Florida High Schools Model United Nations

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AFRICAN UNION PEACE AND SECURITY COUNCIL (PSC)

NEOCOLONIALISM AND ITS EFFECTS ON AFRICAN STABILITY

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<u>**COMMITTEE BRIEF**</u>

Introduction

   "Since the birth of the United Nations, more than 80 former colonies comprising some 750 million people have gained independence."[1] While this is a massive stride toward fostering universal development and industrialisation, previously colonized nations continue to struggle with underdevelopment in multiple facets. The effects of colonialism continue to be felt by states globally, especially in Africa.

   As a matter of fact, "several decades after independence, little has changed with Africa's patterns of growth and trade. They are still largely driven by primary commodities and natural resources, reflecting the persistence of the colonial development model where natural resource-endowed nations served as feedstock to advanced economies."[2] Colonized states in Africa never had the opportunity to industrialize and economically advance and authoritarianism is engrained in their recent history.[3]

   Spanning from education and economy to health and social systems, nations across Africa are still forced to navigate the effects of colonialism. This background guide will explore the wide range of institutions that remind us that Africa's colonial history is not over yet.

Understanding Colonialism

   In order to develop comprehensive solutions combating the negative effects of colonialism it is important that there is a universal understanding of what the practice was. Academics describe colonialism as "the direct and overall domination of one country by another on the basis of state power being in the hands of a foreign power."[4] In other words, "colonialism is a practice of domination."[5]

   The general definition of "colonialism" is very similar to "imperialism" in that they both refer to one nation exerting power or control over another. While some academics differentiate their use of the terms based on the kind of presence the nation in power had over the territory, the

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[1] "The United Nations and Decolonization," United Nations, https://www.un.org/dppa/decolonization/en.

[2] Fofack, Hippolyte. "Overcoming the Colonial Development Model of Resource Extraction for Sustainable Development in Africa." Brookings. Brookings, March 9, 2022. https://www.brookings.edu/blog/africa-in-focus/2019/01/31/overcoming-the-colonial-development-model-of-resource-extraction-for-sustainable-development-in-africa/.

[3] Campbell, John, and Nolan Quinn. "What's Happening to Democracy in Africa?" Council on Foreign Relations. Council on Foreign Relations. https://www.cfr.org/article/whats-happening-democracy-africa.

[4] Ocheni, Stephen, and Basil C Nwankwo. "Analysis of Colonialism and Its Impact in Africa - TRALAC," November 12, 2012. https://www.tralac.org/images/News/Documents/Analysis_of_Colonialism_and_Its_Impact_in_Africa_Ocheni_and_Nwankwo_CSCanada_2012.pdf.

[5] Kohn, Margaret, and Kavita Reddy. "Colonialism." Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Stanford University, January 17, 2023. https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/colonialism/.

terms are often used interchangeably. For the sake of simplicity, the committee will use the term "colonialism" in reference to all forms of domination by one country over another.

The "Age of Discovery" (15th century) marked the beginning of modern colonialism--in looking for new trade routes and people, Portugal colonized Ceuta (on the coast of North Africa) and controlled the territory until 1999, when they transferred the state to Spain.[6] Portugal was the first, but Spain, England, the Netherlands, France, and Germany all followed soon thereafter--colonizing most of the new world.

Africa did not become the forefront of colonialism until the 18th and 19th centuries when European states established colonies to covet natural resources--a concept that was highlighted when the Scramble of Africa occurred.[7] The Scramble for Africa was an event in which European colonial powers divided the continent during the Paris Conference amongst themselves. Notably absent were any representatives of sovereign African nations. It was not until the international period of decolonization that spanned from approximately 1914 to 1975, that colonized nations in Africa began to challenge their colonial powers.[8]

"Used to Achieve the Colonial Objectives"[9]

There are several reasons why Europe colonized Africa. For one, the industrial revolution increased production in Europe, increasing the continent's need for more raw materials, faster.[10] In looking for a steady supply of raw materials, Europe found that Africa was not only rich in valuable goods but also densely populated, allowing for forms of forced labor.

In need of raw materials, colonialists had to find a way to obtain resources such as rubber in Africa and bring them back to Europe. While a trade relationship could have succeeded, European nations still operated in a mercantilist manner, meaning that they wanted to keep the revenue and goods from their spheres of influence within their borders. Because of this, many European nations opted to "take direct control of the economy and political administration."[11] This allowed Europe to produce the type of products needed back home, made African integration into the international market possible but severely limited. Instead of building up industry in Africa, the continent was exploited for its resources which were sent to Europe to be used in production there. In this sense, industrial development was stunted due to Africa's 'resource curse,' a phenomenon where nations with more natural resources – at the turn of the 19th century many of these nations were colonies – see limited economic development since their primary means of succeeding in the global economy are exporting their raw materials.

