



American Model United Nations

Economic Commission for Africa

**Report to the Economic Commission for Africa
on Addressing poverty and vulnerability in
Africa during the COVID-19 pandemic**

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1 Executive Summary

2 The Economic Commission for Africa is pleased to present the Economic and Social Council’s final report on
3 the topic of Addressing Poverty and Vulnerability in Africa during the COVID-19 Pandemic. The following report
4 covers a wide variety of subtopics: healthcare issues, prevention of pandemics and new outbreaks, economic diversi-
5 fication to intra-continental trade and development that can help mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on
6 poverty.

7 Chapter I begins with recommendations for improving preventative measures for health crises, including
8 the use of early warning systems. The body then recommends improvement of vaccine accessibility, medication
9 availability, the performance readiness of hospitals and Economic and Social Council-coordinated temporary clinics.
10 Lastly, the body makes recommendations to promote medical education for African youth, provide training and
11 instruction for the use of new medical equipment and to improve telehealth services.

12 The chapter then moves to suggestions regarding the economy, emphasizing how reliance on a single resource
13 for a Member State’s economy can have detrimental impacts. The recommendations consist of increasing economic
14 diversity by expanding into multiple sectors. Additional suggestions include increasing the price floor of each Member
15 State’s economy, promoting job opportunities and aiding the sustainability of the agricultural sector.

16 Chapter I ends by encouraging further financial aid focused on economic growth. The report then considers
17 facilitating intra-continental trade, developing transportation infrastructure, creating sustainable business models
18 and utilizing Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers.

19 Chapter II details the deliberations of the body for recommendations on topic II. The body held multiple pro-
20 ductive discussions regarding healthcare, prevention of future pandemics, economic challenges, and intra-continental
21 trade. The body then discussed economic diversity and how external conflicts can have a negative impact on the
22 economies of African Member States that are reliant upon one resource or industry. We then deliberated on ideas
23 regarding broadening and diversifying these economies in order to circumvent the aforementioned issues. Finally,
24 the body recognizes possible solutions are intra-continental trade, infrastructure development, increasing internet
25 access, energy access, building sustainable business models and utilizing Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers. The
26 Economic Commission on Africa believes these solutions will help lift millions of people out of poverty and increase
27 Gross Domestic Product immensely.

28 **2 Matters Calling for Action**

29 **2.1 Health**

30 The Economic Commission for Africa recommends that Member States adopt early warning systems for the
31 detection of communicable diseases that can become epidemics and pandemics.

32 The body recommends that Member States engage in active participation with organizations such as the
33 International Health Regulations (IHR) and Joint External Evaluations (JEE).

34 The body recommends the continued support of vaccine rollout campaigns in African Member States, such
35 as the efforts of World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund, Gavi
36 and the Vaccine Alliance and encourages prioritizing rural populations.

37 The body recommends that the African Union promotes the access to proper medication to combat diseases
38 to prevent an increase in hospitalizations, intensive care admissions and, ultimately, higher mortality rates.

39 We favor expanding health services for needy populations by distributing appropriate medication.

40 We also recommend funding health management programs.

41 The body recommends the United Nations Economic and Social Council to coordinate the opening of tem-
42 porary clinics and the provision of material and human resources in times of crises.

43 The body further recommends the allocation of resources to strengthen the avenues designed to aid in medical
44 emergencies prior to crises, including promoting education and training for youth to access the medical field in Africa.

45 The Economic Commission for Africa also recommends that any new medical equipment sent to Member
46 States should be accompanied by instructional resources and maintenance information.

47 The Economic Commission for Africa also recommends the furthering of development and advancement of
48 healthcare infrastructure in African Member States, including telehealth medicine, with a focus on rural areas.

49 **2.2 Economics**

50 The Economic Commission of Africa understands that pandemics like COVID-19 can negatively affect Mem-
51 ber States with single-industry economies. We recognize the need for diversity within each Member State's economy
52 instead of relying on a single-industry economy to help build resilience against poverty and vulnerability in African
53 Member States. The body recommends that Member States begin to integrate an increased focus on tourism, agri-
54 culture, entrepreneurship, service and other industries to shift away from this reliance on a single industry in their
55 economy.

