in their belief that planting GM crops has negative health and environmental impacts. In addition to this, Europe provides technical assistance to African policy makers through the United Nations Environment Programme and the Global Environment Facility's Global Project for Development of National Biosafety Frameworks, causing African GMO regulations to resemble those in Europe.

Continuing the conversation surrounding GMOs into the 21st century, after nearly a decade of discussion, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) produced a draft policy in 2010 laying out the procedure that member states must use when legalizing a specific GMO. For example, if one country wants to introduce a GM crop, the policy calls for rigorous scientific tests to be done on the new crop to determine whether or not it is safe for consumption. If the crop is considered risk-free, each member nation may choose to begin

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large scale production of the crop. The policy was debated upon in workshops from 2010 to 2012 before being formally adopted by COMESA’s Council of Ministers in 2014.44

COMESA’s GMO policy marks the first of its kind in Africa; until its adoption, there had not been any kind of policy or legislation that formally unified the procedures on biotechnology of multiple nations. The policy will likely result in an increase in the support for GMOs within COMESA, as it combats the argument that the scientific community is currently too uncertain of the effects of GMOs to safely implement them.

**Case Study: Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP)**

The CAADP was established in 2003 during an African Union summit as Africa’s policy framework for agricultural development. The programme consists of targets on growth in the agricultural sector. Initially, CAADP’s two goals were to reach 6% annual growth in agricultural Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and to allocate 10% of public expenditures to agriculture in its participant countries.45

In its beginning stages, the CAADP performed relatively poorly. By 2009, only 13 countries had signed CAADP compacts, and even fewer were using the programme’s resources to develop policies. A 2010 report by the New Partnership for Africa’s Development concluded that the aforementioned targets simply were not being hit. This can partially be attributed to the voluntary nature of the compact; it is possible for nations to adopt the vision and policies of the programme without implementing them.46 Furthermore, the CAADP Secretariat claims that it “has not been provided with the human or financial resources or legal status to enable it to fulfill its mandate and role.”47 Despite initially struggling, the programme has seen an increase in engagement in the past few years: as of 2016, 42 compacts were signed.48 The two goals have yet to be surpassed, but the increase in signed compacts is indicative of African leaders beginning to prioritize agriculture; the UN Office of the Special Adviser on Africa notes that between 2003—the beginning of the CAADP—and 2015, the average public agricultural expenditures have nearly doubled.49 Ultimately, however, the effectiveness of the CAADP hinges on countries’ willingness to implement and hold itself accountable to its policies.

**Case Study: Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC)**

Since 2003, the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) has been held every three years, with its most recent iteration taking place in 2018 in Beijing, China. Although the FOCAC is not restricted to discussing agriculture, it is indicative of China’s ever-increasing willingness to work with Africa in the agricultural and infrastructural sectors.

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47 Ibid.

48 Ibid.

49 Ibid.
In the most recent iteration of the forum, Chinese President Xi Jinping emphasized eight areas of cooperation between China and Africa, one of which includes initiatives to develop industry and agriculture.\(^{50}\) Xi also announced that China is pledging USD 60 billion to Africa primarily in the form of credit lines and interest-free loans.\(^ {51}\) Despite matching the total that China pledged three years prior, each previous iteration of the FOCAC has seen China doubling or tripling its pledge to Africa, which is strongly indicative of continued collaboration between the two parties in the future.

Although it was conceived earlier, the FOCAC now operates in conjunction with the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which was initiated in 2013 by Xi Jinping and calls for China to finance infrastructure projects worldwide. In Africa, the BRI addresses the need for roads, railways, and energy projects, among other areas. However, critics believe that China is “debt-trapping” Africa, which entails China leveraging the indebtedness of African nations for economic and political favors.\(^ {52}\) Delegates should acknowledge their nation’s stance on the validity of “debt trapping” claims when discussing how Africa should proceed in financing future agriculture projects.

Current Situation

Chinese Involvement

Land-grabbing can be defined as “the act of taking an area of land by force, for military or economic reasons.”\(^ {53}\) The term "land-grabbing" is typically used by the media in the context of this topic to portray recent Chinese land acquisitions as part of an speculated upcoming neocolonial takeover. The legitimacy and accuracy of the term’s usage, however, is highly controversial.

From a sociocultural perspective, the term holds some validity. Despite the incredible increase in economic productivity engendered by Chinese agricultural projects in Africa, there have been instances of populations being less than satisfied with the manner in which their lives have been altered, such as the local Mozambicans of the Regadio do Baixo Limpopo irrigation scheme. However, the governments of the African nations may also oftentimes favour economic growth over the needs of their citizens, as evidenced by the Mozambican government approving the destruction of an ancient graveyard in the irrigation scheme.\(^ {54}\) Part of what makes “land-grabbing” so brutal is the perceived lack of respect for the indigenous peoples involved.

