

**Working Agenda**  
**9<sup>th</sup> High School Model African Union**  
**The University of Pittsburgh**  
**Wednesday March 25, 2020**

The African Studies Program will host its 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Model African Union (MAU) conference on Wednesday **March 25, 2020** at the **University Club, University of Pittsburgh**. The main activity will be simulation of the African Union Conference where students (known as delegates) will role play delegates to the African Union and simulate AU committees. We are happy to host high schools in our area who have participated in this program over the years and looking to expand the opportunity to new schools interested in participating in this wonderful learning program. Participating students engage in a variety of activities including research, public speaking, debating and coming up with resolutions in partnership with other delegates. If interested, please [register](#) to participate. Registration is open until February 1, 2020. Registration fees per student is \$10.

**About the MAU Program:**

The MAU program is designed to help students learn about Africa by studying the African Union and its inner workings. More specifically, students will learn about countries assigned to them and under the guidance of their teachers, students will study, and research issues facing AU member states and prepare to roleplay delegates to the African Union and simulate African Union committees. It is a great opportunity for students to learn about the African countries assigned to them and the challenges they face as well as opportunities for progress. Through research and group activities, students learn about the African Union member states, and develop a deeper understanding of current events and current issues facing the African countries. On the day of the conference students will gather at the University of Pittsburgh to showcase their debating skills, their knowledge about the issues, their abilities to think critically, and most importantly deliberate and negotiate potential solutions to address the challenges facing the countries they represent.

**Preparation & Research:**

Delegates will be required to do research to become familiar with the African Union generally and their assigned countries more specifically as well as the conference agenda items. This will allow them to assume the role of delegate for their country and represent it to the best of their abilities. The key areas of preparation and research are as follows:

**The African Union (AU):** Students should be aware of the purpose and goals of the African Union, the current climate change issues and Africa's common position on climate change

**General background of country:** students should gain a historical context of their assigned country to better understand policies towards pressing issues. Suggestions for research include: population, type of government, economic activities, and specific country's relationship with the international community

**Agenda Items—Africa, Climate Change and Displacement:** students should research the conference agenda items as they prepare to articulate the views and policies of their respective countries on the issues and what is being done to address the problems. What are the climate change and displacement issues from the perspectives of their assigned countries?

**Views of other countries on climate change & displacement:** Although difficult to research, it is important for students to have basic knowledge of other countries' stances on the agenda issues to inform their debating and resolution writing

**Past African Union actions on climate change and displacement:** Similar topics have been previously discussed and acted upon by the African Union, but the problems persist. By knowing past actions, students may be able to build on them to bring the problems to a resolution. Also, knowledge of the origins of the problems may be beneficial so that a historical prospective can be brought into the debate and help in how to respond to the current crisis of climate change.

### **The Conference Agenda:**

The Heads of State for all African Union members have been called to meet in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, to develop an African Union wide plan of action to address the following agenda items.

#### **1. Climate Change**

Climate change refers to changes in the environment and its properties such as rainfall, and extreme temperatures that persist over an extended period, typically decades or longer. The changes can be caused by natural or human activity. Climate change can also refer to the process in which increases in the volume of gases responsible for trapping heat in the earth's atmosphere leads to an increase in the earth's temperature. Climate change also arises because the concentration of greenhouse gases (GHGs) produced by human activity has increased significantly. Climate change is a pattern of change affecting global or regional climatic conditions, as measured by changes in such factors as average temperature and rainfall, or an alteration in frequency of extreme weather conditions.

Studies suggest that Africa is particularly vulnerable to climate change and variability. This vulnerability has been attributed to the continent's high poverty levels, low adaptive capacity, its dependence on rain-fed agriculture as well as its limited economic and institutional capacity. Research suggests that food production and related livelihoods will

be disproportionately affected by climate change and variability in sub-Saharan Africa. Climate change has even been described as a new security threat for Africa. Climatic projections suggest that prolonged and more intense droughts are likely to cause Africa to become drier. Increasing mean annual temperatures will increase evapo-transpiration losses resulting in a reduction in soil moisture content. It is projected that climate change will reduce net crop revenues by 90% by 2100. This is likely to exacerbate poverty and underdevelopment in many countries and lead to significant migration both within countries and internationally. Other challenges include intensified natural resource degradation, increased flooding, storms, excessive and erratic rainfall, droughts, invasive weeds, pest-and-disease epidemics, infrastructure damage, and increased risk of resource use conflicts, reduced agricultural production and increased food insecurity. While vulnerability to these impacts is differentiated and context-specific, it has the potential to result in significant economic costs that can derail attainment of development goals.

