

Poverty in Africa

A topic paper prepared for the National Debate
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Background and Introduction

From Barbara Bush to Bono (Whittington), it seems that everyone is at least talking about the poverty that afflicts much of the Majority World these days. Concerts have raised awareness among young people, benefits have been held among the wealthy, and debt has been forgiven by the most powerful, yet the problem of poverty and its associated ills—illiteracy, poor health, oppression, to name a few, still afflict the world. Poverty is destroying individuals and entire societies, with billions impacted each day. There is no international issue that is more pressing or damaging. Tazoacha Francis perhaps best summarizes the impact of poverty on the developing world:

Poverty is the oldest and the most resistant virus that brings about a devastating disease in the third world called under development. Its rate of killing cannot be compared to any disease from the genesis of mankind. It is worse than malaria and HIV/AIDS which are claimed to be the highest killer diseases. HIV/AIDS attacks only a few number of people in a society which is a negligible portion of the world's population. As of poverty, it is a pandemic that affects a greater number of people in the society and the whole society at large "out of the world's population of more than 6 billion people, nearly 1.3 billion people live on less than a dollar a day, and close to 1 billion cannot meet their basic consumption requirement... (2001)

Poverty is the most significant threat facing the world today, and threatens to dominate our future. A failure to solve the seemingly intractable problem of global poverty in the Majority World offers a grim present and even worse future, with targets to solve the problems of child mortality not being reached until 2165:

And if we do not work faster, better, and harder, with more money and greater impact - we will miss the 2015 targets. On child mortality. On primary education. And on maternal health.

This poor rate of progress is unacceptable. It should shame the world. And we have to do something about it.

On current forecasts sub Saharan Africa will not achieve our target for reducing child mortality until 2165. Why? It is not that the knowledge to avoid these infant deaths does not exist; it is not that the drugs do not exist; it is not that the expertise does not exist. What is missing is political will and the capacity to make it happen...

1.2 billion still lack access to clean water. 113 million children have no classroom, no desk, no textbook, and no teacher because they don't go to school. Millions of children die each year from diseases we know we can prevent. HIV and AIDS is in some countries wiping out all the gains in life expectancy of the last 40 years (Benn).

The Response Thus Far

Faced with the grim reality of poverty in the developing world, the G8 leaders agreed to a significant package of aid for Africa, doubling the G8's annual aid to Africa to \$50 billion from the current total of \$25 billion by 2010. (Moscow Times). British Prime Minister Tony Blair was optimistic about the campaign, suggesting, "If we implement this, we will make poverty history." (CNN International) However, aid groups have made the argument that the steps, while significant are not nearly enough.

The G-8's aid increase could save the lives of 5 million children by 2010 - but 50 million children's lives will still be lost because the G-8 didn't go as far as they should have done," said Jo Leadbeater, head of policy for British-based Oxfam International. (Crutsinger, 2005)

Others were even less positive about the results of the summit. Caroline Sande Mukulkira, of Action Aid, argued that "Once again, Africa's people have been shortchanged" (CNN International), and Peter Hardstaff, head of policy for the World Development Movement described his reaction as furious. He declared the final proposal

"a disaster for the world's poor." "The agreements on trade, debt, aid and climate change are nowhere near sufficient to tackle the global poverty and environmental crisis we face," he said. "We are furious, but not surprised." (CNN International)

The example of Ethiopia demonstrates that these first steps have not been enough. The UN News Service reports that,

Despite the enthusiasm surrounding the last weekend's Live 8 concerts in the run up to the G8 summit meeting, The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has warned that donors are showing increasingly worrying signs of "compassion fatigue" over the plight of Ethiopia's severely malnourished and dying children. Preventable diseases and malnutrition on average kill up to half a million Ethiopian children a year - more than the entire population of Edinburgh, close to the site of the G8 Summit of the world's most industrialized nations, which kicked off today. (2005)

Action by the United States has been less than specific, with no clear assurances where the aid money will come from. There is also no guarantee that the money will actually reach Africa.

