



THE AFRICAN UNION

TOPIC BULLETIN

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CHAIRS

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Academy Model United Nations

- THE TWENTY-SECOND ANNUAL CONFERENCE -

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Dear Delegates,

Nice to meet you all! My name is Cara Hsiao, and I (and Grace) are honored to be your chairs for AMUN XXII. I'm a junior here at the Academies in the Business Academy. I've been doing MUN since middle school and my very first conference was JAMUN, here at BCA. I've been participating in the MUN travel team here since Freshman year, and have had a lot of amazing experiences along with my peers here.

I think, of all of the different extracurriculars out there, I was drawn to MUN because it was an outlet for genuine, meaningful discourse about the problems in our world, something that you can't experience anywhere else. The people you meet at conferences are incredibly interesting. I've met delegates from all over the world, each with their own unique experiences and stories to tell. There's a unique thrill in participating in conferences as a delegate representing a nation, rather than as yourself. Outside of MUN, I enjoy swimming, art, watching movies (especially stop motion) and debate.

I hope you find the topics of Natural Resource Exploitation and Child Soldiers as interesting as we did. We look forward to seeing you all in committee, and hearing the solutions you discover. If you have any questions, thoughts, or concerns you would like to ask, don't be afraid to reach out to either of us at our emails listed below!

Best of Luck,
Cara Hsiao, Chair, AU
carhsi22@bergen.org

Dear Delegates,

Hello! My name is Grace Chu and I am a junior at the Bergen County Academies and I am so excited to be your chair this year for the African Union at the Academy Model United Nations Conference (AMUN)! I am currently a junior in the Academy of Business and Finance and this is my third year as a member of BCA's Model UN Travel Team. My Model UN journey started out in our school's class and after my first day in committee I immediately fell in love with it. The constant flow and exchange of ideas, the research, and the spontaneity of it all was so enamoring and I only grew to appreciate more and more throughout my time as a delegate. I then continued to gain experience as a delegate attending many conferences both as a double delegate and a single delegate which really helped me not only to gain more experience but expand my horizons in the world of international negotiations. Outside of Model UN I spend a lot of time doing other public speaking activities such as debate and DECA but also love to play soccer. I also love watching movies and TV shows with some of my favorites being The Office, Friends, any Disney or Marvel movie and more! I am looking forward to the AU topics that will be discussed in committee and am very excited for the fruitful discussions to come. If you have any questions on concerns, feel free to reach out to me at the email provided below, and best of luck!

Regards,
Grace Chu, Chair, AU
grachu22@bergen.org



Topic A: Natural Resource Exploitation

Introduction:

Despite Africa's status as one of the most, if not the most, natural resource rich regions in the world, its people have failed to thrive economically. Following decades of unprecedented economic growth, the number of people living in abject poverty has risen by over 100 million. Statisticians predict that the problem is set to become worse, with more and more of the world's extreme poor centralized in Africa. Many of the region's nations have continuously ranked as some of the world's poorest. The continent is home to a wealth of natural resources, including oil, mineral, land, and water. Africa is estimated to hold nearly 30% of the world's remaining mineral resources, 12% of global oil reserves, 8% of the world's natural gas and is abundant in nuclear ores, gold, chromium, cobalt, diamonds, platinum, timber, and more. Most of the continent's economy is completely reliant on natural capital. On the surface, the region's economy appears to be booming as Africa's



GDP has become the second fastest growing of any region, growing an average of 4.6% annually from 2000-2016, yet it is clear that the people of the region have continued to suffer. African natural resources have a long history of exploitation, which has stretched into the current era. Africa is estimated to lose \$195 billion annually as a result of illicit financial flows, including illegal mining, logging, wildlife trade, fishing, and environmental degradation. Resources from the extraction of these valuable resources, which should have been utilized for development and infrastructure of African nations have instead been used to fund violence and corrupt governments. In these issues, the multinational corporations who have made dealings with such governments and profited off of the violence that has occurred cannot escape blame. The topic of natural resource exploitation in Africa is complex, deeply tied to underlying social, economic, and environmental issues, and can largely be attributed to failure in governance.