That being said, regardless of the media’s portrayal of China’s intentions, China’s impact on African infrastructure cannot be discredited. From 2000 to 2015, China has pledged Africa approximately USD 95.5 billion, most of which features low interest rates and long repayment periods; these relatively low-risk forms of

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loans qualify reports of China engaging in aggressive “debt trap diplomacy.”\textsuperscript{55} China’s true intentions are merely a matter of speculation to most of the world, but regardless of whether or not their involvement in Africa is truly malicious, Chinese involvement has undoubtedly improved the efficacy of African agriculture projects.

**Genetically Modified Organisms**

Currently, the scientific community agrees that the consumption of GMOs will not negatively impact the health of humans; however, this consensus is not widely accepted amongst African nations.\textsuperscript{56} In addition to this, modern-day critics of GMOs argue that the growth of GM crops tends to result in large-scale monoculture, which severely reduces the biodiversity of an area and thus increases the difficulty of acquiring foods used in traditional diets; the widespread usage of GMOs could also dilute traditional cultural practices.\textsuperscript{57} Although the abundant yields offered by genetically modified crops must be taken into consideration, the cultures of local communities must also be respected when drafting a resolution.

Although some nations firmly resist GMOs, countries like Burkina Faso and Sudan have begun implementing GMOs into their agriculture since their introduction to the African continent in 1997. Several other countries, such as Nigeria, Mozambique, and Swaziland, are currently conducting biotech research to find new genetic traits to add to crops. Overall, Africa seems to be trending towards the acceptance of GMOs, as more nations begin to abandon their previous anti-GMO stance; a notable example is Zambia, which, despite declining the USA’s food aid during the 2002 famine, currently allows GMO-products to enter the market after rigorous safety testing procedures. The Zambian Health Minister justifies this change by stating that he now accepts that GMOs have been shown to have no adverse health effects.\textsuperscript{58}

**Task Force Rural Africa**

In 2018, the European Commission formed the Task Force Rural Africa (TFRA). Consisting of 11 members from both Europe and Africa, the entity’s job is to advise the European Commission on how the agricultural sectors of the two continents can cooperate. Seeing as the actions of the TFRA could heavily influence the nature of African relations with Europe, the TFRA should be regarded as an entity through which the committee can execute a resolution.

**Advent of New Agricultural Technology**

GMOs are merely one way for a nation to increase its crop yield, albeit a contentious way. Recently, however, there has been a wave of private technology companies with unique and creative solutions to the myriad of agricultural problems plaguing Africa. The technology that these companies boast are usually not as


groundbreaking of innovations as GMOs were when they were first introduced; rather, they are more practical and aim to improve the efficiency of a farmer’s work.

For example, a Nigerian company called Zenvus analyzes soil data across Nigeria and offers advice to farmers on which crops to plant, how to plant them, and when to plant them. Additionally, Zenvus provides farmers with access to real-time crop prices to inform them of the optimal time and place to sell their yields. This will benefit Nigerian farmers by allowing them to make more optimal farming decisions and thus increase their efficiency and overall profit.

Many of these companies work independently from the government and involve African entrepreneurs within a select handful of countries. Therefore, if a nation were to fear the seemingly neocolonialist tendencies of China, these technologies—which occur at a smaller scale and precludes companies from being proxies for a foreign nation’s agenda—could be a viable alternative.

Possible Solutions and Controversies

The issue of control in the African agriculture sector is complex and open-ended; every proposed solution will undoubtedly have both benefits and drawbacks. However, listed below are some concepts that might be useful when being incorporated into a larger, multi-faceted resolution.

Inclusive Business

The term “inclusive business” is used to refer to a business model where large corporations include small-scale businesses into their value chains. If this concept were to be applied to African agriculture, for example, a large agricultural company would invest in small, family-owned subsistence farms to improve their crop yields. These farms would then sell their surplus crops to the larger company for distribution. Through this model, corporations receive their goods, farms have a source of income, and governments may choose to benefit from the resulting tax revenue; furthermore, the model also preserves the biodiversity found in smaller-scale farms and prevents them from suffering from the effects of monoculture.

One obvious use for this model would be to allow Chinese agriculture companies to fulfill the role of the “large corporation.” The model would then provide a basic framework for a resolution that recognizes China’s recent activity in African agriculture, while also preserving the economic and cultural sovereignty of local populations.

An alternative to the inclusive business model would be for each government to assume greater control of the agricultural sector in their country. For example, governments could allocate a larger percentage of their GDP to the development of agricultural infrastructure or legally require banks to give low-income farmers preferential loans. If a solution involves depending on local governments instead of the investment of foreign powers, it will likely be more mindful of the dignity of the people and the sovereignty of the nations. However, African


61 Ibid.
governments might not have the same organizational or economic strength as a large foreign company, which may lead to the government-control model yielding milder and less effective resolutions.

