



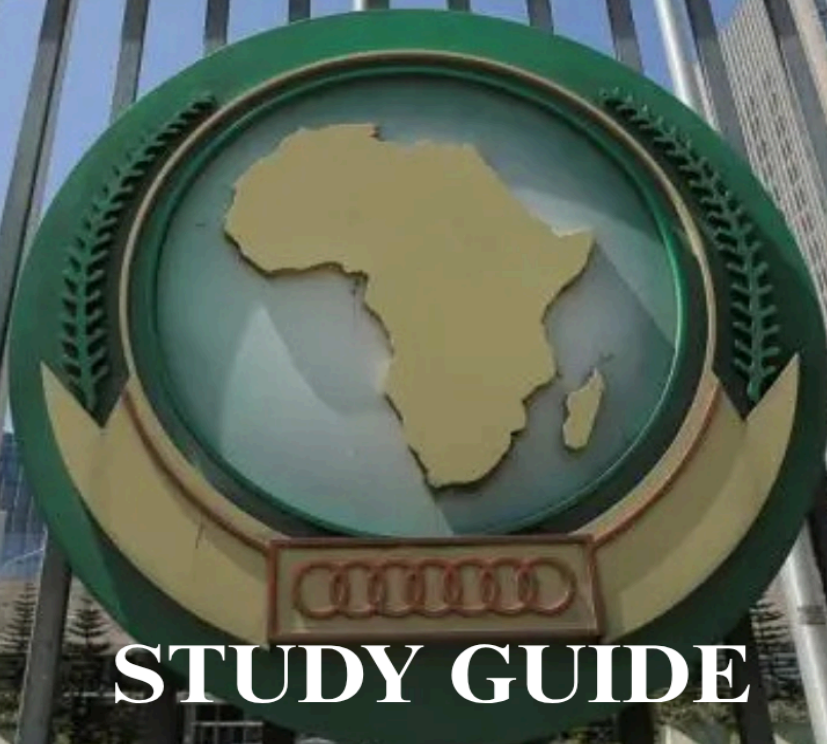
**UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON  
THE DEVELOPMENT OF AFRICA**



**AGENDA:**

Addressing the Exploitation of Resources  
in the African Subcontinent.

# UNCEDA



**STUDY GUIDE**



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## LETTER FROM THE BUREAU

Dear delegates,

It is with great pleasure that we, the bureau members, welcome you all to the Shishukunj Model United Nations 2025, and further, to the United Nations Commission on the Development of Africa committee. We are extremely excited to serve as the bureau for this committee, and we hope that you are equally thrilled.

The United Nations Commission on the Development of Africa is an international commission responsible for promoting Africa's sustainable development. It maintains the focus on careful operations and facility construction. Uniting Africa and forging global partnerships, the committee offers pooled access to Africa's resource wealth. The UNCDA also supports environmental protection, education & technology — striving to develop African countries through sustainable development methods.

The agenda under discussion in this committee is '**Addressing the Exploitation of Resources in the African Subcontinent**'. This topic holds significant importance as it tackles a deeply rooted issue that originated during the colonial era and has continued and even worsened through modern economic and political systems. It underscores the urgent need to confront historical injustices and ongoing practices that deprive African nations of their rightful share in the wealth generated from their resources.

A helpful study guide has been designed to help you understand the main issues, causes, and effects better. We advise you to go through it thoroughly. However, we expect you not to limit your research to the study guide and to comprehend more about the agenda as well as your country's stance on the agenda. We remind you that plagiarism and the use of AI are strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated. We expect genuine and authentic work and research from all delegates. We would like to remind you that the case study of the Democratic Republic of Congo will be subject to debate and discussion in the committee.

Last but surely not least, we stand with each one of you every step of the way. Feel free to reach out to us if you have any concerns or questions. Our only goal is to make this conference enlightening and memorable. We wish you the best and look forward to active participation from each one of you.

Looking forward to meeting you all!

