United Nations Development Programme

UNDP

MUNUC 37

Model United Nations of the University of Chicago

Chair Letter

Dear Delegates,

My name is Cade Creighton and I will be your Co-Chair for the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) Committee! As we will be spending some time together in February, here is some background information about myself: I am a third-year student here at UChicago majoring in Economics and Anthropology. I also compete on the wrestling team. I grew up in Palo Alto, California but I lived in Nebraska for two years in middle school where I learned to fish. Aside from fishing both there and when I returned to California, I love drawing, biking, and eating.

Concerning the committee, Ana Emilia and I want to push you to broaden the way you think about the problems, solutions, and most importantly the people involved in the West African economic situation. In the context of this situation, both topics presented to the committee depend on delegates to be considerate and mindful of past and ongoing histories that affect hundreds of millions of people. Like many places around the world, conversations about West African financial structures and foreign aid will inevitably grapple with sensitive topics. Together I'm confident that the committee will devise considerate and effective solutions to these real global challenges - while still maintaining the highest level of respect and integrity for fellow delegates and those affected by the problem. This means we do not tolerate any harassment or disrespect of any kind.

We hope that you take it upon yourselves to read this background guide diligently and make a strong effort to understand the history that should inform the conversations and debates. As we tackle what can be complicated economic issues, we anticipate cooperation and clear communication between delegates being important aspects of the committee. We want all participating delegates to feel comfortable and have an awesome time competing, so please don't hesitate to reach out to either Ana Emilia or me with any questions or concerns.

Best of Success,

Your Chair,

Cade Creighton

braumoncade@uchicago.edu

Hi delegates!

I'm Ana Emilia, one of your chairs for this year's United Nations Development Program (UNDP) committee for MUNUC 37.

Just a little (a lot) about myself before the committee: I'm originally from Mexicali, Mexico, and I'm a third year at UChicago triple majoring in Public Policy, Romance Languages and Literature, and Global Studies (inspired by my MUN experiences). Apart from my classes, I'm involved in Greek life, I'm on the board of the University of Chicago Mexican Association, I'm in a consulting pre-professional club, and I'm a tour guide! As for MUN specifically, I compete with the travel team and am also a chair for our sister conference, ChoMUN. For fun, I make vlogs with tiny microphones and have a taco-reviewing blog.

As for the committee itself, I'm super excited to run this with Cade this year, and we want to ensure that everyone in the room has an amazing experience. We want you to be comprehensive and creative- especially because this issue is so close to us. There are sensitive topics, and we hope that you take the opportunity to do extensive research on the topic so that your solutions and ideas are applicable and work well with each other.

As Cade said, we hope that you take the time to read the background guide. We want to see collaboration so that you can not only learn from us and your own research but also from each other– it will make your experience so much more valuable.

Best of Success,

Ana Emilia Davalos

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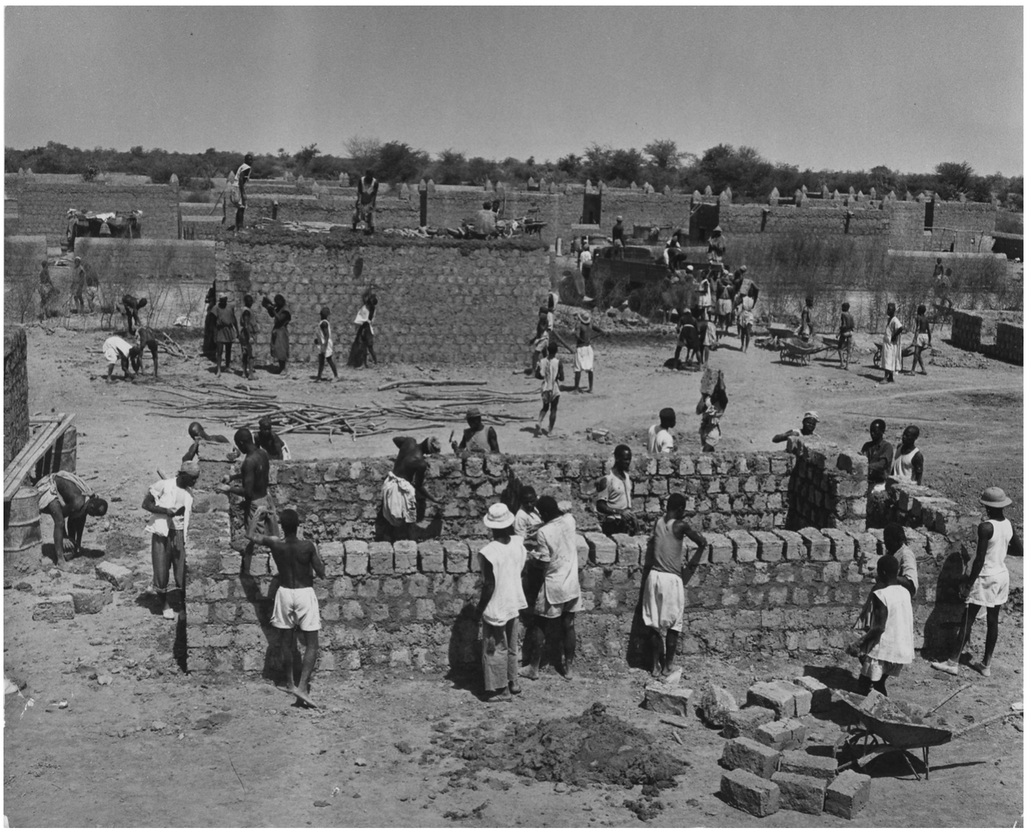
History of the Committee

The United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) is one of the six principal organs of the United Nations, established in 1945 under the UN Charter. ECOSOC serves as the central platform for fostering debate on sustainable development, international economic and social cooperation, and the implementation of internationally agreed development goals. ECOSOC functions as a coordinating body for the economic, social, and environmental work of the United Nations and its specialized agencies. ECOSOC serves as a forum for discussions, and its recommendations are instrumental in shaping international policies on these issues. Though ECOSOC's resolutions are not legally binding, they carry significant influence by setting the global agenda and encouraging cooperation among nations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and the private sector. ECOSOC has historically held the Financing for Development Forum which the IMF and World Bank have taken a part of. Despite not having the enforcement power of the Security Council, ECOSOC remains a vital part of the UN's structure, providing essential leadership and direction on the most pressing socio-economic and environmental issues of our time. Through its convening power and ability to engage many actors, we will use ECOSOC to improve international development policy and promote cooperative solutions to global challenges.

Topic A: Evaluating the Financial Structures and Relationships of West Africa

Statement of the Problem



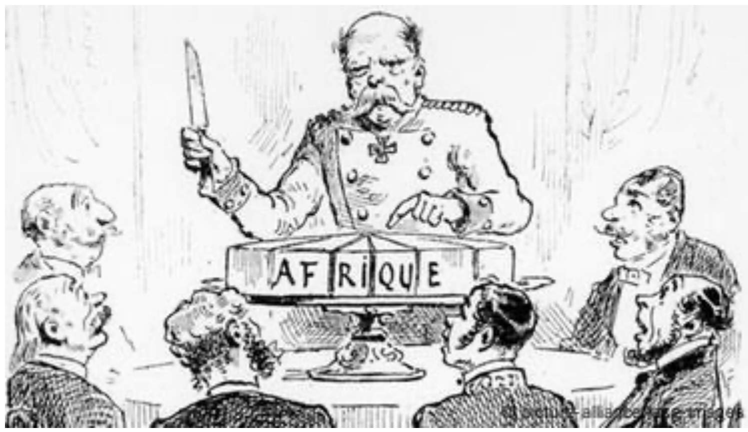
A new village near the Niono cotton region under construction.[1]

West Africa is a region that is rich in natural resources, cultural and biological diversity, and economic potential. The financial structures and relationships that shape its economies today are fundamentally connected to a global history that may sometimes feel farther in the past than it truly was. West Africa did not experience freedom from colony status until the mid-1950s and

[1] "French West Africa. Another New Village Is Riziam, near the New Niono Cotton Region. Still under Construction with Native Labor, It Already Has 350 Residents." National Archives and Records Administration, 1948. https://catalog.archives.gov/id/541639.

later.

The economies of West African nations have largely depended on the export of raw materials such as oil, gold, cocoa, other agricultural products, and captive people. Many of the key issues facing West Africa's financial structure involve the structural system of dependence on foreign investment and extraction of local resources and labor that formed as Europe 'carved up' the continent.



