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The Pan-African Parliament

Topic A: *Improving Women's Rights and Economic Opportunities*

Topic B: *Developing Transportation Infrastructure Across Africa*

Committee Overview

The Pan-African Parliament is the decision-making body of the African Union. Created in 2004, the Parliament serves as a way for the African Union to make important policy decisions to foster and promote a unitary Africa that increases social and economic development. In addition to this, the Pan-African Parliament is working to increase democracy and human rights across the continent and create better oversight for the African Union. The Pan-African Parliament consists of 55 member states[1] and has 10 committees that focus on a broad range of issues affecting Africa and its citizens.[2]

The Pan-African Parliament is not the first body to work towards improving Africa. In 1963, several independent African states came together to form the Organization of African Unity. The new organization's goals were to promote unity among the African states, decolonize Africa, increase international cooperation, and create a better life for all Africans. Over time, the Organization of African Unity grew to 53 members and the powers of the Organization expanded. Eventually, the leaders of the Organization called for more change and in 1999 at the Sirte Summit, the Sirte Declaration was adopted and paved the way for the African Union; A more formal political entity that would function like the United Nations or the European Union.[3]

The African Union was built on the same principles that the Organization of African Unity was founded on but with an expanded scope. New goals included increasing the security of Africa and better integrating the economies of the member states.

In 2004, the Pan-African Parliament held its inaugural session.[4] The Parliament was founded to expand democracy across Africa and to increase cooperation between member states. The eventual goal of the Parliament is to create a legislature that can create laws and implement policies than work to benefit all Africans. Currently the function of the Pan-African Parliament is to implement the policies of the African Union and to expand democracy and human rights.[5]

The Pan-African Parliament is composed of several bodies. The biggest body is the Plenary, currently composed of 229 representatives, elected from the various member states and headed by the president. There is also the bureau, which is composed of the president and 4 vice-presidents that each represent 5 geographical regions of

[1] "Morocco formally joins Pan-African Parliament in South Africa." Xinhua, May 8, 2018.
[2] "Committees." Pan African Parliament.
[3] *History: Africa Union.* (U.S. Agency for International Development, 2017).

[4] Mutume, Gumisai. "Pan-African Parliament now a reality." Africa Renewal, United Nations, April, 2004.
[5] "Background." Pan African Parliament.

Africa. The current president is Roger Nkodo Dang of Cameroon. Finally, there are 10 permanent committees that have a focus area; such as, the Monetary & Financial committee, that deal with the different aspects of life in Africa and work toward making Africa a better place.[6]

[6] Onganga, Jeffery. Pan-African Parliament Background. (Pan-African Parliament).

Introduction

Many organizations around the world, such as the United Nations and African Union, recognize that women's rights are critical to advancing society and to creating a more just world. They also recognize that throughout history, women have had less opportunities than men and have suffered from sexism.

Several organizations, governmental and non-governmental, have taken steps in African to promote women's rights and increase economic opportunities. Actions like Agenda 2063[7] and the Maputo protocol are the foundations to creating a more equitable society, but more action needs to be taken.

Africa has had a long history of inequality perpetuated by sexist traditions and worsened by colonialism. It still faces many obstacles today. Groups like Boko Haram and inhumane practices like Female Genital Mutilation still affect millions and must be addressed promptly. Furthermore, steps must be taken to ensure that women have increased economic mobility and are granted fair wages and given opportunities to access jobs at the same rate as men.

It is the job of the Pan-African Parliament to introduce new policies that can guarantee social and economic rights to women and to give them an equal footing in African society.

Historical Background

Historically, women in Africa have enjoyed many roles in society, from laborers to leaders. Pre-colonial African society was never overly dominated by gender hierarchies, so women had substantial freedoms.[8] Women had political autonomy and were generally consulted by men when making political decisions. Furthermore, women served in different production roles than men, but these roles were supplementary, rather than subordinate. The roles of women in society changed when European countries started colonizing Africa and a hierarchal structure based on gender was imposed.[9]

In the 20th century, women have struggled to gain equal rights. There were many instances across Africa where women fought against injustice. For instance, in 1929 the Women's Market Rebellion took place. Thousands of women in south Nigeria protested unfair conditions and taxes imposed on them by British colonizers. Decades before the conflict, women had much more political and economic freedom. Women were involved in local politics and ran marketplaces. The British stripped women of these rights and excluded them from the political system as a means to better control the indigenous population.[10] After the British had imposed steep taxes on the men, many women believed that they too would be taxed. This was at odds with their

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[7] *Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want* (African Union. October 12, 2014).
[8] Sudarkasa, Niara. "*The Status of Women" in Indigenous African Societies.* (*Feminist Studies* 12, no. 1 (1986).

[9] Ibid.
[10] Bernhardt, Arielle. "Igbo Women Campaign for Rights (The Women's War) in Nigeria, 1929." Global Nonviolent Action Database. September 04, 2010.

cultural traditions as women were traditionally not taxed. Frustrated with the threat of taxes and not having a platform to legally address their grievances with the colonial government, the women began organizing. After months of planning, the women started protesting colonial government officials and the native Warrant Chiefs who had connections with the colonial government. At first, the women blocked roads and taunted government officials. They would target and harass Warrant Chiefs who would treat women unfairly and the women would sit outside the chiefs' house for hours singing and dancing as a form of resistance. The protests would escalate when the colonial government failed to take the women seriously and two women were killed by a government official trying to flee by automobile. The women then destroyed government buildings, infrastructure, and businesses owned by white owners. The colonial government deployed military personnel and many women were killed by machine-gun fire and villages were burned as a collective punishment. The protests ceased after several rounds of collective punishment[11]. Several Warrant Chiefs resigned as a result of the protests. The colonial government was willing to listen to some of the women's concerns and made reforms. Women were assured that they would not be taxed and were finally heard by the government. In addition, the government would scrap the Warrant Chief system opting for a system where villages would elect judges to make day-to-day decisions for the village. This allowed for the indigenous people to regain some autonomy. While the women's revolt did not end colonial conflict, it emboldened women to organize and fight against injustice in the future and marked the start of major resistance against British colonialism in Nigeria.[12]

There have been other instances of women's opposition to colonialism across Africa throughout the 20th century. One such instance is the resistance to apartheid pass laws in South Africa during riots in the 1950's, which climaxed with the Sharpeville Massacre in 1960.[13]