Colonialism also played a vital role in how Europe exploited the labor of African populations. In order to keep up with demand, colonialists used compulsion and force to make

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[6] Blakemore, Erin. "Motivations for Colonization." National Geographic Society, February 19, 2019. https://www.nationalgeographic.org/article/motivations-colonization/.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Ocheni, Stephen, and Basil C Nwankwo.
[10] Ibid.
[11] Ibid.

Africans work--"the use of conquest, forced labor, taxation, monetization of the economy, and payment of low wages" were all used to push Africans into submission to colonialism.[12] One harrowing example is the Rubber Terror, where King Leopold II of Belgium orchestrated mass atrocities on the indigenous people in the Belgian Congo. Most of the actions were legal under the labor policies of the colony.[13]

After seeing the effectiveness of conquest over Africa, European powers gradually began intruding on the sovereignty of African powers, bringing about "gunboat diplomacy;"[14] the concept that Europe had complete control over the economic and political systems in Africa.

In addition to conquest and forced labor, European powers also worked to disrupt the African social system by breaking up tribes, disturbing native life, and making basic necessities available only with currency. By doing this, African people were given no choice but to engage with the European system of life. In breaking apart cultural tribes, the Europeans concurrently forced engagement of tribes who were historical enemies and placed them within the same jurisdictional boundaries as each other. Almost every action of the Europeans in Africa showed a brutal ignorance for the sovereignty of the entire continent and sowed the seeds of the instability seen throughout Africa today.

Colonialism and Development

Colonialism in Africa contributed to the construction of roads and railways and the changes made in the way that labor and land are used.[15] While this development did benefit Africa in some ways, the commercial transition of Africa was for European benefit. More than not, colonialism in Africa played a direct role in the underdevelopment of the continent. One reason for underdevelopment was that colonialism led to the disarticulation of the economy.[16] As aforementioned, colonialists engrained in African populations that their primary role within the international economy was raw material production meant for export--making them dependent on foreign imports even today.

In addition to the lack of diversification in African nations' economies, colonialism also led to the disarticulation of African trade. Colonization of the region altered the traditional pattern of development and urbanization that was present before colonialism and made the continent a "perpetual debtor" to their more developed counterparts.[17] Today states across Africa continue to have elevated levels of debt and lower GDPs than the rest of the world. According to the World Bank "Eight out of 38 IDA-eligible countries in the [African] region are in debt

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[12] Ibid.

[13] Viaene, Vincent. "King Leopold's Imperialism and the Origins of the Belgian Colonial Party, 1860–1905." *The Journal of Modern History* 80, no. 4 (2008): 741–90. https://doi.org/10.1086/591110.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Frankema, Ewout. "How Africa's Colonial History Affects Its Development." World Economic Forum, July 15, 2015. https://www.weforum.org/agenda/africa.

[16] Ocheni, Stephen, and Basil C Nwankwo.

[17] Ibid.

distress, and 14 are at high risk of joining them."[18] This statistic is one indication that African policymakers need to acknowledge the damaging effects colonialism had on their economic institutions and the need to implement policies that enhance productivity and growth, create jobs in new industries and protect international trade flows.[19]

"A Democratic Decline"[20]

Colonialism has directly contributed to the lack of democracy in states across Africa: "For much of the continent, the foundations of a political culture necessary to sustain liberal democracy have been weak for most of the postcolonial era.[21]Oftentimes authoritarian and semi-authoritarian states are disguised as democracies through fixed elections, organized constitutional coups, and more. This political fragility is not only damaging for other institutions within the state but can also snowball into periods of violent outbursts. Examples of this can be seen in, previously colonized, nations like Ethiopia, Mozambique, and Nigeria.[22]

As of 2021, it was reported by *Freedom House* that less than ten countries in Sub-Saharan Africa were considered "free."[23] This alarming statistic is a result of many factors including, but not limited to regional influence, the rise of technology, COVID-19, and the underdevelopment of the region. As affirmed by the United Nations, international financial institutions, and many Africans; the key to combating the issue of authoritarianism in Africa is good governance. With strong leadership states in Africa would have greater opportunities for growth. Freedom of speech, transparent taxation, and truly democratic institutions are all institutions necessary for good governance and require time to implement.[24] With that, it is worth noting that the reasons for why African states lack the democratic institutions described above is not because of poor leadership but because of the colonial history that pit differing linguistic, religious, and cultural groups against each other.

