



African Union

UGAMUNC 30

Table of Contents

Letter from the Chair.....	3
Sensitivity Statement.....	4
Background.....	5
Topic A: Economic Integration among African Union Member states	
Past Actions of the AU's Economic Integration.....	6
Current Actions of the AU's Economic Integration.....	6
Current Problems with AU Economic Integration.....	7
Questions to Consider.....	7
Suggested Readings.....	8
Topic B: Combating Political Instability in the Sahel	
Introduction.....	9
Factors Leading to Instability.....	9
Response by the AU.....	9
Vocabulary.....	10
Questions to Consider.....	10
Suggested Readings.....	10

Dear Delegates,

My name is Mahin Gonela and I will be your chair for the African Union general assembly committee. I am a fourth-year double majoring in International Affairs and Economics. This is my third year doing Model UN, and this will be my first time chairing a committee! Outside of Model UN, I am both a writer and the Social Media Manager for Georgia Political Review, a student-run magazine at UGA focusing on state, national, and international politics. When I'm not doing homework or attending a MUN meeting, I love watching anime, listening to Foster the People, and taking photos of places I travel to. I became interested in African politics after studying abroad at Stellenbosch University in the Western Cape, South Africa. I completed an African Politics course and conducted research on the history of LGBT rights in South Africa. I am very excited for the opportunity to chair this committee!

I would also like to introduce you to our wonderful co-chair, Emily Schoen. She is a first-year student dual majoring in International Affairs and Political Science at the UGA School of Public and International Affairs, with a minor in Spanish. This is Emily's first year doing Model United Nations, and she is very excited to be a part of this committee. In addition to Model UN, Emily is a Taylor Swift superfan (her favorite album is Lover) and an avid member of the tennis community. You can find her hammocking on weekends with a good book, cheering on the Dawgs during Saturday games, or staying up late studying with her friends.

I heavily encourage collaboration and diplomacy. The African Union can be complex, however in order to enact meaningful resolutions, you must find a common ground. It of course must be said, I expect every delegate to be respectful of all religions, cultures, and nationalities. As a delegate, you must conduct yourself with a high level of professionalism. I encourage you to use this background guide as a basis for your research and exploration into the topics and your country. On that note, **position papers are due at 11:59 pm on January 19th**. If you have any questions or concerns, please email me at mahin.gonela@uga.edu, and turn your position papers in here as well. We wish you the best of luck and hope you enjoy your time in committee!

Sincerely,

Mahin Gonela and Emily Schoen

Sensitivity Statement

As you research these topics and prepare to attend our conference, please remember to be respectful and mindful of different cultures, traditions, religions, and more. Here at the University of Georgia, we do not tolerate any form of discrimination. As a standard, follow the Western business attire dress code, do not imitate accents when speaking, and do not bring props. Treat your fellow delegates with the utmost respect, regardless of differences in ability, age, culture and ethnicity, gender identity, national origin, race, religion, and sexual orientation. Please keep this in mind, whether it's the ideas discussed during debate or the content of your papers.

Additionally, cheating by pre-writing or other measures such as the use of AI (ChatGPT, Google Bard, Grammarly AI, etc.) will not be allowed, as it not only provides certain delegates with unfair advantages, but also takes away from the passion, personality, and effort that each delegate puts into their ideas and works. Although this is a technology committee, the use of AI to write position papers, speeches, or papers in committee is strictly forbidden.

In short, please conduct yourself in a respectful and professional manner. If instances of racism, sexism, homophobia, xenophobia, etc. ever arise during committee, please let us know so that we can handle the situation and create a safe and welcoming environment for everyone. Furthermore, if our staff determine that you have violated our code of conduct, or that you have committed any aforementioned forbidden activities such as prewriting, accent imitation, or racism, we reserve the right to disqualify you from UGAMUNC 30.

Background

The African Union (AU) is an intergovernmental organization composed of 55 African states. It was officially launched on July 9th, 2002 in Durban, South Africa.¹ The African Union succeeded the earlier Organisation of African Unity (OAU), which had been established in 1963. The OAU's purpose was to assist in the liberation of African states from colonial powers and to fight against apartheid. It also aimed to increase cooperation between African states through the guiding philosophy of Pan-Africanism, which itself is centered on African unity and a desire to embrace African culture. Although the OAU functioned as an effective forum for member states to coordinate on issues of common interest, in 1999, the Heads of State of the OAU issued the Sirte Declaration in which they called for the establishment of the African Union, which would accelerate the integration of Africa while working on various social, political, and economic issues.

