AFRICAN UNION

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1. Welcoming Letter

"The greatest threat to our planet is the belief that someone else will save it."

   - Robert Swan.

Dear delegates, welcome to the 15th edition of CBEMUN, a space meant for you to learn, grow, debate, and dare to try new things. We, Juanita Bedoya and Sarah Nasser are excited to have you here, in the first edition of the African Union in this model. We are here to guide and accompany you throughout the entire process, so don't hesitate to reach out since our main goal, more than moderate and oversee your participation, is to guarantee that you can develop freely in a trusted environment.

As many of you know, nowadays we see conflicts and problems that make us question things about our societies and humanity, and, in the world that we live in, these situations escalate quickly to the point where external intervention is necessary. That is why we have decided to introduce this committee to you, to target directly some of the world's more vulnerable regions, Africa; a continent rich in so many things such as culture, history, and resources, but that simultaneously faces several challenges; humanitarian crises, political instability, and the devastating consequences of climate change, to name a few.

UN models take place for you to explore ideas, design plans, and communicate to present possible, realistic, and practical solutions to these challenges and mitigate the effects of what our world has become in the present. We trust in your preparation and intentions as world leaders to debate in the way you see fit and determine the final outcome of the committee.

Thank you for joining us in the African Union Commission and this model, while remembering to do more than just watch!

Our best wishes,

Juanita Bedoya Palacio   Sarah Nasser

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2. Introduction to the Committee

The African Union is an organization that used to work towards Africa's liberation and was crucial to bringing the whole continent's interests together. Right now, it focuses on reinforcing international relationships, maintaining independence and autonomy, encouraging unity, and nurturing internal development. The main purpose of the organization is for "An integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in global arena." (AU, n.d.) while these alliances are established within the UN[1] framework.

2.1 Historical background

The Organization of African Unity (OAU) was created in May 1963, that later on became what we know as the African Union (AU). This first organization was the first continental institution that took place after the African independence and it symbolized the **Pan-African[2]** goal of a united and self-reliant continent while taking into account its Charter which included freedom, equality and justice as crucial aspects for the fulfillment of the organization's aspirations and processes. Furthermore, it aimed to encourage solidarity, unity and partnerships amongst African nations despite their national and ethnic differences, at the same time fostering the practices and heritage of their internal communities.

Amid the various goals set by the OAU, the main ones embraced the eradication of the last remains of colonization and **apartheid** from the territory plus cooperation for development in all aspects, and to secure the member state's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

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[1] The United Nations is a global organization "where all the world's nations can gather together, discuss common problems, and find shared solutions that benefit all of humanity." (UN, n.d.)
[2] The words that are in **bold** means that you can find their definition in the glossary on page 13.

The African Union became an official organization in July 2002, going through with the re-launch with the idea of boosting Africa's potential by underline refocusing its efforts. Rather than riveting on decolonisation and overcoming apartheid, it would now focus on the collaboration and integration of African countries in order to work on its growth and economic development (n.a, 1963).

3. Topic 1: Encouraging Peace and Relationships amongst diverse Ethnic and Religious Communities in Africa

3.1. Introduction to the Topic

With more than 50 countries, each with a thorough background, culture, language, and heritage, Africa is finding it difficult to maintain a peaceful coexistence within all of them. Contrary to many beliefs, this is still taking place nowadays. Various examples can be examined to validate this point. Take for instance the current situation in Sudan, where there is an inner conflict between black Africans and Arab communities[3], or the Tigray War in Ethiopia, based on the relationship between the government and the Tigray[4], even the conflict in the Central African Republic, consisting of the tensions between Christians and Muslims. For such a diverse and extended continent, situations of this nature are happening every day, with violent and harmful tensions and confrontations that are the cause of the low life quality and safety of these vulnerable African communities.