Topic History:

Africa's long history of natural resource exploitation began in the late 1860s, when veins of diamonds discovered along the rivers of South Africa sparked a diamond rush, leading to a flood of miners from across the globe entering the nation. Over the next two decades, the South African diamond industry was overtaken by a single company, the De Beers diamond company. They hold a near monopoly over the world's diamonds even to this day. Not far off from the diamond veins, gold fields were discovered, which were, at the time, the largest in the world. European nations faced a multitude of issues as a result of their industrialization, due to their large populations, leading many to establish remote colonies in other continents, one of them being Africa. Seeing the potential in the region, and afraid of falling behind competitors, the world's powers moved quickly to claim a piece of the pie, creating a frenzied dash



between the United States and thirteen other European nations for the most lucrative territories, trade routes, and waterways. The largest players were Britain, France, Germany, Belgium, Italy, Portugal, and Spain. This period of time is referred to as “the Scramble for Africa,” and was a period of deep conflict in the African Continent. The preexisting African states and citizens fell under colonial rule, but not without a struggle. Following failed diplomatic attempts, the European nations sent out protection treaties to African states, kingdoms, and empires under false pretenses. The African states agreed to the treaties, believing them to be diplomatic of friendship treaties, unaware that in the eyes of the European nations, they were essentially agreeing to exist under European rule. When the Europeans moved to take control, they were met with military resistance. However, due to the centralized professional armies in most of the region, they were largely unsuccessful

Only two nations remained independent by the early 1900s,

Liberia and Ethiopia. Ethiopia's organized government and trained armies allowed them to rival, and eventually overcome Italian troops. Despite Liberia's status as sovereign nation in name, following its agreement to exchange millions of acres of arable land for a loan needed to repay debts to Britain, it remained essentially under the rule of the United States. The resources extracted by the colonized nations flowed back into Europe, offering raw materials, land, exploitable labor, and considerable profit. A fundamental imbalance in power was established between the developing and developed nations was clear, and remains an imbalance the region is unable to escape from entirely. Africa became one of the largest global suppliers of minerals and gemstones, but very little of the wealth stayed in the country. Even after decolonization occurred following World War II, fundamentally its economic and political structures failed to change. Despite escaping colonization, European influences remained, and continued to exercise control over the region, supporting and installing



sympathetic regimes in order to maintain their access to the region's resources. Trade networks, political and economic infrastructure, and cultural changes that had existed for decades of colonial rule lingered, and African nations were unable to develop or find the autonomy they sought.

Current Situation:

The phenomenon occurring in Africa is known as the “Resource Curse” which refers to the failure of natural resource rich nations to reap benefits from their wealth, and the failure of governments to provide for public welfare. Far too often in Africa, the discovery of natural resources acts as a curse rather than a blessing, and is followed by conflict, economic and political instability, and environmental losses. When a relatively poor country discovers deposits of natural resources, the benefits often end up in the hands of the few, rather than the many.

Within Africa, this few is often an outside party such as international

corporations who see a chance for profit. They are typically left entirely financially dependent on the sale of these resources, meaning the consequences of exploitation are far reaching. These conditions result in nations left less economically stable, more prone to conflict, and more authoritarian. Africa holds some of the most extreme examples of the destruction that the resource curse can bring. Corrupt and repressive government regimes cling tightly to power, monopolizing the collection of wealth, leading to conflicts and power struggles, particularly between government forces, and other armed groups. A prime example can be seen in Angola, whose economy is reliant on its oil reserves, and is a nation that struggles with a government rife with corruption. 31 billion dollars, equivalent to 25% of the country's income disappeared between 2007-2010, with devastating results. Those who spoke out on this corruption were jailed and silenced. In many cases, the non-action and unfulfilled promises of governments within the region have led to frustration, distrust toward



government bodies, and eventually violence, civil wars, and coup d'états. Instead of going towards the funding of improved infrastructure, resources, and education, proceeds from the sale of a state's resources often end up funding the purchase of weapons and armed forces by both government forces and other separatist armed groups, escalating the violence or fueling organized crime groups.

Oftentimes, communities only see pennies of the proceeds from the extraction of resources, and suffer heavily from the violence within their regions. Notable cases of this violence and corruption are widespread. They can be seen in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia, the Ivory Coast and Sierra Leona, where the sale of blood diamonds funded violent conflicts, or in Nigeria, where an estimated 300 to 400 hundred billion dollars of sales from the extraction of oil have been stolen over the last half century. Natural resource exploitation also has another major consequence, the degradation of the environment. Unsustainable fishing, oil extraction, logging, and

farming practices lead to environmental destruction, and lead to deforestation, decimation of native wildlife species, oil spills, and the sapping of nutrients in soil. Renewable resources are being exploited faster than they can return, leading to long term negative impacts. An estimated 6800 oil spills have been recorded in the Niger Delta of Nigeria, equating to 9 to 13 million barrels of oil, making it the most oil polluted region on earth, harming the natural ecosystems of the region.