French caricature of the 1885 Berlin Conference depicting Chancellor Bismarck of Germany.[2]

Although the countries of West Africa today have achieved liberation from colonial rule through a variety of peaceful and violent means, today's West Africa remains influenced by external actors. This influence manifests in many ways. Some of these appear explicit, for example how the currency of 8 West African countries, the Central African CFA franc, is pegged to the Euro and backed by the French treasury. Other forces of influence come in the form of ownership rights and trade agreements between West African governments and multinational corporations concerning natural resources like gold, oil, and lithium.[3] The process of transitioning a country from a colonial state to an independent cohesive nation is naturally an extremely difficult challenge for leaders of newly free territories.

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[2] "130 Years Ago: Carving up Africa in Berlin ." DW, March 4, 2020. https://www.dw.com/en/130-years-ago-carving-up-africa-in-berlin/a-18278894.

[3] Hairsine, Kate. "Lithium Mining in Africa Reveals Dark Side of Green Energy." DW, November 16, 2023. https://www.dw.com/en/lithium-mining-in-africa-reveals-dark-side-of-green-energy/a-67413188.

For the average citizen, these structural problems translate into everyday challenges. Relatively high levels of poverty, limited access to quality education and healthcare, and inadequate infrastructure are common issues across the region. Many West African countries face issues stemming from the informal economy's dominance, where a significant portion of the population engages in economic activities not officially regulated or sanctioned by the government. This can make it more difficult for governments to collect taxes, invest in public services, and implement certain policies. This large 'informal economy' also reduces the clarity of the real state of the economy at any point in time just because of the lower relative number of transactions, labor, and products being recorded by official sources. While economists debate how best to represent this 'informal economy' alongside official data, converting the 'informal' economy to a 'formal' one will take time and may happen as other economic policies are undertaken by governments.[4,5,6]

West Africa's population dynamics reveal another challenge for the region. Its high total fertility rate (TFR) means that a relatively large portion of the population is young. The median age in Western Africa is 18 years old, so youth unemployment is a pressing concern for many countries.[7] When young people find it more difficult to secure jobs as they exit the education system and reach working-class age it can lead to widespread disillusionment and social unrest. The absence of an adequate labor market may currently help to explain why many young West Africans make the often-dangerous choice of emigrating from the region in search of a liveable wage.

Surely connected to the large informal labor sector, the financial systems in West Africa are also marked by limited financial inclusion. Many people lack access to formal banking services, making it

[4] "Measuring the Informal Economy" IMF, April 17, 2019. https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/Search#sort=%40imfdate%20descending&f:series=[POPPRS].
[5] "Informal Economy in Africa: Which Way Forward? Making Policy Responsive, Inclusive and Sustainable." International Labour Organization, January 29, 2024. https://www.ilo.org/meetings-and-events/informal-economy-africa-which-way-forward-making-policy-responsive.
[6] Ibid.
[7] "Western Africa Population (Live)." Worldometer. Accessed August 22, 2024. https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/western-africa-population/.

difficult to save money, invest in businesses, or cope with economic shocks. This exclusion perpetuates cycles of poverty and limits opportunities for economic advancement. It also reduces the potential efficiency of the economy by making it more difficult for money to move around.[8]

The economic problems that this topic has addressed are broad and set in deep-rooted historical influences, dependencies, and governance challenges. They exist as barriers to equitable wealth distribution, overall growth of the region's economy, and most importantly a better standard of living for the average citizen of the nations of West Africa. As this committee proposes solutions we should recognize the history of governing bodies outside of Africa choosing for its people. Any high-level economic plan for West Africa should be created with the full context of the extractive relationship between Europe and West Africa in consideration.

[8] Eswar Prasad, and Vera Songware. "The Promise of a West Africa Currency Union – IMF F&D." IMF. Accessed August 22, 2024. https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/fandd/2021/06/future-of-west-africa-currency-union-prasad-songwe.htm.

History of the Problem

Like the rest of the world, the financial systems of West Africa have changed significantly over time. Its history has been shaped not only by the forces of technology that affect global markets, banking, and money management globally today, but also by the diverse societies of the region, European colonization, and post-independence reforms. Understanding this history is essential for analyzing the current challenges and opportunities within West Africa.

Pre-Colonial Economy

Pre-colonial West Africa had diverse economic systems driven mainly by agricultural-related activity. In addition to agriculture, commodities like gold, copper, salt, and slaves traveled across the many routes branching through West Africa. All sections of the economy were capable of producing a surplus, which circulated and allowed communities to specialize.[9] Empires such as Ghana, Mali, and Songhai played central roles in these networks, with the city of Timbuktu emerging as a major commercial and intellectual hub..

The Ghana Empire (c. ~300-1200 AD) was an early example of West African control over the gold and salt trade. The gold was taken from goldfields at the Falem and Senegal Rivers, as well as on the upper Niger River in modern-day Guinea. Gold was often used to purchase salt, copper, and other commodities. The passage of such goods through routes controlled by kings and nations gave these kingdoms constant streams of income through taxation. The kings of Ghana also exhibited control over the form of gold available and held most of the larger pieces. For this reason, most gold used by traders and ordinary people within the Kingdom of Ghana was in its raw form of small flakes or dust.

The Mali Empire (c. 1240-1645 AD) spread even farther with access to other goldfields and resources in what is now modern-day Burkina Faso and Ghana. The kings of Mali grew their wealth through

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[9] Ajayi, Adeyinka Theresa. *Dynamics of Trade and Market Management in Pre-Colonial West Africa: A Survey Research in Indigenous Economy* 2, no. 6 (2018): 52–58.

trade but also through direct control or taking tributes and taxes. Commonly known as the richest person in history, Mansa Musa I led his pilgrimage to Mecca in 1324 AD and distributed vast amounts of thousands of pounds of gold with him, earning a reputation for the land of Mali.[10,11]

Mansa Musa, Catalan Atlas (Abraham Cresques, 1375)[12]

The Portuguese were some of the first Europeans to make contact and trade with the peoples of West Africa. The first captured Africans were taken by the Portuguese from Mauritania in 1441, and later in 1444, Prince Infante D. Henrique ('Henry the Navigator') began selling captured Africans as slaves in Lagos. Portugal's slave trade grew massively from here, with Pope Nicholas V giving Portugal

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[10] Cartwright, Mark. "The Gold Trade of Ancient & Medieval West Africa." World History Encyclopedia, April 29, 2024. https://www.worldhistory.org/article/1383/the-gold-trade-of-ancient--medieval-west-africa/.

[11] "Mūsā I of Mali." Encyclopædia Britannica. Accessed August 22, 2024. https://www.britannica.com/biography/Musa-I-of-Mali.

[12] Tesfu, Julianna. "Mansa Musa (1280-1337).", January 9, 2023. https://www.blackpast.org/global-african-history/musa-mansa-1280-1337/.

authorization provided slaves were baptized before being taken aboard.[13] In 1471 the Portuguese first made contact with the Akan people of what is now Ghana, finding the people wealthy in gold and willing to trade for cloth, metal, and other manufactured goods. Portugal called this region 'Mina', meaning "the mine", and by 1482 they had constructed a fort called Sao Jorge da Mina through a lease of land by the Akan people. Other Portuguese forts were subsequently constructed along the western coast of Africa for the purpose of restricting trade in the region with other European nations. According to some records, by around the year 1550 Portugal was taking 12,400 ounces of gold annually. In this period the large "Triangle Trade" system flourished. European goods were traded for slaves and raw materials in West Africa, which were then transported to the Americas (a voyage called the 'Middle Passage'). The products of their labor, such as sugar, tobacco, and cotton were then shipped back to Europe, completing the triangle.[14]

The Triangle Trade and European competition for access to West Africa increased until the mid-19th century when the traditional African political order lost effectiveness for the industrializing European economy and social pressures. Britain and then France joined Portugal in competition for territory across Western Africa in the Ivory Coast, Lagos, the upper and lower Niger Delta, and Guinea, as well as others. These European nations did have footholds in the region prior to this, especially along the coast.

During one of the first global financial panic events known as 'The Long Depression', a global economic recession and price drop spanning the years 1873 to 1896 caused the prices of primary produce and raw goods to decrease worldwide.[15] This pressure contributed to European nations in West Africa choosing to formalize the colony status of their holdings and exact further and complete control over the region's economy.

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[13] "The Beginnings of European Activity." Encyclopædia Britannica, August 21, 2024. https://www.britannica.com/place/western-Africa/The-beginnings-of-European-activity.
[14] "Triangular Trade." Encyclopædia Britannica. Accessed August 22, 2024. https://www.britannica.com/topic/triangular-trade.
[15] Lynn, Matthew. "The Long Depression." History Today, February 29, 2012. https://www.historytoday.com/long-depression.