Nations in Africa must entirely reform the institutions set in place by colonialist powers and make the commitment to "promote transparency, empower citizens, and fight corruption."[25] While this is not an easy undertaking, the reformation of governance in Africa would provide the foundation for nations to develop in ways they are currently unable to.

Education in Africa

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[18] "The World Bank in Africa." World Bank, December 14, 2022. https://www.worldbank.org/en/region/afr/overview.
[19] Ibid.
[20] Campbell, John, and Nolan Quinn.
[21] Ibid.
[22] Ibid.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid.

The education system established by colonialists in Africa was almost entirely literary, lacking any guidance related to technology or industrial development.[26] Because colonial education did not emphasize teaching technological skills – as that would not have helped the indigenous people gather raw materials – many Africans abandoned their indigenous education systems, which highlighted technical-based teaching, for the reading and writing-heavy colonial method of education. As a result of adopting colonial education states in Africa not only suffered industrially but also stagnated the educational development of the region. "Of all regions, sub-Saharan Africa has the highest rates of education exclusion."[27] Of children between the ages 6 and 11, 15 million children will never go to school.[28] These educational disparities were not what post-colonial Africa intended. Following independence from Europe, one of the region's number one priorities quickly became education. Countries across the continent were able to enact universal primary education mandates which aided immensely in ensuring the region's survival.

Universal primary education was a step in the right direction for the region but with low-quality teaching, lack of resources, and limited accessibility for students, there is still an uphill battle for states to combat. Given that there are more than 300 million Africans between the ages of 15 and 35, the opportunity for investment in youth and growth is there. As a matter of fact, the AU Commission deputy chairperson, Thomas Kwesi Quartey, says "governments must address the need for good education and appropriate skills training to stem rising unemployment."[29] This can be done by developing policies aimed at inclusive growth and the eradication of policy, increasing investments in education, and ensuring good governance is established.

Universal Health Coverage?
"Less than half of Africa's citizens - some 615 million people - have access to the healthcare they need, the continent's quality of health services is generally poor, and the family planning needs of half the continent's women and girls are unmet.[30] While the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated these problems, the root of the healthcare issues lies in the way colonialism prevented Africa from technologically advancing at the same pace as the rest of the world. COVID-19 was detrimental to nations globally, especially in Africa, but it also shined a

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[26] Ocheni, Stephen, and Basil C Nwankwo.
[27] "Education in Africa." UNESCO UIS, December 2, 2019.
http://uis.unesco.org/en/topic/education-africa.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Musau, Zipporah. "Africa Grapples with Huge Disparities in Education | Africa Renewal." United Nations. United Nations, March 2018.
https://www.un.org/africarenewal/magazine/december-2017-march-2018/africa-grapples-huge-disparities-education.
[30] Cullinan, Kerry. "Universal Health Coverage: Only Half of Africans Have Access to Health Care." Health Policy Watch, March 9, 2021.
https://healthpolicy-watch.news/only-half-of-africans-have-access-to-health-care/.

light on the potential Africa has to advance and increase self-sufficiency. Rwanda is a notable example of this. The state began producing personal protective equipment locally, rather than importing it, they introduced a community-based health insurance program, and they expanded the number of family planning clinics located in predominately faith-based areas of the country.[31]

As stated by Dr. Matshidiso Moeti, the World Health Organization's Regional Director for Africa, " COVID-19 is one of the most serious health challenges in a generation, but it is also an opportunity to drive forward innovation, ingenuity and entrepreneurship in life-saving health technologies." If other states in Africa work to follow in the footsteps of nations like Rwanda and actively counteract the harmful systems established by colonial powers, there would undeniably be an increase in the quality of life within the region.

Discrimination in Africa

Immense progress has been made to end racial discrimination in post-colonial Africa, but gender inequality and income inequality continue to remain widespread. The patriarchal system was first introduced to African populations by colonialists and eventually was adopted as the norm. Today African women continue to earn less than their male counterparts, continue to be at risk of falling victim to gender-based violence and are less likely to work in "high-status positions."[32]

In terms of income inequality in Africa, "the richest 0.0001% own 40% of the wealth of the entire continent."[33] With this, not much has changed since European colonialists controlled the region. In addition to the gender-based discrimination and income inequality that is still prevalent across the continent, caste systems are still present in some states like Ethiopia and the HIV/AIDs epidemic has also led to issues with workplace discrimination and societal exile.[34]

Committee Goals

The issues of neocolonialism and African stability are highly complex and intersect with a number of race, gender, public health, and economic matters that continue to impact the lives of Africans daily. For the purpose of conciseness, this background only skims the surface of what delegates are encouraged to discuss in committee. Delegates should use this guide as a launching point and thoroughly research the subsections outlined above, understand the key terms below, utilize the resources on the following page, and analyze the important events and resolutions on the "notes" page.

