

The logo for GatorMUN IX features the word "Gator" in blue, "MUN" in blue, and "IX" in orange. Above the "G" in "Gator" is a stylized orange graphic of a gator's head and mouth.**AFRICAN UNION**

Distinguished Delegates,

Hello! My name is Peggy Sukhia and I will be directing the AU committee this year at GatorMUN IX. To say I am thrilled to have you all on board would be an understatement! I hope you will find the topics this year engaging and fun, but before I dive into the logistics of committee, let me tell you a little about myself. I am currently a junior at the University of Florida and am majoring in Linguistics and Political Science with a minor in African Studies. I joined Model UN my sophomore year and loved it so much that I ran for office and am now secretary. Unfortunately, this does not mean I can table the rules and let your countries wage war on one another, but you never know where the course of our debate will go :) Some of my hobbies include writing, collecting pigs (not real ones of course), running, travelling anywhere and everywhere, singing, and, of course, debating about international politics.

Also joining us in committee this year is our brilliant assistant director, Allan Simon Costa. Allan is a first year at Santa Fe College and has been debating in Model UN for the majority of his high school career. Allan will bring an artistic flair to our debate due to his musical talent. He plays an assortment of instruments, including classical guitar and the piano! He wants to pursue a career in diplomacy and international skills and will, therefore be a huge asset to our team.

I am confident this will be a fantastic committee, as long as we work together and remember that we are all learning from each other and striving for a collective solution for the sake of all. It is also important to be courteous and respectful of every delegate during our time together. If you have any questions or concerns regarding your country's position or background, please do not hesitate to contact me at gatormun@gmail.com. I will get back to you as soon as possible. I am a firm believer that there is no such thing as a stupid question, so PLEASE ask away! That being said, make sure you are familiar with parliamentary procedure (which you can find on the GatorMUN website) and take time assessing various sources to access, not only information that pertains to your "position", a chameleon concept at most, but one which models your states' ideals and behaviors. That way, if your state refrains from openly taking a side on a certain issue, you can take liberties and incorporate your ideas while still being faithful to the state you represent. I cannot wait to meet all of you and start the debate!

Best Regards,

Peggy Sukhia
Director of the AU


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TOPIC 1: Assessing the Peacekeeping Forces in Africa

Introduction

The United Nations was instated to curtail conflict within and amongst states and to ensure peace. There are several ways to achieve peace, including preventative diplomacy, peacemaking, peacekeeping, and peace building. When conflict ensues, the UN's primary form of intervention is to organize a peacekeeping operation. Peacekeeping, as underlined by the former UN Secretary-General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali in *An Agenda For Peace*, is defined as 'the deployment of a United Nations presence in the field, hitherto, with the consent of all the parties concerned, normally involving United Nations military and/or police personnel and frequently civilians as well.'¹ The force is deployed after there has been an outbreak of intra-state or inter-state violence. A peacekeeping operation is multi-faceted because every conflict is multi-faceted. As every state varies in its form of government, cultural schemas, and type of conflict, so no peacekeeping operation follows a particular template. Nevertheless, there are guiding principles to make sure the peacekeeping operations are effective. Foremost, the peacekeeping force must be entirely impartial when intervening in the conflict at hand. If this guideline is not kept, it will only propel the conflict at the expense of one party, and its presence will be futile. The second mandate is non-violence, except in self-defense. The third mandate affirms that all parties involved in the conflict must consent to the presence of the UN, in correlation with state's exclusive rights to sovereignty. These three provisions have guided all fifty-four of the peacekeeping missions that have occurred in Africa and the rest of the world.²

The African Union (AU) emulated these principles through its Peace and Security Council and it has since, began its own peacekeeping operations. In 2010 the African Union ratified the African Standby Force (ASF) with five regional forces and allotted funding to these forces through matching Regional Economic Communities (REC).³ But these peacekeeping forces are not the only options. And their presence in some conflicts have had mixed results (See next section)