Regards,

**Falguni Athale** | Co-Chairperson

**Isha Maheshwari** | Co-Chairperson

**Anay Jain** | Vice Chairperson



## **INTRODUCTION TO THE COMMITTEE**

The United Nations Commission on the Development of Africa (UNCDA) plays a vital role in promoting sustainable development and equitable growth across the African continent. As an international body, it works to ensure that development efforts are carefully planned, inclusive, and environmentally responsible. The commission prioritizes infrastructure development, responsible resource management, and capacity building while maintaining a focus on long-term benefits for African nations rather than short-term economic gains.

One of the UNCDA's key goals is to unite African countries under a shared vision of progress and to foster global partnerships that support this mission. By encouraging collaboration between nations, the commission facilitates pooled access to Africa's rich resources in a way that benefits local communities and strengthens economic sovereignty.

In addition to economic planning, the UNCDA places strong emphasis on critical sectors such as environmental protection, education, healthcare, and technological innovation. These pillars are seen as essential to breaking cycles of poverty, enhancing governance, and equipping future generations to lead. Through its efforts, the UNCDA aims to transform Africa's resource wealth into inclusive, people-centered development, ensuring that no community is left behind in the journey toward a prosperous and self-reliant Africa.





## **INTRODUCTION TO THE AGENDA**

Africa is a continent rich with vast and diverse natural resources, ranging from precious minerals and oil to fertile land. Since the 15th century, these resources have attracted the attention of global powers and multinational corporations, whose economic ambitions and greed have often overshadowed the continent's development priorities. Despite Africa's abundant wealth, many of its nations continue to grapple with poverty, underdevelopment, and socio-political instability—conditions frequently aggravated by the exploitative practices surrounding resource extraction.

For centuries, powerful countries and multinational corporations have been drawn to Africa's wealth. Their involvement has shaped the continent's history, from the colonial era—when European powers divided up Africa to control its resources—to the present day, where global companies and foreign governments continue to deprive Africa of its resources. While these actors gain profits, local communities often suffer from displacement, unfair treatment, poor working conditions, trauma, and a lack of the necessities of life.

The impact on people is profound. In many mining and oil-producing regions, local communities face pollution, land grabs, and forced displacement. Child labor and poor working conditions are common, especially in informal mining sectors. Marginalized groups, including women and indigenous people, are often the most affected, facing discrimination and limited access to education, healthcare, and jobs. The lack of investment in human development keeps many communities trapped in poverty, even as billions of dollars worth of resources are extracted from their lands. The environmental consequences are equally serious. Oil spills, toxic waste, deforestation, and land degradation threaten Africa's unique ecosystems and the health of its people.

Financially, Africa faces significant exploitation through unfair trade agreements, tax evasion by multinational entities, illicit financial flows, and debt traps linked to resource-backed loans. These mechanisms drain the continent's wealth, hinder economic sovereignty, and limit the capacity of African nations to invest in infrastructure, social services, and human capital development.

Addressing the exploitation of resources in Africa requires a comprehensive, multi-dimensional approach that recognizes the historical context, present drivers, and impacts involved. Only through equitable policies, transparent governance, and international cooperation can Africa's resource wealth be harnessed to promote sustainable development, social justice, and economic empowerment for all its people.



## IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS AND TREATIES

1. **United Nations Declaration on the Right to Development (1986):** The UN Declaration on the Right to Development affirms that development is a human right. It emphasizes that every individual and all people are entitled to participate in, contribute to, and enjoy economic, social, cultural, and political development.
2. **UN General Assembly Resolution 1803 (XVII) – Permanent Sovereignty over Natural Resources (1962)<sup>1</sup>:** Affirms the right of nations to full control over their natural resources, a key principle for combating foreign exploitation.
3. **UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs, 2015) :**
  - a. Goal 8: Decent work and economic growth
  - b. Goal 10: Reduced inequalities
  - c. Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities
  - d. Goal 12: Responsible consumption and production
  - e. Goal 16: Peace, justice, and strong institutions
4. **Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want (African Union, 2013)** A strategic framework by the African Union (AU) focusing on inclusive and sustainable development, resource governance, and continental self-reliance.
5. **General Act of the Conference of Berlin Respecting the Congo (1885):** The General Act of the Berlin Conference was the formal outcome of the Berlin Conference, where 14 European powers (including Britain, France, Germany, Belgium, and Portugal) gathered to regulate the colonization and trade in Africa, particularly around the Congo Basin. Although framed as a humanitarian effort, the true purpose was to prevent conflict between European powers as they divided Africa among themselves — with no African nations present or consulted.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2025-01/Sovereignty-over-natural-resources-GA-res-1803-XVII.pdf>



