

African Union

Discussing economic instability and conflict in Africa with its effects on African citizens



Main Chair: Vittorio Germano

Deputy Chair: Silke Kabel (Thursday + Friday) & Pepijn Cardous (Saturday + Sunday)

Date: 29-12-2023



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Introducing Your Chairs

Hello African Union committee members,

We, Vittorio, Silke and Pepijn will be your chairs during FAMUN 2024 and we are excited to meet you to debate topics regarding current issues in the world.

I, Pepijn Cardous, will be one of the chairs for this event. I am 19 years old and currently studying Mechanical Engineering at the University of Twente. I am an enthusiastic, open-minded and ambitious person who completed the IB-HL course two years ago. I am honoured and excited to be a part of FAMUN again.

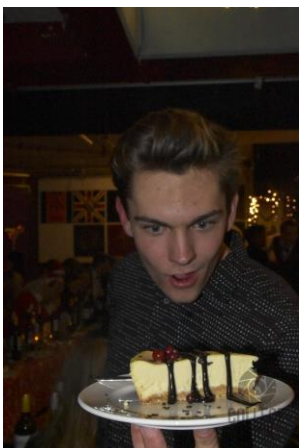
My name is Silke Kabel and I will be the Deputy Chair on Thursday and Friday! I am 16 years old and in my final year at Farel College. I have participated as a delegate in many other MUNs before, and this will be my first time as a chair. I am very excited to participate in FAMUN this year!

Greetings, esteemed delegates, I, formally known as Vittorio Germano, extend to you my most cordial salutations and extend a warm welcome to this august assembly. In this conference, I shall be assuming the distinguished role of your head chair for FAMUN 2024. I have enlisted in the proceedings of a total of 7 MUN conferences and have found them to be quite a satisfactory experience. I aspire to impart to you a comparable sentiment of earnestness and resonance regarding this MUN conference. May you all have a Ravishingly Delectable Conference.

See you soon, and the best of luck for your preparations,

Sincerely,

Vittorio, Silke and Pepijn



List of represented countries

Beginner

- Gambia
- Cameroon
- Gabon
- Tanzania
- Mauritania
- Madagascar
- Tunisia
- Djibouti
- Zambia

Advanced

- Sudan
- Mozambique
- Chad
- Algeria
- Central African Republic
- Ghana
- Kenya
- Zimbabwe

Expert

- Ethiopia
- Democratic Republic of the Congo
- South Africa
- Nigeria
- Niger
- South Sudan

An Introduction To The Topic

The African Union

In May 1963, 32 Heads of independent African States met to sign the Charter creating Africa's first post-independence continental institution, The Organisation of African Unity (OAU). The guiding philosophy was that of Pan-Africanism which centred on African socialism and promoted African unity, the communal characteristic and practices of African communities, and a drive to embrace Africa's culture and common heritage. The main objectives of the OAU were to rid the continent of the remaining vestiges of colonisation and apartheid, to promote unity and solidarity amongst African States, to coordinate and intensify cooperation for development, to safeguard the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Member States and to promote international cooperation. The African Union (AU) was officially launched in July 2002 following a decision in September 1999 by the OAU to create a new continental organisation to build on its work. The decision to re-launch Africa's pan-African organisation was because there was a need to refocus attention from the fight for decolonisation and ridding the continent of apartheid, towards increased cooperation and integration of African states to drive Africa's growth and economic development. The AU is guided by its vision of '*an Integrated, Prosperous and Peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena.*' (About the African Union, n.d.)

Economic instability in Africa

Economic instability in Africa is widely known and remains a formidable challenge, stemming from a complex web of factors that hinder the continent's sustainable development. There are several causes for this instability, such as political turbulence, corruption, inadequate infrastructure, and the volatility of global commodity prices which collectively contribute to a precarious economic landscape. Most countries have ended in a cycle of vulnerability.

Africa is by far the country with the lowest GDP per capita (Wikipedia, 2023). Of the 30 poorest countries in the world, 23 are located in Africa (Hassan, 2023). In 2022, Libya was the highest ranked country on the world GDP per capita list, with number 68 of 177 (Worldometers, 2022). These numbers clearly indicate that Africa is considered economically instable, despite its many resources.