In 2010, military strategists encouraged the United States Africa Command (AFRICOM) and US Army Africa (USARAF) to bolster the ASF to become an international military giant by offering improved training methods, information sharing, and more "military to military programs".³ The concern of some member states is that the emphasis on military in the AU's peacekeeping initiatives will shift the focus of the AU from other aforementioned alternatives, such as preventative diplomacy, and dilute the clear goal of peace. There are also concerns from some states, such as South Africa, that the increased entanglement of the United States in the affairs of the AU and its peacekeeping initiatives is to secure US interests and not African peace.⁴

¹ <http://www.peacestudiesjournal.org.uk/dl/Issue%202014%20Article%202015%20Revised%20copy%201.pdf>

² <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/operations/peacekeeping.shtml>

³ http://pksoi.army.mil/PKM/publications/relatedpubs/documents/Kolva_ASF_article.pdf

⁴ <http://se1.isn.ch/serviceengine/Files/ISN/101899/...A5D2.../Chapter+7.pdf>

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Even decisions of the AU have recently fallen under criticism because of possible ulterior motives. General Muammar el-Qaddafi was indicted by the International Criminal Court (ICC) for severe human rights violations. Following the outbreak of civil dispute in Libya in early 2011, the body voted to “disregard the ICC’s warrant for Qaddafi’s arrest.” This decision was met with outrage from many because of Libya’s entrenchment in the African Union and the financial backing it gives to the institution. In only April of 2010, Libya had been voted as a member of the AU Peace and Security Council.⁵

The AU has to formulate a well-defined plan with set goals in order for peacekeeping forces to succeed in resolving conflict. They must also determine what role peacekeeping should have, as their member states have distinct claims to uphold and different issues to address. Finally, it is imperative for them to weed out corruption within their institution, so they can be a force for peace throughout the world.

History of the UN Peacekeeping Mission

The UN presence in Africa has been keenly felt, both positively and negatively. In 1960, the first UN Peacekeeping mission was deployed to expedite the removal of Belgian forces.⁶ There was a significant lapse before their next intercession. Eastern Europe fell into disarray and by domino effect, so did the African states who had sturdy relationships with the Soviet Union (USSR). These included Angola, Namibia, and Mozambique amongst others. The UN, recognizing the brewing conflict within and between these changing states deployed an onslaught of peacekeeping missions, starting in Angola in 1988. They continued in Namibia, and Mozambique and by the 1990’s, there was a greater demand for their involvement.⁷

But the expectations placed on the UN proved too vast when some of their operations went awry. The most pointed failures were in Somalia and Rwanda in the early 90’s, when peacekeeping forces did little to pacify the conflict and only suffered their own casualties. The most definitive reason for these failures was, that, according to the UN Peacekeeper’s website, “there was no peace to keep.”⁸

By the time, the AU had formed from the ashes of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in 2001, there was an expectation they would be playing a similar role in peacekeeping, as conflicts erupted sporadically in the continent with the rise and fall of dictators and rebel factions. The AU’s entrance into peacekeeping came with the UN Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL). It assisted the UN in diplomatic talks and helped bring about the willing exile of the Liberian General Charles Taylor.⁹

⁵ http://www.nytimes.com/2011/07/03/world/africa/03african.html?_r=1&ref=africanunion

⁶ <http://www.un.org/Depts/DPKO/Missions/onuc.htm>

⁷ <http://www.un.org/Depts/DPKO/Missions/unavem1/unavemi.htm>

<http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/past/untag.htm>

⁸ <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/operations/surge.shtml>

⁹ <http://www.cfr.org/africa/african-peacekeeping-operations/p9333>



AMIB: The African Union and Burundi

Spurred by this success, the AU intervened in Burundi in 2003 in the operation known as the African Mission in Burundi (AMIB). Pogroms between the ethnic groups, the Hutu and the Tutsi had devastated Burundi for over three decades. Following the Rwandan Genocide, a great influx of both ethnic groups flooded the borders of neighboring, Burundi, Uganda, Central African Republic, etc. In Burundi this escalated into a bloody clash between the two groups. The UN was hesitant to involve itself when there wasn't a foundation for a ceasefire agreement in place. Thus, the AU, with permission from its Central Organ of the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, and Resolution (MCPMR) sent in an intervening force with the provisions including to:

- (i) "Act as a liason between the parties
- (ii) Monitor and verify the implementation of the ceasefire agreement
- (iii) Facilitate and provide technical assistance to the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) processes
- (iv) Facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance
- (v) Coordinate mission activities with the United Nations."¹⁰

As noted in these provisions, the operation had semblances of military intervention but primarily focused on other peacemaking strategies such as providing humanitarian assistance and opening a channel of diplomacy between the two parties. In May of 2004, the UN absorbed the AMIB operations, which was attributed to the stabilization the AU had successfully achieved while deployed there.