## KEY WORDS

1. **Neocolonialism** - The use of economic, political, cultural, or other pressures to control or influence other countries, especially former dependencies.
2. **Triangular Slave Trade** - European colonial forces purchased or seized Africans as slaves, who were then sold to the Caribbean and American territories to cultivate cash crops for the colonial powers.
3. **Brain Drain** - The movement of highly skilled and educated people from one country to another country where they can work in better conditions and earn more money.
4. **Marginalized Communities** - groups of people who are relegated to the edges of society, facing disadvantages and exclusion from mainstream social, economic, and political life
5. **Systemic Discrimination** - A type of discrimination that is embedded within the rules, policies, and practices of an organization or society, rather than being the result of individual actions.
6. **Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)** - Individuals who have been forced to flee their homes due to conflict, violence, human rights violations, or natural or human-made disasters, but who remain within the borders of their own country.
7. **Gross Domestic Product(GDP)** - The total monetary value of all goods and services produced within a country's borders in a specific period.
8. **Tax Evasion** - an illegal act of deliberately avoiding paying taxes owed to the government
9. **Trade Agreement** - a formal agreement between two or more countries that outlines the rules for how they will trade with each other
10. **Fundamental Rights** - The basic human rights and freedoms that are guaranteed to every citizen of the country by its constitution or legal system which cannot be denied.
11. **Underemployment** - Underemployment occurs when individuals are employed but not working at their full potential, either in terms of the hours they work, the skills they use, or the wages they earn.



- 12. Pipeline Vandalism** - The deliberate damage or destruction of pipelines, often to steal oil or other petroleum products, or for sabotage. It's a form of property crime with potentially severe consequences for the environment.
- 13. Sabotage** - The damage that is done on purpose and secretly to prevent an enemy or a competitor from being successful, for example, by destroying machinery, roads, bridges, etc.
- 14. Artisanal Miners** - Individuals or small groups who extract minerals from the earth using rudimentary techniques and tools, often without formal employment by a mining company.
- 15. Resource - loans** - Countries access to finance in exchange for, or collateralized by, future streams of income from their natural resource wealth.
- 16. Displacement** - The movement of individuals or groups from their homes or habitual residences, often due to factors like armed conflict, natural disasters, or human rights violations, making them relocate to a different area.
- 17. Refugee Camp** - A temporary settlement established to provide shelter and necessities for individuals who have been forced to flee their home countries due to conflict, persecution, or natural disasters.



## HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The exploitation of Africa's vast and diverse natural resources dates back to the 15th century when European powers began their expeditions along the African coasts. Portugal was the first to establish trade links, exchanging European goods for African gold, ivory, and slaves<sup>2</sup>. This marked the beginning of a long history of exploitative relationships between Africa and external powers.