Conflict in Africa

Africa has always been known for its many conflicts. First of all, colonisation has been an important issue on the continent as many African citizens were enslaved and oppressed. Afterwards, civil wars and corruption have led to an unstable political situation in most African countries.

Definition of Key Terms

African Union

The African Union (AU) is a continental body consisting of the 55 member states that make up the countries of the African Continent. It was officially launched in 2002 as a successor to the Organisation of African Unity (OAU, 1963-1999) (*About the African Union*, n.d.).

Political Conflicts

Political conflict is the incompatibility between social systems with regard to the security of a population, the integrity of a territory, or the maintenance of a political, socioeconomic or cultural, and national or international order. (*Economic Stability*, n.d.)

Economic Stability

Economic stability means that people have the resources essential to a healthy life. Factors affecting economic stability include affordable housing; employment that provides a living wage; things that support employment, like worker protections, paid sick leave, and child care; and access to reliable transportation. (McSwine, 2023)

Colonialism

The policy or practice of acquiring full or partial political control over another country, occupying it with settlers, and exploiting it economically (Cobb, 2021).

Civil War

War between the citizens or inhabitants of a single country, state, or community (Cobb, 2021).

A General Overview of the Issue

Economic instability and conflict in Africa have been enduring challenges that significantly impact the lives of millions of African citizens. Rooted in historical legacies of colonization and exacerbated by geopolitical factors, these issues manifest in various forms across the continent.

Economic and political instability: Africa grapples with economic challenges driven by factors such as overreliance on a few export commodities, inadequate infrastructure, and political mismanagement. Fluctuations in global commodity prices can destabilize economies, leading to high unemployment rates and hindering sustainable development. The consequences of economic instability are felt acutely by African citizens who struggle with reduced access to education, healthcare, and employment opportunities.

Social disruptions: The consequences of economic instability and conflict extend beyond immediate economic hardships. Displacement, loss of educational opportunities, and limited access to essential services compound the challenges faced by citizens. In regions with ongoing conflicts, citizens often endure prolonged periods of insecurity, hindering their ability to lead stable and fulfilling lives.

Efforts to address these challenges involve a combination of good governance, economic reforms, and international collaboration. Initiatives aimed at fostering peace, promoting sustainable development, and creating opportunities for citizens are crucial for building a more stable and prosperous future for Africa. While progress is being made, the road to lasting stability and prosperity remains complex and requires sustained efforts from governments, regional organizations, and the international community.

Historical Background

The history of economic instability and conflict in Africa is multifaceted, shaped by a combination of colonial legacies, geopolitical factors, and internal challenges. Colonialism left enduring impacts, with arbitrary borders, resource exploitation, and institutional imbalances that continue to influence the continent's socio-economic dynamics. (Parker & Ratbone, 2007)

Post-colonial Africa witnessed a series of political upheavals, coups, and civil wars, contributing to a climate of instability. The Cold War further fueled conflicts as global powers sought influence, often exacerbating existing tensions. Weak governance structures, characterized by corruption and mismanagement, hindered economic development and perpetuated cycles of instability. (Dee, 2019)

Economic challenges stem from factors such as overreliance on a few export commodities, poor infrastructure, and insufficient industrialization. Fluctuations in global commodity prices can lead to economic volatility, impacting the livelihoods of millions. Additionally, the unequal distribution of wealth and opportunities has contributed to widespread poverty and social inequality, amplifying discontent.

Ethnic and tribal tensions, exacerbated by political manipulation, have fueled conflicts in various regions. These conflicts, along with terrorism and transnational threats, have led to displacement, creating refugee crises and straining social and economic resources.

Health crises, including the HIV/AIDS pandemic and more recent challenges like the COVID-19 pandemic, have further strained healthcare systems and disrupted economic activities. Lack of access to quality healthcare compounds the impact on citizens, affecting well-being and productivity.

While Africa has made strides in addressing these challenges, efforts toward sustainable development are ongoing. Economic reforms, regional cooperation, and international partnerships aim to build resilience, improve governance, and foster inclusive growth, seeking to uplift the lives of African citizens and create a more stable and prosperous future for the continent.

Major Parties Involved

ECOWAS: The Heads of State and Government of fifteen West African Countries established the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) when they signed the ECOWAS Treaty on the 28th of May 1975 in Lagos, Nigeria. ECOWAS was set up to foster the ideal of collective self-sufficiency for its member states. As a trading union, it is also meant to create a single, large trading bloc through economic cooperation (ECOWAS, 2023).

