



# HMUN 2025

**Securing means to protect Less Economically Developed Countries (LEDCs) from being left behind in global development**

**AU-P**

**Kriti Das**  
Deputy Chair



**Forum:** African Peace Union

**Issue:** Securing means to protect Less Economically Developed Countries (LEDCs) from being left behind in global development

**Name:** Kriti Das

**Position:** Deputy Chair

## Introduction

Despite its rich cultural heritage and natural riches, Africa remains far behind the rest of the globe in terms of economic and technical development. However, this is more than just a result of geographical or meteorological factors; it also has roots in colonialism. Africa was resource-depleted during colonization, politically destabilized, and socioeconomically affected; all of these have left legacies in the years of underdevelopment. Ethiopia and Liberia are Africa's two most highly regarded countries that did not experience formal colonization (HISTORICAL). They, too, have had difficulties, with indirect foreign intervention, global disparities, and limited access to international markets all playing a negative role.

Most African countries are trailing behind in the fight for long-term growth, with many remaining on the periphery, shadowed by Western advances in key economic and technological indicators.

Africa is the world's second-biggest continent, with undeveloped mineral and agricultural land resources, as well as possibilities for renewable energy. When used correctly, these resources have the potential to pull millions out of poverty while also contributing considerably to global economic growth. However, poverty reigns supreme throughout Africa, with more than 30% of the population living below the international poverty line (Saleh). Additionally, almost 70% of African countries fall within the LEDC category where infrastructure is poor, governance weak, health care and education systems are inadequate, subject to the whims of nature, and severely threatened by climate change (Wale-Oshinowo et al.).

The increasing digital divide and lack of access to technology threaten to further undermine Africa from the rest of the world. The ability to participate in the globalized economy as a noncompetitor in terms of its technology and innovations undeniably puts LEDCs in Africa at an economic disadvantage, usually denying them the category of among "the poor suppliers of raw

materials" for the richer countries. This structural dependency, however, inverts the fundamentals of long-term growth and perpetuates economic inequalities.

There should be a collaboration of efforts in all sectors to ensure that LEDCs do not fall behind while the rest of the world advances in development (Wale-Oshinowo et al.). Infrastructure, education, health, and governance must be prioritized while making global investments. Equally crucial are hopes for international collaborations, fair trade agreements, and climate-resilient initiatives to eliminate existing impediments. When it comes to developing Africa, it is not simply a regional issue; it is also a global one. It provides great potential benefits to developing countries and, by bridging the gap, allows all to move forward toward a more equal and sustainable future.

## Definition of Key Terms

### Infrastructure

It is the underlying physical and organizational structure behind structures and facilities that are needed for a society to operate. It is crucial for things ranging from labor and production to governance.

### Less Economically Developed Countries (LEDCs)

LEDCs are countries facing economic challenges. Marginally, the citizens of such a country face low income, poor nutrition, health care, and education. Some examples of LEDCs in the African continent are listed to be the following: Angola, Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, Rwanda, and South Sudan; however, it is not limited to such (United Nations).

### Technological Development

A process in which no technology is being implemented. This can lead to results such as but not limited to new products, services, and/or processes. This may lead to economic advancement or vice versa ("What Is Technological Development?").

## General Overview

The underdevelopment of countries in Africa is rooted in its historical, geographical, and socio-political past. Understanding these aspects provides insight into the current condition of the continent.

## History

Africa's rich but unfortunate history has significantly influenced its developmental trajectory. The transatlantic slave trade, spanning from the 15th to the 19th century, forcibly removing millions of Africans disrupted the societies and economies of the region. This large-scale human displacement fostered ethnic fragmentation and weakened political structures, leaving scars on the continent ("The Historical Origins of Africa's Underdevelopment").

The late 19th and early 20th centuries brought the "Scramble for Africa," where European powers partitioned and colonized African territories without regard for existing ethnic or cultural boundaries. Colonial rule prioritized resource extraction and imposed artificial borders, leading to long-term economic and political challenges ("The Historical Origins of Africa's Underdevelopment").