Climate change affects the lives and livelihoods of millions of poor people. In fact, minor changes in precipitation amount, short periods of extreme temperatures, or localized strong winds can harm livelihoods. Climate change further, affects natural assets on which certain livelihoods depend directly, such as rivers, lakes, and fish stocks. During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, water temperatures increased and winds decreased in Lake Tanganyika. Since the late 1970s, a drop in primary production and fish catches, a key protein source, has been observed, and climate change may exceed the effects of overfishing and other human impacts in this area. The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) face dwindling water resources due to less precipitation and rising temperatures combined with mounting water demand due to population and economic growth resulting in rapidly decreasing water availability.

Climate change effects also erode farming livelihoods, through declining crop yields compounded by increased insect attacks, and parasitic weeds and less availability of and access to non-timber forest products, and medicinal plants and biodiversity. Impacts include homes destroyed by flood water and disrupted water and sanitation services. Flooding has adversely affected large cities in Africa in predominantly dense informal settlements due to inadequate drainage, and health infrastructure. Such changes have already led to harvest losses and food shortages, loss of biodiversity, landslides, and soil degradation. The range of pests for humans, plants and animals are increasing and a reduction in the number of cold days and nights is also contributing to a wider range for malaria across the country. Diminishing water sources and decreasing and sometimes erratic rainfalls have also reduced the availability of water.

## **The Issue**

The fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) explicitly shows that the world is warming faster than estimated and that human activity has caused most of that change over the past several decades. It is evident that climate change will continue, at a pace surpassing past and future emissions predictions for heat-trapping gases. The effects of climate change have been widespread and significant, affecting

agriculture, energy, human health, terrestrial and marine ecosystems, water resources, and some industries across the world and especially the African continent.

Climate change will continue to affect people, economies, and the environment differently in different places across the continent. Some African countries have and will confront risks from sea level rise, extreme weather, including stifling heat, intense rains, and powerful storm surges. Others have and will continue to face risks of more challenging conditions for food and agriculture, water, health, fisheries, infrastructure, transportation, and other livelihoods. Africa is the most vulnerable continent to climate variability and change, a situation that is aggravated by the interaction of ‘multiple stresses,’ including high dependence on rain-fed agriculture, widespread poverty and weak adaptive capacity. We know climate change acts as a threat multiplier, tipping difficult situations over the edge or narrowing options for solving problems.

In order to counteract the numerous risks associated with climate change, we ask Member States to develop strategies to address the challenges of climate change at the national, regional and global level. Africa’s climate policy should seek to enhance the adaptive capacities and resilience of Member States with a view to minimizing their vulnerability, pursue a low carbon growth path dictated by principles of the Green Economy, sustainable development, and poverty reduction; and orient governance, knowledge systems, planning, and national regional/international structures to treat climate change as a development imperative. Therefore, Member States must draft regional resolutions that effectively address the challenges associated with climate change risks, disasters and sustainable development.

*The Executive Committee of the African Union calls upon the heads of state of all African Union members to produce regional resolutions combatting climate change on a national, regional and global level. The resolutions should address what steps Member States will take to reduce the effects of climate change on the African continent including but not limited to a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, accountability measures, capacity development, monitoring and reporting.*

## **2. Forced Displacement (refugees and internally displaced persons)**

The term “displaced people” means people who have left or have been forced to leave their home or usual place of residence in order to escape from any form of hardship, persecution, armed conflict, or human rights violations. There are two types of displacement. The first occurs within the same country in which people are forced to leave their usual place of residence and to move to a different one, but within the same country. These people are referred to as “internally displaced persons” (IDPs). The second form refers to those who move across borders to a different country. These are called refugees. When either refugees or IDPs who had been displaced return to their community (for IDPs) or their country of origin, they are referred to as “returnees”.

Africa has some of the highest number of both refugees and IDPs. Of the estimated 9.5 million refugees and 25 million IDPs in 2005, over a third of the refugees (about 2.7 million) and a half of the world's IDPs (7.5 million) are believed to be in Africa. This means that the total number of displaced people in Africa is over 15 million. The numbers of both refugees and IDPs have increased tremendously. Although wars in other parts of the world (Syria, Afghanistan, Yemen and Myanmar) have produced more refugees than the world has experienced since the end of World War II, the number of refugees in Africa have also increased.