Ethiopia:

Historical Significance: Ethiopia is often seen as a symbol of African independence and resilience, as it was never formally colonized by a European power during the era of European colonization. Ethiopia hosts the AU headquarters and is one of the founders of the AU.

Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC):

Size and Population: The DRC is the largest country in sub-Saharan Africa by land area and has a significant population. Its size and demographic importance contribute to its role in the AU.

South Africa:

Economic Power: South Africa has the most developed economy on the continent and is considered an economic powerhouse. It also has a well-established industrial base and is a member of the BRICS group of emerging economies.

Nigeria:

Population and Economy: Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa, and its economy is one of the largest on the continent. Its demographic and economic influence contributes to its significance within the AU.

Niger:

Niger experienced a political crisis in the summer of 2023. Niger's democratically elected president was overthrown, and the actions taken by ECOWAS almost ended in a war between Niger and its neighbouring countries (UN News, 2023).

South Sudan:

Recent Statehood: South Sudan, as one of the newest countries in Africa (having gained independence in 2011), may attract attention due to its recent geopolitical developments.

Kenya:

Regional Power: Kenya is often considered a regional power in East Africa and plays a significant role in diplomatic and economic affairs within the region.

Ghana:

Stability and Leadership: Ghana is often regarded as one of the more politically stable countries in West Africa and has played a leadership role in regional organizations.

Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue

Several attempts have been made to address economic instability and conflict in Africa. These efforts have involved a combination of regional, continental, and international initiatives.

African Union (AU):

Peace and Security Architecture (APSA): The AU established APSA to prevent and resolve conflicts on the continent. It includes the Peace and Security Council (PSC), the Continental Early Warning System (CEWS), and the African Standby Force (ASF) for rapid response to conflicts.

New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD):

NEPAD is a socio-economic development framework that focuses on eradicating poverty, promoting sustainable growth, and bridging the infrastructure gap. It emphasizes good governance, peace, and security.

African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM):

The APRM is a voluntary self-assessment tool for African countries to promote good governance. Participating countries undergo a review process that assesses political, economic, and corporate governance.

Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS):

ECOWAS has been actively involved in conflict resolution and peacekeeping in West Africa. The ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) has been deployed in several conflicts, including Liberia and Sierra Leone.

United Nations Peacekeeping Operations:

The United Nations has deployed peacekeeping missions in various African countries to help maintain peace and security. Examples include the missions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), South Sudan (UNMISS), and Mali (MINUSMA).

Debt Relief Initiatives:

Various debt relief initiatives, such as the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative and the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative (MDRI), aimed to reduce the debt burden on African countries, allowing them to allocate resources to development and poverty reduction.

African Development Bank (AfDB) Programs:

The AfDB implements various programs and projects to foster economic development in Africa. These include initiatives to improve infrastructure, promote private sector development, and enhance agricultural productivity.



International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank Programs:

African countries have engaged with the IMF and the World Bank to implement economic reforms and receive financial assistance. Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) were historically used to address economic challenges, although they faced criticism for their social impact.

Possible Solutions For The Issue

Addressing economic instability and conflict in Africa is a complex and multifaceted challenge that requires a comprehensive and sustained approach. While there is no one-size-fits-all solution, several key strategies and initiatives can contribute to long-term stability and prosperity on the continent.

Good Governance:

Rule of Law and Institutions: Strengthening institutions and upholding the rule of law are essential for fostering economic stability. Transparent and accountable governance reduces corruption, ensures effective public administration, and builds trust in the government.

Political Stability: Efforts to establish and maintain political stability are critical. Political inclusivity, respect for human rights, and fair electoral processes contribute to stable governance structures.

Conflict Prevention and Resolution:

Diplomacy and Mediation: Invest in diplomatic efforts and mediation to prevent conflicts and resolve existing disputes. Regional organizations, like the African Union and sub-regional bodies, play crucial roles in conflict prevention and resolution.

Early Warning Systems: Strengthen and expand early warning systems to detect potential conflicts before they escalate. Timely intervention can help prevent the escalation of tensions and violence.