Colonial Era of West Africa

With this increase in control, the Europeans were seeking to secure resources at cheaper prices and expand their empires. The British and French armies had ventured beyond the coast reaching into Sudan by the 1870s. Germany established Togoland as its protectorate in 1884. Later that year the Berlin West Africa Conference took place involving the leaders of major European countries negotiating over colonial holdings in Africa.[16] Along with making the slave trade illegal, the Conference enabled Leopold II of Belgium to turn the Congo into his personal property- the Congo Free State.

The colonization of West Africa by European powers, particularly France and Great Britain led to a complete transformation of the region's financial structures. The colonial economies were reoriented to serve the interests of the European imperial states, focusing on the extraction of raw materials such as cocoa, palm oil, rubber, and minerals for export. Trade monopsonies (meaning a one-buyer market), and coercive labor institutions have been argued to have reduced the colonial extraction cut to Africans from trade by over 60%. Studies have shown that the extent to which prices to agricultural producers were reduced with respect to world market prices is strongly negatively correlated with current regional development. Colonial extraction affected subsequent growth in West Africa by neglecting the development of rural areas in favor of an urban elite.[17] The introduction of cash crops in the colonies led to the decline of traditional farming methods which in some cases was subsistence farming. In this new system, local economies were geared towards producing goods for export rather than for local consumption.

During their rule, European powers also introduced new financial institutions and currencies. In French West Africa, the Communauté Financière Africaine (CFA) currency was established in 1945 to facilitate trade within the French colonial empire. The acronym "CFA" was renamed and originally stood for "Colonies Françaises d'Afrique" (French Colonies of Africa). The CFA franc was pegged to the French

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[16] "130 Years Ago: Carving up Africa in Berlin." DW, March 4, 2020. https://www.dw.com/en/130-years-ago-carving-up-africa-in-berlin/a-18278894.

[17] Tadei, Federico. "Extractive Institutions in Colonial Africa," 2014.

franc which ensured that the economies of the West African colonies remained tied closely to France. While this provided some economic stability, it also meant that these economies were heavily dependent on the policies and economic health of France.

5000 CFA Bill, manufactured in Senegal[18]

Post-colonial Financial Systems and the Formation of the West African Monetary Union

Although the countries of West Africa achieved liberation differently, for many, the period following many of these independences in the 1960’s held efforts for reform and consisted of the government regaining control over their financial systems.

However, the legacy of colonialism naturally did not disappear immediately once independence was achieved. The new states struggled with weak institutions, political instability, and economic challenges. Fluctuating commodity prices and high levels of debt (mostly to former colonial occupiers) have been common issues.

To promote regional economic integration and stability, eight West African countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Niger, Senegal, and Togo) formed the West African Monetary Union (UMOA) in 1962. In the pursuit of economic cooperation, UMOA upheld the CFA franc

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[18] “CFA 5000 and 1000 Banknotes.” BCEAO. Accessed August 22, 2024. https://www.bceao.int/en/content/cfa-f-5000-and-1000-banknotes.

as a common currency. The CFA is tied to the French treasury, so while this arrangement provided a degree of monetary stability, it fueled debate about the sovereignty and economic independence of recently free states from their former colonizers. The same countries established the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA) later in 1994 to create a more comprehensive economic union and again maintained the use of the CFA.

UEMOA Map[19]

[19] Map of African Countries of UEMOA :'"Beschreibung"': Karte von afrikanischen Ländern der UEMOA. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Africa-countries-UEMOA.png

In the late 20th and early 21st centuries, West Africa's financial systems have increasingly been shaped by globalization and the influence of global trade networks. Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) imposed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank in the 1980s and 1990s, were eventually accepted in many West African countries. These programs aimed to stabilize economies and promote growth by reducing government spending and privatizing state-owned enterprises among other things. SAPs from the World Bank included required conditions to receive loans which encompassed things like wage constriction, privatization of industries, freezing of hiring, and restructuralization of the workforce. They also resulted in widespread social discontent, as cuts to public services like education and subsidies often disproportionately affected the poorest citizens.

Critics of SAPs claim they have the potential to make the political climate more risky for leaders and weaken the state apparatus. They also argue that in addition to the inevitable repayment of debt, SAPs ensure the export of cheap raw materials to the north. Many labor unions initially resisted SAPs but with high foreign debt rates and social upheaval, West Africa largely accepted these structural adjustments as preconditions for access to grants, loans, and developmental aid from the IMF and the World Bank. Many public sections of industry were privatized or closed entirely. Former World Bank Chief Economist Joseph Stiglitz described SAP-induced privatization as "briberisation," where national assets were sold at discounted prices to the United States and foreign companies. Others argue that SAPs resulted in currency devaluation, reduction of subsidies on public goods and services, as well as budget cutbacks on social services. Higher individual costs became preconditions for healthcare, education, and water supply. Broader complaints about the IMF's SAPs hold them accountable for hyperinflation, mass unemployment, and gutting social services. Foreign exports increased under SAPs, but GDP growth slowed in the years constituting the projects, from 6.8% to 2.2% in the case of Cote d'Ivoire, and 6.9% to 1.7% for Nigeria.[20] According to the World Bank's own descriptions of Nigeria's SAP introduced in 1986, "success

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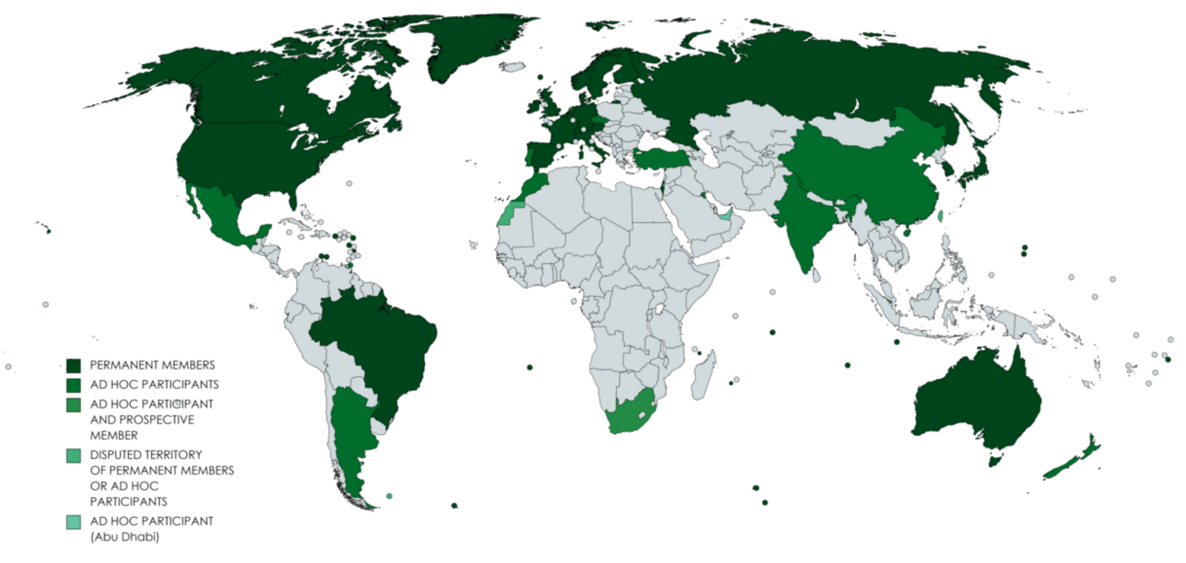
[20] Odah, John. "The Impact of Structural Adjustment Programmes on West Africa: The Die Is Cast!" International Union Rights, January 1, 2022. https://muse.jhu.edu/article/838367.

notwithstanding, per capita income is still only US $320 and consumption and income are little higher (in real per capita terms) than they were in the early 1970s before the oil boom."[21]

An important element in the economic history of West Africa is the Paris Club which was formed in 1956 as an informal group of creditor countries that targeted the payment difficulties experienced by debtor nations like those of post-colonial West Africa. West African countries began engaging with the Paris Club in the 1980s and 1990s during the debt crisis that followed the global oil shocks of the 1970s along with the IMF's SAPs.[22] The Paris Club rescheduled payments, reduced interest rates, and sometimes forgave parts of payments, however, the agreements often included conditionalities tied to economic reforms and adherence to IMF programs. Such measures have at times been politically and socially challenging to implement, as we have demonstrated. For counties like Senegal, Mali, and Cote d'Ivoire that have gone through multiple rounds of negotiations with the Paris Club, significant portions of debt were cancelled or rescheduled which helped alleviate some immediate financial burden despite the conditions.