56 Africa's rapidly increasing youth populations pose issues for the supply and quality of jobs available to
57 African youth populations. This contributes to higher poverty rates as well as lower morale among youth populations.
58 Member States must work to provide high-quality meaningful jobs in the public sectors for young African youth.
59 Many Member States face the challenge of an educated workforce that is overqualified for existing employment
60 opportunities available within their Member State.

61 We acknowledge the need for cooperation among African Member States in regard to a mercantile economy
62 that would give more economic options to landlocked African Member States. This cooperation would also stimulate
63 economic diversity within the continent of Africa.

64 We recognize that many African Member States have a large reliance on the oil industry in sustaining their
65 economy and therefore we suggest the need for Member States to broaden their economies by investing in other
66 industries, specific to their own needs and resources.

67 We recognize the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the informal economy and specifically on
68 sex workers, with many of these workers becoming more impoverished. The committee recommends providing sex
69 workers with healthcare and aid.

70 The Economic Commission for Africa recognizes the effects of colonization and a history of unfair labor and
71 trade practices on the economic prosperity of African Member States. These exploitative practices have undermined
72 Africa's ability for sustainability and left the continent vulnerable to outside stressors. In order to better prepare

73 African Member States, the body believes a recommendation regarding price floors on certain agricultural commodity
74 exports must be made to the United Nations Economic and Social Council.

75 The Economic Commission of Africa recognizes that agricultural sectors in African Member States account
76 for a substantial portion of their economies. The critical role that sustainable farming methods play in achieving food
77 security, preserving the environment, and promoting socio-economic development must be acknowledged. In light
78 of this, we recommend a comprehensive approach for Member States to encourage new farming methods through
79 education and research with a strong emphasis on sustainability. These include expanding the range of crops grown,
80 improving soil conservation and improved land usage, and improving seed production through the use of technology.

81 **2.3 Trade**

82 The Economic Commission of Africa affirms the use of funding for the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers
83 (PRSP).

84 The Economic Commission of Africa requests funding for improving sustainable and inclusive business models
85 among African Member States that contribute to job creation and economic growth.

86 The Economic Commission of Africa highly encourages intra-continental trade between the Member States
87 of Africa. This includes the trade of energy by Member States with hydroelectric production to provide energy to
88 landlocked Member States with communities in need.

89 The Economic Commission of Africa highly encourages intra-continental trade between the Member States
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91 landlocked Member States with communities in need.

92 **3 Considerations of Addressing poverty and vulnerability in Africa dur-** 93 **ing the COVID-19 pandemic**

94 **3.1 Health**

95 Africa has struggled with COVID-19 education for over three years, marked by the absence of precautionary
96 measures, such as the failure to post social distancing indicators, proper hand washing signs and vaccine clinic
97 promotions. Despite having a population of 1,216,000,000 people, Africa only saw 31.1 percent of people to be fully
98 vaccinated. All of these issues contributed to the death of 255,000 Africans. To prevent this from happening again,
99 the World Health Organization must be transparent in their efforts to prevent a future pandemic. One thing that
100 can be done is reaching out to rural and urban communities alike with educational campaigns on how to stop the
101 spread of diseases. The African Center for Disease Control and Prevention must educate members of the community
102 on the proper way to wash hands, wearing masks when the transmission rates of communicable diseases are high and
103 receiving available vaccines.

104 The Economic Commission for Africa understands the importance of early warning alert systems in ensuring
105 that health crises are handled early and global transmission and outbursts are prevented. We believe that detecting
106 these communicable disease outbreaks early ensures reduction of preventable morbidity and mortality. There are
107 already resources available in place that support those detection efforts, including WHO's Early Warning, Alert
108 and Response System (EWARS). WHO even offers an option of EWARS in a box, allowing the local community
109 leaders to easily communicate any suspicions of a disease in real time and get alerted about cases occurring in
110 similar places. Additionally, increased monitoring of wastewater could allow governments to estimate prevalence of
111 COVID-19 within committees and predict major COVID-19 waves.