The origins of the riots begin 20 years earlier with the passage of Apartheid laws in South Africa. Apartheid was a system of segregation that outlawed many forms of racial interaction such as marriage, schooling, and living in the same areas. Apartheid was supported by the National Party to further the racial interests of white Afrikaaners, a minority in the country.[14] One of the many unjust and racist laws enacted was the "Pass Law." The pass law, formally known as the Native Act of 1952, required African men to carry with them "reference books" that condensed various government papers and identification documents into one book. The purpose of this was to keep track of African men and to control which parts of South Africa they were allowed to work, live, and travel through. This would severely restrict the freedom and social mobility of Africans in South Africa. The government then announced that the law would apply to African women in the coming years. The initial reaction from the women was that of shock and anger.[15]

11 Harman, Mike. "Aba Women's War of 1929." Libcom.org. March 8, 2017.
12 Bernhardt, Arielle. "Igbo Women Campaign for Rights (The Women's War) in Nigeria, 1929." Global Nonviolent Action Database. September 04, 2010.
13 Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Sharpeville Massacre." Encyclopædia Britannica. 2019.
14 "A History of Apartheid in South Africa." South African History Online, May 6, 2016.
15 Schmidt, Elizabeth. "'Now You Have Touched The Women': African Women's Resistance to the Pass Laws in South Africa 1950-1960." United Nations, March 1983.

It is important to note that many Africans had formed political organizations like the African National Congress (ANC) and the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) early in the 1900's to voice their concerns about colonialism and to mobilize politically. Although women did not have political privileges, they were instrumental to the organizations. The women in these organizations coordinated protests and demonstrations to resist the pass law. In 1954, the Federation of South African Women (FSAW) was formed. The Federation advocated for better conditions for women, better wages and employment, equal rights, education for girls, and to end the pass law, among many other issues.[16] The ANC Women's League and the FSAW worked to organize protests in the mid-1950's to resist the pass law and other sexist laws. In 1956, thousands of women marched on Pretoria, South Africa, to protest the government and voice their concerns. The government ignored the protests, but these protests remained a significant achievement as the ANCWL and the FSAW had coordinated such a massive effort to show the government that women could be politically engaged.[17] Protests and demonstrations continued throughout the rest of the decade to resist pass laws and Apartheid. In 1960, at Sharpeville, the protests turned bloody. On March 21st, 1960, hundreds of PAC members assembled outside the Sharpeville police station to turn themselves in for not having reference books. For hours, the police and protesters stood off. The protestors acted in a non-violent manor, singing and chanting, until one officer had stumbled, and the crowd had shifted. Officers claim that they were being stoned by the protestors and an officer opened fire with live ammunition. The rest of the police officers followed suit and fired into the crowd, killing 69 and injuring hundreds more as they tried to flee the scene.[18] After the massacre reached global headlines, the South African government decided to ban certain political parties like the ANC and the PAC who they believed were contributing to civil unrest. While the fight to end apartheid and the pass laws do not end here, it marks a critical point of suppression that would not end until the 1990's.[19]

There are countless other examples of women resisting colonialism and other unfair practices in society across Africa. While the decolonialization of Africa did help, women in Africa still face many challenges today. It is the job of the African Union and the Pan-African Parliament to rectify the scars that colonialism left on Africa and create a better Africa for future generations.

Contemporary Conditions

The 21st century has brought Africa limitless opportunities, extraordinary development, and new challenges. This section examines some of the issues that women in Africa face in the current day.

Harmful Cultural Practices

Cultural practices like Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and child marriage are considered very harmful to women and society. These practices have been in place for centuries and violate human rights laws,

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[16] "History of Women's Struggle in South Africa." South African History Online, March 21, 2011.
[17] "The 1956 Women's March, Pretoria, 9 August." South African History Online, March 31, 2011.

[18] "Sharpeville Massacre, 21 March 1960." South African History Online, March 31, 2011.
[19] Schmidt, Elizabeth. "'Now You Have Touched The Women': African Women's Resistance to the Pass Laws in South Africa 1950-1960." United Nations, March 1983.

the autonomy of women, and are detrimental to their health.[20]

FGM is defined by the World Health Organization as "all procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons."[21] Over 200 million women have experienced some form of FGM in their lifetime, and several millions more are at risk of FGM.[22] While the definitive origin of FGM is unknown, it is a cruel cultural practice with no benefits. It is used as a system of violence and control that seriously harms women. Currently, FGM is practiced in over 30 African countries.[23] While some states have taken to criminalizing FGM, support for FGM remains high in practicing countries. Action must be taken to ensure that the African people reject FGM as a cultural practice. It is the job of the member states of the Pan-African Parliament to enact policies that condemn such barbaric practices.

Another harmful cultural practice is child marriage. It is defined as "a marriage of a girl or boy before the age of 18 and refers to both formal marriages and informal unions in which children under the age of 18 live with a partner as if married."[24] Over 720 million children have been forced into marriage across the world and this number increases by 15 million children a year.[25] Forcing children to marry a partner, usually significantly older, is a human rights violation and should not be tolerated. Child marriage often leads to violence and abuse in many cases. It also restricts work opportunities and personal autonomy.[26] Africa struggles with child marriages. West

Africa has the highest rates of child marriage with over 42% of children reported to have entered a union with an adult before they were 18 years old.[27] Child marriage rates have been on the decline but remain extremely high in some countries. For instance, Niger has reported 76% of children married by age 18 in 2015. [28] Countries with a high rate of child marriage show that such a practice is a strong cultural norm that will take significant effort to uproot. Many member states have taken action to ban the practice, but more support is needed from the Pan-African Parliament.

These are some of the most prevalent and most harmful cultural practices that affect women today. Both harm the emotional and physical health of women and severely restrict freedom, choice, and economic opportunity. Enforcing stricter bans, providing services that allow women to escape dangerous family situations, and community outreach are all effective ways of combatting these negative cultural practices. They should be further adopted and strengthened by the Pan-African Parliament.

Terrorism and Violence Against Women

Africa, like many other places, has historically struggled with violence against women. This section will discuss two persistent forms of violence: organized violence, or violence committed by a group of people, and domestic violence, or violence among intimate partners and families.

