



AFRICAN UNION  
TOPIC BULLETIN

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# Academy Model United Nations

- THE TWENTIETH ANNUAL CONFERENCE -

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Delegates,

Welcome to AMUN XX! My name is Lauren Fisher and I'm excited to be your head chair for AU this year. I am a senior in the culinary academy, but I've found a strong interest in the medical field and am planning on pursuing this through college.

I first started participating in Model UN two years ago and have stayed involved ever since. My first conference, I had no idea what I was doing, but I dove right in, and figured it out as I went along, and enjoyed every second of it. Since then, I've competed in multiple conferences, from WAMUNC to AMUN, right here at BCA, and have won a variety of awards. Model UN has motivated me to be more immersed in politics, and has developed my public speaking skills to a whole new level.

Creating resolutions and debating on international issues that pertain to the world that we live in is an amazing experience, and I am looking forward to hearing what you have to say. I wish you well in your preparation, and remember to enjoy your time here at AMUN and to meet and befriend other delegates that are just as passionate about these topics as you are. See you all in February!

Regards,

Lauren Fisher, Head Chair, AU  
laufis19@bergen.org

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the African Union at AMUN XX! My name is Jonah Sohn and it is my distinct pleasure to serve as your chair for what is sure to be a fun and unforgettable time. This is my first time staffing at AMUN and I am super excited to meet all of you.

To tell you a little bit about myself, I am currently a senior at Bergen County Academies in the Academy of Business and Finance. I have been doing Model UN since freshman year and I have attended multiple conferences where I met so many wonderful people I still keep in touch with.

Lauren and I are super excited to have the opportunity to staff the African Union, and we have been working hard to create an amazing experience for our delegates. I encourage you to look over the background guide and conduct extensive research so all of you can add to the debate and construct feasible and innovative solutions. Whether you are a first-time delegate or you're a MUN veteran, our committee will be sure to offer you a fun learning experience.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to either Lauren or me if you have any questions about topics or the committee itself. Have fun researching, and I can't wait to get to know all of you!

Sincerely,

Jonah Sohn, Chair, African Union



# African Union

## Background:

In modern times, foreign policy is mainly concerned with counterterrorism and policies that can be implemented to avoid potential attacks. Following 9/11, global policies were mostly focused on attacks coming out of the Middle East, however this has resulted in the threats within Africa being largely neglected and groups have taken advantage of this and have gained power within their regions. Terror groups like Boko Haram and Al Shabaab have developed under the radar and are now posing massive threats to the African continent. Political instability within African countries as well as widespread corruption and weak infrastructure have made it even more difficult to control the uprising of these groups. Between 2008 and 2012, the number of yearly terrorist attacks tripled from 400 to 1200 and the amount of related fatalities grew by 750%. The issue of terrorism within Africa is getting exponentially worse so this

## Topic A: The Growing Influence of Terrorism in Africa



committee needs to find new solutions to combat this issue within individual countries, the continent, and the world.

## Introduction:

In the years since 9/11, terrorism has reached unprecedented heights and with new technology, the threats from terrorist organizations have developed even more potential to be detrimental to the continent of Africa. In a world where many terrorist groups are large and multinational it is important to consider the global effect of these organizations, while still keeping in mind the threat of new, developing factions that could emerge at any given time. The attacks on 9/11 placed a strong emphasis on combating terrorism in the Middle East, however many of the policies seemed to ignore the growing threats in Africa. Terrorist insurgencies and war criminals have been running rampant in Africa and the focus on the Middle East allowed many groups in Africa

to develop under the radar. Many nations have undertaken efforts to stop these groups, however the weakness in government and high poverty rates have put a huge dent in any hopes these policies had for success.

This background guide serves as an introduction of the topic for the delegate and covers how terror groups have developed over the years and some of the threats they provide. Additionally, some policies in place are covered as well as some questions that should be taken into consideration when looking at a country's stance on the topic. Delegates should use this guide as a base for further and more specific research and we wish you all the best in your research and developing your ideas for resolutions.