The African Union has several different decision making organs. The Assembly of Heads of State and Government, the Executive Council, the Permanent Representatives Committee, and the African Union Committee act as the executive organs of the AU. Organs like the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR), African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights (AfCHPR), and the AU Commission on International Law (AUCIL) work to handle legal and judicial matters. The secretariat of the AU is based in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The guiding vision of the AU is "An Integrated, Prosperous and Peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena." Some of the aims of the African Union include promoting democratic principles and institutions, encouraging international cooperation, promoting peace, security, and stability on the continent, and fostering sustainable development. Through ongoing programs such as initiatives focused on education and healthcare, the African Union works to contribute significantly to the collective progress of the continent.

¹"About the African Union | African Union," n.d.
[https://au.int/en/overview#:~:text=The%20African%20Union%20\(AU\)%20is,OAU%2C%201963%2D1999](https://au.int/en/overview#:~:text=The%20African%20Union%20(AU)%20is,OAU%2C%201963%2D1999).

Topic A: Economic Integration among African Union Member states

Past Actions of the AU's Economic Integration

Economic integration of member states has been a top priority of the African Union since its predecessor, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), was established in 1963. The founders of OAU had a main objective to accelerate economic integration in the continent through promoting sustainable development and creating areas of free trade, a single market, a central bank, and common currency. From the beginning, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa encouraged OAU member states to start up smaller, sub-regional economies, which would then eventually come together to form a larger, multinational economy. This proposal was called the Abuja Treaty (1991), also known as the African Economic Community (AEC). Similar to how the European Union began, member states were encouraged to form Regional Economic Communities (RECs) with the end goal of integrating together to create the AEC. There are currently 8 RECs recognised today: Arab Maghreb Union, Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, Community of Sahel-Saharan States, East African Community, Economic Community of Central African States, Economic Community of West African States, Intergovernmental Authority on Development, and Southern African Development Community. This plan was to be achieved in 6 successive stages, completed in 2028. The aim was to efficiently diversify production of agriculture, mining, and industry, while also increasing locally sourced goods to boost intra-African trade. Creating and maintaining close international relationships and economic stability is crucial towards establishing a successful African economy.²

Current Actions of the AU

In 2002, the OAU was scrapped for the newly established African Union. Since then, the economy of Africa has been in a slow decline due to political corruption, currency inflation, and lack of strong ties between neighboring nations. However, there have been some strides towards organizing a stronger system and staying on top of the original 6 stage developmental plan. The AU has completed the first stage, which was creating the regional blocs in different areas of Africa. For stage 2, RECs have already begun to integrate. Stage 3's goal is to establish free trade areas and custom unions in RECs, followed by stage 4, which is set up to create a continent wide free trade area. Stage 4 is currently in progress, as the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (ACFTA) initiated continental free trade for the entirety of the African Union. 22 ratifications from AU member states made the treaty operational, and in 2021, 34 member states have

²“The Role of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) as the Building Blocks of the African Union,” n.d. <https://www.scribble.com/view/source/7GQO0C0G0IHMG2NO10S7S02S0F20IG8F:1004143349/>.

signed.³ The end goal of AU is to establish a central bank and create a common currency, and those endeavors have come to the forefront of discussion, especially among RECs. ECOWAS has made efforts towards a common currency among East African states, which is the first step towards a continental common currency, something similar to the Euro created by the European Union. Treaties have been passed by the African Union to enable the free movement of African citizens in between member states. In Article 14 of “Treaty Establishing Free Movement of Persons”, the free movement of workers is specifically brought up, allowing for constituents of any member state to find employment in other member states.⁴ These steps towards stronger bonds between member states will help facilitate a growing economy and eventually a shared economy.

Current Problems with AU Economic Integration

Although there are big strides towards continental economic integration within Africa, there are still modern-day problems that are hindering the success of this plan. Many Sub-Saharan currencies are weakening against the US dollar. This is inhibiting economic growth, causing a slowdown in that area of Africa.⁵ Another major influence to economic decline in Africa is the HIV/AIDS pandemic. This disease has a heavy impact on the working population, so when workers become ill, they are no longer able to support the economy of a nation. If no one is able to work, the economy slows down. This reduces the production of goods, therefore reducing the number of exports a country is able to enact. Imports increase and more money is spent, further pushing a country into economic decline. If a nation is not able to control its economy, then it will struggle within the RECs, and prevent progress of Africa’s multinational economy.⁶

Questions to Consider

1. What are some forms of treatment that can help stop the HIV/AIDS pandemic and its impact on the economy?
2. What are some weak areas of the African Union?
3. How could corruption and conflict impact the effort to create a continental economy?
4. What could other RECs follow ECOWAS lead in creating a regional union for currency?

³“AfCFTA Agreement Secures Minimum Threshold of 22 Ratification as Sierra Leone and the Saharawi Republic Deposit Instruments. | African Union,” n.d. <https://au.int/en/pressreleases/20190429/afcfta-agreement-secures-minimum-threshold-22-ratification-sierra-leone-and>.