Organized violence against women takes many forms in Africa. Perhaps the

[20] "Harmful Practices." UNICEF, 2019.
[21] "Female Genital Mutilation Facts." World Health Organization. World Health Organization, January 31, 2018.
[22] "Female Genital Mutilation Facts." World Health Organization. World Health Organization, January 31, 2018.
[23] "Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)." World Health Organization. World Health Organization, June 1, 2016

[24] "Child Marriage." UNICEF South Asia, 2019.
[25] "Ending Child Marriage in Africa." Girls Not Brides, 2015.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Makori, Daniel. "The Current State of Child Marriage in Africa." The Borgen Project. 2019
[28] "Ending Child Marriage in Africa." Girls Not Brides, 2015.

most notable examples come from terrorist organizations like Boko Haram and the Lord's Resistance Army, which kidnap girls and women to force them into sexual slavery. For example, the Islamic terrorist organization Boko Haram kidnapped 276 girls from a boarding school in northern Nigeria in 2014. Only a fraction of the girls ever returned home. Many fear that the girls were sold into slavery, never to be seen again.[29] Instances like this are extreme but highlight a systematic problem in Africa where abuse is common. The Pan-African Parliament must condemn such groups. Not only do they pose a significant harm to women and children, but they are detrimental to the security of Africa.

Member states take a serious approach to terror organizations like Boko Haram but can lack the resources to conduct long operations to stop terrorism.[30] This is why the member states should take multilateral action to stop terrorists like Boko Haram who harm women and security.

Violence also occurs domestically. Millions of women have been affected by sexual violence at least once in their life.[31] Violence in the home leads to a cycle of abuse that has serious intergenerational harms that are hard to break.[32] Such practices are hard to remedy and to stop once it becomes a social norm. These norms violate the freedom of women and their personal security. The Pan-African Parliament must ensure that the proper education systems are in place to try and stop these damaging cultural norms.

Violence against women must be strongly rejected in Africa. The member states of the Pan-African Parliament must cooperate to ensure that individual liberties and rights are protected and that citizens can be free from violence and persecution. This is essential for a better Africa for all people.

Issues of Labor

Women often contribute the most to the economy but are frequently disenfranchised. For instance, in countries like Zimbabwe women make up over 50% of the work force. Furthermore, in Sub-Saharan Africa, women are more likely to participate in informal economies relative to men.[33] This participation in informal economies can be problematic because there is potential for exploitation and unfair labor conditions. The informal economy is not regulated so governments cannot step in to stop unfair labor conditions.

Besides participating in informal economies, many women are care providers for children and stay at home to tend to chores. While this labor does not contribute to metrics like Gross Domestic Product, it is estimated that it would boost the GDPs of certain countries by over 30%.[34] The unfortunate downside to women staying at home is that they miss out on educational opportunities and lack the skills to specialize in a profession. Furthermore, cultural norms may prevent women from being educated or force them to stay at home rather than seek jobs. These norms prevent the economic mobility of women and restrict personal liberty. The Pan-African Parliament must take actions to ensure that these norms are

[29] "Boko Haram Fast Facts." CNN. Cable News Network, September 8, 2019.
[30] Felbab-Brown, Vanda. "Nigeria's Troubling Counterinsurgency Strategy Against Boko Haram." Foreign Affairs, March 30, 2018.
[31] "Facts and Figures: Ending Violence against Women." UN Women, 2018.
[32] Black, David, Steve Sussman and Jennifer B. Unger. "A Further Look at the Intergenerational Transmission of Violence:

Witnessing Interparental Violence in Emerging Adulthood." Journal of Interpersonal Violence, June 2010, 25(6): 1022-1042.
[33] Dahir, Abdi Latif. "The Highest Share of Women in the Workforce Globally Are Found in These African Countries." Quartz Africa. Quartz, March 14, 2017.
[34] "Facts and Figures: Economic Empowerment." UN Women, June 2018.

erased and that women have an equal opportunity to join the work force.

Women are most likely to work in agriculture, apparel manufacturing, mining, and mobile telecommunications.[35] In these industries discrimination abounds, and women are usually paid less than their male counterparts. Furthermore, unsafe labor conditions make working dangerous for all and is detrimental for economic productivity. While several countries have signed labor agreements and have committed to encouraging safer workplaces, many remain unsafe. For instance, in the mining industry, there are several reports of overworking, unsafe workplaces, child labor and low wages.[36]

One significant barrier for women in the workforce is education. In Sub-Saharan Africa, over 30 million children are not in school, 56% of whom are girls.[37] The lack of opportunities for some girls cannot be ignored. For example, in Somalia, only 2% of school-age girls attend secondary school.[38] If women do not have access to educational opportunities, then they have trouble finding higher paying jobs. This means that they have less economic mobility and freedom. Factors like violence against women and cultural norms that discourage the education of girls are harmful and must be addressed. Furthermore, measures to ensure that girls are safe while learning are paramount. Refer back to the Boko Haram example mentioned earlier. Terrorists threaten the quality of education that girls receive and are the most extreme form of violence used to deter girls from getting an education. Education would allow women to break into higher paying jobs, increasing their freedom and economic standing. The Pan-African Parliament must adopt policies that encourage education and increase the security of the member states to ensure that terrorist organizations do not discourage girls from getting an education and empowering themselves.

Past United Nations and International Actions

The United Nations and the Pan-African Parliament have remained committed to increasing the liberties of people across the world and Africa since their inceptions. For instance, the United Nations adopted the "Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women" (CEDAW) in 1979 to establish an intolerance for gender discrimination. Over 100 countries have ratified the treaty. The treaty focuses on the rights of women and emphasizes liberties like reproductive rights.[39] The United Nations has continually focused on emphasizing human rights and the Pan-African Parliament has followed. For example, the Pan-African Parliament has ratified several treaties and action plans like one to end FGM in Africa,[40] the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, also known at the Maputo Protocol,[41] and the G7 has also increased their commitment to educating girls and empowering women.[42]

Furthermore, organizations like UNICEF have called for the implementation of plans that would further the cause of

[35] Chichester et al. "Women's Economic Empowerment in Sub-Saharan Africa." bsr.org. Business for Social Responsibility, 2017.
[36] "Labor & Community." Brilliant Earth, 2019.
[37] "Millions of Girls Remain out of School | Africa Renewal." United Nations. United Nations, April 2015.
[38] "Girls and Women - Africa Educational Trust." Africa Educational Trust RSS, 2015.