## History of the Topic:

Terrorist threats within Africa have been apparent since before 9/11, however the constant threat that citizens see today cannot begin



to compare to what we see today. In the years since 9/11, there has been a resurgence of terrorist activity specifically in Africa and has been even more apparent in countries like Nigeria, Somalia, Uganda, and Sudan. In a matter of 4 years, the number of reported terrorist attacks in Africa has tripled and related fatalities have increase by 750%. There are a variety of reasons why these terrorist groups are able to be so successful ranging from corrupt governments to a lack of infrastructure to overall political instability. Many countries around the Horn of Africa have been through periods of instability, which have allowed terrorist organizations to seep in and begin to flourish.

The largest terrorist groups today didn't start out as they are today. Many of them started as small local groups that split from the government due to political differences. Groups like Al-Shabaab and Boko Haram first appeared locally, but then gained funding from larger Middle Eastern groups like Al Qaeda and the Islamic State and were able to grow and expand

to take over more area and have a stronger hold on the countries they populated. The groups took advantage of weak East African politics to be able to grow into the strong groups they are today.

## Current Situation:

Al-Shabaab primarily operates out of Somalia, where it originated. It had originally pledged its allegiance to Al Qaeda but has since branched off into its own group. Al Shabaab has been known for recruiting people from all social groups including elders, women, and children and a leader once said that young women should be sent along with their brothers to fight in the war. Al Shabaab has grown quickly and is now largely active in Somalia and nearby Kenya. The group has made numerous deathly attacks throughout Kenya, and says that the reason for being on the offensive in Kenya is that the Kenyan government joined the African Union, who are largely dedicated to combating the group. The group had at one point had control within the capital and a major city but recent pushes from



the US and the AU have pushed Al Shabaab back into the countryside and have weakened their power. Despite this, the group have continued to attack nations within the continent and have placed a major threat over the people of these countries. The country of Somalia still harbors the constant threat of attacks from Al Shabaab and is far too weak to hold any kind of democratic elections that could bring a change in the operations of the group.

Boko Haram originated as a sect of the Islamic State in West Africa and is now largely based in Chad, Niger, Nigeria and Cameroon. Nigerian politics in the early 2000s contributed to the rise of the group as did the social inequity and vast amount of poverty across the country. The founder of the group set a “religious complex” which included a mosque and a school and he used this to gather support from the poor and impoverished and was able to spread his message through the schools to the young and lower-class. Boko Haram began operating on a smaller scale in hit and runs and shootings but soon graduated to bombings and large scale attacks. The group reached

their peak in 2014 when 276 students were kidnapped from a school in Chibok, Nigeria. The girls were tortured and forced to give birth to “the next generation of soldiers.” Some girls managed to escape but many have still not been found and it is unsure where they are and if they are even alive. It has been reported the group plans to use the girls as leverage with government officials, however this has not yet been confirmed. Boko Haram was responsible for 6,644 deaths in 2014, 77% of which were civilians. After being allowed to grow and expand in countries with weak governments and an abundance of poverty, the group threatens all of Africa with attacks at any given time and could be responsible for any number of deaths in the time to come. Without individual countries strong enough to fight the group, the African Union has taken on the initiative to shut down this organization.

## Policies in Place:

The Trans-Saharan Counterterrorism Policy was implemented in 2005 and is a U.S.-funded and run multi-faceted approach intended to build



cooperation of the military, governments and civilians in North and West Africa in an effort to decrease terrorism in these areas. Partners within this policy include Algeria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, and Tunisia. The policy aids with strengthening border security and law enforcement protocols within the countries and has built cooperation within these countries despite many setbacks. The idea of regional cooperation has begun to spread into Western and Central Africa and Nigeria has implemented a Multinational Joint Task Force with its neighbors in an effort to bring down Boko Haram.