By the 17th and 18th centuries, the triangular slave trade became a dominant form of exploitation. Millions of Africans were forcibly taken from their lands and sold as labor across the Americas, generating immense wealth for colonial powers while devastating African societies.<sup>3</sup>

During the colonial period, European nations divided Africa among themselves in what is known as the "Scramble for Africa" in the Berlin Conference 1884-85.<sup>4</sup> During this "Scramble for Africa," colonial powers, instead of focusing on the development, infrastructure, and political stability of Africa, were primarily interested in extracting raw materials to satisfy their greed. Africa's gold, diamonds, rubber, copper, and oil were extracted and exported in massive quantities, often through forced labor and violent coercion. The Belgian exploitation of the Congo under King Leopold II is one of the most famous examples—King Leopold II granted large areas to private companies that used brutal methods to extract rubber, causing an estimated 10 million deaths between 1880 and 1920. These companies held government-like powers, including control over violence and taxes, and relied on fear and local leaders to meet quotas. The concessions were poorly planned, focused only on resource extraction, with little regard for infrastructure or the well-being of the people.<sup>5</sup>

During the colonial period, European powers built infrastructure in Africa—such as railways and ports—mainly to extract and export raw materials, not to benefit local communities. They discouraged local manufacturing and forced African economies to rely on exporting raw resources and importing finished European goods, which kept Africa economically dependent.<sup>6</sup> Traditional systems of governance were either dismantled or taken over by colonial authorities, making it easier for Europeans to control the population. Additionally, colonial borders were drawn without regard for Africa's diverse ethnic or cultural groups, but instead to benefit

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<sup>2</sup> [Southern Africa - European and African interaction from the 15th through the 18th century | Britannica](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Transatlantic Slave Trade | Causes & Effects | Britannica](#).

<sup>4</sup> [Berlin Conference | 1884, Result, Summary, & Impact on Africa | Britannica](#)

<sup>5</sup> [DR Congo: Cursed by its natural wealth - BBC News](#)

<sup>6</sup>

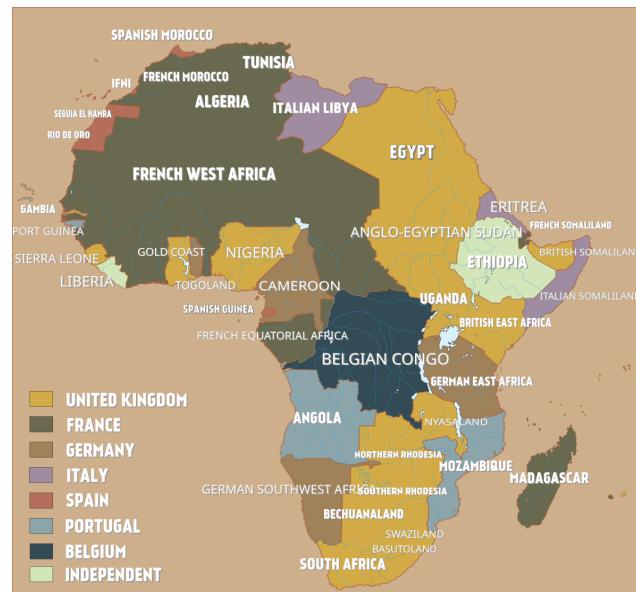
<https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/african-issues/article/abs/problems-of-industrialization-in-africa/BC281D58A6174E34D03B38238475AAAE>





European interests<sup>7</sup>, often splitting communities or forcing rival groups together. These actions left a legacy of economic dependency, weakened governance, and social divisions that still affect many African countries today.

After African countries gained independence in the mid-20th century, they achieved political freedom but remained economically dependent on former colonial powers. European countries and multinational corporations continued to control much of Africa's resources through trade deals and mining rights, and African economies stayed focused on exporting raw materials like minerals and oil, often at prices that were not in their favor. Most countries of Africa are still diagnosed with corrupt government structures, widespread poverty, and civil conflicts.<sup>8</sup>



## **Role of Global Powers and Multinational Corporations**

The exploitation of African resources by global powers and multinational companies has a long history, resulting in significant economic and social challenges across the continent. This exploitation, dating back to colonial times and continuing through neocolonialism<sup>9</sup>, has often prioritized external economic interests over the sustainable development and well-being of African nations, as explicitly mentioned above. During the colonial period, European powers systematically extracted vast natural resources from African nations, including minerals and

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<https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/colonial-borders-in-africa-improper-design-and-its-impact-on-african-border-land-communities>