Most African countries faced numerous post-independence challenges regarding their weak institution and artificial boundaries. These boundaries often grouped together diverse ethnic groups, leading to tensions and conflicts, as seen in the Nigerian Biafran War or the Rwandan genocide (Maron). Fast-tracking into self-government sometimes led to political instability, corruption, and inadequate governance structures, hindering development compared to other regions like Southeast Asia.

## Geographical and Environmental Factors

Another factor that contributed to the development of the African continent was its geography and climate. Vast expanses of deserts, heavy rainforests, and a scarcity of rivers that could be navigated also hindered trade and communication in the past. The tropical climates brought a variety of diseases, like malaria, which ultimately reduced populations and, therefore, labor efficiency (Engheim; SOS Children's Villages).

However, Africa was also very abundant in natural resources, such as diamonds, gold, and oil. This causes the region to have a strong potential for economic prosperity. However, it has also led to what is commonly known as the "resource curse." Instead of fostering development, the competition over these resources has often triggered corruption, conflict, and environmental degradation.

Climate change has accelerated environmental challenges in recent decades as well. Increased droughts, desertification, and floods have affected agriculture, the primary livelihood for many Africans, thus contributing to food insecurity and economic instability.

Furthermore, the rapid growth in urbanization has presented additional environmental issues, including inadequate waste management and strain on water resources, particularly in cities such as Lagos and Nairobi. Many rural areas remain disconnected from basic infrastructure, creating further disparities.

### **Socio-Political Dynamics**

Coups, civil war, and autocratic leadership have been some of the very significant obstacles to development. Such instability disrupts economic activities, deters investment, and leads to misallocation of resources. Corruption further exacerbates these issues, undermining governance and eroding public trust.

Authoritarian regimes like that of Mobutu Sese Seko in the Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly Zaire) epitomize how corruption siphoned billions from public coffers into private bank accounts. Additionally, the patronage systems implemented in some post-independence governments fueled elite-driven politics that marginalized rural and poorer communities (Ojo).

Ethnic diversity is the cultural asset that political leaders, at times, have used to engender tensions and conflicts. The artificial borders that resulted from colonial demarcations have often forced diverse groups into single nations, placing obstacles in the path of nation-building and good governance. For instance, the Biafran War (1967–1970) in Nigeria and the continued tensions in Sudan and South Sudan are direct examples of how ethnic divisions have escalated into devastating conflicts (Ojo).

### **Economic Challenges**

Most often, the integration of Africa into the global economy has been on unfavorable terms. The continent has always been a source of raw materials, while value addition has been poorly developed. Such an economic structure makes the economies of African countries susceptible to changes in commodity prices and limits diversification (“Africa: The Arrival of Europeans and the Transatlantic Slave Trade”).

In addition, external interventions, such as SAPs by the IMF and the World Bank in the 1980s, demanded austerity that resulted in cuts in public services. These have often led to increased poverty and social unrest, further hindering development (Boughton).

Multinational corporations have also played a controversial role in Africa's economic development. While they provide investments and job opportunities, these companies have often extracted profits with minimal reinvestment in local economies. Tax avoidance and profit repatriation by foreign firms, particularly in the mining and oil sectors, have deprived African nations of much-needed revenue (Sonno et al.).

### **Current Situation**

Well, presently, Africa is like a mixed bag few have brought in their economy and, therefore, have developed, while others are still trying to shake off the past mishaps of history and today's incidents. The poor infrastructure, poor access to a good school and good health care, and poor governance continue to be challenges in lots of areas.

On the other hand, great strides have been made. Regional organizations like the African Union contest for increased political and economic integration. Initiatives like the African Continental Free Trade Area will seek to boost intra-African trade and spur economic growth. Private sectors, especially in telecommunications and fintech, have had spectacular growth. For example, startups in Nigeria, Kenya, South Africa, and others use digital technologies to address the challenges of financial inclusion entirely, proof of Africa's amazing entrepreneurial spirit (Figaro).