Furthermore, the consequences on the citizens of affected nations is vast. Oftentimes, the human capital within African nations, that is, the citizens themselves, are taken advantage of. Left with few options and with no other job opportunities, many in mining regions have no choice but to work in extremely unsafe conditions for little to no pay, while their employers pocket much of the profit. A large proportion of mines in Africa are illegally run and operated, though the figure is near impossible to identify, some experts



believe that upwards of fifty percent of mines are illegally owned and operated, with an even higher rate in some nations. The mines go unregulated, leading to deaths, and often injury.

Some level of accountability also must be placed on the shoulders of corporations who make dealings with such corrupt governments, unethical/illicit African mining, logging, and fishing companies, as well as natural gas and oil extractors. By sourcing materials and providing funds to such industries, they are often indirectly helping to fund violent groups, and are participating in the exploitation of natural resources. In some cases, their involvement has stretched even further, going as far as bribery of government officials to allow them cheaper and easy access to extraction, with little or often no oversight. The Panama Papers revealed many examples of this. One prominent case occurred Democratic Republic of the Congo, where an Israeli businessman closely connected with the nation's president was able to negotiate a monopoly on the country's

diamond exports, and by utilising tax havens and offshore accounts, was able to dodge paying taxes on most of his earnings. Many areas within the African region are underdeveloped, unstable, and economically struggling, leaving them ripe for exploitation. Many companies have publicly resolved to take steps to ethically source resources used for electrical components like colton and certain metals following outcry, a step that may be beneficial.

Country Policy:

However Africa remains a region with great potential for future development, as well as improvement. Though exploitation is widespread, there have been efforts in recent years to counteract it. Some countries have shown that it is possible to create widespread economic improvements for their citizens/ general population and benefit from their resources, for example, Botswana, which has navigated it's difficulties with their diamond wealth successfully



through their competent leadership, and functional government, and Ghana, with its mineral wealth, which has taken steps to try to prevent exploitation and bolster communities to increase knowledge on the importance of sustainability, and offered grants to those looking to develop their communities. They are making efforts to help economic growth, and reduce poverty levels.

Botswana, Nigeria and South Africa have also made movements to diversify the industries that their economies are reliant on, helping citizens move into other industries beyond simply production of raw materials, and into higher skilled industries, processing mined minerals into electronic components, or cutting and polishing gems. In highly-skilled industries, the African region has been largely left behind, leaving it at an economic disadvantage, and often unable to take full advantage of the natural resources at hand. In this, education and outreach programs are a necessity, and offer the benefit of helping many move up the socioeconomic ladder by

learning valuable trades. By reducing the country's dependence on a single resource, some of the pitfalls of the resource curse are mitigated. Nigeria has also begun to try to keep resources sourced from their country within the country, and implemented protective tariffs to try to bolster domestic industry, though this solution is not universally applicable.

In recent years, more pressure has also been put upon corporations who utilize raw materials sourced from Africa to take more responsibility in monitoring where their materials are

sourced from. All too often, illicitly harvested materials find their way into everyday products. Systems like the Kimberley Process, now considered standard by much of the diamond industry, exist to reduce the flow of “blood diamonds,” diamonds produced through conflicts. It came about when South African states gathered to discuss methods of ensuring that diamonds purchased from their nations were not aiding in the funding of arms and violence by rebel movements.



Members must meet requirements for rough diamonds to be certified as “conflict free” and also must exhibit certain levels of transparency. The scheme has been highly successful, and serves as an excellent proof of concept for similar regulation legislation on other resources. Keeping prominent public records of which countries have continued to be transparent and honest with their financial dealings, and which ones have failed to meet their promises, have often succeeded in pushing member nations in the correct direction.

Other nations have also come up with promising solutions, increasing oversight, setting aside a specific percentage of revenues from natural sources towards public development. In order to manage these issues, a few prominent solutions have arisen that have seen great success. Increased government transparency and management of revenue collection in places where it has been largely inadequate led to reduction in illegal cash flows. Some countries have moved

towards international standards of transparency, such as the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), Publish What You Pay (PWYP), and the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act, working along with Civil society organizations, which help to maintain transparency and encourage enforcement of regulations. Though the countries listed still have major issues to overcome, they are taking necessary steps in the direction of change. With widespread oversight and strict natural resource management, the economic development of Africa has great potential.