Financially Stable Careers in Agriculture
One way for African countries to increase their crop yields is to expand the workforce of the agricultural industry, which can be achieved by increasing the profitability of farming to make the profession more attractive. Currently, many Africans raised in rural areas seek more lucrative careers by moving to more densely populated urban cities. If governments can prove to their people that farming can be a financially rewarding job, then the nation’s agriculture sector will flourish. This can be achieved in a myriad of ways, including developing more agricultural projects with China and Europe, the subsidization of farms, and the use of biotechnology and other agricultural technology. Regardless, establishing farming as a financially rewarding career would be a plausible starting point for any resolution. Although foreign donors could support a resolution involving this concept in the short-term, if done properly, African agricultural sectors could be less dependent on them in the long term.

Use of GMOs
If a country believes that the widespread adoption of GMOs increases agricultural productivity, the creation of regional policies—similar to those of COMESA’s regarding GMOs—may be a viable strategy for increasing crop yield. Nations against GMOs sometimes cite health risks as their reason for abstaining from the practice, but if every Regional Economic Community were to mandate rigorous testing before approving a certain GM crop, this argument would lose some merit. Ultimately, proponents of GMOs can use these regional policies to demonstrate that GMO use has historically led to economic growth. Advocates of genetic modification could also call for an increase in funding towards biotechnology research, which would greatly aid Africa’s transition towards accepting the utility of GMOs.

Upon passing the continent’s first policy on GMOs, South Africa has seen great economic growth. However, a country could also argue that the returns biotechnology offers are not worth the loss of cultural dignity, European market access, and biodiversity. If a country chooses to resolve the topic without the legalization of GM crops, another method of innovation in the agricultural sector should be proposed. Biotechnology is ultimately just another means of improving the efficiency of African agriculture, and less mainstream but equally viable technologies should be considered as well.

Bloc Positions
The blocs listed below are not mutually exclusive; rather, the topic has been split into two separate yet interconnected subtopics to make the descriptions of blocs easier to read. For example, two countries may share a stance on the usage of GMOs but disagree on whether or not foreign investments should be the primary force supporting the agriculture sector.

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Anti-GMO
Countries in this bloc believe that the drawbacks of GMOs—decreased crop diversity, the transfer of allergenic genes, the risk of adverse health effects, and the loss of access to the European market—heavily outweigh any benefits that they may provide an economy.63 Although the primary objective is to strengthen the African economy via agricultural developments, some critics of GMOs believe that its usage interferes with using traditional seeds and farming practices, thus further diluting their culture and rendering the objective meaningless.64 Some countries in this bloc, such as Zambia, allow GMO foods to be imported but maintain a ban on GMO seeds.65 Although the number of nations in this bloc has gradually decreased over the past decade, the countries that continue to hold this stance include Angola, Zimbabwe, and Ethiopia, amongst others.

Pro-GMO
These nations advocate for the adoption of GMOs because of their proven economic success and the ability of GM crops to withstand the often-harsh environmental conditions of the continent. Although the scientific consensus dictates that GMOs are safe for consumption, policies can be implemented to thoroughly test the safety of new crops and new traits in crops. To these nations, the economic benefits that the implementation of GMOs provides outweighs the decrease in agricultural trade with the EU and the potential loss of biodiversity. In addition to this, some nations see GMOs as necessary to keep their agriculture sector afloat; for example, as of 2016, Egypt has roughly 0.03 hectares of arable land per person—the 26th lowest rate in the world—and would struggle to maintain food supplies if not for GMOs.66 Countries with similarly high population densities and relatively small amounts of agricultural land may see GMOs as essential to feeding the population. This bloc includes South Africa, Sudan, Burkina Faso, and Egypt, amongst others.

Pro-Economy
Nations in this bloc believe that the current trend of increased foreign investments can and should be leveraged into economic success. African relations with China and the EU should be strengthened because these trade partners possess an economic and organizational strength that could be of assistance to all African nations. While the majority of African nations align with this bloc, some exceptions are listed in the section below.

Pro-Sovereignty
Most nations in this bloc do not hold an explicitly anti-China or anti-EU stance. Rather, these countries have recently had experiences that introduced an element of caution into their foreign policies. For example, President Julius Maada Bio of Sierra Leone cancelled the construction of an airport that was to be funded by Chinese entities because he “didn’t see any need for [the proposed airport].”67 However, Bio later stated that Sierra Leone  

64 Ibid.
was not ending bilateral relations with China and that his government would like to build a bridge to the existing airport, a change he claims is more necessary.\textsuperscript{68} Similarly, the president of Kenya stated in a conference that although his nation is grateful for the recent Chinese support, the trade has been “heavily skewed in favor of China”.\textsuperscript{69} The Kenya National Bureau of Statistics shows that China annually exports about KES 390 billion to Kenya while Kenya exports about KES 9 billion to China, indicating an imbalance in the trade relation.\textsuperscript{70} Neither of these nations feel the need to completely boycott investments from foreign powers, but they would likely call for other African nations to be cautious with such foreign investments.