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[3] See more in:
https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/africaatlse/2024/11/11/sudans-african-versus-arab-narrative-lies-in-southern-propaganda/
[4] You can read more information in: https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/conflict-ethiopia

3.2. Historical Background

To have a better understanding of the tensions we see at the present, let's go back to some particular details that took place during Africa's colonization until the beginning of the 20th century. According to Rueda (2013), the countries under European rule suffered the imposition of Christianism (including Catholicism and Protestantism), thus rejecting the pre-existing religions and beliefs –even if countries like Ethiopia already practiced it–. For example, Islam was already established by the Arabs in their conquered land (this religion prevailed from the eleventh century until the nineteenth), so the contrast of these two doctrines, plus the traditional African ones, was one of the first circumstances in which religion collided with others in these territories.

Furthermore, today's ethnic violence is the outcome of what African leaders and communities were obliged to endure 140 years ago when the continent was divided arbitrarily between the European powers[5] into new states for them to control and own (Berlin Conference in 1884/85). Therefore, the real effect of this new territorial division would be instead a set of artificial borders; in other words, each country's territorial limitations were inadequate since the views of indigenous groups and the separation of ethnic communities were entirely overlooked. Another way of looking at it would be the way that kingdoms, groups, and communities that opposed each other abruptly were forced to be part of the same colon and territory, live by the same laws and rules, and be governed by the same ruler – that in most cases completely went against their every principles and values– (Diversity atlas, 2023).

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[5] Countries like the United Kingdom, Portugal, Belgium, France, Italy, Denmark, Russia, Austria-Hungary, etc.

With changes and certain evolutions throughout the years, the 1990s was another time in which African communities clashed. For the most part, the withdrawal of communism mingled with the reinforcement of Islamic extremism was the cause of this clash. Cases such as discrimination in Egypt, a violent civil war in Sudan, Christian brutalities in Nigeria, even bomb-involved crimes in Kenya (Rueda, 2013).
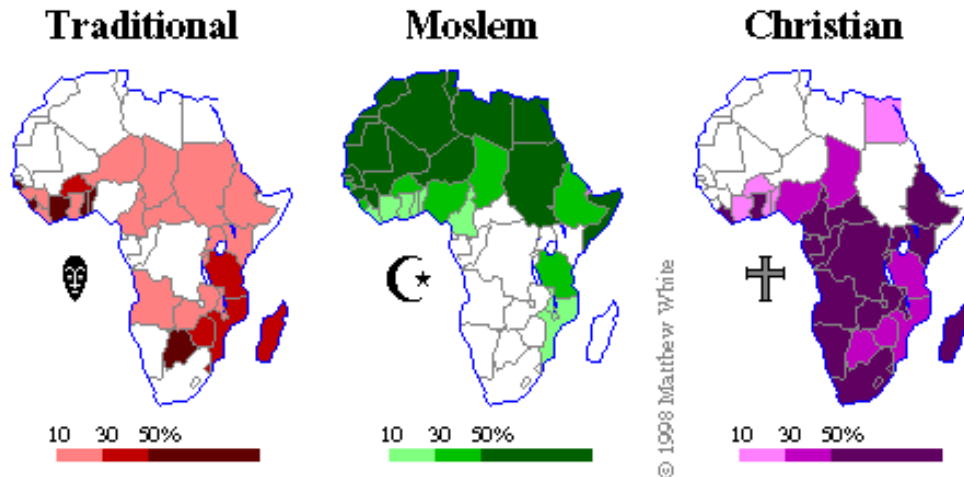
3.3. Current Situation

Several factors can be the main reason behind the tense relationships between diverse ethnic and religious communities in Africa. As mentioned before in the introduction to the topic and historical background, religions and ethnicities are based on different values and principles, which is why when they are in critical circumstances, these differences act up and engage in complicated interactions. In most cases, these communities don't know how to mediate and agree on a middle ground, escalating the situation. Furthermore, these differences could present a threat to one group or another, but they usually don't, and the disputes are created sometimes due to misunderstandings –considering how they can speak distinct languages– or historical tensions that haven't been resolved.