As the first self-sustained operation by the AU, AMIB was considered a success. However, there were also issues it highlighted. One of its most important responsibilities was to ensure the disarmament of approximately 20 000 ex-combatants, and, because of limited funding and underwhelming resources, it did not meet this goal.¹¹ What it revealed was the need for a more organized system and pool of funding. As Emma Svensson, stresses in her essay, *The African Mission in Burundi*, if the AU is going to rely on outside funding it must have an interim source of funding to fall back on while waiting for donations, because "[it] can take as long as six months" (Svensson).¹¹

AMIS: The African Union and Sudan

The AU Mission In Sudan (AMIS) began in 2007 when clashes between southern Sudan and northern Sudan ignited. Since its independence, Sudan had experienced civil war and disputes partly because of its diverse populace. Ethnically and socially, the two regions are very different. Northern Sudan has a high percentage of Arabic nomads, who are primarily Islamic.

¹⁰ <http://www.issafrica.org/pubs/ASR/12No3/AWBoshoff.html>

¹¹ http://www.foi.se/upload/projects/Africa/FOI2561_AMIB.pdf

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The majority of the southern half of the country consists of African farmers who predominately adhere to either traditional African religions or Christianity.¹² The tensions have always run very high but at the dawn of the new millennium, the region in western Sudan known as Darfur, became the backdrop for most of the violence. When rebel groups sprang up in the south, a proxy army, the Janjaweed, reportedly backed by the government, tirelessly invaded the region and murdered hundreds of thousands.¹³ The AU hastily concocted its mandate, signed a Humanitarian Ceasefire Agreement and entered the country. The AU was sent to “undertake confidence building, facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance; assist internally displaced persons (IDP) in their camps and eventually facilitate their repatriation; and promote overall security in Darfur” (Murithi)¹⁴ The mission in the Sudan did not yield the same results as it had in Burundi. At the outset, only 150 troops were deployed in 2004. By 2005, as the conflict escalated, that number had jumped to 7,000.¹⁵

The AU peacekeeping force lacked support from western states, which had pledged donations, and, by consequence, they lacked the resources to help IDP’s and refugees.¹⁶ In 2006, after organizing meager peace talks between the rebel groups and the government in Abuja, Nigeria, only one rebel group, the Southern Liberation Army (SLA) had signed. The result was continued conflict and an increase in AMIS personnel fatalities. The Sudanese government, resentful of the accusations from outside institutions, assumed a defensive stance, and called to expel AMIS. By 2007, the operation was on the brink of collapse and was enveloped by the UN.¹⁵

AMISOM: The African Union and Somalia

The AU authorized another notable peacekeeping operation in Somalia in 2007. The state had been in a state of anarchy as combatants and ‘freelance militias’ vied for power of the government. The AU deployed a peacekeeping force to aid the transitional federal institutions (TFI) in restoring peace in the state and instituting a government. Despite their intentions, AMISOM still faces a monumental task in the region. Though it still operates today, it has been constricted to a small area in the state capital of Mogadishu, because militias have seized control of most of the state since 2009.¹⁷

Research Questions

1. Has your member state deployed forces in any peacekeeping operation? If so, have they funded them?

¹² <http://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/sudan.htm>

¹³ <http://www.peacestudiesjournal.org.uk/dl/Issue%2014%20Article%2015%20Revised%20copy%201.pdf>

¹⁴ <http://www.africa-union.org/DARFUR/homedar.htm>

¹⁵ <http://www.peacestudiesjournal.org.uk/dl/Issue%2014%20Article%2015%20Revised%20copy%201.pdf>