A notable exception to the widespread interaction with China is Swaziland. Although most African countries recognize the People’s Republic of China as the legitimate government of China, Swaziland has retained relations with Taiwan. Under the One-China policy, a nation may only recognize one sovereign state as China, so Swaziland’s relations with Taiwan prevents it from collaborating with China. Unlike Sierra Leone and Kenya, who plan on approaching relations with China cautiously, Swaziland will likely support resolutions that bypass the need for Chinese support altogether.

Discussion Questions

1. To what extent should foreign powers have control over the African agriculture sector?
2. What is the optimal balance of agricultural control between the African public and private sectors?
3. To what extent is the implementation of GMOs necessary for the economic survival of Africa?
4. What would be the best way to invest in and implement up-and-coming technologies that boost the productivity of farmers?
5. Should unifying policies regarding the usage of GMOs and collaboration with foreign powers be applied to all African nations?

Additional Resources

For Africa’s Farmers It’s Government, Not Big Business, That is Key (The Guardian):
https://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/2017/jan/18/agriculture-africa-role-multinationals

The Last Thing Africa Needs to Be Debating Is GMOs (Washington Post):
https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/food/the-last-thing-africa-needs-to-be-debating-is-gmos/2015/05/22/81b76574-fe62-11e4-833c-a2de05b6b2a4_story.html

American Food Aid and the GMO Debate in Southern Africa:

Will Africa Feed China? by Deborah Brautigam

The State of Agricultural Trade Between the EU and Africa:
https://oegfe.at/2018/07/neocolonialism-or-balanced-partnership/

GMO Foods and Crops: Africa’s Choice (New Biotechnology):
Bibliography


Political Instability and Electoral Violence

Overview

Political instability can be defined as “the propensity for regime or government change,” “the incidence of political upheaval or violence in a society,” or “the degree to which fundamental policies…are subject to frequent changes.”71 All three of these factors have found their way into the Western world’s perception of the African continent; according to Freedom House, only 11% of the continent can be considered “politically free.”72 Political instability can be considered one of several factors responsible for the incompetence and inefficiency of certain governments; solving it would allow for the continent as a whole to operate more efficiently and prosper in the 21st century.

One way to go about instilling political stability would be to encourage the peaceful transfer of power, whether in democratic or autocratic regimes. Currently, violence permeates society during nearly every African election—be that through protests or which  in turn disillusions the population’s perceptions of democracy. However, electoral violence occurs at an even higher rate in autocratic regimes, mostly because the incumbent party is reluctant to give up their access to absolute power. By mitigating electoral violence—which ultimately stems from a fundamental lack of faith in the government—power can be transferred more smoothly, helping facilitate the transition to democracy in nations that wish to do so.

A challenge that delegates may face when debating this issue is the need to find concrete and realistic courses of action. Electoral violence is ultimately caused by African nations’ lack of democratic roots; by focusing solely on improving the institutions necessary for establishing democracy, electoral violence would theoretically no longer be an issue. However, delegates must remember that democracy takes several decades to fully implement whilst electoral violence is affecting citizens during this decades-long transition period. In addition, under the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 46/130, nations are not allowed to interfere with the elections of other nations; to enter every nation and rewire their political systems into democratic ideals would constitute a violation of sovereignty. 73 Although democratic development in the abstract can be discussed and briefly mentioned in resolutions, the goal of the topic is to ultimately find realistic and concrete ways to combat political instability whilst operating within the jurisdiction of the African Union.

Timeline

1881 – 1914 — The Scramble for Africa takes place. During this period, European nations annex and colonize the majority of the African continent.74

1950s – 1960s — Most African nations regain independence from their European colonizers. Despite the successful decolonization of most parts of Africa, long-term effects still remain.

1947 – 1991 — The Cold War takes place between global superpowers such as the United States and the Soviet Union. Upon the decolonization of Africa, both sides of the conflict financially support African nations, sometimes resulting in the strengthening of dictatorial regimes.

1974 – 1998 — Nations around the world experience the Third Wave of Democratization, a global phenomenon in which democracy finds its way into the political systems of developing nations, several of which are in Africa.75 Despite its name, the leaders that emerge from this period tend to undermine constitutional limits and neglect the liberties of their citizens; such governments are known as illiberal democracies.

December 17, 1991 — The United Nations General Assembly passes Resolution 46/130, which limits the degree to which countries are able to interfere with the electoral systems of other countries.76

1948 – 1994 — Apartheid takes place in South Africa; this is a time marked by autocracy and institutional racism. In the later stages of this period, the United States and other democratic Western nations support the discriminatory National Party with the intent of limiting the spread of communism and Soviet influence.