Africa as a continent still has some of the highest number of IDP/refugee producing countries and the highest number of IDP/refugee hosting countries. For example, five of the ten top refugee producing countries are in Africa. The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has the highest number of internally displaced people in Africa (4.3 million. 1.9 million of them were displaced in 2017 alone), and many more are refugees in several African countries. South Sudan has 4 million displaced, half of them refugees, while Somalia has 986, 400. Burundi and Liberia have also produced over a million displaced people. By 2015, five of the world's ten hosting countries were also in Africa. They are Ethiopia (702, 500), Kenya (552, 300), Uganda (428, 400), Chad (420, 800) and Sudan 356, 200).

This means that displacement of people, whether internally within their countries of origin or as refugees in neighboring countries, has become an important defining characteristic of Africa. As shown above, in the last few decades, millions of people throughout the continent have been forced to flee from their homes to seek refuge elsewhere, which causes problems both to the refugees as well as the hosting countries—refugees have to be fed, sheltered, but more important protected from harm (especially from the leaders of the countries they flee from). This is an expensive undertaking. Since the refugees and IDPs hope to return to their homes, both the African Union and the rest of the international community have designed policies governing not just how refugees and IDPs get treated (protection, security,) but also on how they can be returned and reintegrated to their homes. Several documents/policies and frameworks have already been circulated on this. Kindly read them and understand the various issues they address.

Displacement in Africa (both IDPs and refugees) has also taken an important regional dimension. Concerning both refugees and IDPs, two principal sub-regions of displacement have emerged in the course of recent years: the five neighboring States of Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, and Sierra Leone in the west of the continent; and the vast area of central Africa which stretches from Eritrea in the north-east to Angola in the south-west, encompassing the DRC, Congo Brazzaville, Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia. Both of these sub-regions have been affected by interlocking patterns of war and human displacement, in which the movement of refugees, IDPs, and returnees constitutes both a consequence and a cause of social and political violence. In many instances, moreover, displacements have been deliberately used by warring parties as a means of securing or reinforcing their control of territory, resources,

and people. This regional nature of the problem of displacement has forced states to organize a regional approach to it.

It is for the above reason that African countries have taken a multi-faceted approach to addressing the displacement problem—country-specific (where each country addresses its unique displacement issues), regional (where countries in the same (sub)-region take a collective approach to the problem) and a continent-wide approach, where through the AU, Africa takes a common stand or takes a common approach by developing a continental policy on displacement. The United Nations Organization (UN) has also a policy for dealing with the issue of displacement. These IDP/Refugee documents developed by the AU are distributed as well.

At the same time, some countries have opted to close their borders against refugees and to close down camps housing IDPs. African countries that had been generous admitting as many refugees as they came to their borders are reconsidering their position. Either they have had already too many refugees, or the international community is not helping to meet the cost of hosting them. Others have already received refugees who have stayed for decades without being returned and are not sure what to do with them. Thus, without a repatriation plan, certain countries are reluctant to accept more. Finally, as resources for resettling refugees reduce, fewer countries are willing to host them.

### **The Issue:**

*In spite of the fundamental principles which constitute the pillars for the protection of refugees as established by the 1951 Geneva Convention and its 1967 Protocol and the Organization of African Unity Convention of 1967 governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa (OAU Convention), in particular the principle of non-refoulement and non-discrimination; the protection of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) is beset with many obstacles, including, police crackdowns, unjust or arbitrary detentions, xenophobia, racism and sometimes expulsions.*

To be a refugee or an IDP is not an option but a fate that can befall any human being at one time or another in their lives. It is therefore important that Member States take steps to ensure that the rights of refugees and IDPs, especially the rights bordering on human dignity, are respected. In the face of the multiplicity of internal armed conflicts, weather-related disasters and terrorist attacks which contribute to the increase in the number of refugees and IDPs on the continent, Member States have a responsibility more than ever before to abide by the principles and rights guaranteed by the 1951 Refugee Convention, its 1967 Protocol and by the Kampala Convention, in particular at a time when the temptation to undermine it is growing in the face of challenges posed by the protection of refugees and IDPs.