To date, however, inequality persists. Women, as well as other disadvantaged groups, suffer many obstacles to participation in political and economic systems, thereby ensuring continued cycles of exclusion and poverty. In addition, they often attach heavy conditionalities and constraints to any grant or loan given to African nations as an alternative for not directly depriving them of funds and improving sovereignty over their developmental priorities.

### **Contribution of More Economically Developed Countries (MEDCs)**

Historical colonial exploitation has hindered Africa's progress in the past. However, in the current situation, MEDCs have attempted solutions for this crucial problem to address, which has had a positive impact. However, on the other hand, MEDCs have had their own share of negative impacts on the development of African Nations in the past few years.



On the silver lining, More Economically Developed Countries have encouraged growth through initiatives like foreign aid, infrastructure investments, and technology transfer. For instance, programs like the G20 Compact with Africa attracted private investments through substantial improvements of the macro, business, and financing frameworks (World Bank Group). However, these efforts are often undermined by exploitative trade practices, unfair debt burdens, and a focus on donor-driven agendas that neglect local priorities.

The International Monetary Fund and World Bank have been putting their efforts into poverty reduction programs, which have been failing to meet the needs of locals as they urgently require attention to debt burdens and further economic stability, the root of the poverty crisis (“The African Debt Dilemma: Unpacking the Three Unfavourable Factors”).

Exploitative trade practices have been to be done mainly by Multinational corporation Cooperations. A few examples consist of Shell, causing oil spillage in Nigeria and facing criticism for environmental damage; H&M and Zara for failing to promote sustainable wages for their workers in their supply chains; Apple, Tesla, and other tech giants for promoting child labor and injury of workers through supply chains - for harvesting cobalt from the Democratic Republic of Congo (Ajala; Infomineo; Lavietes).

Unfair debt burdens, however, are seen more commonly among developing or developed nations such as China. The Chinese government offers large loans for infrastructural development, which, on the surface, seems like a boost for the African Nations. On the contrary, however, the transparency of the terms is limited, causing unsustainable debt levels that can sometimes force African Nations to go into a cycle of dependency due to struggling to repay the loans, commonly termed “debt-trap diplomacy” (Baomi and Lingyu).

## Conclusion

The underdevelopment of Africa flows from numerous directions, touching upon historical events, geographical realities, socio-political dynamics, and economic structures-all of which demand consideration if the challenge facing the continent today, or indeed those seeking to help deal with them, is to be understood. However, with a collective effort from African Nations and More Economically Developed Countries able to provide support, the backlog in development can be covered, leading to further equality and sustainability.

## Timeline of Key Events

Date	Event
1400 – 1800	Transatlantic Slave Trade between Africa and the Americas
1850s – 1950s	Scramble for Africa
1960s – 1970s	Decolonization leading to rapid transitions to independence with weak infrastructure
1980s	World Bank-mandated policies leading to severe cuts in public services, therefore increasing poverty
1991–2002	Sierra Leone Civil War
1994	Rwandan Genocide
1998–2003	Second Congo War
2020s	Political Instability caused by corruption
Present	Severing Climate Change leading to more droughts, especially in the Sahel Region.

## Major Parties Involved

### Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)

This is a regional organization that focuses on promoting economic cooperation, trade integration, etc. It does so by reducing trade barriers that ultimately help enhance intra-regional trade and cooperation between African LEDCs (Inaju-Challydoff).

### Rwanda

Despite its small area, the government has driven the country into a more knowledge-based economy, which allowed it to make substantial advancements in technology. It has launched drone delivery systems, introduced AI chatbots to health care, and implemented numerous other policies and initiatives throughout its country regardless of being considered an LEDC (Philipp).