8

<https://www.culturaldiplomacy.org/academy/content/pdf/participant-papers/africa/Ibrahimfarah-Kiamba-And-Mazon-go-Major-Challenges-Facing-Africa-In-The-21st-Century-A-Few-Provocative-Remarks.pdf>

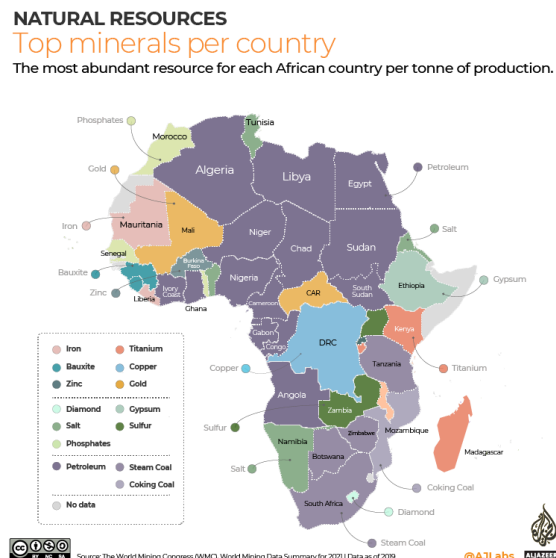
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[The ongoing exploitation of Africa | Revealing Histories](#)

agricultural products, at minimal costs<sup>10</sup>. Africa's self-sufficiency and equitable development have been hindered by this persistent pattern of exploitation, which has increased its reliance on outside powers. In order to achieve true economic justice and sustainable development throughout the continent, this imbalance must be addressed.

## **Economic Interests**

Global powers and multinational corporations (MNCs) have long been interested in Africa because of its rich supply of natural resources. The continent holds about 30% of the world's mineral reserves, including 40% of global gold, 90% of platinum, and 70% of coltan.<sup>11</sup> These resources are essential for industries like technology, construction, and renewable energy. By gaining access to Africa's raw materials, companies gain a lot of advantages, like reduced production costs and a steady supply of raw materials. Often, they sign unfair agreements with governments that lack bargaining power, allowing them to extract valuable resources at very low costs while avoiding taxes and regulations.



The economic interest in Africa also includes access to oil, agricultural land, and other natural assets. Since 2000, foreign investors have leased over 20 million hectares of land in Africa.<sup>12</sup> Meanwhile, billions of revenue have been lost to corruption, tax avoidance, and unfair trade agreements. So, whilst global powers and corporations gain huge profits and maintain economic dominance, African countries suffer from environmental damage and underdevelopment.

<sup>10</sup>

[Colonial Rule and Natural Resources Exploitation in Post-colonial Africa | SpringerLink](#)

<sup>11</sup> [Mapping Africa's natural resources | Maps News | Al Jazeera](#)

<sup>12</sup> [Land investments in Africa: a long-term move or a simple opportunity.](#)

## **Geopolitical Competition**

Geopolitical competition in Africa is intensifying as various nations compete eagerly for Africa's resources and strategic positioning on the continent. Countries such as China, the U.S., the U.K., and France are intensifying their presence across the continent. China has aggressively expanded its impact, particularly in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Zambia, by securing mining contracts and investing in infrastructure under the Belt and Road Initiative.<sup>13</sup> The U.S., aiming to counterbalance China, is strengthening ties with resource-rich African nations and supporting American corporations like Chevron in Nigeria. France, with historical ties in West Africa, continues to assert control over key sectors like uranium mining in Niger, vital to its nuclear energy program.<sup>14</sup>

This competition often sidelines African interests. Governments, in trying to attract foreign investment, offer favorable terms to corporations, resulting in weak regulation, limited taxation, and poor enforcement of environmental and labor standards. The rivalry between global powers turns Africa into a geopolitical battleground, where resource access is prioritized over sustainable development, sovereignty, and human rights.



