

African Union  
Presidents Letter  
2016 St. Bonaventure University Model United Nations Conference

Hello Delegates! My name is Jenna Maxwell and I will be your chair for the subcommittee of the African Union. I am currently a Sophomore Political Science major at St. Bonaventure University. For this conference, I am confident that all of you will do the required research to learn about the issues we will be discussing. I look forward to seeing all of you at our conference this spring!

There are several expectations of you as delegates:

1. **Knowledge of procedure** is critical for committee to run smoothly. You will be expected to know the basic Rules of Procedure.
2. **Knowledge of policy** makes the committee more enjoyable for everyone. Look into the past and present news and history of your country, and look at how they are reacting to events on the world stage. Know basic principles of your country's policies and try to assimilate them into the issues we are dealing with.
3. **Diplomacy and courtesy** are not only helpful but necessary. Treat other delegates with courtesy and respect.

I want this committee to have fun, learn from each other and enjoy our time together.

## **THE TOPICS**

### **Desertification**

Desertification is known to affect 40% of the earth's land mass. Over the last several years, much of the agricultural land has been degraded to some degree. One main location where desertification is occurring is the Sahel desert in the continent of Africa. This problem will cause migration, due to the lack of fertile land. It would also exacerbate poverty. We should not only strive to reverse the effects of desertification but should do our best to make sure that this problem does not recur.

The African Union (AU) has a duty to investigate what other types of practices for sustainable agriculture can be implemented and what resources can be depended upon to further help alleviate the issues that arise from desertification. We could learn a lot from Australia which is

known to be one of the first countries to develop a comprehensive drought management strategy.

Questions for consideration:

1. What is your country's position on desertification / does it affect you?
2. Does your country feel there are possible short term/ long term solution(s) to this crisis?
3. How quickly can these issues be addressed to prevent future damage?
4. Is it possible to enhance sustainable agriculture in your country?
5. What recommendations or actions can the AU take to alleviate the situation in Africa: what programs can be created, who can be called upon to help fund and provide resources?
6. Do you think the UN should also intervene and offer help in resolving this issue?
7. Is this issue limited to the African continent? What other countries suffer from desertification as well?

### **Addressing Terror in Central Africa**

Central Africa appears to be the epicenter of political violence in Africa during 2014. Undoubtedly Nigeria, particularly its northeastern border with Cameroon, Chad, and Niger, has endured the brunt of this violence. Boko Haram's insurgency cost thousands of lives, displaced countless more, and led to widespread devastation. The past year also saw Boko Haram expand its operations into neighboring Cameroon where security forces have faced challenges in containing its increasing strength and widening field of action. It has become increasingly evident that neighboring Chad and Niger, which have already received large numbers of displaced persons and refugees from Nigeria, are being drawn into the conflict. As a result, the African Union, which has, in the recent past, deployed sizeable military forces to Somalia and Mali, is considering a new mission in the area to contain and rollback Boko Haram.

Questions for consideration:

1. How does your country stand on addressing terrorism/ Boko Haram?
2. Does your country have ideas for long or short term solutions on the issue?
3. How quickly can these issues be addressed to prevent future damage?
4. What actions can the AU take to alleviate the situation?
5. What could be done to prevent the emergence of similar terrorist organizations in the future?

### **The Situation in Sudan/South Sudan**

There are several conflicts taking place in Sudan. The most enduring one was between Southern and Northern Sudan, which ended when South Sudan became an independent country in 2011 (Republic of South Sudan).

Another is the conflict between the marginalized and impoverished region of Darfur and the Sudanese central government and its supporters. The conflict in Darfur led many to accuse the central government in Khartoum of committing Genocide against the native population. The Sudanese government sponsored militia and police forces (Janjaweed) to fight against the rebel groups in Darfur. The Janjaweed is composed of Arab Muslims, who are also mostly rural farmers. The Sudanese government denies any support for the Janjaweed; however, it is widely believed that the Sudanese government has been supporting the Janjaweed since the onset of the conflict by supplying them with weapons and other resources. Furthermore, it is also important to recognize the role of the Sudanese President Omar Hassan al-Bashir in the conflict, who was accused of genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes in Darfur by the International Criminal Court (ICC) in 2008. In 2009, the ICC issued an arrest warrant for the Sudanese President, accusing him of war crimes and crimes against humanity. Since then, the President has yet to be arrested or to turn himself in. The situation in Darfur was widely considered to be genocide. While reports of casualties have varied greatly, the conflict is believed to have claimed as many as 300,000 lives, and displaced as many as 2,000,000.

Sudan has truly suffered in the last few decades. Even in the newly independent Southern Sudan, new conflicts between Southern Sudanese themselves emerged and led to massive casualties as well.

Questions for consideration:

1. What is my country's relationship to Sudan/ do they have a relationship?
2. Has my country responded to the crisis in Darfur? And to the civil war in Southern Sudan? If so, how?
3. How does my country stand on the issue of genocide? / Does my country feel the Sudanese government committed genocide?
4. What should/could be done to help stop the civil wars in Sudan? How could my country help?
5. What is the role of the UN and the AU?