[39] "Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women." OHCHR, 1979.
[40] "Pan African Parliament Signs Action Plan." FIGO, August 8, 2016.
[41] "About the Protocol." Maputo Protocol, 2011.
[42] "Declaration on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment." G7 France, May 2019.

ending FGM and child marriage.43 The support that the international community brings to these efforts gives more legitimacy to the causes and gives momentum to the fight for equal rights and the end of harmful cultural practices. The World Health Organization (WHO) has also been critical in the fight to end FGM. Recall that FGM has no medical benefit and the WHO has been a strong advocate in making this known. The WHO has been fighting FGM since 1997 and with the support of the UN General Assembly, passed a resolution in 2012 that called for the total end of FGM.44 The WHO continues to do important work in Africa to end FGM.

These resolutions show that these international groups have committed to standing up for women's rights and opportunities. The Maputo protocol has been ratified in several African states and it calls for the elimination of FGM and child

marriage, increased reproductive rights, and an end to discrimination and violence against women.45 This is the most committed that the Pan-African Parliament has been to supporting women's rights thus far. More steps need to be taken to address harmful cultural practices that objectify women as sexual objects to be married off, without control of their own bodies and choices, as well as those that normalize violence against women. Progress hinges on women and they must be better included and accepted in larger society. If the Pan-African Parliament is to guide Africa to a better future, everyone must be included. Women and other gender minorities must be protected and granted an equal footing to stand on. Economic and social growth can only happen when everyone is treated fairly and is the foundation for a brighter future.

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43 "Harmful Practices." UNICEF, 2019.
44 "Female Genital Mutilation." World Health Organization. World Health Organization, January 31, 2018.

45 "About the Protocol." Maputo Protocol, 2011.

Questions a Resolution Must Address

1. What role does the Pan-African Parliament play in increasing women's rights?

What are some other measures that states have used to increase personal liberty in the past? Could those be applicable?

2. What can the PAP do to address the historical oppression of women during the colonial era?

Think of how colonialism disrupted social orders in Africa. Can Africa ever return to those social orders? What can the PAP do to make society more equitable for women?

3. What kind of programs should the PAP sponsor to foster economic opportunities for women?

Think of programs that have been successful in the past and how they have been implemented. Are there any other creative solutions to these problems? Think of other countries that have implemented social welfare programs. How are these programs funded?

4. What can the members states of the PAP do internally to promote women's rights?

This question ties into question 1. Think about what rights are and how they are guaranteed. Does the PAP have a duty to defend right? If so, how?

5. If the PAP were to adopt a new declaration on the rights of women, what clauses and proposals should be included?

Draw inspiration from previous UN actions and declarations. Has the AU done anything similar? What are the strengths and weaknesses of these declarations? How can they be improved to deal with modern issues?

6. How can the member states cooperate to combat against cultural practices like FGM and child marriage that harm women?

Specifically, what policies can states enact to stop these harmful cultural practices? Would these new policies be popular?

7. What can the PAP do to address groups like Boko Haram that target women?

Consider what authority or powers the PAP has. What bilateral actions can be taken to address these groups? Think of non-military solutions to the problem as well.

8. How should the PAP combat unfair wages and unsafe labor conditions for women in Africa?

What do the labor laws look like Africa? How could they be improved? Consider the laws in other countries and what it means to be "paid fairly."

Bloc Positions

The Pan-African Parliament's, leadership is known as the *Bureau*, and is composed of the President and the four Vice-Presidents, each representing a different region of Africa.

- *Central Africa*

    Roger Nkodo Dang of Cameroon, President of the PAP, is the head of the Central Africa bloc. FGM is one of the biggest issues in this region and some of the states in this region have the highest rates of FGM in the world. Countries in this region include Cameroon, The Central African Republic, Chad, and others.

- *East Africa*

    Stephen Julius Masele of Tanzania is the First-Vice President of the PAP and is the head of the Eastern African Bloc. Issues this bloc faces are violence against women and some new countries like South Sudan are increasingly unstable. Countries in this bloc include Ethiopia, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Uganda, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, and others

- *West Africa*

    Haidara Aichata Cisse of Mali, Second-Vice President of the PAP is the head of the Western African Bloc and the only female in the *Bureau*. Issues that affect the bloc are terrorism that targets women, FGM and unsafe labor conditions in the mining industry. Counties in this region are Senegal, Mali, Nigeria, Benin, Sierra Leone, Ghana, and others.

- *North Africa*

    Bouras Djamel of Algeria is the Third-Vice President of the PAP and is the leader of the North Africa Bloc. North Africa has some of the lowest rates of female employment and must combat economic inequality. Countries in this region are Egypt, Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, and others.

- *South Africa*

    Chief F.Z. Charumbira of Zimbabwe is the Fourth-Vice President of the PAP and is the head of the South African Bloc. Issues that are important to the South African Bloc are gender income inequality and domestic violence between partners. Countries in this bloc include Angola, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Lesotho, and others.

Conclusion

The struggle for equality and rights for women in Africa has been an ongoing one. The Pan-African Parliament stands in firm affirmation to the work that has made to lift women up in society and continues to make progress.

The ideas and norms of gender and equality from pre-colonial Africa were disrupted by the forces of imperialism and control. The legacy of colonialism impacts the structures of African society and the roles that women occupy today. Recall that before colonialism, women had certain social and economic freedoms that were discouraged under colonial rule. Even during colonialism, brave women and men fought for equability and established large social movements for change. The Pan-African Parliament must honor the sacrifices made by those who resisted injustice and stood up to their oppressors.

While the past cannot be changed, the future can. The Pan-African Parliament must address the legacy of colonialism and the impact that it had on social structures. It has started by passing measures to fuel economic growth and assert the rights of women, but more can be done. While a plan like the Maputo Protocol is an excellent first step, there is always more action taken. For instance, The Pan-African Parliament must come up with better solutions to end FGM and child marriage and must take an active role in the fight against harmful cultural practices.

Harmful cultural practices will only stop when African society as a whole rejects them for what they are. These practices are repressive and cruel. FGM has no medical benefit and can often inflict trauma, serious injury, and even death. Child marriage restricts autonomy of the individual and promotes a cycle of abuse and domestic violence. Women and girls are seen as objects who have no say in their decisions or future, and this is especially damaging in regard to cultural perception. Furthermore, child marriage decreases economic productivity and makes it hard for women and girls to have greater economic mobility.