The track record of delivery is rather appalling. Recall the Millennium Challenge Account announced by the United States in 2002 to provide \$5 billion dollars to support Africa's development. Three years later, the United States managed to deliver only \$17 million dollars to Madagascar bizarrely in support of land privatisation and the introduction of a cheque-account system in commercial banks. ...The Enhanced HIPC debt relief initiative promised, in 1999 a debt relief package for all eligible highly indebted poor countries to the tune of \$100bn. Six years later, as the HIPC regime threatens to fold up, they have delivered \$40bn

less. Bush may make promises but he does not have the power to actually deliver. It is his Congress that does and that is filled with extreme neo-cons who hate foreign aid. (Abugre, 2005)

Africa

The area of the world that most clearly needs poverty assistance is Africa. In fact, as the rest of the developing world has seen a steady decline in rates of poverty, the situation in sub-Saharan African is only getting worse. As the Global Policy Forum notes in 2003, The World Bank recently reported that Sub-Saharan African countries have the largest share of people living below one dollar a day. The tragedy is that while other countries in Asia and Latin America are slowly but surely pulling themselves out of the poverty club, African countries, including Nigeria, are regressing into lower levels of deprivation, with the result that the number of poor people in this region is expected to rise from 315 million in 1999 to about 404 million in 2015. (Daily Trust)

While the rest of the world seems to be slowly pulling itself out of debt and poverty, the situation in Africa remains grim.

Healthcare in Africa

One of the most important issues related to poverty in Africa is the AIDS epidemic. Currently, 25.4 million people are living with HIV in Africam with over 3 million new infections occurring each year (Avert.org). HIV/AIDS and poverty are linked in a way that makes determining causality difficult. Desmond Cohen identifies the nexus of these two issues:

There are two bi-causal relationships which need to be understood by those involved in policy and programme development. These are:

- ◆ the relationship between poverty and HIV/AIDS -- which includes the spatial and socio-economic distribution of HIV infection in African populations, and consideration of poverty-related factors which affect household and community coping capacities; and
- ◆ the relationship between HIV/AIDS and poverty -- understanding the processes through which the experience of HIV and AIDS by households and communities leads to an intensification of poverty. (2001)

As a debate issue, this will provide fertile ground for both Affirmatives and Negatives.

There are other health concerns in addition to AIDS. Measles alone kills over 500,000 African children each year (Red Cross), and 11,000,000 children die before their fifth birthday each year as a result of mostly preventable diseases, including malaria, diarrhea and pneumonia (Sapp). These deaths can be prevented, according to Jean Pierre Habicht, at Cornell University:

"Every single day--365 days a year--an attack against children occurs that is 10 times greater than the death toll from the World Trade Center... "We know how to

prevent these deaths--we have the biological knowledge and tools to stop this public health travesty--but we're not yet doing it. (Sapp)

And the current public health system is simply not up to the challenge, with poverty a major obstacle, as Sustainable Development International points out:

The record of African countries in dealing with disease is not encouraging. There are major structural and geographical problems to be overcome. Millions of people Africa simply do not have access to trained medical personnel, and even if they do, essential medical equipment and drugs are either not available or supplies are not sustainable. In addition, there are inadequate data on the incidence and prevalence of illness which adds to the problem of providing a reliable healthcare service...

Until the creation of affluence becomes the major political driver, more money will be spent on arms than on health. The countries Africa are no exception to this rule. Politically, they must get on the affluence ladder before they can afford seriously to tackle the healthcare challenge. (2005)

Education in Africa

Access to education is another critical issue facing the people of Africa. A lack of literacy, combined with low levels of schooling, makes any reform or economic program challenging. USAID identifies the challenges facing education in Africa currently:

- ◆ African primary school enrollment and literacy rates are among the lowest in the world;
- ◆ 42 million school children in sub-Saharan Africa are not enrolled in school. Of those that do have access to school, the schooling they receive is often of such poor quality that they are not able to acquire even the most basic skills of reading and writing;
- ◆ In 1999, more than 860,000 children in sub-Saharan Africa lost teachers to AIDS. In fact, it is predicted that by 2005, 15 to 20 percent of teachers in sub-Saharan Africa will have died from AIDS. (African Education Initiative)