### South Africa

Johannesburg and Cape Town are both key centers in Africa for tech innovation and business. The country mainly focuses on IT and telecom infrastructures. Additionally, the workers of



South Africa generally have a highly skillful profile, especially in the fields of technology education and training (Figaro).

### **United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA)**

This United Nations commission works closely with African governments. It facilitates collaboration on economic policies and sustainable development practices. It additionally also focuses on addressing the challenges in building infrastructure, tackling the long-lasting issue of poverty, and improving the governance between member states (“United Nations Economic Commission for Africa | Ideas for a Prosperous Africa”).

## **Possible Solutions**

### **Investing into Education**

LEDCs can achieve improvement by investing in education and skill development. Quality elementary and secondary school education helps economically underprivileged people rise above poverty and inequality. People can learn job-ready skills through vocational courses such as renewable energy and healthcare. Scholarships and exchanges with industrialized nations promote shared learning and help people establish a trained workforce capable of dealing with both local and global concerns.

### **Development in Healthcare**

Developing healthcare systems in low- and middle-income countries is critical for sustainable economic growth. Universal healthcare promotes health equity by making medical services available to all people and ensuring health equality. Local investment in healthcare facilities and preventive programs can address key issues such as maternity health, nutrition, and disease prevention. Global collaboration is required to collect funds for research and solve health issues on the African continent. An enhanced health system increases productivity and resilience, which supports other development goals.

### **Climate Resilience**

Climate resilience is necessary since LEDCs in Africa typically bear a disproportionate amount of the burden of climate change. Funding is needed to implement new, improved technology, such as drought-resistant farming practices, in more vulnerable areas as part of climate change

adaptation. Both the environment and food security should be enhanced by environmentally friendly technologies or sustainable agriculture. Investing in renewable energy generates green capital and jobs. Long-term sustainable development with lower environmental hazards and prosperity for LEDCs can be financed via green bonds and other financial instruments.

### **Political Stability**

Good governance and political stability lessen the impact of sustainable development. Anti-corruption initiatives reduce instability and produce the desired development results by fortifying the resource intended for its uses, fostering trust among international partners, and establishing procedures for successful dispute settlement. Local government capacity-building programs help local governments manage resources and make policies; transparency makes it possible to draw in investments that will pay off in the long run, and citizens can help build the nation.

### **International Aid and Partnerships**

To achieve the development objectives specified for LEDCs, international collaborations are essential. Instead of following the donor's agenda, international help ought to be localized. Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) contribute their knowledge to large-scale health, education, and infrastructure projects. The exchange of information and technology between southern nations is known as "South-South cooperation." International collaboration will bridge the development gap because it fosters equity in the global economy and guarantees accountability for aid through independent oversight.

### **Further Reading**

This is a source that can lead you to understand the full underlying cause of Africa's late development in technology, such as agriculture. It quotes multiple sources to give a detailed overview of the long history that can help one support their arguments and come up with feasible clauses:

<https://erik-engheim.medium.com/why-is-africa-underdeveloped-9561479ca9cb>

If one is interested in having an insight into the corruption that occurs in Africa, in addition to the aftermath of conflicts, the innovation arising in the continent, and all the more above, then this source can be of great help:

[https://www.addleshawgoddard.com/globalassets/insights/africa-2023/globalizationconflict\\_tommasosonno.pdf](https://www.addleshawgoddard.com/globalassets/insights/africa-2023/globalizationconflict_tommasosonno.pdf)