For some decades now, countries have necessarily become host countries par excellence; either due to their geographical proximity to the countries in conflict situation or due to

their reputation as hospitable countries. However, this is not accomplished without consequences, especially in the long term. Thus, the presence of a growing number of long-term refugees and IDPs on the territory of these countries currently poses a real challenge in the area of protection, treatment and assistance, including the related economic, security and legal concerns.

Furthermore, the weaknesses in the area of resources available to the host countries, coupled with unequal distribution of the burden posed by hosting refugees and IDPs are persistent concerns. One of the major causes of this state of affairs is the non-existence of national policies or rigid or weak policies governing the granting of asylum which depends on the sovereignty of States; and the lack a common policy at the regional level concerning refugee and IDP issues.

*Thus, the Special Rapporteur asks Member States of the African Union to create a humanitarian plan of action at the regional and continental level to address issues of protection, treatment and assistance, including the related economic and security concerns. Member States should draft resolutions to organize national and regional consultations in order to ensure an improved protection of refugees and IDPs. Furthermore, Member States should identify long-term solutions to existing refugee and IDP problems.*

### **What do we expect the students/schools to do on the day of Conference?**

Students will engage in creative discussions among the various delegations. To ensure that all students get the opportunity to speak and participate in the conference, we will use the individual sessions to break delegations into different regional blocks. The delegations will work in groups to create a resolution for their region and will negotiate among themselves to develop the resolution. The moderators will be available to answer any questions and to help facilitate discussion among the respective groups.

Each school delegation will be allocated a country to represent. The delegation will prepare two reports (one on climate change) and the other on forced displacement on the status of two issues. The reports should be specific and brief and should address the following:

- A brief introduction of the country's experience with a). Climate Change; and, b). Displacement (specify whether refugees or IDPs or both).
  - Does the country have a climate change policy? Displacement policy?
  - What are the major effects/impacts/threats that the policy identifies as facing the country?
    - To what extent is climate change contributing to displacement?
    - Effects on crops, livelihoods, water and water towers? Etc.
- The economic/political/social effects that Climate Change/Displacement have brought

- Any communal conflicts or conflicts with neighbors?
- What about the costs?
- For climate change—any effects on rain patterns, amounts, drought, floods, agriculture, land etc.
- What has the government done/is doing to mitigate it/address them?
- What challenges is the government facing in addressing them?
  - What financial constraints does the government face?
- What assistance does the government require to fully address the problems?
- Are there any collaborations with other entities such as the civil society, donor community or a regional organization?
- What mechanisms/solutions does the policy offer to address climate change and displacement?
- What issues/problems associated with climate change and displacement do you propose they be addressed at a continent-wide perspective?
- Any suggestions/Recommendations?
- Conclusion

### Note.

Several documents have been/will be circulated on the policies/frameworks that the AU/UN etc. have on both Climate Change and IDPs/Refugees. Teachers in each school are encouraged to use these documents to guide their students on some of the discussions that have already taken place regarding the two issues. These documents are merely meant to offer some suggestions on how Member States are currently considering these issues, without being exhaustive. Feel free to be creative in your research and resolution writing.

### Suggested Timeline

For the month of **November**, teachers and students should begin researching their individual country assignments.

**December** – Teams should continue researching their respective countries while focusing on the agenda topics using the format outlined on the previous page. Determine where your country stands on the agenda topics and highlight what challenges they face (as well as suggestions to overcoming these obstacles).

**January** – Expand your research from your specific country to looking at neighboring countries to determine how climate change and displacement have affected the region as a whole.

**February** – Begin drafting the 1-2-page policy briefs on behalf of your countries in regard to agenda items 1 and 2. These policy reports will be used during the individual breakout sessions when working with other delegations to draft regional resolutions. The deadline to register for the conference is **February 1<sup>st</sup>**. Teachers should also email the MAU coordinator with the students' photo/video clearance forms, and child protective clearance



letter by **February 1<sup>st</sup>**. (Please email the MAU coordinator at [AfricanStudies@pitt.edu](mailto:AfricanStudies@pitt.edu) when you send the payment for the registration fee).

**March** – Work on final preparations for the Conference while reviewing your country’s position, policies and aspirations for the MAU.

**March 25, YOUR HARD WORK HAS PAID OFF!** The MAU is finally here! We look forward to hosting you and having a wonderful learning experience and a fun day together. You will also have a chance to taste African foods, music and dance.