And education matters—as a tool for eliminating poverty, decreasing disease, and creating a sustainable future. UNESCO describes its impact

Development experts underscore the fact that universal education for children—particularly for girls, who account for more than half of the world's children not in school—is the foundation for lasting social change. Education broadens employment options, increases income levels, improves health and well-being, helps prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS, and stabilizes interpersonal ties.

No less tangible are the rippling effects education can have on a community or an entire nation. (2005)

Population Control in Africa

Compounding all of the problems in Africa is the rate of population increase, which swallows up much of the aid and debt relief provided by Western donor States. On

average, African mothers still bear six sons, and the lack of adequate contraception is responsible for the deaths of 6.9 million people (Baschetti).

High birth rates and lack of education and contraception are linked to mortality among African children. David Paxson, of World Population balance, explains the impact of a population that is expected to double in Africa:

In Africa, the population is expected to double in 25 years. So, in African nations such as Mali, formerly French Sudan, the problems related to population growth will only worsen. Already, nearly 30 percent of the children born in Mali never reach their fifth birthday. Half the people live in poverty. The life expectancy for men is 44 and for women, it's 48. With all of these grim statistics, the average number of children per mother - 7.3 - shouldn't sound so shocking, but it is.

Nutrition in Africa

While Americans often associate famine in Africa with the almost-consistent emergency in the Horn of Africa, famine stalks the rest of the continent as well. Bread for the World described the situation in 2004, arguing that a comprehensive program is needed:

Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia have cut by half - from 13 million to 6.5 million - the number of people facing severe food shortages in Southern Africa. However, many people still are at risk of famine. In Swaziland and Lesotho, families continue to face food shortages, and in Zimbabwe, escalating food prices, unemployment and political instability continue to leave many families without enough food to eat.

Other regions in Africa also face famine threats. The situation in Ethiopia and Eritrea remains dire. Promised food aid reached only some remote parts of these countries. In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), where a protracted interethnic war continues, nearly half a million people face starvation. Civil wars in Liberia, Cote d'Ivoire and Sierra Leone also have displaced millions of people who now depend on food aid for their meals. (2004)

John Nayamu argues that the "twin onslaught of disease and hunger" has had dire consequences for people, communities, and the very systems that provide their food (2003).

One area of debate centers on assigning blame. Jeffrey Sachs, author of The End of Poverty, argues that blaming Africans for their poverty is misguided.

The poor are blamed for their problems. We say the poor are poor because they are corrupt or because they don't manage themselves. But in the past two years I've seen exactly the opposite. ... The idea that African failure is due to African poor governance is one of the great myths of our time." (Eviatar)

Others disagree, including Marian Tupy, from the Cato Institute. She argues that corruption is getting worse in African nations, preventing aid and loan programs from solving the problems they hope to address (Tupy). This conflict will provide an interesting avenue for solvency debates, providing fertile ground for the negative to attack and provide alternative solvency mechanisms.

The Unique Status of Women

All of the problems facing African society are magnified in the condition of women, who often bear the brunt of poverty and its implications. Despite constituting more than 50 per cent of the total population of Sub-Saharan Africa, women are undervalued and often ignored in policy discussions (Lopi). AFMIN explains that women suffer more from poverty, and have a more difficult time using business to escape it:

In a context of rising poverty and unemployment, women suffer disproportionately. While self-employment can provide a means to build income and assets and a way out of poverty and an avenue to increasing their assets, a vast number of poor women entrepreneurs still lacks access to financial services that can help them build their businesses. (2004)

The 'feminization of poverty' makes life especially difficult for African women, who are burdened with significant familial and social responsibility, as the International Labour Organization points out

In developing countries, nearly 570 million rural women - 60% of the rural population - live below the poverty line. Recent research by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) shows that in those countries, it is women who are nonetheless responsible for most food production. On the African continent, it is estimated that women produce 70% of the food. Poor women in these countries produce for sale as well as for subsistence; the poorer the household, the harder and more essential these two activities become. Analysis of the effects of structural adjustment programmes on African agriculture suggests that the increasing work load of women could provoke a new poverty crisis in which poor households will have record mortality levels even as overall agricultural revenues increase. (1996)

Gender inequality also leaves African women more vulnerable to a range of problems, including HIV/AIDS.