[21] "Nigeria - Structural Adjustment Program : Policies, Implementation, and Impact." World Bank. Accessed August 22, 2024. https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/959091468775569769/nigeria-structural-adjustment-program-policies-implementation-and-impact.

[22] Corbett, Michael. "Oil Shock of 1973–74." Federal Reserve History. Accessed August 22, 2024. https://www.federalreservehistory.org/essays/oil-shock-of-1973-74.

Map of Paris Club Creditors[23]

The rise of China as an available trading partner has influenced not only West Africa but the whole of Africa's financial landscape. China is currently Africa's biggest trading partner, with trade values reaching $200 billion annually. Chinese investment in infrastructure, mining, and other sectors has increased over the past two decades, offering new opportunities. According to the US Foreign Affairs Committee, Africa has passed Asia as the largest market for Chinese overseas construction projects. These investments have also raised concerns about debt sustainability and the long-term impact on local economies. Regarding the nature of the loans, Paris Club debt typically involved concessional loans from multiple countries in more multilateral projects, whereas Chinese debt has been issued bilaterally, is project-specific, and more commercially oriented. China's loan policy seems to be more ad hoc. In some instances the Chinese government has asserted that loans from its policy banks are commercial rather than official. The conditions of Paris Club agreements are more strongly tied to broader developmental goals, while Chinese loans often focus mainly on infrastructure development with fewer immediate conditions, though they may require the use of Chinese contractors and equipment. Chinese investment has financed much-needed infrastructure, but it has also contributed to rising debt levels.[24] Over-dependence on foreign debt is a common issue among former colonial states.

Like the IMF's SAPs, large foreign loans and accrued debts for projects have the capacity to escalate past even the original preconditions. If a country is unable to pay back its creditor, the creditor may often choose to issue new loans with other stipulations regarding special trade agreements (discounted commodities) and/or access to the debtor nation's natural resources like minerals and agriculture. Creditor nations experience external and internal pressure to engage in trade in this way. If a creditor were to offer a discount on the repayment of a loan, shareholders would take cuts in their return. If a creditor were to issue a discount for one debtor, they might also face more pressure from other trade partners. It is important

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[23] "Paris Club." Wikipedia, August 19, 2024. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paris_Club.

[24] Ballard-Rosa, Cameron, Layna Mosley, and B. Peter Rosendorff. *Paris Club Restructuring and the Rise of China*, April 3, 2024.

to note that debt and SAP programs are complicated agreements that require our understanding of each of their specific context, content, and result in order to accurately evaluate their economic effect.

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) is another influential body in the region. With 14 member nations, ECOWAS was founded in 1975 to foster economic cooperation within the region. China aided in the construction of the ECOWAS headquarters in Nigeria in 2022. Today, eight members of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA) (Benin, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Niger, Senegal, and Togo) still use the CFA franc. Equatorial Guinea and Guinea-Bissau, colonized by Spain and Portugal respectively, are the only non-French colonies using the CFA franc. Their use as non-french former colonies is an example of how the CFA was effectively promoted as a stabilizing force that facilitated economic integration and performance to some degree.

ECOWAS Headquarters[25]

[25] ECOWAS Headquarters Building (2014). Shot by Willem Heerbaart.

The stability and benefits of using the CFA franc have been increasingly questioned, particularly in the wake of increasing political turmoil. Since 2020, six successful coups have taken place in West Africa, all within UEMOA states. These coups occurred amid rising insecurity, growing anti-French sentiments, and the presence of armed groups within the region. As relations with France deteriorated many states began to explore new partnerships, such as with Russia[26]. Supporters of the CFA franc argue that its peg to the euro provides a buffer against inflation, needed in the Sahel region where crop growth can have large variations year-to-year.[27] Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso make up approximately 8% of the gross domestic product (GDP) of ECOWAS, while larger economies like Ghana and Nigeria face sharp currency devaluations of their cedi and naira, making economic stability extremely important.

Critics of the CFA franc argue that its continued use is based on outdated monetary doctrines that do not necessarily serve the best interests of African states. Senegalese economist Ndongo Samba Sylla, head of research and policy for Africa at International Development Economics Associates, has been a vocal critic of the CFA. He asserts that the currency was created not to benefit African states but to protect France from the rising influence of the US dollar after World War II. Sylla makes the point that the perceived stability of the CFA is artificial, as it is pegged to an external benchmark (the euro). Because oil is traded in US dollars, this peg can be particularly detrimental to oil-producing African states. Additionally, long-term economic analysis suggests that countries using the CFA franc have not achieved the expected levels of development. Côte d'Ivoire for instance has not been able to reach its peak income per capita in 1978, and Niger, which had a recent military coup in 2023 reached its highest income per capita last in 1965.[28] To maintain the convertibility guarantee, member countries were initially required to deposit half of their foreign exchange reserves with the French Treasury. However, this requirement was abolished in 2019

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[26] "Russia's Growing Influence in Africa Calls for More Balanced Partnerships." ISS Africa. Accessed August 22, 2024. https://issafrica.org/iss-today/russia-s-growing-influence-in-africa-calls-for-more-balanced-partnerships.
[27] Dlewis. "The Sahel Faces 3 Issues: Climate, Conflict & Overpopulation." Vision of Humanity, October 19, 2022. https://www.visionofhumanity.org/challenges-facing-the-sahel-climate-conflict-and-overpopulation/.
[28] Ferdjani, Hannane. "Debate on Ditching CFA Begins as Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger Forge New Path." Al Jazeera, February 23, 2024. https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2024/2/23/burkina-faso-mali-and-niger-debate-exiting-cfa-zone.

(effective in 2021) for the West African CFA franc, while it remains unchanged for the Central African CFA franc, which was not included in the 2019 reform. The currency has faced criticism for limiting the sovereignty of the African member states, as it effectively places their monetary policy under the control of the European Central Bank.[29]

Today Europe continues to rely on West Africa, particularly for its energy resources. France generates approximately 70% of its electricity through nuclear power plants.[30] Over the past ten years, 20% of France's uranium which it uses to fuel these plants has been from Niger.[31] Orano, a multinational group of which the French state owns 90%, owns 63% of the Somair Uranium mine which accounted for approximately 90% of Niger's Uranium export to France in 2021.[32] Despite this, less than one out of every seven Nigeriens have access to electricity.[33] Even in the face of this disparity, Orano signed new contracts in May of 2023 with the Nigerien government and extended French uranium mining in the country to 2040. Later in 2023 Nigerian journalist Seidick Abba said "[t]he uranium will still be shipped from the mine near Arlit to France via Cotonou. The contract does not give Niger the right to stop the shipments"..."[t]he junta has no way to stop the deliveries."[34] Separation from former colonial powers is one of the largest stated reasons for the formation of the Alliance of the Sahel States (AES).

The history of West Africa's financial systems is marked by the imposition of colonial extractive economic models, post-colonial efforts at reform, and the ongoing influence of global economic forces and high debt. Addressing Africa's debt sustainability issues in a historically mindful manner will be the best way to contribute to a more economically stable West Africa. The region's current financial structures

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29 "CFA Franc." Wikipedia, August 17, 2024. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/CFA_franc.
30 "Nuclear Power in France." World Nuclear Association. Accessed August 22, 2024. https://world-nuclear.org/information-library/country-profiles/countries-a-f/france.
31 Maad, Assma. "How Dependent Is France on Niger's Uranium?" Le Monde.fr, August 4, 2023. https://www.lemonde.fr/en/les-decodeurs/article/2023/08/04/how-dependent-is-france-on-niger-s-uranium_6080772_8.html#.
32 Schwikowski, Martina, and Philipp Sandner. "Are Niger's Uranium Supplies to France under Scrutiny?" DW, September 28, 2023. https://www.dw.com/en/are-nigers-uranium-supplies-to-france-under-scrutiny/a-66711717.
33 "Power Africa in Niger: Power Africa." U.S. Agency for International Development, April 10, 2024. https://www.usaid.gov/powerafrica/niger.
34 Ibid.

cannot be fully understood without considering this historical context, which continues to shape the challenges and opportunities facing West Africa today.

Past Actions

Efforts to address the financial challenges in West Africa have been in progress since the wave of independence in the 1960s and involve many internal and external actors. Let's broaden our understanding of these past actions which we have touched on in the previous section.