## Bibliography

- “Africa: The Arrival of Europeans and the Transatlantic Slave Trade.” *Revealing Histories*, [www.revealinghistories.org.uk/africa-the-arrival-of-europeans-and-the-transatlantic-slave-trade/articles/the-underdevelopment-of-africa-by-europe.html](http://www.revealinghistories.org.uk/africa-the-arrival-of-europeans-and-the-transatlantic-slave-trade/articles/the-underdevelopment-of-africa-by-europe.html).
- Ajala, Samuel. “Shell Accused of Trying to Wash Hands of Nigerian Oil Spill Mess.” *Climate Home News*, 13 Feb. 2024, [www.climatechangenews.com/2024/02/13/shell-accused-of-trying-to-wash-hands-of-nigerian-oil-spill-mess/](http://www.climatechangenews.com/2024/02/13/shell-accused-of-trying-to-wash-hands-of-nigerian-oil-spill-mess/).
- Baomi, Gu, and Lu Lingyu. “The Innocent Lender: Is China Pursuing “Debt-Trap Diplomacy” in Africa?” *Interpret: China*, 15 Jan. 2020, <http://interpret.csis.org/translations/the-innocent-lender-is-china-pursuing-debt-trap-diplomacy-in-africa/>.
- Boughton, James M. “The IMF and the Silent Revolution.” *Imf.org*, 2019, [www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/silent/index.htm](http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/silent/index.htm).
- Engheim, Erik. “Why Is Africa Underdeveloped? - Erik Engheim - Medium.” *Medium*, 11 Mar. 2024, [www.erik-engheim.medium.com/why-is-africa-underdeveloped-9561479ca9cb](http://www.erik-engheim.medium.com/why-is-africa-underdeveloped-9561479ca9cb).
- Figaro, Aldo. “5 African Countries to Consider When Expanding in the IT Industry.” *Africa HR Solutions | EOR - Employer of Record Services*, 21 May 2024, [www.africa-hr.com/blog/consider-these-5-african-countries-when-expanding-in-the-it-telecom-industry/](http://www.africa-hr.com/blog/consider-these-5-african-countries-when-expanding-in-the-it-telecom-industry/).
- HISTORICAL. “Countries in Africa Considered Never Colonized.” *Historical Africa Cultural Centre*, 30 July 2022, [www.historicalafrica.org/countries-in-africa-considered-never-colonized/](http://www.historicalafrica.org/countries-in-africa-considered-never-colonized/).
- Inaju-Challydoff, Daniel . “About ECOWAS | Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).” *ECOWAS CEDEAO*, 2024, [www.ecowas.int/about-ecowas/](http://www.ecowas.int/about-ecowas/).
- Infomineo. “Fast Fashion in Africa.” *Infomineo*, 15 Feb. 2021, [www.infomineo.com/consumer-goods-retail/fast-fashion-in-africa/](http://www.infomineo.com/consumer-goods-retail/fast-fashion-in-africa/).

Lavietes, Matthew. "Tesla, Apple among Firms Accused of Aiding Child Labor in Congo." Reuters, 17 Dec. 2019, [www.reuters.com/article/world/tesla-apple-among-firms-accused-of-aiding-child-labor-in-congo-idUSKBN1YK24E/](http://www.reuters.com/article/world/tesla-apple-among-firms-accused-of-aiding-child-labor-in-congo-idUSKBN1YK24E/).

Maron, Jeremy. "What Led to the Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda?" Canadian Museum for Human Rights, Canadian Museum for Human Rights, 26 June 2019, [www.humanrights.ca/story/what-led-genocide-against-tutsi-rwanda](http://www.humanrights.ca/story/what-led-genocide-against-tutsi-rwanda).

"NYC African Council Hosts Town Hall with Mayor Adams - African Immigrants, African American New Yorkers in Harlem and Beyond." African Immigrants, African American New Yorkers in Harlem and Beyond, 12 May 2024, [www.africainharlem.nyc/en/nyc-african-council-hosts-town-hall-with-mayor-adams/](http://www.africainharlem.nyc/en/nyc-african-council-hosts-town-hall-with-mayor-adams/).

Ojo, Emmanuel. "Under development in Africa: Theories and Facts." *Underdevelopment in Africa: Theories and Facts*, vol. 41, no. 1, 2016, [www.jspes.org/samples/JSPES41\\_1\\_ojo.pdf](http://www.jspes.org/samples/JSPES41_1_ojo.pdf).