Gender inequalities in personal relationships, in the community, within the workforce, and in political circles affect women all over the world. Inequalities increase women's vulnerability to poverty and vice-versa: both impact harshly on our ability to enjoy full human rights. Gender inequality and poverty not only increase the risk of HIV but also leave women more vulnerable than men to its impact. (International Community of Women Living with AIDS).

Conclusion

There is no more critical problem facing the world than the specter of poverty, a plague that threatens the lives of millions each year. While the topic area is quite broad, I believe a resolution can be selected that both challenges Affirmatives to develop creative solutions and provides Negatives with legitimate debatable ground. Given the critical dimension of this problem for this and generations to come, I can think of no better topic for the brightest of our students to tackle.

Key Terminology

Africa

- the second largest continent; located south of Europe and bordered to the west by the South Atlantic and to the east by the Indian Ocean (wordnet.princeton.edu/perl/webwn)
- Africa is the world's second-largest continent in both area and population, after Asia. At about 30,244,050 km² (11,677,240 mi²) including its adjacent islands, it covers 20.3 percent of the total land area on Earth, and with over 800 million human inhabitants in 54 countries, it accounts for about one seventh of world human population. (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Africa)
- The second-largest continent, lying south of Europe between the Atlantic and Indian oceans. Africa has vast mineral resources, many of which are still undeveloped. (The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition, 2002)

Aid

- Assistance provided by countries and by international institutions such as the World Bank to developing countries in the form of monetary grants, loans at low interest rates, in kind, or a combination of these. (www-personal.umich.edu/~alandear/glossary/a.html)
- The flow of finance and capital resources from developing to developed and underdeveloped economies (nations or regions).(www.gtasa.asn.au/glossary/gloss_a.htm)
- The act or result of helping; assistance.
 2. a. An assistant or helper.
b. A device that assists: visual aids such as slides.
c. A hearing aid.
 3. An aide or aide-de-camp.
- 4. A monetary payment to a feudal lord by a vassal in medieval England. (The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition, 2002)

Assistance

- Money, property, services, or anything of value transferred to a recipient to accomplish a public purpose of support or stimulation authorized by Federal statute.(www1.pr.doe.gov/gf48ap1.html)
- 1. The act of assisting.
 2. Aid; help: financial assistance. (. (The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition, 2002)

Development Assistance

- International transfers through loans or outright grants, either directly from one country to another or indirectly from one country to another via a multilateral assistance agency like the World Bank. (www.agrade.org/glossary_search.cfm)
- specific economic assistance for the purpose of promoting economic, social, and/or political development. (www.futureharvest.org/about/glossary.shtml)

Education

- **American Heritage Dictionary, 2000**
 1. The act or process of educating or being educated.
 2. The knowledge or skill obtained or developed by a learning process.
 3. A program of instruction of a specified kind or level: driver education; a college education.
 4. The field of study that is concerned with the pedagogy of teaching and learning.
 5. An instructive or enlightening experience: Her work in the inner city was a real education.
- Instruction to improve critical life and social skills, including decision-making, refusal skills, critical analysis (eg media messages), and systematic judgment abilities. (wind.uwyo.edu/sig/definition.asp)
- **WordNet (wordnet.princeton.edu/perl/webwn)**
 - ◆ the activities of educating or instructing or teaching; activities that impart knowledge or skill; "he received no formal education"; "our instruction was carefully programmed"; "good teaching is seldom rewarded"
 - ◆ knowledge acquired by learning and instruction; "it was clear that he had a very broad education"
 - ◆ the gradual process of acquiring knowledge; "education is a preparation for life"; "a girl's education was less important than a boy's"
 - ◆ the profession of teaching (especially at a school or college or university)
 - ◆ the result of good upbringing (especially knowledge of correct social behavior); "a woman of breeding and refinement"
 - ◆ Department of Education: the United States federal department that administers all federal programs dealing with education (including federal aid to educational institutions and students); created 1979