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has implemented various policies aimed at fostering regional trade, economic stability, and political cooperation. ECOWAS has since created and launched regional framework policies for the purpose of enhancing the efficiency of production, trade, and commerce at the regional level. Policy and rules can take significant time to be implemented, for example in 2019 ECOWAS Regional Competition Authority (ERCA) was launched in Banjul, Gambia in order to implement Regional Competition Rules that were adopted in 2008.

ECOWAS also continues to work with foreign administrative bodies such as the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). Using financial support from a German international cooperation organization called Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), in 2016 ECOWAS launched a services policy review to further review regulatory and institutional frameworks and trade policy involving the services sector of involved nations. Examples of such related sectors include banking and other financial services, education, legal, energy, construction, telecommunications, air transport, and road transport services. The review was presented in 2018 and included policy analysis, research, and restrictions on the selected services sectors. These drafted services policy reviews are taken as recommendations by member states and if implemented, the UNCTAD would provide assistance.

Map of ECOWAS Member States[35]

Despite the existence of ECOWAS as a body, it is important to note that the states of West Africa obviously should not be expected to behave monolithically. In September 2023, Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger formed the Alliance of the Sahel States (AES) which has had its own negotiations with ECOWAS and the other nations in the region. In January 2024, all three countries announced their separation from the ECOWAS body. Their reason being that ECOWAS was "under the influence of foreign powers, betraying its founding principles, has become a threat to its member states and its population." Following the recent

[35] "Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso Announce Withdrawal from ECOWAS." Al Jazeera, January 28, 2024. https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/1/28/niger-mali-burkina-faso-announce-withdrawal-from-ecowas.

coups, ECOWAS had issued sanctions on the AES nations as recommended by the IMF which AES called "illegal, illegitimate, inhumane and irresponsible sanctions."[36] For Niger, these included the freezing of the central bank and state assets, border closures, and immediate suspension of commercial transactions. Niger was forced to default on over $500 million in debt payments and make harsh cuts in its government spending. In February 2024 close-door talks resulted in ECOWAS deciding to lift the sanctions issued on AES in order to stop them from leaving ECOWAS.

Many Structural Adjustment Programs have been implemented in Africa, which we have touched on in earlier sections. These have had differing effects on the local economies of the various countries they have targeted. SAPs tend to have conditional requirements attached concerning other aspects of the economy, trade, and structural organization of the recipient nation, which can be helpful or harmful but which often stand as a challenge to apply or enforce.

[36] Ibid.

Possible Solutions

Improving Financial Structures and Relationships

As a dynamic geopolitical situation, the financial structures and relationships of West Africa cannot be solved in one fell swoop. As history should tell us, another conference in Europe deciding the fate of millions of people in Africa will not be sufficient. The gigantic project of improving these financial systems can be approached in many different ways. What will make this project successful is understanding key aspects of the West African economy, why they are important, and how they affect the financial system as a whole.

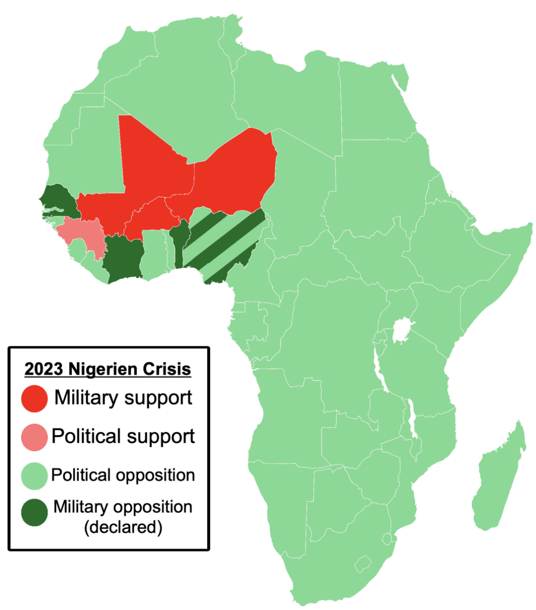
Debt remains one of the most significant hurdles to economic growth and stability in West Africa. The region's history with debt is complex, with many countries burdened by loans taken during times of economic distress, often under terms that have proven difficult to meet. The Paris Club, for instance, has been a long-standing forum where debtor nations negotiate debt relief or restructuring with creditor nations, including many from West Africa. While these efforts have provided temporary relief, they have more often than not failed to result in long-term economic stability. The current debt situation is further complicated by new creditors, such as China, who have provided substantial loans for infrastructure projects but under conditions that can be opaque and potentially disadvantageous to the borrowing nations.

An approach to the debt crisis in West Africa could involve a more comprehensive and transparent approach to debt restructuring. This would include not just traditional Paris Club creditors but also new lenders like China. A multilateral framework that brings all creditors to the table could ensure that debt relief or restructuring efforts are fair and equitable, preventing any one creditor from gaining disproportionate influence over the debtor nation's economic policies. Additionally, debt restructuring should be tied to measurable economic reforms that promote sustainable development rather than austerity measures that often exacerbate poverty and inequality.

Another aspect of this solution could involve the use of debt-for-development swaps. These arrangements might allow debtor nations to reduce their debt burden in exchange for committing to invest in specific development projects, such as education, healthcare, or environmental conservation. This approach not only alleviates the immediate debt burden but also contributes to long-term development goals, thereby addressing some of the root causes of economic instability.

Increasing Regional Cooperation

Regional cooperation through bodies like the ECOWAS could also provide helpful structure and organization in coordinating debt relief efforts. By presenting a united front, West African nations could negotiate more favorable terms and conditions for debt restructuring, ensuring that their collective interests are better represented. Involvement of international organizations like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank should also be considered for their capability of providing technical assistance and financial oversight could help ensure that debt restructuring efforts are effective and lead to sustainable economic recovery.



Map of Alliances for the Nigerian Coup[37]

Infrastructure development is a cornerstone of economic growth and stability. In West Africa, inadequate infrastructure has long been a significant barrier to development, hindering trade, limiting access to markets, and exacerbating social inequalities. Poor roads, unreliable electricity, limited access to clean water, and inadequate digital infrastructure are some of the challenges that the region faces. Some of this lack of infrastructure is surely connected to the degree to which West African countries have control or rights to their own natural resources and commodities. Addressing these issues is crucial not only for economic development but also for improving the quality of life for millions of people across West Africa.

Leveraging Public-Private Partnerships

Another way to address the infrastructure deficit in West Africa is through increased investment in public-private partnerships (PPPs). PPPs can leverage the financial and technical expertise of the private sector to build and maintain infrastructure, while ensuring that these projects align with public policy goals. Governments in the region can create a more conducive environment for PPPs by enacting clear regulations, ensuring transparency in project selection, and offering guarantees or incentives to attract private investment. Successful PPPs can lead to the development of roads, ports, energy systems, and digital infrastructure that are critical for economic growth.

Regional cooperation in infrastructure development could also expedite the process. The fragmented nature of West Africa's infrastructure networks often limits the potential for economic integration. ECOWAS and other regional organizations may be able to help in coordinating infrastructure projects that cross national borders, such as transnational highways, railways, and energy grids. By pooling resources and aligning national infrastructure plans with regional development goals, West African nations can create more cohesive and efficient networks that facilitate trade and economic cooperation.

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[37] Political situation in Africa following the 2023 Nigerien coup.
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:2023_Nigerien_Crisis_Reactions_in_Africa.png

Financing for infrastructure projects remains a critical challenge. Traditional sources of financing, such as international loans and grants, are often insufficient to meet the vast infrastructure needs of the region. As a result, there is a growing need to explore alternative financing mechanisms. Sovereign wealth funds, green bonds, and infrastructure investment funds are potential avenues for mobilizing the necessary capital. An additional option might be the use of international financial institutions and development banks which could provide low-interest loans.

Promoting Sustainable Resource Management

Natural resources are a double-edged sword for West African nations. On one hand, they represent a significant source of revenue and potential economic development. On the other hand, the mismanagement of these resources has often led to environmental degradation, social conflict, and the perpetuation of poverty. The history of resource extraction in West Africa is fraught with examples of how foreign corporations and governments have exploited the region's wealth, often at the expense of local communities. Ensuring that the benefits of natural resource extraction are equitably distributed and that environmental and social impacts are minimized is a critical challenge that must be addressed.

One possible solution to the issue of natural resource management in West Africa is to strengthen the legal and regulatory frameworks governing resource extraction. This includes ensuring that contracts with foreign companies are transparent and that they include provisions for environmental protection, community development, and fair revenue-sharing. Governments in the region can also enhance their capacity to monitor and enforce these regulations, reducing the likelihood of corruption and ensuring that the benefits of resource extraction are more equitably distributed.