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[31] Ibid.

[32] "Ilo Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and Its ..." https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---declaration/documents/normativeinstrument/wcms_716594.pdf.

[33] "A TALE OF TWO CONTINENTS FIGHTING INEQUALITY IN AFRICA." Oxfam, September 2019. https://www-cdn.oxfam.org/s3fs-public/file_attachments/bp-tale-of-two-continents-fighting-inequality-africa-030919-en.pdf.

[34] "Ilo Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and Its ..."

The citizens of states across Africa continue to feel the effects of colonialism and it is up to those African states to reclaim their power. The African Union Peace and Security Council has the opportunity to unite and take real action towards a more independent and stable future.

Key Terms
1. Colonialism - "The policy or practice of acquiring full or partial political control over another country, occupying it with settlers, and exploiting it economically."[35]
2. Neocolonialism - "The use of economic, political, cultural, or other pressures to control or influence other countries, especially former dependencies."[36]
3. Colonist - "A settler in or inhabitant of a colony."[37]
4. Colonialist - "A person who supports the practice of gaining political control over other countries and occupying them with settlers."[38]
5. Industrialization - "The development of industries in a country or region on a wide scale."[39]
6. Authoritarianism - "The enforcement or advocacy of strict obedience to authority at the expense of personal freedom."[40]

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[35] Oxford Languages Dictionary
[36] Ibid.
[37] Ibid.
[38] Ibid.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Ibid.

RESOURCE REVIEW

"What is colonialism?" | National Geographic | February 19, 2019
https://www.nationalgeographic.com/culture/article/colonialism
Outlining the history of colonialism in Africa.

"The Impact of Colonialism on African Economic Development" | TRACE: Tennessee Research and Creative Exchange | 1996
https://trace.tennessee.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1182&context=utk_chanhonoproj
Outlining the connection between colonialism and the state of the African economy.

"What's Happening to Democracy in Africa?" | Council on Foreign Relations | May, 26, 2021
https://www.cfr.org/article/whats-happening-democracy-africa
Discussing the dynamics of African government as they relate to colonialism.

"Basic Education in Africa" | International Seminar on Basic Education and Development Assistance in Sub Saharan Africa | March 3, 1997
https://www.jica.go.jp/jica-ri/IFIC_and_JBICI-Studies/english/publications/reports/study/topical/sub_sahara/keynote_1.html
Outlining the ways in African education changed as a result of colonialism.

"Disease Control and Public Health in Colonial Africa" | Oxford Research Encyclopedias | November 19, 2020
https://oxfordre.com/africanhistory/display/10.1093/acrefore/9780190277734.001.0001/acrefore-9780190277734-e-620;jsessionid=F0BBA27E9D91C79847353DCB8BD7F5A7
Discussing the state of public health in colonial Africa.

"The Institutional Origins of Inequality in Sub-Saharan Africa" | Cornell University Department of Political Science | 2009
https://www.annualreviews.org/doi/pdf/10.1146/annurev.polisci.11.063006.092318
Outlining the ways in which colonialism has fostered inequality within Africa.

"Foresight Africa: Top priorities for the continent 2020-2030" | Brookings | January 8, 2020
https://www.brookings.edu/multi-chapter-report/foresight-africa-top-priorities-for-the-continent-in-2020/
Outlining the priorities for Africa over the next decade.

UN Resolutions
General Assembly Resolution 1514 (XV)
"Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples"
https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/declaration-granting-independence-colonial-countries-and-peoples

UN Documents
"Decolonization"
https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/decolonization

"Acting High Commissioner: Addressing the Legacies of Colonialism Can Contribute to Overcoming Inequalities Within and Among States and Sustainable Development Challenges of the Twenty-First Century"
https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/decolonization

"Africa and the United Nations since 1945"
https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000095969.locale=en

AU Documents
"AUHRM Project Focus Area: Colonialism"
https://au.int/en/auhrm-project-focus-area-colonialism

Important Events
https://www.blackpast.org/global-african-history/events-global-african-history/
NOTE: This resource includes events that took place outside of Africa as well. For the sake of this committee, we will *ONLY* be discussing neocolonialism in Africa.