The US plays a large part in many of the policies in place within Africa, either through monetary support or military support. In 2002, President Bush granted 100 million to initiate training and protection plans within Eastern Africa, where Al Qaeda was then developing. Many nations have responded to the aid from America in different ways. Somalia has welcomed American aid and supplemented however they could, but Kenya and South Africa have

struggled more to create security policies while maintaining human rights. Ethiopia and Mauritania have used the threat of terrorism to aid their policies of suppression and antidemocratic policies, but have thrown in anti-terrorism clauses to keep American support.

## Questions to Consider:

Would a local approach or a collective approach be more effective?

What root causes of terrorism are the most important to address first?

Should African nations look towards or depend on more developed nations for funding and military support in their policies?

What ideas could be implemented that would prevent the rise of terrorism in the future?

What is the most detrimental form of terrorism for Africa and what can we do to combat it?





## **Topic B: Economic Growth and Stability in African Nations**

### **African Union Background:**

Over the past 15 years, most countries in Africa experienced sustained economic growth, with growth rates often exceeding 5% per year. This has inspired much optimism about the region's prospects to finally leave poverty and under-development behind. However, the general economic context is now turning less favorable, with growth slowing down, especially in oil and mineral exporting countries. Sub-Saharan Africa remains unable to join the ranks of those developing countries that base their growth on the export of competitive manufactured products. Growth has been fast, but from a low base, and consequently Africa still has much to do to catch up with other regions of the world. Despite the excitement raised by the fast economic growth which inspires the belief that Africa could become the next Asia, African countries still trail behind other developing countries in terms of development pace. Economic



stability is essential for African countries if they wish to continue developing and lessen the effects of political instability within the continent.

## Introduction:

Many African Countries have experienced a period of sustained economic growth over the last two decades. This economic boom followed two decades of economic stagnation in most Sub-Saharan African (SSA) countries, characterized in many of them by military conflicts, economic mismanagement, and an unsustainable external debt. An important feature of this boom is that it has largely been shared by all countries in Africa, with a few exceptions related to conflicts. This has inspired much optimism about the region's prospects to finally leave poverty and underdevelopment behind. However, the general economic context is now turning less favorable, with growth slowing down, especially in oil and mineral exporting countries. Sub-

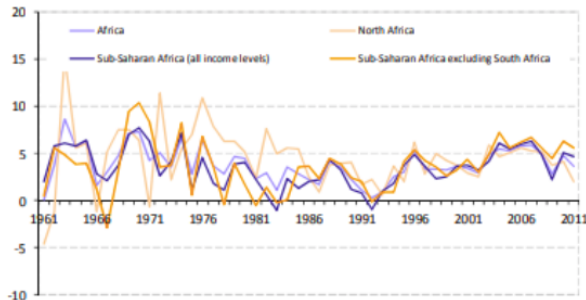
Saharan Africa remains unable to join the ranks of those developing countries that base their growth on the export of competitive manufactured products. Growth has been fast, but from a low base, and consequently, Africa still has much to do to catch up with other regions of the world.

This background guide serves as an introduction to the topic and covers the economic history of Africa briefly as well as current problems that need to be solved in order for Africa to sustain their high economic growth. Furthermore, this guide will introduce questions that should be taken into consideration when proposing economic policies that would benefit Africa. It is recommended that Delegates should use this guide to get an understanding of the topic while also going into further research to gain a better understanding of the situation and possible resolutions.



# Recent Economic History of Africa:

Figure 1 – GDP growth in %, 1961-2011



Data source: World Bank, [Africa Development Indicators](#), 2013.

Africa's economic history since independence is characterized by wide fluctuations, as can be seen in Figure 1. The continent has experienced two periods of growth: one between 1961 and 1975 and a second from 1995 to the present, with stagnation in between. Given the protracted economic stagnation, and the continent's low economic output in comparison with other regions of the world, Africa seemed doomed to persistent under-development. Primary reasons for the cause of this is based on three factors -