December 27, 2007 — The Kenyan federal elections occur, featuring several instances of intentional vote miscounting recorded by electoral monitors. The event is followed by a period of violence—presumed to be rooted in tensions between ethnic groups—that requires UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan to order UN forces to intervene.77

July 30, 2018 — The Zimbabwean federal elections take place after the impeachment of long-time ruler Robert Mugabe. What begins as a relatively peaceful election cycle ends with electoral fraud and eventually, violence against protesters.

March 1, 2019 — The Nigerian federal elections occur. Several forms of violence (terrorist attacks, ethnic conflicts, kidnappings, etc.) occur surrounding the election date, threatening the safety of voters, impacting voter turnout, and possibly skewing results.

Historical Analysis

Like many of modern-day Africa’s difficulties, the ongoing trend of political instability can be attributed to imperialism. Although precolonial Africa was by no means a fully-utopic place, scholars have noted that checks and balances were frequently employed to promote accountability and good governance in both democracies and autocracies. However, the indirect rule employed by the Western imperial forces served to destabilize virtually all pre-existing forms of political structure that the African people had in place. European actions in Africa at this period, such as the creation of arbitrarily-defined conflict-prone borders, have paved the way for future autocratic activity, ethnic conflict, and general political instability.

It can be argued, however, that the decolonization process and the Cold War shaped modern African politics just as much as imperialism. After gaining independence from their European colonizers, the institutions necessary for a functioning democracy were left severely weakened throughout Africa, which allowed for autocracy and corruption to thrive. However, the continent’s relations with the Western world did not end with decolonization; the Cold War saw many nations from both sides of the conflict supporting often-autocratic African governments to increase their overall influence and presence.

A major example of Cold War forces competing in Africa would be the late stages of South African apartheid. The National Party—the ruling political party at the time—held strictly anti-communist views, which attracted the support of Western nations like the United Kingdom and the United States. Despite championing democracy, these liberal democracies were willing to support South Africa’s arguably fascist regime for fear that communism would prevail; at the time, the Soviet Union provided the African National Congress—a more revolutionary and left-leaning political party—with military support. Having used divisions in South Africa as a proxy for communist and anti-communist conflict, European involvement in Africa during the late stages of apartheid demonstrated the potentially harmful impacts of intervention from global superpowers in Africa.

Upon the fall of the Soviet Union, African nations began to experience the Third Wave of Democratization, a term coined by political scientist Samuel Huntington in his book *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*. This phenomenon, which began in 1974, occurred in more than 30 nations; this total didn’t initially account for the rise of democracy in Africa, as Huntington published his book before it occurred, but scholars have retroactively changed this. One major factor that triggered democratization in Africa was the loss of support from the Cold War forces, which severely reduced the amount of power that dictators held. This shift, along with a general desire for democracy in the population that can be linked to the popularization of Western culture, made way for a new wave of African leaders, including Isaias Afwerki of Eritrea, Paul Kagame

of Rwanda, and Meles Zenawi of Ethiopia, among others. However, in retrospect, scholars have pointed out that these leaders merely used the guise of democracy to fulfill their autocratic aspirations.\textsuperscript{82} For example, nations with falsely democratic leaders would continue to hold elections, but the results were often manipulated to keep the incumbent party in power. Additionally, these leaders may abolish term limits by manipulating legal procedure; since 2000, at least 30 African leaders have attempted this, 18 of whom have succeeded.\textsuperscript{83} In summary, autocrats had found a way to adapt to the political landscape of the 1990s and 2000s.

Although it would be tempting to assume that all African countries shared a similar postcolonial political trajectory, it is important to remember that each nation has had distinct colonial and post-colonial histories, resulting in the nuanced and varied political spheres in Africa today. Despite the grim generalizations discussed in this section, it is worth noting that several African nations—such as South Africa and Eritrea—have made tremendous strides towards full democracy. Because not every nation has been affected by all of the aforementioned historical factors, a viable resolution must cater to the distinct political needs of each African nation.

**Past UN/International Involvement**

Until the end of the Cold War, the discourse on development widely accepted that political freedom in African nations could only be achieved after economic prosperity; scholars would argue that Africa as a continent was not economically-developed enough to benefit from all that democracy had to offer, and some believed that authoritarianism would expedite the African economic development process.\textsuperscript{84} However, with the end of the Cold War, the notion of democracy aid from Western nations gained popularity. With governments around the world gearing their stances towards human rights, the public generally began to see political freedom as a means of promoting economic growth in African economies.\textsuperscript{85}

**Conditionality**

Democracy aid can be defined as foreign policy that intends to strengthen the political institutions of other nations by promoting democracy in governance and helping nations implement democratic frameworks in their governments. Along with simply funding the institutions necessary for a functional democracy, donors of democracy aid would also employ conditionalities: conditions that a recipient country must meet in order to receive aid. Although the concept of conditionalities is sound—a nation in need of aid in establishing democracy can only receive support if it uses the funds it acquires in a democratic and productive way—they are currently no longer considered to be an effective method of aid. In any aid-based relationship, the action of a donor supplying aid to a recipient nation reduces the recipient government’s responsibility and accountability to its own people; rather, the recipient is accountable to the donor country and its taxpayers.\textsuperscript{86} This same inversion of