¹⁶ <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/05/12/AR2007051201567.html?hpid>

¹⁷ <http://www.peacestudiesjournal.org.uk/dl/Issue%2014%20Article%2015%20Revised%20copy%201.pdf>

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2. What would be the implications of a militia, such as the ASF, being fully funded, trained and accountable to a Western power, such as the United States?
3. What is the history of conflict in your state? Has the AU intervened? Have you ever requested their intervention?
4. What is your member state's stance on corruption? How does your government counter corruption? Could those methods be applied to the AU as a whole?
5. Is the response of the AU to Libya, an interactive, integral member of the institution, appropriate? Why or why not?
6. Why do many consider the AU's intercession in Sudan to be a failure?

Helpful Websites

- <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/>
- <http://www.cfr.org/africa/african-peacekeeping-operations/p9333>
- [http://www.peacestudiesjournal.org.uk/dl/Issue 14 Article 15 Revised copy 1.pdf](http://www.peacestudiesjournal.org.uk/dl/Issue%2014%20Article%2015%20Revised%20copy%201.pdf)
- <http://www.africa-union.org/root/au/auc/departments/psc/amisom/amisom.htm>

TOPIC 2: The African Union and Human Rights Violations

Introduction

With the spawn of the worldwide web, the greater accessibility of satellite phones, and the increasing convenience of travel, globalization has had a revolutionizing effect on Africa. Companies are no longer limited to state borders but span across the whole world. People can move cheaply from one place to another. Internet cafes have sporadically sprung up in remote areas. But, some are resistant to the change, for, with it, comes a reanalysis of cultural norms that have guided societies for centuries. Information is more available and many, especially the youth are challenging the way things are done. Are some of the practices, such as FGM and polygamy just part of the social identity of these communities? Or are there inherent human rights violations the veil of tradition tries to cover? The AU, in an attempt to respond to criticisms that the spread of information and the call to end some practices is just another form of neo-colonialism, assessed the UN Human Rights Declaration to try to delineate between what is a human right violation and what is an acceptable social dynamic for the security and preservation of the community. There are thirty Articles in total, with some notable ones listed here.

“Article 1: All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood

...Article 3: Everyone has the right to life, liberty, and security.

...Article 5: No one should be subjected to torture, or cruel, degrading, or inhumane treatment.

...Article 27: Everyone has the right to participate freely in the cultural life of the community. . . .”¹⁸

¹⁸ <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/>

The AU has issued a charter to define the protocol for human rights and broadcast these to their constituency. Three particular human rights violations have been denounced by the institution but are still prevalent in the continent; human trafficking, domestic violence, and female circumcision. The AU, though publicly outspoken against these atrocities, has been unable to hold their member states accountable to stopping them. If it wants to ensure the progress of its continent, the AU needs to consider restructuring their campaign against these issues by breaching state borders and attacking the problem at the grassroots level.

Cultural Context

Various methodologies and principles guide a society, and ensure the safe and stable transition of that environment from one generation to the next. These societies vary from place to place because of social, developmental, historical, religious, and even geographical differences. For instance, a polygamous family structure can influence a person's role in life, the way they view the world, their ideas about gender roles, and what they deem to be "socially acceptable". The African Union (AU) has many very young member states with volatile governments and unequal distributions of wealth. Due to a limited availability of information and restricted mobility, people in the impoverished regions are often cut off from other communities and witness no other cultural relics or customs to compare with their own. Other areas are so impoverished, that self-sustenance and survival become the top priorities, and the rights of others are overlooked or neglected. Traditional practices can sometimes prolong human rights abuses, usually against one particular group. For instance, the practice of female circumcision, discussed in further detail in the next section, has been a longstanding practice that discounts the child's right to humane and decent treatment for the sacred observance of a tradition. It is imperative for member states, however, to realize the wide range of cultural schemas and traditions the AU envelopes. Any mandates prescribed must take into account all of the cultural, linguistic, social, developmental, and humanitarian variances of so many communities.