Economic Diversification and Development:


Investment in Infrastructure: Infrastructure development, including transportation, energy, and telecommunications, is vital for economic growth. Improved infrastructure facilitates trade, attracts investment, and connects remote areas to economic opportunities.

Agricultural Development: Agriculture is a key sector for many African economies. Supporting smallholder farmers, promoting sustainable agricultural practices, and investing in value chains can enhance food security and boost rural economies.

Private Sector Development: Fostering a vibrant and competitive private sector is crucial for economic stability. Creating an environment conducive to entrepreneurship, reducing bureaucratic hurdles, and providing financial support to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) can stimulate economic growth.

Education and Skills Development:

Investing in Education: Education is a fundamental driver of economic development. Investing in quality education, vocational training, and skill development programs equips the workforce with the skills needed for a modern economy.



Youth Empowerment: Given the youthful demographic in many African countries, empowering young people through education and employment opportunities is crucial. This can help harness the demographic dividend and reduce the risk of social unrest.

Regional Cooperation:

Trade Agreements: Encourage regional economic integration through trade agreements. Enhanced intra-African trade can create economic synergies, foster cooperation, and contribute to overall economic stability.

Joint Security Initiatives: Collaborative security efforts among neighbouring countries can contribute to regional stability. Shared initiatives to combat transnational threats, such as terrorism and organized crime, can enhance security across borders.

Healthcare and Social Services:

Health Infrastructure: Strengthen healthcare systems to address public health challenges. Improved health outcomes contribute to a more productive and resilient workforce.

Social Safety Nets: Establish social safety nets to support vulnerable populations during economic shocks or conflicts. This can mitigate the impact of crises on the most disadvantaged groups.

International Collaboration:

Development Assistance: International partners can provide financial and technical assistance to support African countries' development initiatives. Development aid should align with national priorities and promote sustainable and inclusive growth.

Debt Relief: Consideration of debt relief or restructuring to ease the fiscal burden on countries facing economic challenges. Responsible debt management and transparency are crucial components of sustainable financial practices.

It's important to recognize that these solutions are interconnected, and success requires a holistic and coordinated effort from governments, regional organizations, the private sector, and the international community. Additionally, solutions must be context-specific, considering the unique challenges and opportunities in each African country. A long-term commitment to these strategies, coupled with adaptability to changing circumstances, is essential for achieving lasting economic stability and conflict resolution in Africa.

Timeline Of Key Events

- *Post-Colonial Era (1960s)*: As African nations gained independence in the 1960s, political instability emerged. Rapid transitions often led to power struggles, border disputes, and internal conflicts, hindering economic development.
- *Apartheid in South Africa (1948-1994)*: Apartheid's institutionalized racial segregation in South Africa led to international sanctions and internal unrest. While the end of apartheid brought political stability, the transition posed economic challenges, including the need for redistribution and inclusion.
- *Cold War Dynamics (1970s-1990s)*: The Cold War rivalry influenced African conflicts, with superpower interventions often fueling political instability. Proxy wars and ideological struggles further complicated the continent's political landscape.
- *Ethiopian Civil War (1974-1991)*: The overthrow of Emperor Haile Selassie in 1974 marked the beginning of Ethiopia's civil war. Political upheaval, regional conflicts, and famine characterized this period, contributing to economic instability.
- *Rwandan Genocide (1994)*: The Rwandan Genocide resulted in widespread violence and loss of life. The aftermath posed significant economic challenges as the country sought to rebuild and reconcile.
- *Establishment of the African Union (2001)*
- *Implementation of the African Peer Review Mechanism (2002)*: See 'previous attempts to solve the issue'
- *Arab Spring (2010-2012)*: While the Arab Spring primarily affected North Africa, its ripple effects were felt across the continent. Political upheavals in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya had economic implications and contributed to regional instability.
- *Boko Haram Insurgency (2009-Present)*: Nigeria and neighboring countries have grappled with the Boko Haram insurgency. The conflict has strained resources, displaced populations, and hindered economic growth in the West African region.
- *African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) (2018)*: AfCFTA, the world's largest free trade area, seeks to enhance intra-African trade, promote industrialization, and stimulate economic growth by creating a single market.
- *COVID-19 Pandemic (2020s)*: The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated economic challenges in Africa. Health and economic crises unfolded simultaneously, highlighting the vulnerabilities of healthcare systems and social safety nets.

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