Foreign Aid

- The international transfer of public and private funds in the form of loans or grants from donor countries to recipient countries (www.bized.ac.uk/virtual/dc/resource/glos3.htm)
- Same as development assistance, which consists of international transfers through loans or outright grants, either directly from one country to another or indirectly from one country to another via a multilateral assistance agency like the World Bank. (www.agtrade.org/glossary_search.cfm)
- Aid, such as economic or military assistance, offered by one nation to another. (American Heritage Dictionary, 2000)

Foreign Policy

- way in which a nation establishes relations with other nations; relations thus established, how a nation deals with other nations. (web.isp.cz/jcrane/Glossary.html)
- A foreign policy is a set of political goals that seeks to outline how a particular country will interact with the other countries of the world. (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Foreign_policy)
- The diplomatic policy of a nation in its interactions with other nations. (American Heritage Dictionary)
- Policies of the federal government directed to matters beyond US borders, especially relations with other countries. (www.nmlites.org/standards/socialstudies/glossary.html)

Literacy

- The ability to read, write, communicate, and comprehend. (www.educationoasis.com/curriculum/Reading/glossary_reading_terms.htm)
- Is the ability to read, write, calculate, speak and understand as well as communicate with others. It promotes the ability to understand and use information and communication technologies. Literacy is critical to the ability to function as an individual and to participate and contribute in one's family, community, culture, work place, or any other group that one interacts with on a regular basis. (siksik.learnnet.nt.ca/05%20colleges/05_02%20indicators1999/appendix.htm)
- **American Heritage Dictionary, 2000**
 1. The condition or quality of being literate, especially the ability to read and write. See Usage Note at literate.
 2. The condition or quality of being knowledgeable in a particular subject or field: cultural literacy; biblical literacy.

Nutrition

- The taking in and use of food and other nourishing material by the body. (www.stjude.org/glossary)
- A process or series of processes by which the living organism as a whole (or its component parts or organs) is maintained in its normal condition of life and growth. (www.ventria.com/glossary.asp)
- The process of nourishing or being nourished, especially the process by which a living organism assimilates food and uses it for growth and for replacement of tissues. (American Heritage Dictionary, 2000)

Poverty

- The Copenhagen Declaration describes absolute poverty as "a condition characterised by severe deprivation of basic human needs, including food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health, shelter, education and information." The World Bank identifies "extreme poverty" as being people who live on less than USD \$1 a day, and "poverty" as less than \$2 a day. On that standard, 21% of the world's population was in extreme poverty, and more than half the world's population were poor in 2001. [1]
- From my own perspective, poverty can be viewed as the absence of peace in an individual. This could be as a result of hunger, lack of medical care, marginalisation, denial of human rights relating to the fulfilment of basic human needs, freedom, etc. It is generally known that poverty can be "absolute" or "relative". (Francis, 2001)
- **American Heritage Dictionary, 2000**
 1. The state of being poor; lack of the means of providing material needs or comforts.
 2. Deficiency in amount; scantiness: "the poverty of feeling that reduced her soul" (Scott Turow).
 3. Unproductiveness; infertility: the poverty of the soil.
 4. Renunciation made by a member of a religious order of the right to own property.