Female Circumcision

In 2006, the African Union, officially called upon their member states to terminate the practice of female circumcision, due to its degradation of the dignity and health of girls and women. Female genital mutilation (FGM) involves the cutting of vaginal tissue and is practiced in many communities as a rite of passage for women preceding their marriage or at a young age prior to adolescence. According to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), over 140 million girls have been circumcised in at least 28 countries.¹⁹The practice is extremely painful and, if performed incorrectly, can have dire effects on the health of the recipient. Long-term health complications include infertility, birth complications, severe bleeding, and urinary tract infections.²⁰

¹⁹ <http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?reportid=59355>

²⁰ http://www.blatantworld.com/feature/the_world/female_genital_mutilation.html

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According to the World Health Organization, there are many factors that perpetuate FGM in local communities, most notably traditional and cultural ones, as listed below.

- “FGM is often considered a necessary part of raising a girl properly, and a way to prepare her for adulthood and marriage.”
- “FGM is often motivated by beliefs about what is considered proper sexual behaviour, linking procedures to premarital virginity and marital fidelity.
- FGM is in many communities believed to reduce a woman's libido, and thereby is further believed to help her resist "illicit" sexual acts. When a vaginal opening is covered or narrowed (type 3 above), the fear of pain of opening it, and the fear that this will be found out, is expected to further discourage "illicit" sexual intercourse among women with this type of FGM.”
- “FGM is associated with cultural ideals of femininity and modesty, which include the notion that girls are “clean” and "beautiful" after removal of body parts that are considered "male" or "unclean”.²¹

In response, to the AU statement, 16 African states officially banned FGM. Nonetheless, female circumcision still persists in many of these states. In Tanzania, for instance, where the practice was banned, over 18% of its female population has undergone some form of FGM.²² Although the AU has done much to raise awareness and put an end to it, the practice is widespread and not easily traceable, making it difficult to identify and terminate.

Gender-Based Violence

The African Charter on the Protocol for Human Rights proscribes the corrosive treatment of women. But aside from this document, the AU has been slow to address the recurring issue of domestic, gender-based violence amongst member states. In many communities in western, eastern, and sub-Saharan Africa, patriarchal and polygamous societies are common and men are the final and primary authorities over most decisions made in the household.²³ Women are often considered inferior, and, subjected to brutality with few consequences for the perpetrators²⁴. In Zambia, over 59% of women have experienced violence since the age of 15. In South Africa, over 10% of women between the ages of 15 and 19 were exposed to sexual violence. In Kenya, over 43% have experienced some form of gender-based violence. In rural Ethiopia, over 59% of women had reported experiencing sexual violence at some point in their lifetime. In rural Tanzania, 47% of women have reported experiencing physical violence.²⁵ In South Kivu, a heavily populated area in the Democratic Republic of Congo, 45 women, on average, are sexually attacked every day.²⁶ It is also important to note how many cases of sexual and physical

²¹ <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs241/en/>

²² <http://www.genderlinks.org.za/article/zero-tolerance-to-female-genital-mutilation-fgm-2011-02-01>

²³ <http://www.ajol.info/index.php/saje/article/viewFile/24919/20531>

²⁴ <http://iussp2005.princeton.edu/download.aspx?submissionId=50005>

²⁵ http://www.popcouncil.org/pdfs/AfricaSGBV_LitReview.pdf

²⁶ http://www.congoweeek.org/pdf/ending_mass_rape.pdf



violence go unreported. Many women would compromise their own safety and their standing in the community if they speak out against their perpetrators.

In December 2010, in response to the recent surge of sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the AU Security and Peace Council received the testimonies of female Congolese victims at the request of the UN Special Representative, Maria Wallerstrom. "It is essential that the commitment expressed by the AU Peace and Security Council also translates into concrete actions," she stated, in a press release after speaking to a community of women in the Congo.²⁷

To curb the violence, the AU and other non-governmental organizations (NGO) have led community campaigns and promotions for the victims of violence. In order to raise awareness the AU also hosted the 15th AU summit in Kampala, Uganda in July 2010 entitled "Make Peace Happen: Prevent Violence Against Women and Girls".²⁸ Despite these efforts, local police forces and judicial systems, according to a recent study by the Population Council, are not held accountable to enforcing the equal and fair treatment of women.²⁹