Another important approach is to increase the participation of local communities in decision-making processes related to natural resource management. Too often, the voices of those most affected by resource extraction are excluded from discussions about how these resources should be managed. By involving local communities in these decisions, governments might be able to better ensure that the benefits of these projects are shared more broadly. This approach can also help to reduce the likelihood of social conflict, as communities are more likely to support projects that they have been actively involved in shaping.

The development of value-added industries in West Africa is another critical solution. Instead of exporting raw materials, which often results in limited economic benefits for the region, West African nations can invest in industries that process and add value to their natural resources. For example, instead of exporting crude oil, countries could develop their refining capacities to produce finished petroleum products. Similarly, instead of exporting raw agricultural products, investments could be made in processing facilities that produce finished goods. This approach not only increases the economic benefits of resource extraction but also creates jobs and stimulates broader economic development.

Regional cooperation is essential for managing transboundary resources, such as rivers, forests, and mineral deposits. ECOWAS and other regional organizations can play a key role in facilitating cooperation among West African nations to ensure that these resources are managed sustainably and equitably. This includes developing regional agreements on resource management, sharing best practices, and coordinating efforts to combat illegal resource extraction. Reshaping the rights and control of natural resources are effectively managed requires strengthening legal frameworks, increasing community participation, developing value-added industries, and enhancing regional cooperation.

Bloc Positions

It may be the case that countries choose to take entirely different strategies to tackle the problems in the financial structures and relationships of West Africa. Many countries may fall into one of the groups listed below or may use a mix of such strategies.

New Paris Club

Countries in this bloc would likely seek to adopt a strategy modelling the best and most effective aspects of the SAPs and debt management used by the Paris Club and IMF/World Bank in order to address the issues with the financial structures of West Africa. More emphasis might be placed on broader multilateral economic plans involving multiple countries. Whether this means multiple creditor countries collaborating to provide credit to a particular nation, or several West African countries sharing debt, the 'New Paris Club' would seek to learn from past missteps of the Paris Club and/or IMF to improve the situation. Benefits to working within this framework come in some part from the fact that this sort of loan infrastructure and precedent already exists. Plans with larger scopes may also be able to more effectively include legislature or policy to address other issues like access to sustainable energy and the construction of new infrastructure. Because of their historical proximity to the Paris Club or current position in it, the following countries might be more aligned with the New Paris Club bloc: United States, United Kingdom, Japan, France, Spain, Germany, Republic of Korea, Sweden, Australia, Israel, Canada, Russian Federation, etc.

Ad Hoc Investment

Countries in this bloc may choose to adopt a strategy that chooses to zoom in and focus on more bilateral deals which can easily include items like improvements to key infrastructure. It could also build stronger ties between involved nations and work in opening the West African market to more countries aside from historical Paris Club members and recently China. Involved nations have many options when deciding terms and conditions. They may choose to hire domestic or international firms to complete construction. Future contracts about special access to resources or special trade deals and discounts may also come about more easily. Smaller deals are always faster, so trimming the fat and padding of gigantic restructural plans and sticking with point of interest deals or plans that target specific sectors of the economy would allow more deals to happen across the board. The following countries might be more aligned with this position due to their recent economic dealings with China, or their historical style of international deals: Argentina, Saudi Arabia, Nigeria, Angola, Kenya, Iran, Kazakhstan, Turkey, Pakistan, United Arab Emirates, Indonesia, Egypt, Ecuador, Chile, etc.

Glossary

International Monetary Fund (IMF): An international financial institution headquartered in Washington, D.C., established in 1944. The IMF works to stabilize international monetary systems by providing financial assistance, policy advice, and technical assistance to member countries experiencing economic instability.

Structural Adjustment Program (SAP): Economic policies and programs implemented by countries that receive financial assistance from the IMF and World Bank. These programs typically include measures such as privatization, deregulation, and reductions in public spending, aimed at promoting economic growth and stabilizing the economy.

Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS): A regional political and economic union of 15 West African countries, established in 1975. ECOWAS aims to promote economic integration and cooperation among its member states, with a focus on trade liberalization, economic policy coordination, and regional peace and security.

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD): A permanent intergovernmental body established by the United Nations in 1964. UNCTAD aims to promote the integration of developing countries into the world economy through policy analysis, consensus-building, and technical assistance in areas such as trade, investment, and development.

Sahel Region: The semi-arid region of Africa located between the Sahara Desert to the north and the Sudanian savanna to the south. The Sahel spans across several countries, including Mali, Niger, and Chad, and is characterized by its harsh climate, food insecurity, and challenges related to desertification and conflict.

CFA (Communauté Financière Africaine): A currency guaranteed by the French Treasury and used by 14 African countries, most of which are former French colonies. The CFA franc is pegged to the euro and is divided into two separate currencies: the West African CFA franc (XOF) and the Central African CFA franc (XAF).

West African Monetary Union (UMOA): A regional organization of West African countries that share the West African CFA franc as their common currency. UMOA, established in 1962, aims to ensure monetary stability and promote economic integration among its member states.

West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA): An organization of eight West African states that share the West African CFA franc. UEMOA was established in 1994 with the goal of achieving economic integration among its members through the coordination of economic and financial policies, a common market, and the harmonization of fiscal policies.

Alliance of the Sahel States (AES): A regional alliance formed in 2023 by three Sahelian countries: Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger. The AES aims to strengthen cooperation and collective security among its member states, particularly in addressing regional challenges such as terrorism, economic instability, and political sovereignty.

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Topic B: Policy and Practice of Foreign Aid in West Africa

Statement of the Problem

As a problem that's been rising in the last ten years, more and more journalists, foreign correspondents, academics, and students have been turning to the issue of foreign aid in Africa. As with any large sums of money being exchanged internationally and even locally, there's a myriad of potential steps in the process that can become a potential worry for both countries sending the aid and the countries receiving it. To properly analyze the problem, one has to break it down into three steps: the need for foreign aid, the process of sending aid, and the use of foreign aid in West African countries.

The Need for Foreign Aid

Simulation Practice for an Ebola Outbreak[38]

The need for foreign aid in West Africa arises from both established situations and others more specific to the region. There is aid meant to address humanitarian issues like poverty alleviation, food insecurity, and healthcare, especially in regions that are often affected by natural disasters or disease outbreaks, like the Ebola crisis in 2016- 2013. For the hunger crisis specifically, the West Africa region is experiencing one of the worst food crises in decades, with more than 45 million people in urgent need of food assistance across the region.

How Aid Is Distributed

The United States is the largest donor of humanitarian assistance to Africa, sending more than $6 billion in multi-sector aid to Africa in 2022 alone. Most aid is sent through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). In late 2022, USAID sent an additional 2 billion dollars in “urgently needed humanitarian assistance- including emergency food, shelter, critical healthcare, water, sanitation and hygiene support, gender-based survivor services, and other protection support.”[39] There’s another angle to this problem, though, regarding the political instability that’s present in the area. The United States has a program called the USAID/West Africa’s Democracy, Peace and Governance program that supports the capacity for “democratic governance.” This support is in the form of: (1) strengthening participatory, representative, and inclusive political processes and government institutions; (2) promoting greater accountability of institutional leaders to citizens and to the law; and (3) supporting partner countries’ pathways toward stability and peace. USAID also addresses the risks of instability from violent conflict, and prioritizes targeted conflict and violence prevention, peacebuilding, and preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE) interventions across the region.”

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[38] *Mobile training team helps Liberians take care of their own*, by SFC Terrance D. Rhodes. https://www.dvidshub.net/image/1671507/mobile-training-team-helps-liberians-take-care-their-own

[39] USAID. "United States to Provide $2 Billion in Humanitarian Assistance to People across Africa." *United States Agency for International Development*, December 15, 2022. https://www.usaid.gov/news-information/press-releases/dec-15-2022-united-states-provide-2-billion-humanitarian-assistance-people-africa.