Questions to Consider:

1. How can member nations be held accountable to any regulations or agreements made within the AU?
2. What steps can individual nations make to reduce the



- number of illicit resource extraction and prevent additional growth of illegal cash flow domestically?
3. What changes are necessary to ensure sustainable harvest of renewable resources, protect remaining resource deposits, prevent further environmental degradation?
 4. Should the companies who benefit from and/or directly participate in the exploitation of African resources be pushed to take responsibility, if so, how?
 5. What steps should be taken to reduce the impacts of violence and conflicts resulting from the exploitation of natural resources on vulnerable African communities?
 6. How can member nations ensure that the wealth gained from the extraction of resources makes its way into the hands of the population at large, rather than simply the few?
 7. How can issues of worker exploitation and maltreatment be addressed? What regulations should be put in place, and with what consequences?
 8. How can wealth be distributed more equally amongst the general population, what programs would help to reduce poverty, aid in the further development of infrastructure, and offer greater opportunities for the average citizen?
 9. What steps existing nations take to reduce their dependence on their natural resources, and expand into other industries?
 10. How should the revenues from the extraction be divided between local and national governments?



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Topic B: Child Soldiers

Topic History:

All throughout Africa's history, violence is not a rare concept as different African countries struggle with fighting wars. For example, in the 21st century alone, there are incidents such as the civil war in Chad, the Sudan conflict and protest, the Egyptain Crisis, and many more. However, along with the frequent notion of war, also comes the need for soldiers which then brings in the dilemma of child soldiers. By definition, a child soldier is a person under the age of 18 that is recruited by an army or participating in an armed conflict. But, in some cultures, child soldiers are considered to be adult soldiers by the age of 14 or 15 although the International Convention on the Rights of the Child state adulthood begins at 18. While legally, one can only participate in war at the age of 15, child soldiers start all the way from the age of 7. They are recruited to perform tasks including being recruited as a cook, carrier, guard, spy, messenger, bodyguard, sex slave, mine



detector, and many more tasks. Currently, in Africa there are more than 120,000 child soldiers in the countries of Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, and Sudan. Although the majority of these children “choose” to become soldiers according to government documents, there are many cases in which they are forced to serve by adults. This forced recruitment process includes the abduction and torturing of children as well as taking advantage of them in vulnerable locations such as schools, orphanages, refugee camps, and more. Children specifically are taken advantage of for many different reasons. One primary reason is that children are much more easier to manage than others during conflicts as they are easily manipulated and will be more obedient as they are driven by fear of authority. Without the full development of their minds, children do not understand the full effect of what killing somebody can have, which could potentially lead to psychological damage on this child’s future. These children put

into combat are not only forced to kill but sometimes even perform unethical actions to prove their loyalty; this could severely impact them as their conscience is not fully developed and it could possibly change how they might think or act in the future. Multiple accounts record child soldiers having to kill family members and friends to prove their ability to kill, and other atrocities. In addition to this, as children in Africa do not always come from fortunate positions, some kids take the option to join the army as it may be easier than living in a difficult family situation, an unsafe environment, living alone, and more. These armies however take advantage of the children as they cost less for food, training, recruiting and arming, ultimately putting them in a vulnerable state. One final major reason as to why children specifically are recruited, is due to their dispensability. Children are more likely to be recruited in civil wars which are generally drawn out and result in mass casualties. As the children replace adults in combat, this comes to an advantage for the



army but a disadvantage towards the children.

Current Situation:

In the African Union, the issue of child soldiers continues to be a raging issue as annually the number of child soldiers continue to steadily increase and with that, child casualties at war. In fact, each year exceeds previous years statistically in the number of children both involved and impacted by these wars. Over the past 5 years, the number of child soldiers

involved in conflicts has jumped a monstrous 159%. Groups such as the Peace and Security Council of the African Union continue to meet to try and alleviate this issue. In addition to this, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) of the African Union has also been very active as they continue to enforce embargos on arms and targeted sanctions towards individuals responsible for child soldiers. They have also threatened to take necessary