Human Trafficking

The most vicious violation of a human right is slavery. And yet, today, it still looms over millions of people as a potential future. Human trafficking involves the blatant method of control and manipulation of a person, reducing their status as a human being and labeling them as property whose right to a choice is stripped from them forcefully. Approximately 130,000 people in sub-Saharan Africa and 230,000 in the Middle East and Northern Africa are in forced labor.³⁰ The difficulty in stopping human trafficking is the income it incurs. UNICEF reports that the profits human trafficking receives is surpassed only by the trade in weapons and drugs.³¹

The factors which contribute to trafficking worldwide include but are not limited to

- Lack of education
- A lack of understanding about the risks in trafficking. Many families will be deceived into trafficking their children, entrusting them to people who promise to provide their children with an education and care for them. Many parents will unknowingly never see them again.
- A great demand for cheap labour in a resource-rich sector
- An absence of laws that provide for the protection particularly of youth migrating from place to place in search of employment.

²⁷ <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=37964&Cr=sexual+violence&Cr1=>

²⁸ <http://www.un.org/en/women/endviolence/news.shtml>

²⁹ http://www.popcouncil.org/pdfs/AfricaSGBV_LitReview.pdf

³⁰ <http://www.ungift.org/ungift/en/stories/african-union-starts-campaign-against-human-trafficking.html>

³¹ http://www.consultancyafrica.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=233&Itemid=156



Women are also targeted, particularly in the sex trafficking industry. In sub-Saharan Africa, the primary destination for sexually trafficked women is South Africa, a hub of activity with wealthier clientele than most of eastern Africa. A woman is not always physically restricted by captives but can be held through other means, such as “internalized or self-imposed oppression”, whereby a woman “chooses” to stay due to debt bondage or other forms of manipulation.³²

African Union hosted a campaign against human trafficking in June of 2009 and launched the initiative known as AU.COMMIT. The Ouagadougou Plan places trafficking as the top priority to be overcome in the continent and outlines methods for developing policies in member states to obliterate the traces of trafficking that pervade the continent.³³ According to the African Renewal, a renowned online journal, the AU needs to coordinate an attack against human trafficking at local levels and hold the perpetrators accountable by pressuring their member states to enforce laws and bolstering their judicial systems.³⁴

Research Questions

1. What are some attainable ways for the AU to hold their member states accountable to ending human rights abuses?
2. Explore the economic sector of your state and if there have been any corruption charges leveled against your government within the last decade? Is there a link between either of these factors and the history of human rights violations in your state? If so, how could they be altered?
3. How could ending a practice such as FGM, be considered an encroachment of a right to partake in a cultural tradition? Have any in your government defended such practices or similar controversial activities in the name of tradition?
4. What, if any, course of action has your government taken to eliminate FGM, gender-based violence, and human trafficking?

Helpful Websites

- <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/>
- <http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?reportid=59355>
- http://www.blatantworld.com/feature/the_world/female_genital_mutilation.html
- <http://www.ajol.info/index.php/saje/article/viewFile/24919/20531>
- <http://iussp2005.princeton.edu/download.aspx?submissionId=50005>
- http://www.popcouncil.org/pdfs/AfricaSGBV_LitReview.pdf
- http://www.congoweeek.org/pdf/ending_mass_rape.pdf
- <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=37964&Cr=sexual+violence&Cr1=>

³² Territo, Leonard. *International Sex Trafficking of Women and Children*. Flushing, NY: Looseleaf Law Publications, 2010. Print

³³ <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/frontpage/2009/June/au-starts-campaign-against-human-trafficking.html>

³⁴ <http://www.un.org/ecosocdev/geninfo/afrec/vol23no3/233-people-trade.html>



TOPIC 3: The African Union and HIV/AIDS

Introduction

The greatest threat to the African continent is not in the form of any government or financial predicament but from the chilling ramifications of Human Immuno-deficiency Virus (HIV) and Assisted Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). The killer with a thousand different names, HIV/AIDS is a disease that ravages the immune system, leaving it defenseless against common illnesses that are normally treatable such as Tuberculosis, Syphilis, or the common cold. Although the AU has proposed several statutes to achieve the eradication of the disease, a decade following the Millennium Development Goals, and the disease still rages on.