This is broken down into a few different programs meant to target different needs across the greater political issue in the area. These are:

- Partnerships for Peace (P4P)
- Voices for Peace (V4P)
- REWARD II
- Peace through Evaluation, Learning, and Adapting (PELA)
- Preventing Violent Extremism Actions through Increased Social Cohesion Efforts (PEACE)
- Measuring the Impact of Civic Values Training for Informal Educators on Students Vulnerability to Violent Extremism
- Strengthening Resilience to Extremism in West Africa - the Role of Traditional Authorities
- Gender Differentiated Drivers of Violent Extremism in Central Sahel (Sahel CVE Research)

The problem lies in the fact that there has been decades of intended aid that has resulted in a lack of successful policies, bolstered by political conflicts, rampant corruption, and the cycle of poverty. Some examples of this include the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) decision in the early 2000s to freeze aid to Kenya due to "the grotesque corruption of the regime of Daniel Arap Moi." Seemingly, those in high government positions capture aid from those in aid-dependent countries, making it extremely difficult for the hundreds of millions of dollars sent to be implemented in the right avenues and within the right programs.

One of the potential results of decades of misused aid is *aid dependency*, which refers to a cycle in which countries become reliant on aid and therefore do not develop their own new programs or establish the necessary systems that would, in the long term, remove the need for those high levels of aid. Economists argue that less developed countries can develop by themselves, providing the examples of Japan and even Mexico, in recent years.[40]

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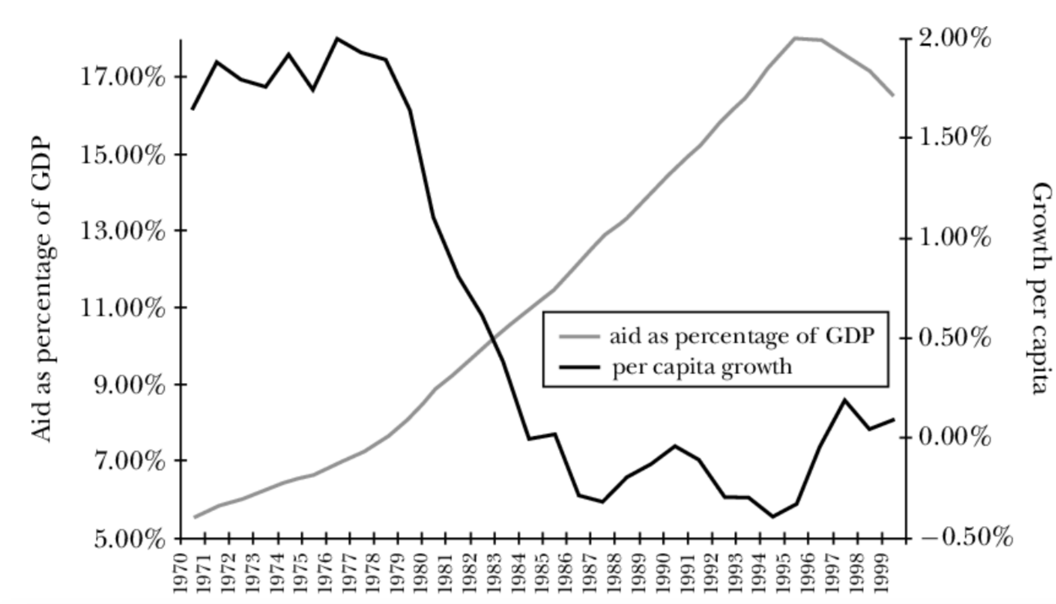
[40] Bauer, Peter Thomas (1973) : "The Case Against Foreign Aid", *Intereconomics*, ISSN 0020-5346, Verlag Weltarchiv, Hamburg, Vol. 08, Iss. 5, pp. 154-157, https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02927631

Economic Theory

The problem seems to be then, not the high level of aid itself, but the fact that the aid that is being received is not implemented in a way that leads to growth. This is not a US-West Africa problem specifically, and actually is an idea that arose in the 90's regarding the actual impact of foreign aid in leading to growth.



Aid as it Affects Growth[41]

The extent to which this problem can be explained and was not resolved can be partly explained by the aid-investment-growth macroeconomic model, also called the Solow Growth Model.[42] This is a widely accepted economic theory that explained that developing countries would receive aid, would turn it into

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[41] Easterly, William. "Can Foreign Aid Buy Growth." *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 17 (2003): 23-48. DOI: 10.1257/089533003769204344

[42] Solow Growth Model." *Corporate Finance Institute*. Accessed August 28, 2024. https://corporatefinanceinstitute.com/resources/economics/solow-growth-model/#:~:text=The%20Solow%20Growth%20Model%20is,the%20rate%20of%20technological%20progress.

investment, and then into development, which would then cause self-sustaining, long-term economic growth.

Although there has been short term growth in individual countries, the fact is that there is incredibly rapid growth in developed countries, and that in developing countries, “growth” seems to take form in what some economists call “catching up.” Developing countries catch up to a level of technology that they had failed to implement. Some economists argue that what actually creates economic growth in the long term is reducing tariffs, and tax rates, and that aid misallocates resources to projects known as “white elephants,” which are large, complicated economic projects that do not create any productive solutions.[43]

One potential crisis that the aid-development model creates is that it results in debt being accumulated by the developing countries, and because the countries cannot implement policies or programs that create returns on these investments, citizens are further embroiled by this debt.

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[43] Baumol, William J., Robert E. Litan, and Carl J. Schramm. "The Microeconomic Evidence on Rent-Seeking." *Journal of Public Economics* 88, no. 4 (2004): 795-817. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpubeco.2003.12.003.

History of the Problem

In order to effectively evaluate the way that foreign aid should be implemented going forward in West Africa, there is an immense importance of understanding the history of the problem, which includes considering the colonial era, the post-world war Marshall plan, and the tech boom in the new millennium.

Early Trans-Saharan Trade Routes[44]

44 Blanc, E, and Société De Géographie. Grandes routes commerciales du Sahara. [Paris: Société de géographie, 1890] Map. https://www.loc.gov/item/2005625329/.

Colonial Era and Early Independence (Pre-1960's to 1970's)

West African countries during colonial rule were impacted beyond structural economic change, and it's necessary to note how different European countries scrambled to occupy different areas of West Africa to exploit for economic gain. In the mid to late 1800s, this economic move turned into these countries creating colonies to establish political initiatives, which wore down the already established African political order. This change affected the coastal cities first, due to the immediate need of controlling tariffs, exports, and imports leaving and coming into the region. A few years later, both French and British armies had begun to take over inland areas in the form of military expansion and replacement of existing political structures. This was creating tens of millions of dollars for the European countries, and so their interest in continuing expansion grew.[45]

Early Independence and the Initial Need for Aid

The decolonization of western Africa from 1957 to 1976 was influenced by changing European perspectives on colonialism and a growing African opposition to colonial rule due to economic and social transformations. Europeans began to question their moral right to control other nations following the devastation of World War I and the economic hardships of the Great Depression. Initiatives like the League of Nations' mandates and Britain's Colonial Development Act of 1929 indicated a shift towards preparing colonies for self-governance, while post-World War II economic policies aimed to develop colonies for mutual benefit, further altering the colonial dynamic.

Political changes followed the economic initiatives, with Britain and France implementing reforms to increase African participation in governance. However, these changes often fell short of African aspirations. By the late 1940s, a class of educated and politically active Africans emerged, feeling frustrated by the lack of significant progress in political control. This discontent led to the formation of political

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[45] Western Africa: Colonization." *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Last modified October 24, 2023. https://www.britannica.com/place/western-Africa/Colonization.

movements like the African Democratic Rally in French West Africa and Kwame Nkrumah's nationalist party in the Gold Coast, which pressured colonial powers for greater autonomy and eventually independence.

The independence movements gained momentum in the 1950s and 1960s, leading to the gradual liberation of western African colonies. In British West Africa, Ghana set a precedent by achieving independence in 1957 under Nkrumah, followed by other colonies. In French West Africa, leaders like Félix Houphouët-Boigny and Léopold Senghor navigated political changes within the framework of French governance until complete independence was achieved by 1960. The Portuguese colonies faced prolonged conflicts, with independence finally recognized in the mid-1970s following the collapse of Portugal's dictatorship. These political transformations marked the end of European colonial rule in western Africa.

With this switch came the initial need of African states to receive aid to overcome the gaps left in place by the exit of European country leadership and financial relationship. In order to do this, Africa fell subject to political conditionalities in relation to donor countries, having to establish specific mechanisms and relationships, but lacking the connection to real change and progress in the African systems.

Félix Houphouët-Boigny[46]

Malawian historian Paul Tiyambe Zeleza writes that "[u]shering liberal democracy, a new wave of liberalization swept across Africa during the 1990s. Donors imposed conditionalities that facilitated Africa's transition. Yet, reforms are either façade to stay in power or poorly instituted. Not only the recession of democracy but also mismatch between official reports and real settings marks post-colonial Africa."[47] Despite massive democracy and development assistance, real changes are still elusive.