Figure 1

Distribution of different religions in Africa.

Traditional Moslem Christian

Note. thinkafrica.net. (2020, December 16). Africa's Religions. Learn About Africa. source:

https://thinkafrica.net/africas-religions/

As seen in the image, Islam is the predominant religion in the countries located in the north of Africa, whereas Christianism is the main doctrine in the south. Considering how traditional African faiths are more distributed throughout the territory, the merger of more than two strongly imposed religions in one country (for example in Ethiopia, both Sudans, Chad, or Mozambique according to the image) has proved to be complex, plus the coexistence of them have shown a plethora of challenges. Governments have also played a part in the religious course of their territory; there have been occasions where for example Christians were offered job posts if they agreed to convert to Islam in countries like Ethiopia (Rueda, 2013).

Disputes over political representation are one of the main bases of conflict, especially since sometimes, politicians use ethnic diversity as a tool to gather followers in an effort for resources, assets, and status (Aapenguo, 2010). Likewise, external entities –foreign countries or

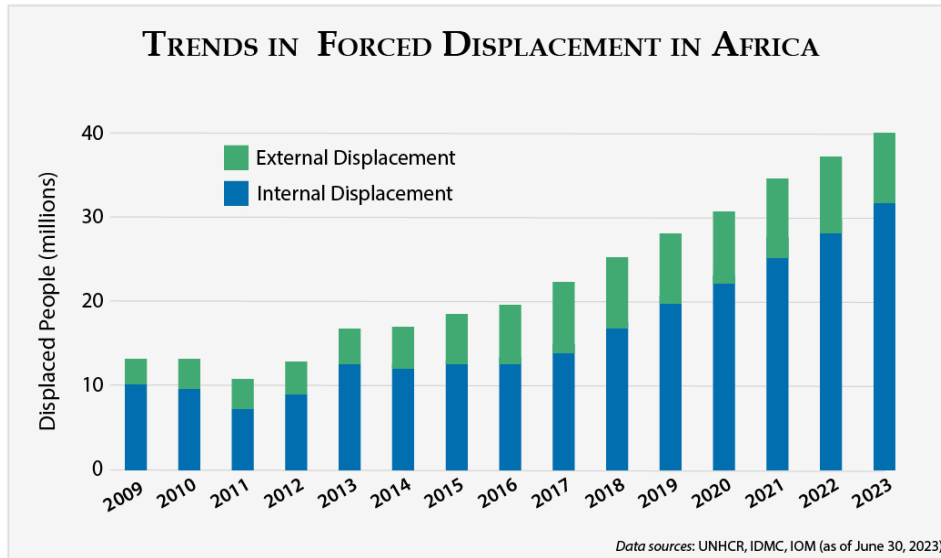illegal groups– in some cases support one side or party by providing aid, thus increasing the tensions.

As seen before, colonial rule disrupted the established structures hence, it was necessary to compete for resources and cultural dominance. However, this continues to occur in the present in some regions where access to water, lands aimed for crops, and grasslands is limited, generating controversy amongst communities (Deng, 1997). Moreover, there are ethnic groups that don't have an economic activity to acquire resources and fend for themselves, which is why this competition for resources can also be for survival.

Taking for instance events like Rwanda's genocide, there's been a great deal of both internal and external displacement caused by conflict of an ethnic nature. On account of violence and lack of safety, millions of people have been obliged to leave their homes, causing plenty of humanitarian crises that have happened in countries like Sudan and DRC. Indulging the image below, a significant percentage of the total displaced people is on account of the explained topic, considering the amount of religious and ethnic conflict in Africa today.

Figure 2

Statistics of both internal and external displacement in the African continent.