Despite misconceptions, HIV and AIDS are not the same diseases, though they are inextricably linked. A person contracts HIV through blood transfusions, the exchange of bodily fluids, sexual intercourse, drug injections, or from birth. It can lay dormant in the system for over a year, but the disease can still be spread during this period. HIV advances through several stages before it leads to AIDS but if ignored and infections occur, it can fast forward through all of the stages within a few short weeks. AIDS will ultimately claim the lives of its victims. In many parts of Africa, it is the most devastating killer, stifling the voices of roughly 2 million annually and infecting thousands each day.³⁵

States should try to focus on what measures their states have corrupt and channel money elsewhere and also adopted and the ways to forge their efforts together to achieve not just the prevention of HIV and AIDS but their complete obliteration. States must be prepared to expound on the initiatives set forth by the AU to stabilize the spread of the disease and

History

Roughly 22 million people are infected with HIV/AIDS in Africa. In 2009, almost 2 million more were infected with the virus and over 1 million died.³⁶ The origin of AIDS in Africa is still unknown. The first recorded cases occurred in the Congo in the late 1950's. Strands of the disease were found in chimpanzees, which possessed an immunity to it and transferred it to humans.³⁷

The African Union supports HIV/AIDS preventative measures. It set initiatives to deal with HIV/AIDS at the beginning of the millennium. In 2000, the United Nations introduced eight Millennium Development Goals, the sixth one to "Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases"³⁸. In 2001, the Union convened at Abuja, Nigeria to coordinate a plan to meet this goal. After this summit, eight heads of state went further and formed the AWA (AIDS Watch of

³⁵ <http://www.avert.org/worldstats.htm>

³⁶ <http://www.avert.org/worldstats.htm>

³⁷ Reeves, Jacqueline D.; Doms, Robert W. (2002). "Human immunodeficiency virus type 2.". *The Journal of general virology*

³⁸ <http://www.sarpn.org.za/documents/d0001769/index.php>



Africa) to “create a platform for HIV/AIDS advocacy, to co-ordinate the efforts of African leaders, and to mobilise resources to achieve these objectives.” In 2002, they organized a framework of initiatives for eradicating these diseases and it was decided to allocate 15% of their respective government funding to fight the disease. In 2007-2009, the Union decided to combine the HIV/AIDS Strategic Plan with individual regional economic communities (REC) to forge ties between local and national efforts.³⁹

Implications of HIV/AIDS for the African Union

Like every disease, HIV/AIDS has implications beyond its prescribed symptoms. Not only does it rob Africa of almost 2 million people annually, it steals the livelihood of families who are left to cope, children who are left to fend for themselves, a workforce left impaired, and an economy devastated by the outcome.

Most African states face a vicious cycle. In a state with little or no infrastructure and a punctured economy, such as Uganda,⁴⁰ AIDS is difficult to treat. Medical centers are scarce and improperly stocked with medicine and supplies. In turn, the population is dramatically reduced, which leaves many children orphaned. At the end of 2003, roughly 12 million children in Sub-Saharan Africa were left orphaned due to HIV/AIDS. In 2009, this annual number had risen by 3 million.⁴¹

Without parents to ensure their safety and survival, these orphans are often forced to forego an education and pursue work as a means of survival. Without an education, they are less likely to receive general sex education and HIV/AIDS education, making them more vulnerable to AIDS. If infected, their opportunities are automatically limited and their lifespan inevitably shortened. By consequence, their future sexual partners are in danger of the disease. This catastrophic toll on the state will perpetuate the dismal livelihood of its people and the dire economic straits that helped spread the disease in the first place.

Myths

There are common urban legends associated with AIDS, especially in Africa. One of them is that AIDS is spread through condom use, which deters many men from using protection and can spread AIDS to a whole new generation of people, if the woman conceives.