In addition to ending harmful cultural practices, the Pan-African Parliament must be able to effectively create new policies that encourage the economic mobility of women. Policies have been passed that promote increased education for young girls and keeping them in school and the UN and Pan-African Parliament have adopted numerous policies that argue for fair wages. However, more must be done to keep girls in school safe. Recall that terrorist organizations like Boko Haram work to actively remove girls from school and endanger their lives. Increased security from the member states is necessary to promote education. Moreover, action must be taken to increase the economic rights of women that allow them fair wages. This discourages women from engaging in unsafe jobs where they are more likely to be exploited.

In order for the Pan-African Parliament to build a better Africa, the member states must adopt the policies that the Pan-African Parliament passes. The member states are instrumental to the organization and good governance on the part of the Pan-African Parliament and the African Union requires cooperation and a willingness to make Africa a better place for all.

Introduction

Transportation infrastructure is critical for the movement of people and goods. A thriving economy depends on efficient infrastructure to ensure that people and goods get from one point to another. It is the duty of the Pan-African Parliament to ensure that Africa's infrastructure continues to develop. Economic prosperity can only be achieved when the infrastructure that supports it is in the best condition. The Pan-African Parliament must grapple with the transportation networks left behind by colonial powers and must modernize for the future. Furthermore, the Pan-African Parliament must work closely with transportation companies to increase transportation access across Africa in ways that are good for the environment and that promote robust job development. They must also work closely with the leaders of Urban centers to increase access to accessible and efficient public transportation. Finally, the Pan-African Parliament must examine the role of Africa in the global economy and must structure transportation infrastructure to facilitate trade and other kinds of economic activity. Africa must work together as a whole to reap the benefits that come with a connected continent where all have equal access to transportation that is efficient and environmentally friendly. Such connectivity fosters unity, peace, and economic growth.

Historical Background

Africa is a vast continent covering several million square miles.[46] There has always been a need to navigate the continent through various terrains and environments. Humans have been mobile since the beginning of time and have used methods other than walking to traverse the African continent.

A popular transportation method in pre-Colonial times were animals. For instance, pack animals like donkeys, camels, and oxen were used to go long distances. Combined with innovations like the wheel and carts, goods could be transported over long distances.[47] These innovations were critical to creating long-distance trade networks that connected the interior of Africa to the coasts and allowed Africa to access the Middle East. These routes were vital to trade items like gold, salt, and other precious commodities.[48] These trade routes propped up the economies of ancient African civilizations and would go on to set the foundation for future trade routes that remain vital to the African economy. While these trade routes existed, there was not yet adequate road coverage that could facilitate the transportation of mass amounts of individuals and goods.[49] The sheer size of the continent paired with various impassible terrains made traversing Africa difficult.

46 Steel, Robert et al. "Africa." Encyclopædia Britannica. Encyclopædia Britannica, inc., November 7, 2019.
47 Gardiner, Robert K.A., and Audrey Smedley. "Africa: Transportation." Encyclopædia Britannica. Encyclopædia Britannica, inc., November 7, 2019.

48 Department of the Arts of Africa, Oceania, and the Americas. "The Trans-Saharan Gold Trade (7th–14th Century Century)." In Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000–.
49 Ibid.

The development of transportation infrastructure remained limited until the colonial era. The first wave of expansion is when colonizers and slave traders expanded and improved ports in Africa. Ports in north Africa have been active trading hubs since the ancient era when civilizations like Rome utilized them for trade. In the 1400's, the Portuguese started sailing down the southern coast of Africa to map the unknown territory and began developing ports along the western coast of Africa. As more European counties started exploring and colonizing Africa, they began to export commodities like ivory, gold, and other precious metals. Slaves were also a significant export for western Africa and European powers expanded river transport systems to better access the interior of Africa and enslave more Africans.[50] The development of infrastructure like seaports was important for trade, but should not have come at the cost of enslaving Africans.

Further expansion of transportation systems, with an emphasis on access to the interior, came after the Berlin Conference in 1884 when European powers formally decided to divide Africa amongst themselves. Brutal colonial rule would follow for the next several decades,[51] throwing Africa into turmoil and leaving local governments to rebuild after decolonization.[52] Yet, colonization did bring innovations like the railroad and automobiles Africa, though not with the interests of Africans in mind.[53]

The first railroads were constructed in Africa towards the end of the 1800s and continued to develop by the end of the 1960s, when decolonization began. The railways were utilized to access the interior and the resources there. Minerals were highly sought after and the railroads connected the mines to the coasts. Railroads were also used to transport soldiers and other war equipment used by colonial powers to enforce their rule on the colonies and in skirmishes with other colonial powers. The introduction of the railroad led to a quicker response time to conflicts and faster mobilization times. The railroads were critical for the colonial powers to keep their grasp on the colonies.[54]

Figure 1: Development of Railroad in Kenya[55]
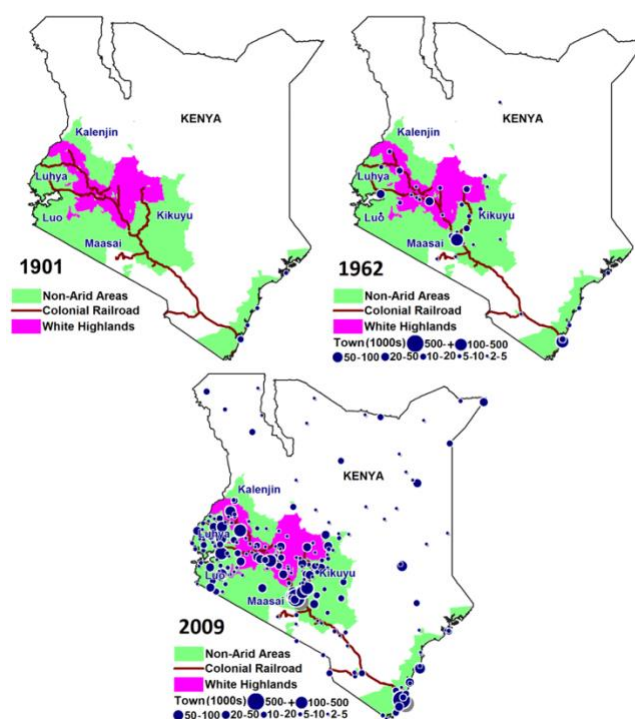
While the railroads may have benefited colonial powers, they were the product of grueling labor and their construction faced much resistance. For instance, the construction of the Ugandan railroad was sponsored by the British, who

50 Silva, Filipa Ribeiro da. "The Slave Trade and the Development of the Atlantic Africa Port System, 1400s–1800s - Filipa Ribeiro Da Silva, 2017." SAGE Journals, February 7, 2017.
51 "The Berlin Conference." South African History Online.
52 "Decolonization of Asia and Africa, 1945-1960." Office of the Historian. U.S. Department of State.