Public Health

- the science and the art of preventing disease, prolonging life, and promoting physical health and mental health and efficiency through organized community efforts toward a sanitary environment; the control of community infections; the education of the individual in principles of personal hygiene; the organization of medical and nursing service for the early diagnosis and treatment of disease; and the development of the social machinery to ensure to every individual in the community a standard of living adequate for the maintenance of health."(www.doh.state.fl.us/planning_eval/CHAI/Resources/FieldGuide/6CommHealthStatus/CHSATerminology.htm)
- the health or physical well-being of a whole community (www.nrdc.org/reference/glossary/p.asp)
- The science and practice of protecting and improving the health of a community, as by preventive medicine, health education, control of communicable diseases, application of sanitary measures, and monitoring of environmental hazards (www.disabilitymuseum.org/glossary.php)
- The science and practice of protecting and improving the health of a community, as by preventive medicine, health education, control of communicable diseases, application of sanitary measures, and monitoring of environmental hazards. (American Heritage Dictionary)

Reduce

- **Wordnet**
 - cut down on; make a reduction in; "reduce your daily fat intake"; "The employer wants to cut back health benefits"
 - make less complex; "reduce a problem to a single question"
 - bring to humbler or weaker state or condition; "He reduced the population to slavery"
 - simplify the form of a mathematical equation of expression by substituting one term for another
- To bring down, as in extent, amount, or degree; diminish. (American Heritage Dictionary, 2000)

Sub-Saharan

- Of, relating to, or situated in the region of Africa south of the Sahara. (American Heritage Dictionary, 2000)
- of or relating to or situated in the region south of the Sahara Desert (Wordnet)

Substantial

- **Wordnet**
 - significant: fairly large; "won by a substantial margin"
 - being the essence or essential element of a thing; "substantial equivalents"; "substantive information"
 - having substance or capable of being treated as fact; not imaginary; "the substantial world"; "a mere dream, neither substantial nor practical"; "most ponderous and substantial things"- Shakespeare
 - hearty: providing abundant nourishment; "a hearty meal"; "good solid food"; "ate a substantial breakfast"
 - solid: of good quality and condition; solidly built; "a solid foundation"; "several substantial timber buildings"
- **American Heritage Dictionary, 2000**
 1. Of, relating to, or having substance; material.
 2. True or real; not imaginary.
 3. Solidly built; strong.
 4. Ample; sustaining: a substantial breakfast.
 5. Considerable in importance, value, degree, amount, or extent: won by a substantial margin.
 6. Possessing wealth or property; well-to-do.

A Brief List of Web Resources

Action Against Hunger USA (<http://www.actionagainsthunger.org/>)
ATD 4th World (<http://www.atd-quartmonde.org/accueil-uk.html>)
Bread for the World (<http://www.bread.org/>)
Bretton Woods Project (<http://www.brettonwoodsproject.org/>)
Debt Relief International (<http://www.dri.org.uk/>)
Development Information Online (<http://www.ids.ac.uk/ids/info/>)
EuropaWorld on Famine (<http://www.europaworld.org/Famine.htm>)
European Commission for Africa (<http://www.uneca.org/>)
European Network on Debt and Development (<http://www.eurodad.org/>)
Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (<http://www.fao.org/>)
Food for All (<http://www.foodforall.org/>)
Food Insecurity and Vulnerability Information and Mapping Systems (<http://www.fivims.net/>)
Freedom from Hunger (<http://www.freefromhunger.org/>)
Friends of the World Food Program (<http://www.friendsofwfp.org/>)
G8 Information Center (<http://www.g7.utoronto.ca/>)
Global Call to Action Against Poverty (<http://www.whiteband.org/>)
Information for Development in the 21st Century (<http://www.id21.org/>)
Institute for Policy Studies (<http://www.ips-dc.org/>)
International Develop Research Center (<http://www.idrc.ca/>)
International Famine Center (<http://www.ucc.ie/famine/>)
International Food Policy Research Institute (<http://www.ifpri.org/>)
Make Poverty History (<http://www.makepovertyhistory.org/>)
Microcredit Summit Campaign (<http://www.microcreditsummit.org/>)
Oxfam (<http://www.oxfam.org.uk/>)
Partnership to Cut Hunger and Poverty in Africa (<http://www.africanhunger.org/>)
Poverty Mapping (<http://povertymap.net/>)
Poverty, Inequality and Development from Cornell University (<http://www.arts.cornell.edu/poverty/>)
Synergos (<http://www.synergos.org/>)
The Development Group for Alternative Policies (<http://www.developmentgap.org/>)
Trade Justice Movement (<http://www.tjm.org.uk/>)
US Famine Early Warning System (<http://www.fews.net/>)
World Bank PovertyNet (<http://www.worldbank.org/poverty/>)
World Hunger Year (<http://www.worldhungeryear.org/>)