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[46] Israel National Photo Collection D790-100. (1962)

[47] Zeleza, Paul Tiyabme. "Africa's Persistent Struggles for Development and Democracy in a Multipolar World: Canadian Journal of African Studies / Revue Canadienne Des Études Africaines: Vol 53, No 1." Africa's persistent struggles for development and democracy in a multipolar world, March 2019. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00083968.2019.1575757.

Past Actions

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

MDGs formulated by the World Health Organization[48]

Millennium development goals, or MDGs, were 8 goals that UN member states agreed to try to achieve by 2015. It was a declaration signed in September of 2000, and was meant to commit world leaders to combat poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, environmental degradation, and discrimination against women, with targets set for the 2015 mark and with progress monitored from the 1990 mark. Although some countries did make significant progress, West African states, especially those facing the HIV/AIDS epidemic, were making less progress. With other advances, especially in the hunger MDG, there is a drastic difference in results and progress between regions. The significance of MDGs related to foreign aid is that the initial phases of reaching these goals are directly related to monetary exchanges between countries, and

[48] WHO. "Millennium Development Goals". *World Health Organization* (2018). https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/millennium-development-goals-(mdgs)

it provides developed countries who are sending the foreign aid to target specific goals in the recipient country with a connection to any one or multiple of these millennium development goals.

Shift To Sustainable Development Goals

In 2015, UN Member states, when reviewing the progress made through those MDGs, created the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, a new blueprint with similar goals, building on the past decades of work that had been taken on through the MDGs. These are called Sustainable Development Goals, or SDGs. These build off the MDGS, adding more specific goals related to industry and innovation, economic growth, and sustainability in cities and communities.

The 17 Goals for Sustainable Development[49]

[49] "The 17 Sustainable Development Goals". UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs Sustainable Development Goals. https://sdgs.un.org/goals

Current Trends and Challenges

Aid to Africa dropped to 45 billion in 2022, and in West Africa specifically, Nigeria's Foreign Direct Investment (FDIs) flows went down to negatives due to equity investment. FDI flows to Ghana fell by 39% as well. This trend of negative net aid is important to note, having fallen from their peak of $225 billion USD in 2014 to $51 billion in 2022. The negative net aid means that developing countries will instead add to outgoing flows, an expected 50 billion dollars by the next few years.

A large trend seen in recent years is aid organizing bodies like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund are being additionally discretionary with aid, due to corruption possibilities. This means that the IMF or World Bank control projects in the developing countries to ensure additional oversight, leading to tighter budgets and specific project means and ends.

Potential Solutions

There are two potential approaches when thinking about ways to resolve and most optimally continue the course to success with foreign aid for all countries. The first approach comes from the perspective of the countries which give financial aid. Where the main concern is that the financial aid package will be utilized correctly and to the most useful extent possible. Many of these countries are wary of the increasing commonality of corruption and improper allocation of the resources they are spending when there has been a history of these occurrences. The second approach is then from the perspective of countries which need these financial aid packages in order to stay on their own two feet for the time being. From this side, the main priority is "slowing or stopping the bleeding" by paying off existing debts which wouldn't otherwise be possible with just the taxes or economic activity from the sovereign country alone.

While the first approach can sound like an excuse to restrict necessary aid to countries in need, it does not come without merit. For instance, in Kenya, $600-850 million disappeared from the treasury between 1990 and 1995, although aid from developed nations continued entering the treasury. Some years later, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) froze aid to Kenya, "citing the grotesque corruption of the regime of Daniel arap Moi."[50] In 2020, the World Bank published that "ruling politicians, bureaucrats, and their cronies" captured aid in the most aid-dependent countries. Despite the setbacks, the large majority of aid resources are still spent in an effective way. One key way to combat these deterring practices would be strengthening democratic institutions and processes should be at the forefront of foreign aid policy in West Africa. recognizing that stable, accountable governments are essential for long-term development and effective use of aid resources. Three ways this can be realistically measured or instituted would be electoral integrity programs, allowing various political parties to develop (as a means of garnering true political support), and civil society support. For electoral integrity programs, donors should scale up support for free and fair elections in West African countries. This includes funding for international election observation missions and high-level diplomatic engagement to demonstrate commitment to democratic processes. For example, in Senegal, where recent election delays have raised concerns, diplomatic pressure should be applied to ensure timely and credible elections. As for political party development and civil society support, they go well hand-in-hand. Aid programs focused on helping interested political parties develop robust policy platforms. This can foster a more vibrant democratic culture and improve governance outcomes. Moreover, increased funding for civil society organizations can help create a more engaged citizenry and provide checks on government power. This relationship more or less becomes a positive reinforcement cycle as confidence and trust in one of these garners more support for the other.

On the contrary, a prominent critic of foreign aid to Africa, Dr. Dambisa Moyo, argues that African countries have had no significant progress despite receiving aid for decades. Going so far to say that aid actually harmed some of these countries by making them aid-dependent. Dr. Moyo pointed out that aid itself might not be the problem, but the fact that it is given in perpetuity.[51] She pointed out that, in the 1970s,

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[50] Cosso, Matheus. "Foreign Aid in Africa: More than Meets the Eye". *The Gate*. (2024). http://uchicagogate.com/articles/2024/1/24/foreign-aid-africa-more-meets-eye/

[51] Moyo, Dambisa. Dead Aid: *Why Aid is not Working and How There is a Better Way for Africa*. 1st American ed. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2009.

countries like Singapore and South Korea had lower income per capita than many African countries, yet they surpassed African countries in terms of economic growth. Moreover, she highlighted that to double a per capita income in one generation, which means about 25 years, a country needs to grow at 3% a year, and lower-income countries need to grow at a faster pace to anticipate this, approximately 7% a year. However, the best-performing African country, South Africa, has a growth rate below 3%. These disparities are largely attributed to corruption and the favoring by government officials to allocate funds and resources to donors or supporters of their party rather than the general public because they are not as indicative of continued power for the individual or group.

With those statistics in mind, it may be beneficial to consider solutions which instead prioritize security of proper stewardship over anything else. Two things to think about for corruption security would be conditional security aid and a pivot to sub-national governance. Conditional security assistance should be tied to democratic performance and human rights standards. This may result in short-term declines in cooperation but can lead to more stable partnerships in the long run. Second, a pivot to sub-national governance is a very fine line to toe. In cases where national governments fail to meet democratic standards, aid should be redirected to sub-national entities and non-governmental organizations. Finally, and most importantly, aid policies should focus on building the capacity of West African countries to generate their own economic growth and reduce dependence on foreign assistance. This can be done through trade policy reforms and encouraging open trade policies, as seen in Botswana's success story, which can stimulate economic growth and reduce aid dependency. Aid programs should also emphasize the development of stable monetary policies and fiscal discipline in recipient countries. Meaning that substantive measures towards reducing debts and investing in future economic growth would be a necessity to demonstrate that aid is helping in a direct economic manner.

Bloc Positions

The issue of foreign aid in west Africa and the opinion of countries are mainly divided by the countries who are giving aid and the countries who are the recipients of it. This falls along mostly to previously colonizing countries and colonized countries.

Countries in the present day that receive most foreign aid within Africa are:

1. Ethiopia
2. Nigeria
3. Democratic Republic of the Congo
4. Kenya
5. Tanzania
6. Mozambique

Outside of Africa, countries that receive aid mostly fall along the lines of countries going through crises such as wars or sudden economic downturns. Countries like Ukraine have received a large amount of foreign aid in recent years due to the Russia-Ukraine War, in past decades, countries in South America were the focus of foreign aid due to economic and political instability.

The countries that provide this aid, as mentioned, have historically been countries who were colonizers of the areas, mostly the United States, Great Britain, and EU countries. Most recently, in may of 2024, the EU pledged more than 200 million Euros to aid in the humanitarian crisis in West Africa, split between the countries of Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, and Nigeria,

Countries That Provide Foreign Aid:

1. United States
2. Germany

3. United Kingdom

4. France

5. Japan

6. Canada

7. Australia

8. Sweden

9. Norway

10. Netherlands

Countries that Receive Foreign Aid:

1. Afghanistan

2. Ethiopia

3. Haiti

4. Yemen

5. South Sudan

6. Somalia

7. Syria

8. Bangladesh

9. Nepal

10. Pakistan

11. Nigeria

12. Democratic Republic of the Congo
13. Kenya
14. Uganda
15. Rwanda
16. Malawi
17. Zambia
18. Mozambique
19. Central African Republic
20. Chad

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