Trends in Forced Displacement in Africa

Data sources: UNHCR, IDMC, IOM (as of June 30, 2023)

Note. Studies, T. a. C. F. S. (2024, September 6). African conflicts displace over 40 million people – Africa Center. Africa Center.

 source: https://africacenter.org/spotlight/african-conflicts-displace-over-40-million-people/

It is fundamental to understand that extremist or illegal groups have used religion as an excuse for violence in the past (for example the Taliban in Afghanistan, using Islam as a bridge for oppression and control) and how this might be happening in regions like the African continent, particularly when events like Rwanda's genocide, or Ghana and Kenya's indigenous circumstances have taken place (Aapenguo, 2010).

Despite these challenges posed by diverse communities, many countries and international organizations work everyday to improve present events and implement strategies like mediation, education, development programmes, fostering a peaceful coexistence. Strong political institutions are essential in improving conflicts of an ethnic nature, as seen in Ghana, where an independent electoral commission has helped build trust in the democratic process (Aapenguo,

2010). The early intervention in conflicts is a powerful tool, and when mixed with the efforts of civil society great achievements like national unity can be achieved.

3.4. Guiding Questions[6]

1. What are the most important and present religious and ethnic communities in your delegation?

2. Which of these communities have had conflicts in the past?

3. What were the main reasons behind the conflict?

4. Was your delegation's government a party involved in the conflict?

5. What strategies has your delegation implemented to solve these confrontations/conflicts in the past?

6. Is there any solution or plan in which your delegation collaborated? Was it successful?

3.5. Recommendations from the chair

Is it critical to understand the position of your delegation and how they have worked in the past to solve these types of situations. Do not allow for your country's limited resources or involvement in the past to slow down your process, both during your preparation and debate, since the assigned delegations are not without reason.

If you have a delegation from outside the African continent, you should share during the debate which strategies are being used by these developed countries as examples and perhaps adjust them to the African context so that they could be applied more adequately there; the idea

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[6] These guiding questions are a tool for you to research and understand better the position of the delegation (country) you are representing, which is why it is recommended to answer them.

is to provide a more global perspective outside the African region and to cultivate innovative and practical solutions.

3.6. Supporting Links[7]

- African Union site: https://au.int/

- A quick guide to the distribution of religion around the globe:

  https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2012/12/18/global-religious-landscape-exec/

- Main ethnicities in each country:

  https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/field/ethnic-groups/

3.7. Glossary

1. Apartheid: "(1948 to 1994) in South Africa was the racial segregation under the all-white government of South Africa which dictated that non-white South Africans (a majority of the population) were required to live in separate areas from whites" (African Union, n.d.).

2. Pan-African/Africanism: "The idea that peoples of African descent have common interests and should be unified" (Kuryla, n.d).

3. Sectarian Violence/Sectarianism/Sectarian: "caused by or feeling very strong support for the religious or political group that you are a member of, in a way that can cause problems with other groups" (Cambridge Dictionary, 2025).

4. Topic 2: Promoting Sustainable Agriculture in Africa

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[7] These are websites and/or articles in which you can find useful information that will help you with your preparation process.

4.1. Introduction to the Topic

"Agriculture is by far the single most important economic activity in Africa. It provides employment for about two-thirds of the continent's working population and for each country contributes an average of 30 to 60 percent of gross domestic product and about 30 percent of the value of exports" (Nicol and Middleton, 2025). Despite agriculture's importance in this context, only 6% of African land is cultivated and there's low productivity for an activity that feeds the larger part of the population. This happens mostly due to a lack of resources and the usage of traditional processes (especially in northern Africa) which hinders the path towards a highly developed system (Nicol and Middleton, 2025).

The consequences of an undeveloped system include ongoing poverty and dropping **food security**, thus increasing the number of people who experience malnutrition with a preoccupying increase from 240 million people (2015) to 320 million (2025) in only 10 years (African Development Bank, n.d.) taking into account the rapidly growing population and the need for sufficient nourishment.

What's needed to aid the poverty, hunger, and economic issues lies in the investment of modern agriculture, allowing for more active and sustainable operations. This can be achieved by exploiting Africa's potential; however, bearing in mind that environmental aspects and financial responsibility are the main threats to this activity (African Union, n.d.).