53 "The Story of Africa| BBC World Service." BBC News. BBC.
54 Ibid.
55 Jedwab, Remi, Edward Kerby and Alexander Moradi, "How Colonial Railroads Defined Africa's Economic Geography." African Economic History Network, May 9, 2016.

exploited workers from India for their cheap labor to construct the rail network. The British has a difficult time recruiting workers from the local population who refused to work on the railroads and actively tried to sabotage the progress made on railroad construction.[56] Despite their efforts, the colonial railroads prevailed and were utilized to cement the rule of the colonizers.

The railroads would be expanded until the 1960s, yet there was never full connectivity for the continent. The railways mainly stretched into the interior and the coast for each power to use separately, making it difficult to connect different systems together.[57] Furthermore, many of the new governments could not afford the upkeep costs of the railroads so they fell into disuse.[58] Despite this period of disuse, the original colonial railways heavily influenced the modern development of urban Africa. For instance, in Figure 1, the development of Kenya was influenced by the colonial railway, as it is a vital means to connect the southern part of the country. Moreover, the railroad fosters economic connections that make settlement and population centers along it more likely.[59]

Besides railroads, automobiles and aircraft have been revolutionary methods of transportation in Africa. Automobiles appeared in the form of small passenger cars for the wealthy in the early 1900s. By the 1920s they were used to transport goods and people, and were more versatile than railroads. At this point Africa still lacked paved roads to support massive numbers of automobiles. Airplanes were introduced around the time of World War I and were primarily used for combat operations and by colonial powers as air support for skirmishes with other powers and efforts to stop indigenous revolts. Later, they became a way to transport goods like mail and dramatically cut transport times.[60]

In more recent times, road networks have become the dominant means of transportation.[61] Automobiles have become cheaper and more efficient and can sufficiently transport goods and people over large amounts of space. Roads are also cheaper to construct and are more accessible by commuters. Air travel has also gotten cheaper, faster, and therefore more popular.

Contemporary Conditions
State of the Transport Sector

Africa currently suffers from poor quality and expensive infrastructure services relative to other parts of the globe. It is estimated that this harms productivity by up to 40 percent and reduces the continent's GDP by about 2 percent per year.[62]

It is critical that the Pan-African Parliament supports the development of transportation infrastructure, especially with the imminent enforcement of the African Continental Free Trade Area, which will become the largest single market in the world for goods and services, as well as the free movement of investments and people. Supporting its development will create jobs and strengthen the economy of Africa as a whole.[63] Yet, the current state of infrastructure is inadequate to meet the demands of Africa's rapidly growing economy.

[56] "Resistance and Rebellions (Africa)." New Articles RSS.
[57] Ibid.
[58] Ibid.
[59] Ibid.
[60] Ibid.

[61] "Africa Review Report on Transport: A Summary." Economic Commission for Africa. United Nations Economic and Social Council. September 29, 2009.
[62] Mofor, Linus. "Africa Has a $100 Billion Infrastructure Problem. What's Missing?" Brink, March 20, 2019.
[63] Mofor, Linus. "Africa Has a $100 Billion Infrastructure Problem. What's Missing?" Brink, March 20, 2019.

Compared to its size, the road network of Sub-Saharan Africa is sparse compared to the networks of other developing regions. That being said, once it is contrasted with the region's population and income—and its ability to pay for maintenance—road density begins to look rather high. The World Bank reports that in several countries (Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Niger), "the asset value of the road network exceeds 30 percent of gross domestic product (GDP), an indication of the magnitude of the maintenance problem." Despite the considerable value of these roads, their quality lags behind that of other developing regions. However, the World Bank also reports that "the network of main trunk roads has been maintained in reasonably good condition."[64] Furthermore, the region's main roads include several vital corridors linking ports to the interior, carrying about $200 billion worth of goods every year. While the roads are in an acceptable condition, bottlenecks at borders and ports can dramatically slow traffic. The proposed Trans-African Highway has been suggested as a key means to connect the continent, but missing links and maintenance issues have made it more of a dream than a reality.[65]

Another major form of transportation, maritime shipping, is essential to the economy of Africa, with over 90% of the continent's imports and exports transported by sea. Sea trade is critical for Africa to be connected to the greater global economy and its ports must be secure and well-maintained to accommodate the volume of products it ships and receives. Moreover, in its Integrated Maritime Strategy paper, the African Union called the shipping industry "a new frontier for the continent's renaissance."[66] Despite this, a small percentage of global trade comes from activity in Africa due to problems at its ports ranging from limited capacity to poor security and corruption. That being said, estimates suggest that just a 25% improvement in port performance could increase GDP by 2%.[67] It is critical that the Pan-African Parliament work together with coastal counties to ensure that the world can trade with Africa. The only way economic growth can continue is if Africa has the proper infrastructure to support its lofty trade endeavors.

In addition to maritime transportation and roadways, the railway network in Africa is another major form of transportation, but struggles from an insufficient density of access. However, there are many positive signs despite this situation: railways are going through a revival across the world, as evidenced by the large number of major, pivotal projects either being planned or underway. Africa is part of this revitalization of railways and has much to gain from the undeniable advantages railway technology can offer. The historical precedent for Africa's railways is there. The Pan-African Parliament must act swiftly to ensure that projects that improve railways and connect the continent are being prioritized. Railways are still one of the most attractive option in terms of value for money. This is even more true if governments decide to subsidize transportation based on environmental costs, along with other societal costs.[68]

Africa's economy is negatively affected by the lack of solid infrastructure.