\textsuperscript{82} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{85} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{86} Ibid.
control applies to conditionality-based democracy aid in Africa. For example, the Washington consensus was a set of ten policies that the US, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank would attempt to implement in countries in need of democratic aid. Many of the countries that lacked the political will or means to argue against it were satisfied with simply accepting the aid and integrating the conditions, therefore decreasing a government’s autonomy and accountability to its people. Given that accountability to a nation’s own citizens is one of the pillars of democracy, conditionality-based aid is widely regarded as detrimental to the democratization of Africa. Once this argument became clear to academics and policymakers, the usage of conditionality became less prevalent, replaced with more equitable forms of aid. In 2005, the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, having recognized that accountability is necessary for the development of democracy, called for all nations to “exercise effective leadership over their [own] development policies.”

Electoral Assistance and Observation

Another major form of democracy aid is electoral assistance, which primarily consists of election monitoring. Rather than assuming full control of an election, the objective is to analyze elections and detect areas of improvement in hopes of bolstering the legitimacy of elections. Although one could argue that election monitoring does not greatly benefit the democratization of a nation, it is important to note that in 1991, the UN passed General Assembly Resolution 46/130, which calls for “respect for the principles of national sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of States in their electoral processes.” This resolution greatly reduces the extent to which donor countries can be involved with their recipient country’s elections, but regardless of whether this is for better or worse, a viable solution to this topic must operate within the limitations imposed by this resolution.

The Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa (EISA) is a Johannesburg-based non-governmental organization founded in 1996, specializing in the usage of the Parallel Vote Tabulation method to determine the accuracy of an election. After combining their assessment with citizen participation data, EISA may determine the legitimacy of an election and report the findings to a body like the African Union or a Regional Economic Community. In addition, EISA is also capable of providing technical election support (e.g. voter registration and electoral staff training) and advice on electoral violence management.

Another organization that works to improve democracy internationally is the European Commission-United Nations Development Programme (EC-UNDP) Partnership on Electoral Assistance. This collaboration between two major contributors to global electoral assistance was founded in 2006, and has since funded EUR 500 million to programs in over 70 countries. The partnership operates heavily in Africa; its activities—non-invasive electoral assistance and observation projects—are similar to those of EISA.

87 Ibid.
Current Situation

Since the Third Wave of Democratization, the African continent has seen a shift towards more legitimate forms of democracy. Although it is by no means the most accurate indicator of a democracy’s health, the number of transfers of power has increased throughout the past decade; while only nine transfers of power occurred from 2010 to 2014, while more than 26 have occurred since 2015—more than half of which involve the defeat of an incumbent party.\footnote{Judd Devermont and Jon Temin, “Africa’s Democratic Moment?” \textit{Council on Foreign Relations}, June 11, 2019, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/afrika/2019-06-11/afrikas-democratic-moment.} Only one coup has taken place in this period of time, taking place prior to the Zimbabwean election of 2018.\footnote{Ibid.}

However, electoral violence continues to prevail. Although some nations have managed to embrace the liberal aspects of Western democracy and reduce the frequency of election-related violence, several others have retained the illiberal institutions instilled by the Third Wave of Democratization, which has led to the frequent outbreak of electoral violence. Although this violence commonly refers to when protesters—dissatisfied with election results—engage in conflict with military personnel, it can also take the form of a general increase in criminal activity or ethnically motivated violence. This phenomenon, along with electoral fraud, will be examined in the following case studies.

Case Study: 2018 Zimbabwean Election

Since 1987, Robert Mugabe had ruled over Zimbabwe as its first democratically-elected president. However, especially towards the end of his presidency, in which Mugabe would constantly rig elections to secure his position, the general public felt increasingly jaded with his democratic veneer. On November 24, 2017, the Zimbabwean military staged a coup against Mugabe, forcing him to resign from his position. Former Vice President Emmerson Mnangagwa assumed his role and began organizing an election for the following year to fulfill his promise of democratic reform.

The election process began smoothly; many of the people of Zimbabwe believed that the upcoming election would mark a new era of democracy. However, the main opposition party—the Movement for Democratic Change, led by Nelson Chamisa—repeatedly claimed that the election was being rigged against them, citing voter intimidation and bias in the electoral commission; these allegations were supported by election monitors’ findings.\footnote{Jason Burke, “Zimbabwe Election: Mnangagwa Narrowly Wins Presidential Poll,” \textit{Guardian News}, August 3, 2018, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/aug/02/mnangagwas-zanu-pf-on-track-to-pull-off-narrow-win-in-zimbabwe-election.} Chamisa also accused Mnangagwa’s party of “vote buying,” a practice in which a political party offers money or food to citizens to persuade them to vote in their favor. Vote buying is universally considered undemocratic, as it allows a political party’s money and resources to sway a vote, deterring voters from democracy’s emphasis on choosing candidates for the quality of their policies and platform.