4.4. Historical Background

Going way back to approximately 1000 BCE, locations close to bodies of water made possible for production processes of materials like iron, allowing for the creation of adequate and

advanced farming tools, a huge innovation back in the day. In addition, diseases had spread in Africa among people, and several tropical illnesses made it preferable for communities to travel instead of settling down, thus there wasn't a development or establishment of farming practices, favoring other methods like **foraging** (Khan Academy, n.d.). Taking both of these events into account, the agricultural techniques implemented in ancient West Africa were peculiar, however, useful at the time. These practices began simultaneously in other continents, therefore we can see the unequal evolution in different regions globally.

The system that spread slowly –partially because of difficulty with communication and transportation– was essential to the reinforcement of East African Kingdoms, which were based on traditional cultures (Harlan, 2008). Unfortunately, later on, there were new challenges posing threats to these previously growing practices like colonization, the exploitation of land, lack of investment and resources, and so on.

In the late 1800s, Africa was seen for the most part as a supplier of raw materials for Europe, and all the innovation and development that was implemented wasn't for the land itself, but for the benefit of non-native communities (Steel and Gardiner, 2025), thus hindering the evolution and progress of these lands anew.

Furthermore, the Second World War was a "helpful" time in which growth happened rather quickly in the continent (especially since 1950) thanks to higher demand, the inclusion of local production (replacing imports), plus more support from the governments and investments. Nonetheless, challenges perdured, like increasing prices along with a shortage of adequate workers (Steel and Gardiner, 2025).

More recently, the most imposing threat is the growth of the population (since 1990), hence the need for more food and resources, urgently calling for a practical solution.

4.3. Current Situation

Recalling the diverse environment of the African territory, there are plenty of challenging conditions that in the past influenced the positioning of agriculture, and continue to interfere today; for instance, the Sahara desert which has significantly less fertile land and difficult channels of communication (Khan Academy, n.d.), decreasing the amount of crop growth that can be produced.

The African region alone contains more than half of the world's unused **arable land**, nonetheless, it has used more than 78 billion dollars on food exportations annually, approximately 20% of the African population suffers from hunger, and almost the entirety of the food supply relies on local farmers who have not implemented modern or practical practices to date (Hodder and Migwalla, 2023). The land is available and the opportunities are present, so there's only the need for refocusing resources and innovation.

As has been mentioned, there are new challenges that hinder the path toward the improvement of the African agricultural system, including:

I. African agriculture is highly susceptible to climate-related challenges (climate vulnerability), which can make the growth and healthiness of crops difficult. This includes floods, cyclones, droughts, and so forth. (African Development Bank, n.d.)

II.   The limited use of technology and innovation makes the agricultural processes impractical, so not only it can't supply what's needed, but the economic potential that it can produce is not exploited.

III.   The poor infrastructures and inefficient markets make it difficult for farmers and workers from this industry to sell their products at just prices, and considering the socioeconomic status of most Africans can result problematic and unfair.

IV.   Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic undid all the previous progress of the last years, and hunger increased by 60% in the African continent (397 million people), which triggered an almost impossible situation for the population like significant loss of resources and income, the affordability of basic supplies, disruption of the supply chain, among others (African Development Bank, n.d.)