[64] Gwilliam, Ken, Et Al. "AFRICA INFRASTRUCTURE COUNTRY DIAGNOSTIC Roads in Sub-Saharan Africa." World Bank, June 2008.
[65] Ibid.

[66] Kingsland, Patrick. "Expansion at These African Ports Could Boost Its Maritime Industry." Ship Technology, July 2, 2018.
[67] Ibid.
[68] "A NEW LEASE OF LIFE FOR AFRICAN RAIL Destination 2040." International Union of Railways, February 2014.

Yet, this hole in infrastructure quality leaves a large amount of room for improvement. Investors have addressed this in recent years and hope to improve the current state of roads, ports, and railways across the continent. The Pan-African Parliament should be committed to improving the infrastructure and connectivity of the continent as a whole.

Pollution as a result of Transportation

Africa has the fastest population growth of any continent,[69] which has occurred alongside rapid urbanization and increased transportation needs. Because of these demographic changes, transport emissions are a growing concern and are only made worse by the quality of current infrastructure.[70] Transport-related emissions also result in pollution that takes a heavy toll on the health of Africans. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that outdoor air pollution claims approximately 176,000 deaths every year in Africa.[71]

To address gaps in both knowledge and collaborative action to address air pollution, there is a need to develop a systematic assessment and approach to guide governments, key municipal stakeholders, and policymakers on the most effective ways to collect, store and analyses data, and map air pollution levels within cities.

Transportation in Cities

Minibuses and motorcycle taxis remain an important form of transportation in cities, though the sector is mostly informal and thus unregulated and untaxed. The service is also often quite expensive, with some estimates suggesting that users of these services ultimately spend as much as 30% of their income on their daily commutes to work.[72]

Finally, due to a lack of robust public transportation, walking and cycling remain the most common method of transportation for urbanites. However, city infrastructure has not been built to accommodate pedestrian and cycling traffic, making safety a concern.[73]

The Pan-African Parliament must adopt policies that ensure that urban Africans can get around cities safely, effectively, and at a low cost. They must also support efforts to better connect rural Africans and encourage economic development.

Past United Nations and International Actions

While transportation infrastructure may seem like an overlooked responsibility by the United Nations and African Union, it is an integral part of Africa's economy. The Pan-African Parliament has remained committed to improving the current transportation infrastructure around Africa and seeks to implement new and innovative solutions to problems that still occur.

The first attempt by international organizations to promote a connected Africa was the Trans-African Highway. It was conceived in 1971 by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) with the goal of better connecting the continent.[74] It would also lower the cost of

[69] "Population." United Nations.
[70] "Cleaning up the Transport Sector in African Cities." African Development Bank Group, COP24 Africa In Action, 2018.
[71] Ibid.
[72] "Trans-Africa – Efforts to Improve Public Transport in Africa." SmartCitiesDive. Trans-Africa, 2017.

[73] Ibid.
[74] "The Trans-African Highway Network Will Connect the Continent, but What Role Will China Play?" UNECA, August 26, 2018.

ground shipping and encourage trade. While there have been grand visions for this project, progress towards an efficient and connected highway has been slow. UNECA cites reasons like lack of funding from certain countries, armed conflict, and different construction standards as to why construction has been slow.[75] Member states should recognize the potential good a project like the Trans-African Highway can do for the continent. Furthermore, The Pan-African Parliament should encourage member states to allocate more funds to invest in a project that will truly benefit all Africans.

Figure 2: Proposed Trans-African Highway[76]

Besides focusing on roads, there has been a push by the international community to revive African rail networks. Part of

Agenda 2063, a multi-decade plan to improve every aspect of life in Africa sponsored by the African Union, is to create a connected Africa with the best infrastructure possible. One way to improve connectivity is to create a high-speed rail line that connects all countries and major cities in Africa.[77]

The project is very ambitious and very expensive. It would cost billions and over 12,000 km of new tracks would need to be added to connect Africa.[78] However, the Pan-African Parliament must take the necessary steps to ensure that a connected Africa becomes a reality and that the goals of Agenda 2063 are met. The biggest obstacle that the project faces is corruption. The Pan-African Parliament must pass the necessary legislation to guarantee that corruption will not stop the project's progress.

While many of these solutions and plans seem achievable, they can only materialize with adequate funding. One way that the African Union funds development projects is through the Program for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA). PIDA is a collaborative effort by the African Union, the African Development Bank and other organizations to promote infrastructure projects that aim to connect the continent. It aims to better integrate Africa into the world economy and hopes that the interconnectivity of Africa increases trade and other economic activities.[79]

However, funding for Agenda 2063 and PIDA will be very expensive and experts estimate that in order for Africa to improve its infrastructure, over $50 billion

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[75] "Trans-African Highway: Roads and Railways to Make Cargo Move." Trans-African Highway: Nine New Highways Under Construction - Salini Impregilo Digital Magazine. WeBuildValue, November 8, 2017.
[76] Ibid.
[77] "Infrastructure & Energy Development." African Union, November 18, 2018.

[78] "African Union: High-Speed Rail Network on Track." Voice of America, April 11, 2019.
[79] "Program Infrastructure Development for Africa (PIDA)." Program Infrastructure Development for Africa (PIDA) | African Union, 2012.

must be spent yearly to meet the goals of PIDA and Agenda 2063 in a timely manner. Despite the high cost, experts predict that up to 70% of infrastructure costs could be self-financed if member states of the African Union impose different taxes and subsidies to the project.[80] Many may dislike the idea of new taxes, but the investment may be worth it in the long run if Africa can become a bigger player in the world economy.

While domestic financing is an option, China has recently stepped in and offered aid to Africa to help with the costs of upgrading its transportation infrastructure. Chinese banks have offered several billions of dollars in loans to African projects and have assisted with over 200 different project that increase the amount of connectivity in the continent. This is part of China's belt and road initiative, one that seeks to increase China's land and sea connections with Europe, Africa and other mainland Asian countries.[81] Chinese assistance can be very beneficial for Africa, yet the Pan-African Parliament must be vigilant when dealing with China. Colonialism is still fresh in the hearts and minds of many Africans and they would not take well to a large power like China practicing a form of neocolonialism. It is the duty of the Pan-African Parliament to foster better relations with China yet stand firm in the face of China possibly overstepping its boundaries.