The election resulted in a win for Mnangagwa and the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF). However, citizens who were displeased with the outcome of the election—under the impression that the election had been fraudulent—began organizing protests. Mnangagwa’s government eventually called
for the army to intervene, resulting in widespread violence via live ammunition, tear gas, and water cannons.\textsuperscript{94} What was once thought to be a turning point for Zimbabwean democracy eventually unfurled as yet another case of electoral violence.

**Case Study: 2019 Nigerian Election**

In 2015, former President Goodluck Jonathan peacefully conceded his incumbency to Muhammadu Buhari, ending the 16-year presidential streak of the People’s Democratic Party. Many of those paying attention to Nigerian politics believed that this election would be the first of many peaceful, democratic transfer of powers to come; however, the 2019 election rendered it as merely an anomaly. After postponing the election date from February 16 to February 23, it was announced on February 27 that Buhari had defeated his opponent Atika Abubakar and would retain his position. However, Abubakar rejected the election’s outcome, claiming that Buhari’s victory was a “statistical impossibility.”\textsuperscript{95} This, along with the aforementioned delay of the election and Buhari’s decision to suspend Chief Justice Walter Onnoghen, who plays a key role in the electoral process, has led some to believe that electoral fraud had occurred. Nevertheless, election observers concluded that the impact of these allegations were not significant enough to skew the final results.\textsuperscript{96}

The more alarming aspect of the recent Nigerian elections is the violence surrounding it. An estimated 626 people had been killed during the election cycle for a number of reasons: the Islamic State West Africa Province organized attacks in Northeast Nigeria hours before the polls were scheduled to open, the Fulani herdsmen conflict increased in intensity throughout the central parts of the nation, and the Northwestern section of the country was subject to a general increase in kidnappings and killings.\textsuperscript{97, 98} Although it is uncertain as to whether all of the violence occurred in reaction to the election cycle, all these events played a role in reducing voter turnout. In addition to the violence, there have been several reports of the police force making no attempts to alleviate the severity of the situation, raising further questions about whether or not the government and its associated bodies are actively making attempts to further democracy in Nigeria.\textsuperscript{99}

**Possible Solutions and Controversies**

**Mitigating Electoral Violence**

Tackling electoral violence is the most tangible solution to the issue; as the most foundational aspect of the problem, electoral violence during democratic transitions is the subproblem that the African Union can most

\textsuperscript{94} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{96} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{99} Ibid.
realistically combat. Although electoral violence is obviously linked to larger societal issues such as ethnic
tensions and a population’s general distrust of democracy, this does not dismiss the urgent need for mitigation.

There are several ways to approach preventing electoral violence. One possible solution would be to support
humanitarian efforts in places with high rates of electoral violence, whether that be through requesting
international support, supporting the work of pre-existing humanitarian NGOs, or assembling an African
Union-backed task force. Currently, there are not any intergovernmental organizations specifically intended to
combat electoral violence; as such, the committee can make use existing intergovernmental organizations to
implement solutions regarding electoral violence.

Making Elections Fair
A simple way to bypass the need for humanitarian efforts is to demonstrate to the public that a nation is capable
of holding a fair election; most of the violence surrounding elections is caused by the widespread doubt in an
election’s legitimacy, which usually manifests in protests.

The UN’s General Assembly Resolution 46/130, which calls for nations to refrain from interfering with foreign
electoral affairs, may eliminate the plausibility of some solutions. Although it would be easy for a group to enter
each country and rewire their political systems to ensure a fully-liberalized democracy, this would impede on the
sovereignty of the nations receiving the support. Therefore, changes to elections—ideally ones that eliminate
corruption in electoral commissions, violence around voting stations, and the practice of vote buying—would
most likely have to be implemented at the discretion of each nation.

Election observation is a popular form of non-intrusive electoral support. Although it does not help democratize
elections in the long term, it helps citizens of a nation keep their rulers accountable by providing them with an
empirical basis for their frustrations. Two popular methods of electoral observation exist: Parallel Vote
Tabulation (PVT)—which uses a sample of official results to independently infer results—and exit polls—which
relies on polling voters as they leave the stations to tally votes. Both of these methods have their advantages and
drawbacks—as PVT produces more accurate results, but exit polls are easier to apply—so the committee must
decide on which method is more advantageous for their country’s situation.

Asking the international community for support should be considered when trying to obtain the means to tackle
democratization. However, as was previously discussed, nations depending too heavily on foreign aid will see
their governments’ accountability to their own people erode. Furthermore, any agreements that employ
conditionalities should be carefully considered, as conditional aid has historically strayed recipient nations away
from democratic progress. 100 Foreign aid should be used to supplement a reasonable resolution, but not be a
resolution’s sole focus.