112 The Joint External Evaluation (JEE) is a voluntary process that Member States can participate in to
113 assess their preparedness for and handling of outbreaks, epidemics and pandemics. JEE helps nations point out
114 gaps in not just human health, but also animal health systems in order to enhance preparedness. Many African
115 Member States that participate are not scoring above the "not ready" zone as outlined by the JEE. This takes into
116 consideration factors such as national laboratory systems, workforce development, emergency response operations,
117 national legislation such as policy and financing, biosafety and biosecurity and real time surveillance. Many Member
118 States are in compliance with the International Health Regulations (IHR) to mandatory self report certain outbreaks
119 and public health events, as well as an annual self report on their compliance with these regulations, yet there are
120 many Member States that have not completed this in recent years.

121 An unfortunate outcome of COVID-19 was its associative diseases. The pandemic consequently increased
122 health problems, namely malaria and anemia. Although these diseases were previously present in African Member
123 States, the pandemic exacerbated the extent of their effects on the population's health. This was reflected by a 12
124 percent global increase in Malaria mortality during 2020 the peak year for COVID-19.

125 As collateral damage, poverty became intensified because individuals did not receive the proper care normally
126 provided by domestic policies. There were shortages in pills, vaccines and other forms of medication. Even if the
127 proper treatment was available, many individuals couldn't afford to purchase it. This issue must be addressed,
128 otherwise African Member States will suffer severe consequences, such as high mortality rates.

129 Hospitals in Africa have struggled with inadequate funding and resources even before the COVID-19 pan-
130 demic. Due to lack of preventative measures, the pandemic has set behind Africa's healthcare institutions and affects
131 what we still see today. Although hospitals are deficient in budget and resources, the body discussed lack of training
132 in hospitals and poor management. These drawbacks have caused substantial turmoil for hospitals which have been
133 amplified due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It is the will of the body to address these healthcare disparities in order
134 to ensure that states are recuperating from the pandemic, which continues to have a negative impact on African
135 countries today.

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141 to ensure that states are recuperating from the pandemic, which continues to have a negative impact on African
142 countries today.

143 The Economic Commission of Africa believes replacing strict prevention laws with loose policies would
144 protect a Member State from the spread of this deadly disease while at the same time give room to economic growth.

145 States should also consider adapting strategies from Member States that have a better success rate with
146 economic growth post-COVID-19. Some Member States were better than others in handling the aftermath of
147 COVID-19 and learning from others and helping each other is a key way to avoid resource wasting.

148 Another important aspect that Member States need to consider and utilize is technology. Use of technology
149 such as the internet can be utilized to avoid contact and prevent the spread of Covid-19 while also helping the
150 development of a country's economy. In conclusion, the Economic Commission for Africa believes efficient use of
151 technology is an important aspect Member States need to consider as well.

152 The body agrees that a state cannot economically recover from a pandemic if the direct health effects of the
153 pandemic are still present and if a state is still vulnerable to future health crises. This is why the body has focused
154 on improving health infrastructure and health awareness in addition to addressing economic and financial methods of
155 combating pandemic-induced poverty. By improving on health infrastructure and health awareness, Member States
156 would be better prepared for a future health crisis, thus lessening the effects a future crisis would have on a Member
157 State's economy and individuals' poverty.

158 **3.2 Economics**

159 The body of the Economic Committee of Africa acknowledged the fact that the COVID-19 pandemic exac-
160 erbated the high level of poverty that already existed within the continent of Africa. This was shown to be especially
161 harmful to Member States whose economies were based on a single industry. The Russo-Ukrainian war is a prime
162 example of this interdependence. When the Russian Federation's currency plummeted to a value of zero, it made
163 it difficult for African Member States to sell oil to Russia which was previously a main export partner. Therefore,
164 Member States with a large reliance on oil were largely negatively impacted.