[80] "FINANCING AFRICA'S INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT." Office of the Special Advisor on Africa, 2015.

[81] Edinger, Hannah, and Jean-Pierre Labuschagne. "If You Want to Prosper, Consider Building Roads." Deloitte Insights. Deloitte, March 22, 2019.

Questions a Resolution Must Address

1. What roll does the Pan-African Parliament have in improving transportation in Africa?

To what extent can the PAP support infrastructure project and what are the responsibilities of individual countries to addressing transportation problems?

2. How can the PAP increase access to transportation in areas that do not have accessible transportation networks?

How can the PAP increase connectivity to rural regions and what kind of transport should be available that would be most effective to implement?

3. What can the PAP do to address pollution created by transportation infrastructure?

What kind of environmental regulations should the PAP enforce? Consider the different environments and climates of different member states.

4. What programs can the PAP sponsor to create jobs that improve the current transportation networks across Africa?

How would these jobs affect local economies? What kind of skills would the workers need and where would member states or the PAP get the funds to support these projects?

5. What can member states do internally to foster connectivity across their countries and Africa as a whole?

What have member states done in the past to increase their internal transportation infrastructure and how can this benefit Africa as a whole?

6. What are some methods that member states and the Pan-African Parliament can use to raise capital for infrastructure projects?

Member states and the PAP can use several methods to reallocate funds to these project and what kind of organizations or partnerships can be made to ensure that the development projects are properly funded?

7. What can the PAP do to encourage urban Africans to support formal public transport?

Currently, many taxis and motorbikes operate in informal ways and lots of tax revenue and consumer protections are missed out on. What can governments due to encourage taxi operators to participate in the formal economy?

8. Which kinds of transportation methods should the PAP prioritize?

Which method of transportation would be the most effective at moving people, which one would work best for goods? If the PAP can only fund one project at a time, what are some of the costs and benefits for the major methods of transport?

Bloc Positions

The Pan-African Parliament's, leadership is known as the *Bureau*, and is composed of the President and the four Vice-Presidents, each representing a different region of Africa.

- *Central Africa*

    Roger Nkodo Dang of Cameroon, President of the PAP, is the head of the Central Africa bloc. Central Africa is a largely landlocked region and relies on railways, roads, and air transportation to get their goods to the world. Central Africa countries should lead the charge to creating a more connected Africa that allows the interior better access to the coasts. Countries in this region include Cameroon, The Central African Republic, Chad, and others.

- *East Africa*

    Stephen Julius Masele of Tanzania is the First-Vice President of the PAP and is the head of the Eastern African Bloc. Seaports are very important for this bloc as they have access to the Indian ocean and Middle Eastern Countries. This region has an interest in expanding their seaports to be able to trade more efficiently with Asia. Countries in this bloc include Ethiopia, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Uganda, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, and others

- *West Africa*

    Haidara Aichata Cisse of Mali, Second-Vice President of the PAP is the head of the Western African Bloc. This block is resource rich and countries in this block were among some of the very first to be colonized and seaports were built in them. This bloc of countries is on the Atlantic and has access to trade with North and South America. Counties in this region are Senegal, Mali, Nigeria, Benin, Sierra Leone, Ghana, and others.

- *North Africa*

    Bouras Djamel of Algeria is the Third-Vice President of the PAP and is the leader of the North Africa Bloc. This bloc is in a unique position in relation to Africa and the rest of the world. The seaports of this bloc have access to the Mediterranean and Europe, it is connected via land to the Middle East and is highly urbanized. Furthermore, the Suez Canal is in this bloc and is essential for world trade. Connectivity and efficient public transport are important for this bloc and countries should prioritize these aspects. Countries in this region are Egypt, Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, and others.

- *South Africa*

    Chief F.Z. Charumbira of Zimbabwe is the Fourth-Vice President of the PAP and is the head of the South African Bloc. This bloc is the furthest from other global trade partners and from other counties on the continent. Member states of this bloc advocate for greater connectivity and better infrastructure concerning highways and airports. Countries in this bloc include Angola, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Lesotho, and others.

Conclusion

The only way that Africa can truly realize its economic potential is if it strengthens its transportation infrastructure. It is critical for the economy because workers and trade rely on connected transportation networks daily.

There has always been a need for viable transportation options considering the size of the continent. While technology and innovations have seemingly made the continent smaller, there is much progress to be made.

The legacy of transportation innovations in Africa cannot be ignored. The Pan-African Parliament must reconcile with the facts that European development in the continent was for selfish gains at the expenses of the indigenous populations. Seaports were developed to ship gold and slaves from the interior, disrupting a way of life dating thousands of years. Railroads cut through the natural landscape as a means to export the riches of the interior and keep a strict rule on the colonies. Even after de-colonization, the shadow of the imperial powers remains. Recall how the development of urban centers in many African countries occurs along colonial railways. While the past cannot be changed, the Pan-African Parliament must ensure that future development belongs to Africans and is for Africans.

The Pan-African Parliament must also decide which critical areas of infrastructure must be upgraded and prioritized first. They must balance the development of roads, railways, seaports, and airports to create a diversified range of transportation options for all Africans. Furthermore, they must balance viable methods of public transportation in cities and urban environments to ensure that commuters have the best means of getting around urban environments in a timely manner. It is the duty of the Parliament to decide what kind of public transportation will be available and how it will impact the environment and air quality of Africa's cities.

Transportation infrastructure upgrade are also very expensive and take many years to complete. The Pan-African Parliament must navigate complex waters to secure funding form internal or external means. Internally would be better for African unity and pride, yet some may feel discouraged with higher taxes and fees to subsidize a continental transportation network. Looking externally to an organization like the IMF or World Bank would be ideal, yet the Pan-African Parliament must be prepared to negotiate with a big country like China. One that is continually investing all over the African continent. Corruption and foreign powers overstepping boundaries should not be tolerated by the Pan-African Parliament and should be prepared to reject outsiders who wish to impose a new form of economic neo-imperialism on Africa.

Finally, the Pan-African Parliament must find environmentally friendly transportation solutions that address many concerns like pollution from urban transportation or transportation routes that corrupt the natural environment.

The only path the Pan-African Parliament can take is forward. The member states need to act in unison to create an economically stronger Africa that has a bigger role in the world economy. The only way to accomplish this goal is by improving transportation infrastructure to create an interconnected Africa.

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