Philipp, Jennifer. "10 Facts about Rwanda's Innovative Technology." *The Borgen Project*, 21 Jan. 2023, [www.borgenproject.org/rwandas-innovative-technology/](http://www.borgenproject.org/rwandas-innovative-technology/).

Saleh, Mariam. "Africa: Share of Global Poverty by Country 2021." *Statista*, 2022, [www.statista.com/statistics/1228553/extreme-poverty-as-share-of-global-population-in-africa-by-country/](http://www.statista.com/statistics/1228553/extreme-poverty-as-share-of-global-population-in-africa-by-country/).

Sonno, Tommaso, et al. *Globalization and Conflicts: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly of Corporations in Africa* \*. 2022.

SOS Children's Villages. "On the Poorest Continent, the Plight of Children Is Dramatic." *SOS-US-EN-NONCLUSTER*, 31 Dec. 2015, [www.sos-usa.org/about-us/where-we-work/africa/poverty-in-africa](http://www.sos-usa.org/about-us/where-we-work/africa/poverty-in-africa).

"The African Debt Dilemma: Unpacking the Three Unfavourable Factors." ODI: Think Change, 10 June 2024, <http://odi.org/en/insights/the-african-debt-dilemma-unpacking-the-three-unfavourable-factors/>.

“The Historical Origins of Africa’s Underdevelopment.” *CEPR*, 8 Dec. 2007,

[www.cepr.org/voxeu/columns/historical-origins-africas-underdevelopment](http://www.cepr.org/voxeu/columns/historical-origins-africas-underdevelopment).

United Nations. “As a Global Crisis Continues, Africa’s Most Vulnerable Nations Set Development

Priorities for an Equitable and Resilient Future.” *United Nations*,

[www.un.org/ohrlls/news/global-crisis-continues-africa’s-most-vulnerable-nations-set-](http://www.un.org/ohrlls/news/global-crisis-continues-africa’s-most-vulnerable-nations-set-development-priorities-equitable#:~:text=The%2033%20Least%20Developed%20Countries,Niger%2C%20Rwanda%2C%20S%20o%20Tom%20e%20and)

[development-priorities-](http://www.un.org/ohrlls/news/global-crisis-continues-africa’s-most-vulnerable-nations-set-development-priorities-equitable#:~:text=The%2033%20Least%20Developed%20Countries,Niger%2C%20Rwanda%2C%20S%20o%20Tom%20e%20and)

[equitable#:~:text=The%2033%20Least%20Developed%20Countries,Niger%2C%20Rwanda%2](http://www.un.org/ohrlls/news/global-crisis-continues-africa’s-most-vulnerable-nations-set-development-priorities-equitable#:~:text=The%2033%20Least%20Developed%20Countries,Niger%2C%20Rwanda%2C%20S%20o%20Tom%20e%20and)

[C%20S%20o%20Tom%20e%20and](http://www.un.org/ohrlls/news/global-crisis-continues-africa’s-most-vulnerable-nations-set-development-priorities-equitable#:~:text=The%2033%20Least%20Developed%20Countries,Niger%2C%20Rwanda%2C%20S%20o%20Tom%20e%20and).

“United Nations Economic Commission for Africa | Ideas for a Prosperous Africa.” *Www.uneca.org*,

[www.uneca.org](http://www.uneca.org).

Wale-Oshinowo, Bamidele A., et al. “Least Developed Countries in Africa.” *The Palgrave*

*Encyclopedia of Global Security Studies*, 2020, pp. 1–16, [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-74336-3_346-1)

[74336-3\\_346-1](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-74336-3_346-1).

“What Is Technological Development?” *LinkedIn*, [www.linkedin.com/pulse/what-technological-](http://www.linkedin.com/pulse/what-technological-development-atlantks-tigers)

[development-atlantks-tigers](http://www.linkedin.com/pulse/what-technological-development-atlantks-tigers).

World Bank Group. “G20 Compact with Africa.” World Bank, 2017, [www.compactwithafrica.org](http://www.compactwithafrica.org).