V.   The prolonged use of unsustainable farming practices has led to the degradation of the land and reduced fields.
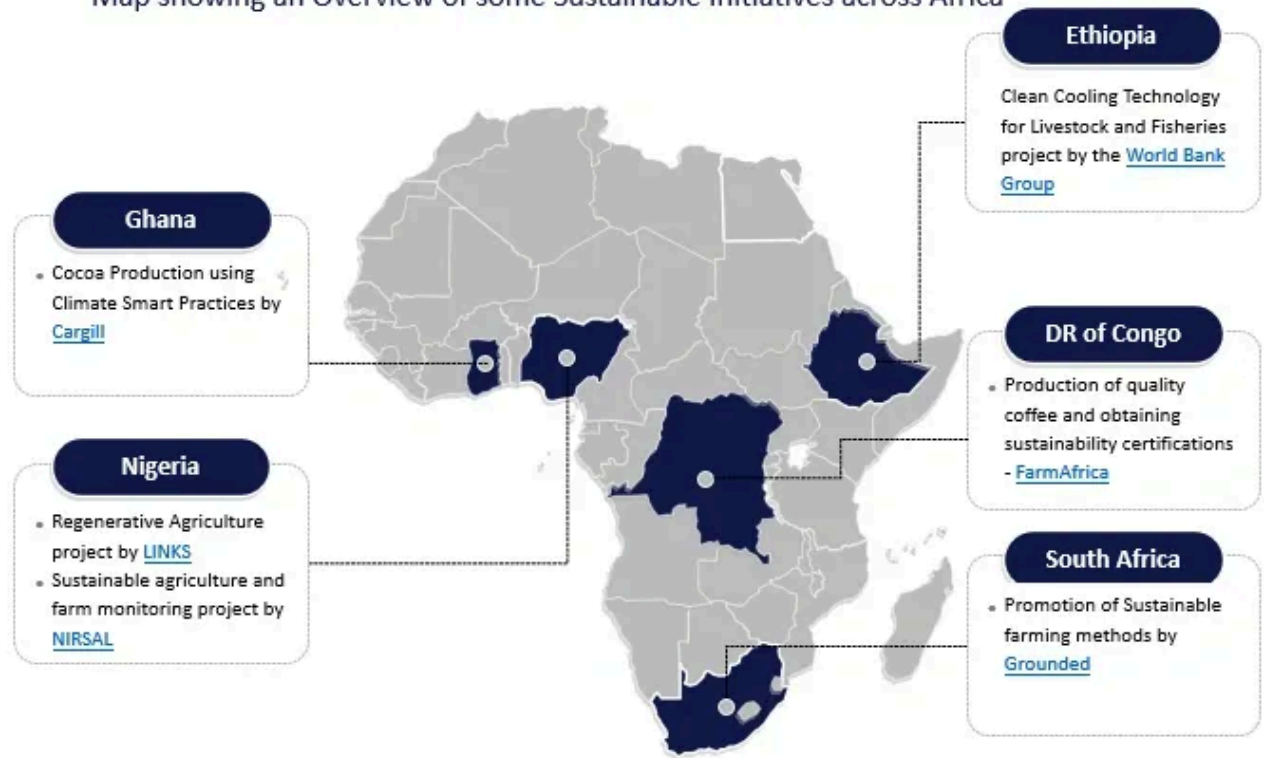
Moreover, countries like Nigeria have been making an effort and implementing more sustainable practices to transform their agricultural system, thus increasing their crop production. These efforts are boosted due to modern phenomena like the escalation of population and the need for more living resources (Nicol and Gardiment, 2025). In the following image, more examples and cases of initiatives taken by some countries.

Figure 3

Recently used initiatives across different African countries to include a more sustainable agriculture.

Map showing an Overview of some Sustainable Initiatives across Africa

Ethiopia
- Clean Cooling Technology for Livestock and Fisheries project by World Bank Group

Ghana
- Cocoa Production using Climate Smart Practices by Cargill

DR of Congo
- Production of quality coffee and obtaining sustainability certifications - FarmAfrica

Nigeria
- Regenerative Agriculture project by LINKS
- Sustainable agriculture and farm monitoring project by NIRSAL

South Africa
- Promotion of Sustainable farming methods by Grounded

Note. Map showing overview of some Sustainable Initiatives across Africa. (2022). Agramondis. Source:

https://agramondis.com/news-%2F-articles/f/sustainable-agriculture-in-africa---what-is-already-happening

For the resolution of the agricultural crisis in Africa, there's been aid from some institutions and organizations, and the main one consists of The Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP), which works for the abolition of hunger and poverty by boosting the agricultural sector, encouraging African governments to invest more resources. This calls for the 10 percent of national budgets to be directed toward the agricultural

industry and rural development while promoting sustainable farming practices, the adequate usage of raw materials and natural resources, and so forth (African Union, n.d.).