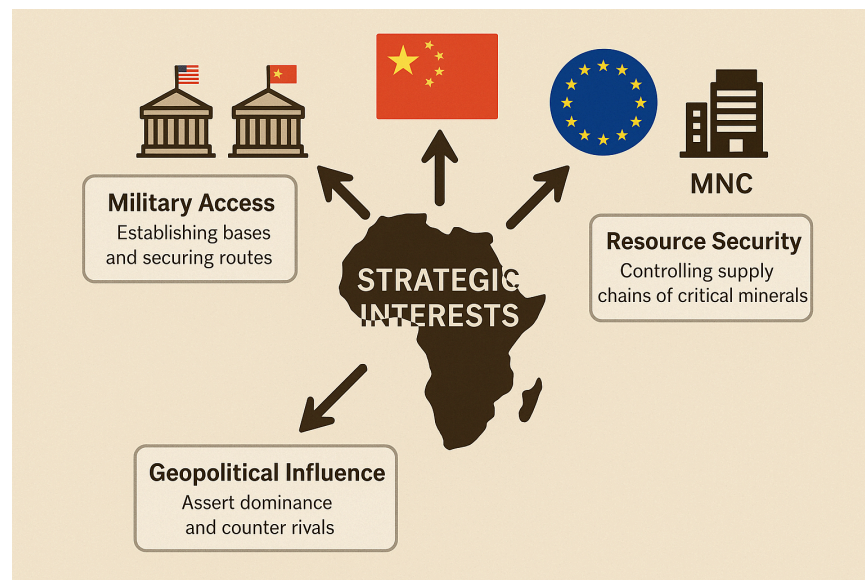
<sup>13</sup> [China's belt and road initiative: Implications in Africa](#)

<sup>14</sup> [Competing for Africa's Resources: How the US and China Invest in Critical Minerals • Stimson Center](#)

## **Strategic Interests**

Beyond economic profit, global powers and MNCs have pursued strategic interests in Africa to secure political influence, military access, and long-term control over essential global supply chains. Africa's geographic location gives it strategic military and trade advantages, including control of key sea trade routes like the Suez Canal and access to the Atlantic and Indian Oceans. Many global powers have established military bases or security agreements in African regions rich in resources.

Another important reason why global powers are interested in Africa is because of its valuable natural resources. Minerals like lithium, cobalt, and rare earths are in high demand because they are used in technology, green energy, and defense industries. Since Africa has large amounts of these minerals, many countries want to control their supply. For example, by 2030, Africa is expected to provide over half of the world's cobalt. To gain long-term access to these resources, powerful countries often invest in African infrastructure, offer loans, or build strong diplomatic relationships.



## **Effect on Human Resource**

In Africa, the potential of human resources is significantly affected by widespread poverty, limited access to quality education, inadequate healthcare, and high unemployment rates. Many African nations struggle to invest in their populations, leading to low skill development, brain drain, and underutilization of talent. These challenges hinder economic progress, reduce



productivity, and deepen inequality, preventing the continent from fully harnessing the energy and creativity of its young and growing population.

## **Socio-Economic Discrimination of Vulnerable Groups**

### **Indigenous Communities**

Across Africa, indigenous and minority communities continue to face displacement driven by political conflict, natural resource extraction, infrastructure development, and the expansion of tourism parks. Despite Africa's immense diversity—with over 3,000 ethnic groups—this has not translated into equitable access to power, resources, or representation. In many countries such as Nigeria, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Mauritania, marginalized communities remain excluded from decision-making and national development plans.

<sup>15</sup>Caste-affected and stigmatized groups like the Osu of Nigeria, Dime of Ethiopia, and Sab of Somalia face discrimination. They are often confined to low-status occupations, denied equal marriage rights, and labeled as "impure," reinforcing cycles of social exclusion.

<sup>16</sup>These inequalities are compounded by land dispossession, poor access to education and healthcare, and cultural appropriation. Displacement from ancestral lands further cuts them off from basic services and sustainable livelihoods. Failure to address these structural injustices has not only deepened poverty but also fueled tensions and conflicts in several regions.