Potential Resolutions

- ◆ **Resolved:** The United States Federal Government should establish a foreign aid policy to substantially assist Sub-Saharan nations in one or more of the following areas: education, public health, nutrition.
- ◆ **Resolved:** The United States Federal Government should establish a foreign aid policy to substantially assist Sub-Saharan nations in education and/or public health programs.
- ◆ **Resolved:** The United States Federal Government should establish a policy to substantially assist Sub-Saharan nations in one or more of the following areas: education, public health, population control, or nutrition.
- ◆ **Resolved:** The United States Federal Government should provide non-military assistance to one or more Sub-Saharan African nations to substantially reduce poverty.
- ◆ **Resolved:** The United States Federal Government should establish a policy to substantially reduce poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa.
- ◆ **Resolved:** The United States Federal Government should provide non-military, government to government aid to sub-Saharan Africa.
- ◆ **Resolved:** The United States Federal Government should establish a policy to provide substantial development assistance to Sub-Saharan Africa.
- ◆ **Resolved:** The United States Federal Government should establish a policy significantly reducing poverty among Majority World women.
- ◆ **Resolved:** The United States Federal Government should establish a policy to increase economic stability for women living in Africa.

Sample Cases to Be Debated

- ◆ Debt Relief
- ◆ Direct Foreign Aid
- ◆ Conditional Aid
- ◆ Education Programs
- ◆ Expansion of Peace Corp Programs
- ◆ Transparency Programs
- ◆ AIDS Education
- ◆ AIDS Funding
- ◆ Mosquito Nets/Insecticide
- ◆ Medical Resources/Training
- ◆ Micro Credits
- ◆ Loans
- ◆ NGO Coordination
- ◆ Food Assistance
- ◆ Contraceptive Distribution/Education

Resources Available

This topic offers a breadth of research opportunities that should allow any team to be prepared for the topic. There is a wealth of information available on the web, in the form of articles by members of think tanks, advocacy groups, and policy analysts. There are a number of current books on the subject of alleviating poverty and debt relief, with a multitude of approaches. Finally, the increased attention this issue has received in the past year will undoubtedly lead to more scholarly work to supplement the existing wealth of information. This topic should offer an ideal of combination of a topic that is both easy to research and challenging for students.

Topic Balance

While the potential number of countries and topics may seem to favor the Affirmative, there are a number of limits that should make the debates even-sided. Given the huge number of proposals for dealing with the problems of Africa, the Negative should have strong case negative and potential counterplans—both specific and generic, for almost any case. Kritik ground is also strong for the Negative, given the potential implications of a resolution that requires the United States to give assistance to Africa. I believe the topic will present a fair challenge to both sides, with better-researched teams being more successful.

Timeliness

There is no more timely topic than poverty reduction in Africa. While Africa has been on the periphery of some recent topics, we have never selected Africa, or even an African nation as the focus of a resolution (National Forensics League). Given the critical situation in Africa today, it is essential that our students be exposed to the problems of Africa, so that they can be part of the solution. It has been over 10 years since we have considered a topic dealing with poverty in any form—another subject that is long overdue. World attention on the problems of African poverty has never been higher—and this is the time for our students to approach the topic.

Interest

I believe that students and judges will embrace this topic, because it will force an examination of an area that many people overlook. There should be sharp, interesting debates on point under this topic, given the availability of evidence. The wide-ranging nature of the topic, combined with media attention, make this a topic that our communities will want to see—and one that they should.

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