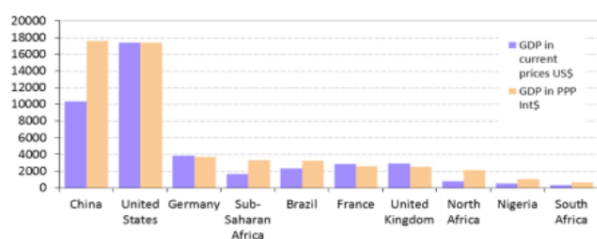
geographical conditions, the slave trade legacy, and colonization. Weak economic performance on the continent therefore would seem unsurprising. However, Africa was not always considered destined to under-development. At the end of the colonial era, the continent's resources and relative stability led to favorable comparisons of its development prospects with south-east Asia, which at that time was engulfed in conflict and marred by poverty, and seemingly destined for economic failure. Africa indeed experienced sustained growth in the 1960s and 1970s (above 5% in many cases), but this growth ended abruptly with the 1979 oil crisis. Soaring oil prices and high interest rates for sovereign debt sealed the fate of many countries. In the decade after independence, industrialization had often been attempted, but under state ownership and with money borrowed from abroad. Aimed at import substitution, industry was uncompetitive, with low-quality products and low productivity. Many industries were unsustainable and were abandoned during the difficult economic



period in the 1980s and 1990s, leaving many African countries crippled by debt.

In response to these economic problems, a series of political measures were taken that finally renewed growth: liberalization of agricultural markets; closure or privatization of state-owned companies; opening to international trade; reduction of external debt; and improvement of the current account balance, either through sound macroeconomic policies or external aid, including debt cancellation. The growth of the services sector also played a major role. At the turn of the millennium, Africa entered a period of sustained and impressive growth, with some of its countries among the fastest growing economies in the world. The continent proved resilient in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis due to two factors: a good fiscal situation; and low economic interconnectivity with the rest of the world. However, the fiscal situation has again deteriorated, and the region is characterized by 'twin deficits' (current account deficit and government budget

deficit) instead of the twin surpluses which formerly helped the continent to withstand the financial crisis. Debt levels in certain countries are approaching risk-factor status. Despite the optimism the robust growth rate of recent years may generate, closer inspection is warranted. SSA economic output remains particularly low, in comparison to other regions. The region is home to almost 1 billion people, however, SSA's total GDP valued in purchasing power parity lies between that of Germany and Brazil. Population growth is also rapid in SSA, the region of the world with the highest population growth rate. As a result, GDP growth per capita has been lower



Source: IMF [World Economic Outlook](#), April 2015.

than total GDP growth. In the 2000s, SSA enjoyed the world's third highest increase in GDP per capita (in PPP and in percentage points), after South Asia and East



Asia and the Pacific, but its growth rate was in fact only almost half the rate of these two regions.

## Current Situation:

At the moment, per capita GDP growth is still significantly lower than in Asia with economic diversification and sophistication continuing to remain low level in most African countries. While South Saharan Africa has 12% of the world's population and 18% of the world's land surface, it produces only 1.5% of the world's nominal GDP (and 2.3% in PPP). Proposals to spur a real and deep economic transformation have varied, but in many cases focus on the need to develop Africa's industrial base. Adapting Africa's industrialization to its specific characteristics requires coordination with the extractive industries and modernization of agricultural production and expansion of agro-processing. In this way, the continent could leave dependence on a few export commodities behind, and improve resilience to external shocks. Industrialization is also considered necessary in order to create

sufficient jobs for the rapidly growing population. While the service sector has grown quickly, driven by internal demand, and is usually considered the sector that most contributed to growth, its overall productivity, and its export potential are still low; much of the workforce lacks the necessary higher skills. For economic success to continue and to achieve its transformative impact, a climate of political stability is also needed, since conflict is a major threat to Africa's economic growth. An improved political and security situation is often mooted as a contributing factor to the economic rise of the continent.

## Questions to Consider:

What are the best strategies for countries in Africa to diversify their economy and create more jobs for everyone?

Why does Africa continue to struggle economically even though they show the highest growth prospects out of any continent in the world?



Should outside countries like China play a role in Africa's economic development?

What are key areas of opportunity to capitalize on for Africa's development?

What are ways to ensure steady financing for Africa's significant needs for sustainable development in an increasingly uncertain global environment?

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