measures such as carrying out more sanctions, freezing assets, and more to try and stop the recruitment of child soldiers yet it continues to be an issue; however, countries do not always take heed to these warnings. In addition, as widespread news and social media have become so much more prevalent in the 21st century, news outlets continue to report the atrocities that happen to these child soldiers. Many of these child soldiers step up and tell their stories to help others from being in the same position and raising awareness. Children recount being abducted, detained, trained in inhumane facilities, harsh training conditions, being underfed, and even forced to commit horrible crimes. This has brought rise to different protests and movements all over Africa such as a protest in Sudan where women walked through the city to show the anger that mothers as well as children face as a result of these heinous actions. These atrocious acts have also caused the creation of organizations such as Child Soldiers International, War Child, and more. When keeping logs of soldiers, although many



governments state that children join the army on their own volition, that is often untrue as the majority of children are forced to join. They are influenced from a young age with exposure to violence and military schools to join the army, and as they grow older this manages to sway some children and eventually lead to their becoming a child soldier. However, as some child soldiers currently are being “relieved of their duty” as UNICEF steps in, most children receive psychological aid as well as help reintegrating into their communities. While this is positive, the number of children still serving in the war far outweighs the number of children receiving the necessary help. Countries do acknowledge child soldiers to be a pressing issue and claim to understand that it is one of the six grave violations against children as recognized by the United Nations Security Council. With this in consideration though, countries are wary to intervene with other country’s usage of child soldiers because it is in direct regard to a country’s internal armed conflicts

and would not be in respect of a nation’s sovereignty.

Country Policy:

Regarding child soldiers, there have been many pieces of legislature passed, especially from the United Nations to try and alleviate the issue. All of the policies that have already been passed in the United Nations have had an overwhelming majority or a unanimous vote in an effort to help child soldiers, as countries agree that the use of these soldiers is illegal even though they are frequently used in war. Some 20th century pieces of legislation include the Paris Commitments and Principles, the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict (OPAC) and additional provisions to the Geneva Conventions in 1949. The piece of legislature which enabled children to volunteer for the army at the age of 15 was passed in 1989 and was known as the Convention on the Rights of the Child. This said that children under the age of 18



had the right to be protected from physical and mental violence but they could also volunteer for the army from the young age of 15. While every country with the exception of Somalia and the United States ratified or agreed to

follow the convention, many countries that did sign it still violate these principles which contributes to the total number of child soldiers annually. The Resolution 1379 was then passed in 2001 which essentially created a list of countries the United Nations had to look out for that might potentially use child soldiers. This led to the creation of a resolution in including those countries in discussions of ending the use of child soldiers. In 2002, the Convention on the Rights of the Child on Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict went into effect which said anyone under the age of 18 cannot be forced to serve in the military and implored countries to raise the minimum age of serving in the military to 16. However, many countries did not change their policy and kept the minimum age as 15. Resolution 1612 was then passed in 2005 by

the Security Council which speaks against child soldiers in armed conflicts and brings up ways to watch for and report the usage of child soldiers in countries. It also states mandates for the United Nations peacekeeping units to protect children and prevent their exploitation. While these laws have been made however, legislation is not always stringently enforced and not always followed.

UNICEF has also made strides to help this issue as UNICEF is required by the UN General Assembly to help speak for children and their rights, to make sure their basic needs are met and to help them reach their full potential. UNICEF with the help of other NGOs have helped to set up refugee camps during armed conflict and actively help in reintegrating children post-conflict, demobilize them as well as disarm them. One particularly prominent NGO throughout this whole process has been Invisible Children which has raised awareness as well through films about child soldiers and more. While these policies have been passed on national and global levels



it is also important to make sure that regional and local governments are enforcing these policies to stifle the growth of this issue.

Questions to Consider:

1. What is my country's past and current record with child soldiers?
2. In my specific country do I have child soldiers? If so, to what extent?
3. Am I allies with a country that uses child soldiers and have they used child soldiers in combat during a war?
4. How can my country and other countries work together to try and eradicate child soldiers in the African Union?
5. What are possible policies that I can pass with the help of other countries to fight this problem?
6. How often does recruitment of child soldiers happen and what has my country done to handle this?
7. What is considered as "adulthood" in my country?
8. What resources would my country need to help alleviate this problem? How would I gain access to those resources?
9. What has my government accomplished in the past to help this problem and what can my government do to make advances with this problem?
10. How does recruitment of child soldiers happen in my country? What are possible preventative measures?

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