Strengthening Democratic Institutions
Tackling the root causes of electoral violence, political instability, and illiberal democracy is difficult due to the
abstract nature of these issues. However, solving the roots of these issues completely are beyond the scope of this
topic. The practice of vote buying, for instance, can ultimately be attributed to Africa’s rampant poverty, but

100 Thandika Mkandawire, "Aid, Accountability, and Democracy in Africa," Social Research 77, no. 4 (2010: 1149 -182,
poverty cannot feasibly be eliminated through a single resolution. Delegates should touch on any factors they feel are underlying causes for political instability and electoral violence—such as underdeveloped democratic institutions and the lack of checks and balances in certain governments—but they should not be the focal point of a resolution.\textsuperscript{101}

**Addressing Regional Differences**

It is worth reiterating that the political landscape of modern Africa is diverse. Most of this section has been geared toward dealing with illiberal democracies, but there are also many other African nations that defy this norm. For example, rather than attempting to use a democratic bluff, autocratic Eritrea stands as the only African country that currently does not hold elections.\textsuperscript{102} The nation seemingly has no interest in democracy whatsoever, evident by its complete lack of independent political parties. While Eritrea has been classified as an authoritarian regime by the Economist Intelligence Unit’s Democracy Index, Mauritius stands as the only African “full democracy.”\textsuperscript{103} Every other nation falls on the spectrum in between these two countries, resulting in the need for a resolution that can address the issue in a wide variety of political contexts.

**Bloc Positions**

**Full Democracies and Developing Democracies**

Nations in this bloc genuinely believe in the strength of democracy, even those who do not have fully-functioning democracies themselves. Although solving electoral violence is a priority to the countries that face it regularly, the bloc as a whole is also interested in democratizing elections. In addition to this, these nations may have the goal of spreading liberal democracy across Africa; more than other blocs, this bloc may struggle with finding a balance between considering the individuality of each nation’s political situation and applying policies that make democratic gains across the board. This bloc will also likely advocate for foreign democracy aid that respects the sovereignty of the governments it works within. Countries in this bloc—such as Ethiopia, South Africa, and Mauritius—include those that have recently experienced a successful election, those with accountable and democratic new leaders, and those rated highly by The Economist Intelligence Unit’s Democracy Index.\textsuperscript{104}

**Hybrid Regimes**

Hybrid regimes employ elements of both democratic and autocratic regimes; however, they are typically found to be less politically stable than their fully-democratic or fully-autocratic counterparts.\textsuperscript{105} A nation with a hybrid regime might hold regular elections but a party may rig them to ensure the security of the long-standing incumbent, and have both democratic and autocratic elements integrated into the nation’s politics. These nations


\textsuperscript{104} Ibid.

are interested in maintaining their veneer of democracy while furthering their underlying autocratic tendencies; during the conference, this may take the form of agreeing with the sentiment of democratic reform but creating resolutions that largely maintain the political status quo. For example, these countries might agree with the democratic bloc's solutions to electoral violence but be hesitant to call for the widespread reform of African elections. The Democracy Index lists Nigeria, Kenya, and Mali as among the nations classified as “hybrid regimes.”

**Illiberal Democracies and Autocracies**

This bloc, like its name suggests, stands further down the spectrum of illiberalism and autocracy than hybrid regimes. However, in contrast to hybrid regimes, these nations are entirely opposed to the ideals of liberal democracy and embody the legacy of the authoritarian leaders of the Third Wave of Democratization. Any semblance of democracy is in fact autocracy that has “[transformed] itself to survive in a new, liberalized post-Cold War global setting.” This bloc might only be interested in combating surface-level symptoms of political instability, such as electoral violence. For example, a country in this bloc might solve this by discretely convincing the committee that the right to protest must be moderated in order to reduce the number of civilian casualties, when in reality, this bloc may be attempting to suppress the right to protest. It is worth noting that every country in this bloc—with the exception of Eritrea—holds elections, albeit ones that are fundamentally unjust and illiberal. To avoid having to make any restrictive changes, nations in this bloc might stand in support of resolutions that allow for individual nations to pursue democracy at the pace that they wish—which, in the case of these nations, is hardly at all.

**Discussion Questions**

1. How can the damages caused by electoral violence be mitigated in the short term?

2. To what extent should the committee focus on solving the root causes of the issue? What tangible actions can be taken to accomplish this?

3. What role does electoral observation play in combating political instability? How can such processes be improved upon?

4. Should the resolution call for all African nations to be subjected to the same standard of democratic improvement?

5. To what extent should African nations rely on the democracy aid provided by foreign powers?

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Additional Resources

EC-UNDP Electoral Assistance Projects Update, April 2019:

Aid, Accountability, and Democracy in Africa:
https://www.jstor.org/stable/23347123?read-now=1&seq=8#metadata_info_tab_contents

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