165 There is a need for the diversification of the economy within each African Member State. Member States such
166 as the delegations of Equatorial Guinea, Algeria, Angola and other African Member States rely on oil as a major
167 economic sector. This has caused issues in terms of poverty and vulnerability and therefore the body discussed
168 broadening the economy to other sectors such as tourism, mercantile, agriculture, entrepreneurship and service,
169 amongst others.

170 The Delegation of Cote d'Ivoire and the Delegation of Burkina Faso brought to the attention of the body
171 that there should be a focus on incentivizing entrepreneurship and addressing the informal economy in which many
172 Member States rely on. Furthermore, the delegations of Equatorial Guinea, Nigeria and other Member States
173 considered uplifting the agricultural sector, focusing on addressing food insecurity, promoting more sustainable
174 farming practices and advocating for farmers and their livelihoods.

175 The Delegation of Kenya mentioned the climate crisis facing the continent of Africa and how large of a focus
176 our recommendations should rely on the sector of agriculture. The Delegation of Rwanda also commented on how
177 these climate crises are also causing different conflicts and instabilities in the region. This increases the hardship
178 faced by the population trying to work in these spaces, such as a worsening of herder-on-farmer violence as viable
179 land becomes more competitive. The body made reference to a worsening herder-on-farmer violence, as land that
180 is viable for farming and herding becomes more competitive. The Delegation of Burkina Faso noted the difficulty
181 facing African Member States that rely heavily on agriculture and mineral exports and their ability to effectively
182 fight the climate crisis without international aid.

183 Regarding the agricultural sector, the body discussed that within each Member State, instead of increasing
184 the quantity of corporations and organizations within the agricultural sector, just improving what already exists.
185 The Delegation of South Africa and the Delegation of Niger explained the need to respect the traditional practices
186 of agriculture by providing the tools and education for farmers to switch to more sustainable practices but not
187 necessarily changing it.

188 The Delegation of Burkina Faso made a recommendation regarding price floors on certain agricultural com-
189 modity exports in order to prevent the further exploitation of African Member States. The body made reference
190 to colonization of a number of African Member States and a history of disadvantageous trade agreements between
191 African Member States and developed countries.

192 The Delegation of South Africa discussed the rising youth population that is also facing high unemployment
193 rates which were exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. While there are many educated individuals, they are

194 having difficulty finding quality jobs. There is a lack of institutions in place to accommodate the educated workforce
195 to be able to work. We recognized the need for more employment opportunities to be created, but acknowledged
196 that gaining funding for these creations would be a challenge. However, the Delegation of Ghana noted that abrupt
197 changes in the economy, such as an increase in industrialization within the Member States, can negatively impact
198 the economy.

199 Additionally, the Delegation of South Africa discussed the effect of COVID-19 on sex workers within the
200 informal economy and proposed that each Member StateMember State provides healthcare and aid to those workers.

201 The Delegation of Kenya introduced the idea that when requesting funding for these proposed programs and
202 projects that would help reduce poverty, that funding is not taken away from other programs that are essential for
203 Member States.

204 **3.3 Trade**

205 The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) is the second largest trade organization in the world and
206 is not used to its full potential. Currently, 15 percent of African trade is intra-continental and the rest is international
207 trade. However, we recognize that during the pandemic, the shut down of the global market negatively impacted
208 all African Member States and their ability to get the supplies they needed. Stepping away from globalization and
209 focusing on the African Union will help prevent future international conflicts from impacting Africa's ability to access
210 necessary goods and services. Because of this, the African Continental Free Trade Area is an avenue that will prevent
211 instability and promote Gross Domestic Product (GDP) today. The United Nations projects that increasing intra-
212 continental trade will increase Africa's income up to \$450 billion US dollars by 2035. Overall, growth in GDP has
213 the ability to open the economic market and create new job opportunities. The effects of this will help individuals
214 and families have disposable income above the current poverty amount.