⁴“Scrible PDF Viewer,” n.d. <https://www.scrible.com/app/pdf-viewer/#docUId=3GIG0C0L0GH602NO10S5O2HT8B20I08F&entryId=1004190416>.

⁵Brookings. “Africa’s Economic Morass—Will a Common Currency Help? | Brookings,” July 28, 2016. <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/africas-economic-morass-will-a-common-currency-help/>.

⁶Dixon, Simon, Scott McDonald, and Jennifer Roberts. “The Impact of HIV and AIDS on Africa’s Economic Development.” *BMJ* 324, no. 7331 (January 26, 2002): 232–34. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.324.7331.232>.

5. How could the African Union strengthen its world standing in the global economy through the efforts of RECs and monetary policy?
6. What are the benefits to ACFTA? Downsides?

Suggested Readings

- [Economic Integration](#)
- [2021 African Integration Report shows significant progress in achieving the continental integration agenda](#)

Topic B: Combating Political Instability in the Sahel

Introduction

Many countries across Sub-Saharan Africa have experienced coups, civil wars, and other forms of political instability after achieving independence from colonial powers. Since 2020, numerous states in the Sahel have undergone coups, leading to the creation of the term “Coups Belt” to describe the region.⁷ Burkina Faso, Chad, Gabon, Guinea, Mali, Niger, and Sudan have all had successful coups since 2020. With the exception of Gabon, all the aforementioned states have an HDI of below 0.500, and fall into the designation of “Least Developed Countries” as identified by the United Nations.⁸ The underlying economic and social realities of these states are possible contributors to the high prevalence of coups in the region.

Factors Leading to Instability

Another factor to consider when examining the prevalence of coups is the presence of insurgent groups across the Sahel. The Islamic State and al-Qaeda operate in the northern regions of the Sahel, creating severe security dilemmas for nations in the region.⁹ Countries are forced to increase their military spending to combat insurgent groups, which strengthens the military as an institution. Since 2012, Mali has doubled its military spending as a percentage of its GDP. International support has largely exacerbated the issue, as aid from countries like the United States and France overwhelmingly goes towards military and counterterrorism training, as opposed to going towards areas like democracy, rights, and governance programs. As a result, the military becomes more powerful while civil society remains institutionally weak and becomes unable to properly monitor the military. This makes it easier for dissatisfied generals with support to overthrow leaders and take power for themselves.

Response by the AU

The African Union and other regional bodies like ECOWAS have condemned these coups and attempted to isolate the new governments diplomatically. As of 2023, Guinea, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Sudan, and Gabon have had their membership in the AU suspended in an effort to deny legitimacy to the leaders of the coups. Similarly, ECOWAS has suspended the membership of Guinea, Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger. After a coup in Guinea in September 2021, both the

⁷“Towards a Better Understanding of the Underlying Conditions of Coups in Africa.” E-International Relations, September 24, 2021. <https://www.e-ir.info/2021/09/24/towards-a-better-understanding-of-the-underlying-conditions-of-coups-in-africa/>.

⁸UNCTAD. “UN List of Least Developed Countries,” n.d. <https://unctad.org/topic/least-developed-countries/list>.

⁹United States Institute of Peace. “After Two Coups, Mali Needs Regional Support to Bolster Democracy,” n.d. <https://www.usip.org/publications/2021/12/after-two-coups-mali-needs-regional-support-bolster-democracy>.

African Union and ECOWAS placed sanctions on the country, while ECOWAS went a step further and froze the financial assets and placed travel restrictions on the coup leaders.

The Constitutive Act of the African Union grants the organization the ability to intervene with military force “in respect of grave circumstances, namely: war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity.”¹⁰ Although the AU has sent peacekeeping missions to various countries in the past, they have not mobilized to respond to the recent coups in the Sahel. The coups in the Sahel have not presented such grave circumstances as defined by the Constitutive Act, but the scope of the AU’s peacekeeping interventions could be expanded on in the future as a means to ensure regional stability.

Vocabulary

- **HDI:** Human Development Index, a composite index used to measure a state’s level of development
- **GDP:** Gross Domestic Product, a monetary measure of the size of a state’s economy
- **ECOWAS:** Economic Community of West African States, an intergovernmental organization of 15 West African states

Questions to Consider

1. Should the African Union consider expanding the circumstances in which peacekeepers can be deployed to ensure regional stability?
2. Should African states continue accepting military aid from western powers?
3. How can African governments increase their political legitimacy and strengthen democratic institutions?
4. What role should other regional organizations like ECOWAS play in ensuring political stability in member states?

Suggested Readings

- [After Two Coups, Mali Needs Regional Support to Bolster Democracy](#)
- [Middle powers, big impact: Africa’s ‘coup belt,’ Russia, and the waning global order](#)
- [Violent Extremism in the Sahel](#)

¹⁰African Union. CONSTITUTIVE ACT OF THE AFRICAN UNION, n.d.