Finally, there have been stronger strategies to address the agriculture crisis. There is a plan by the African Development Bank which intends to provide 40 million farmers with high-impact agricultural technologies by 2025. Likewise, the investment in infrastructure (like road and **irrigation system** improvements) has made for easier market access to smallholder farmers; in Ethiopia, new crop varieties have increased production and created jobs, national and international cooperation have fostered sustainable agricultural development, and there's been more investment in the private sector (African Development Bank, n.d.).[8]

4.4. Guiding Questions

1. What are the main agricultural activities practiced in your delegation?

2. What methods of production are being used in these agricultural activities? Are these practical, ethical, harmful to the environment and/or do they allow for a maximum advantage of the land and resources?

3. Does your delegation have a budget or fund for agricultural development? If so, is it being used appropriately? Is it possible to see the positive impact of its usage?

4. Has your delegation implemented any type of innovation or modern methods in its agricultural processes?

5. Is the current agricultural activity "enough" to provide for the whole population and maintain a stable economy in your delegation?

6. Has your delegation shown any interest or initiative to upgrade its agricultural processes?

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[8] All of these strategies are included and explained thoroughly in the fourth supportive link on page 20.

4.5. Recommendations from the Chair

It is crucial to consider modern agricultural practices and methods around the world in order to improve the current situation in the African continent; however, evaluating their implications environmentally, monetarily, regionally, and their applicability when aiming to develop the existing system to have a more practical and functional structure is crucial. For the delegations outside the evaluated continent, it's imperative the appropriation of internal strategies and processes to help these traditional practices grow and transform while doing a proper adaptation to guarantee a positive impact in Africa. Overall, Africa is a continent with an enormous potential to be exploited, make sure to bear that in mind.

4.6. Supportive Links

Step by step what's needed to address the agricultural crisis

https://www.whitecase.com/insight-our-thinking/africa-focus-summer-2023-africas-agricultural-revolution

Soil degradation across Africa

https://www.africa-business.com/features/images-africa/africa-soil-degradation.jpg

Countries with agricultural potential (land)

https://www.agter.org/images/merlet_c2a_cultivablelands_G2.png

Africa Development Bank's plan to deliver highimpact agricultural technologies to

40 million farmers by 2025 (page 4).

https://www.afdb.org/sites/default/files/news_documents/chap2-ader_2021_en_v15.pdf

4.7. Glossary

1. <u>Arable land:</u> "Arable land is land worked (ploughed or tilled) regularly, generally under a system of crop rotation" (Eurostat, n.d.).

2. <u>Food Security:</u> "when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life" (World Bank, n.d.).

3. <u>Foraging</u>: "To go from place to place searching for things that you can eat or use" (Cambridge Dictionary, 2025).

4. <u>Irrigation system:</u> "The controlled application of water for agricultural purposes through manmade systems to supply water requirements not satisfied by rainfall" (Water Science School, 2018).

5. Delegation List

1. Federative Republic of Brazil

2. People's Republic of Burkina Faso

3. Republic of Burundi

4. Central African Republic

5. Republic of Côte d'Ivoire

6. Arab Republic of Egypt

7. Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

8. Federal Republic of Germany

9. Republic of Ghana

10. Republic of India

11. Republic of Kenya

12. Republic of Malawi

13. Republic of Mali

14. Republic of Mozambique

15. Kingdom of the Netherlands

16. Republic of Niger

17. Federal Republic of Nigeria

18. Republic of Rwanda

19. Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

20. Republic of South Africa

21. Republic of South Sudan

22. Republic of the Sudan

23. United Republic of Tanzania

24. Republic of Turkey

25. Republic of Zambia

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