215 The Economic Commission for Africa encourages negotiation between landlocked Member States and those
216 with waterway access. Allowing the use of these ports would allow for more international trade for Member States.
217 To facilitate international and intra-continental trade, we suggest the creation of railroads to transport raw materials
218 or agricultural products is needed. The benefit of developing these roads, railways and waterways will allow for trade
219 opportunities at a lower cost; additionally, it will also make the transportation of goods and services much more
220 efficient and accessible to the public.

221 The Economic Commission for Africa recognizes the need for energy in impoverished communities across
222 Africa. Forty-three percent of people on the continent of Africa lack access to electricity. We encourage agreements
223 between Member States which facilitate the connection of power to areas in need. This would also include hydroelec-
224 tric power being provided to areas in need, more specifically Member States that are landlocked. Furthermore, with
225 further emphasis in other parts of the report, the Economic Commission for Africa feels that Africa's reliance on oil is
226 a hindrance and could be negated by a switch to sustainable renewable resources. In addition to energy, the Economic
227 Commission for Africa acknowledges sentiments towards limited access to the internet in impoverished communities.
228 Without access to the internet, there is increasingly limited access and promotion of each Member State's economy.
229 The Economic Commission for Africa strongly encourages the body to consider developing infrastructure around
230 internet access for impoverished communities throughout Africa. We feel that with the everchanging times, internet
231 access is becoming a necessity to develop one's country and communities. This body additionally recommends the
232 expansion of Member States' internet access to allow easier access for all people. Only thirty-six percent of Africa
233 has access to the internet. However, the International Telecommunication Union predicts that if internet access were
234 able to grow by ten percent, then the continental GDP would grow by two and five tenths percent per capita.

235 Improving sustainable and inclusive business models among African Member States is crucial for fostering
236 positive change. By focusing on creating businesses that are environmentally friendly, socially responsible and
237 economically viable, we can achieve multiple benefits. Firstly, these models can lead to job creation, providing
238 employment opportunities for local communities and helping to alleviate poverty. Secondly, they can contribute to
239 economic growth by attracting investments and fostering entrepreneurship. Lastly, by considering the needs and
240 aspirations of local communities, these business models can improve livelihoods and empower individuals to take
241 charge of their own economic futures.

242 Enhancing the implementation of efficient routines and processes is key to promoting economic stability in
243 African communities. By streamlining operations, reducing waste and optimizing resource utilization, organizations
244 can increase productivity and achieve better outcomes. This can lead to increased access to resources such as
245 education, healthcare and infrastructure, which are essential for sustainable development. Moreover, efficient routines

246 and processes can attract more investments and facilitate trade, creating a conducive environment for economic
247 growth and stability.

248 The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) approach was created by the World Bank and International
249 Monetary Fund to reduce poverty. Member States have the opportunity to fill out this paper with the goal to
250 reduce poverty and promote growth in Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC). The majority of HIPC are African
251 Member States and would greatly benefit from receiving funding. This funding would help support infrastructure
252 development which would radiate positive effects onto opening trade, providing access to electricity and internet,
253 and bolster business models to continue the flow of capital. In further research, this committee has discovered that
254 Member States have not kept up with the HIPC Initiative and are not writing a PRSP. The Economic Commission
255 for Africa urges the body to resume work on and within the HIPC Initiative. We recognize the reluctance to involve
256 the International Monetary Fund; however, there are billions of dollars in funds to help reduce poverty for HIPC.
257 These funds are explicitly for poverty reduction alone. The Economic Commission for Africa emphasizes the usage
258 of already existing programs and organizations to work within other initiatives.

259 **4 Adoption of the Report**

260 At its meeting on 21 November 2023, the draft report of the Economic Commission for Africa was made
261 available for consideration. The Commission considered the report and with no amendments, adopted the report by
262 consensus. Passed by consensus, with 0 abstentions.

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