Sometimes myths are created in order to ease the burden of responsibility. A common notion in parts of Sub-Saharan Africa is that women are less likely to contract the disease. This belief conveniently allows some men to engage in sexual intercourse if they have the disease, and ultimately infect more people, without the guilt of altering the course of their lives or dramatically shortening them.

³⁹ <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>

⁴⁰ <http://allafrica.com/stories/201108110548.html>

⁴¹ <http://www.avert.org/africa-hiv-aids-statistics.htm>


 The logo for GatorMUNIX features a stylized orange and blue graphic of a gator's head and neck above the text "GatorMUNIX". "Gator" is in blue, "MUNIX" is in orange, and "IX" is in blue.

Other myths concern how the disease is spread. It is commonly believed that mosquitoes transmit the disease to other people and that people can acquire it, simply from physical proximity with an infected person. These notions confuse many people and deter them from taking the right precautions, if any. People feel so overwhelmed hearing contradictory theories, many fall prey to the worst symptom of AIDS. Complacency.⁴²

The Cure

Currently, there is no known cure for AIDS. But there are many preventatives. HIV/AIDS is primarily transmitted by blood transfusion or bodily fluid. It can be prevented by abstaining from sexual intercourse with an infected person or dramatically reduced with birth control methods such as condoms or other safeguards. AIDS can also be prevented simply by throwing out used syringes and needles to ensure they won't be used on someone else. Pregnant women with HIV can dramatically reduce the likelihood of passing on the disease to their children if they have access to antiretroviral (ARV) treatment⁴³

If caught early on, HIV is treatable through ARV, but it is extremely costly and only partially effective. Antiretroviral treatment includes the drugs, nucleoside, protease inhibitors, and integrase inhibitors. But, its price prevents its widespread availability and deters many people from acquiring it. In addition, it only delays the onslaught of AIDS and is virtually unattainable for those who cannot afford healthcare.⁴⁴

Breaking the Cycle

The problem for respective states in combating this issue is knowing who or what to target. First of all, it is difficult to identify the disease since it attacks in the form of other illnesses. AIDS strips the immune system of its defenses laying it bare for foreign bacteria, and intrusive cells to take root and lay waste to the body. Another problem the African Union faces is informing the public about HIV and AIDS. Because AIDS can be spread through sexual contact, in many African communities, AIDS is associated with sexual promiscuity and is therefore a taboo subject to discuss. Depending on the religious and cultural context of the community, there may be many victims who are afraid to speak up and admit they have a virus to fight for fear of rejection and ostracism from their social group.⁴⁵

What members of the African Union should focus on are measures they would consider the most effective in marginalizing the spread of AIDS. The tendency to target high-risk groups such as truck-drivers or prostitutes, according to Helen Epstein, author of "The Invisible Cure", attaches a stigma to the disease and prevents people in many communities from admitting they have the

⁴² <http://www.aidshealth.org/about-hiv-aids/hiv-aids/hiv-aids-myths.html>

⁴³ <http://health.nytimes.com/health/guides/disease/aids/overview.html>

⁴⁴ <http://www.avert.org/aids-drug-side-effects.htm>

⁴⁵ <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1953703,00.html>

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disease.⁴⁶ The African Union needs to find a way to formulate a more cohesive team of scholars and medical experts that overlaps state boundaries in order to find a cure for this silent killer.

Research Questions

1. What are cohesive measure states can adopt to combat the AIDS pandemic
2. How could the African Union improve their medical and research facets to find a cure for AIDS?
3. Is it wise for strategists to target high-risk groups, such as prostitutes or truck-drivers, in their campaign for awareness against AIDS? Why or why not?
4. What is the primary deterrent your state government has adopted to prevent the propagation of HIV/AIDS?

Helpful Websites

- <http://www.avert.org/africa-hiv-aids-statistics.htm>
- http://www.unicef.org/mdg/index_disease.htm
- <http://www.livestrong.com/article/78254-physical-effects-aids-hiv/>
- <http://www.globalissues.org/article/90/aids-in-africa>

⁴⁶ Epstein, Helen. *The Invisible Cure*. 1st. Farrar, New York: Straus & Giroux, 2007. Print.