### **Gender Inequality**

Gender inequality remains a deep-rooted issue across many African regions, affecting the social, economic, and political spheres. Sub-Saharan Africa, in particular, ranks as the worst-performing region in the United Nations Development Programme's Gender Inequality Index—a measure that reflects disparities in reproductive health, empowerment, and labor market participation between men and women.<sup>17</sup>

In social terms, women often face systemic discrimination and domination, especially within marriage.<sup>18</sup> West Africa reports some of the highest rates of child marriage in the world, with 44% of women aged 20 to 24 having been married before the age of 15. Countries like Niger and

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<sup>15</sup>  
[UNSSC Annual Report 2022](#)

<sup>16</sup>  
[Art In Tanzania](#)

<sup>17</sup>  
[Right for Education - Africa](#)

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[VOA](#)





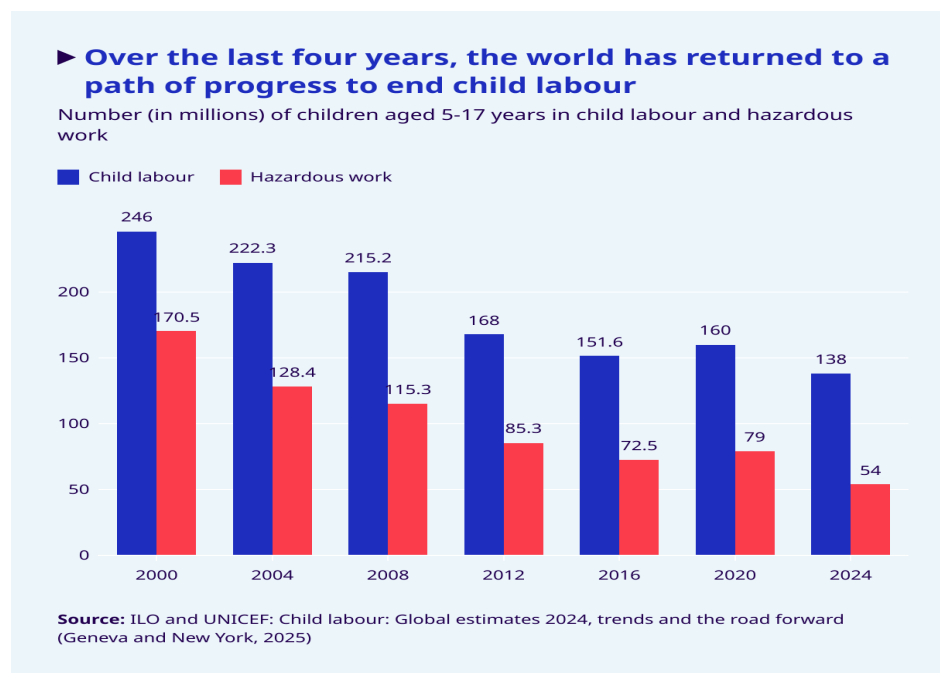
Mali show particularly high prevalence. Moreover, educational access is unequal, with girls at both the primary and secondary levels having significantly lower enrollment and completion rates compared to boys.

Economically, gender disparity is equally stark. The wage gap between men and women stands at 30%, meaning that for every dollar earned by a man, a woman earns only seventy cents. This disparity indicates a broader issue—Africa is not harnessing the full potential of its female population, thereby limiting its own development and economic growth.

In the political domain, women's representation is improving slowly but remains limited. As of 2018, women held only 24% of seats in national parliaments across Africa. Their presence in ministries and executive roles is even lower, with many countries falling short of the 30% target set by the Beijing Platform for Action (1995). For instance, Morocco, Nigeria, and Sudan have notably low female representation in mid-level government positions.

### Child Labour and Exploitation

<sup>19</sup>Africa bears the highest incidence of economically active children in the world, with 41% of children engaged in work. An estimated 72.1 million African children are in child labor, and 31.5 million are involved in hazardous work. Agriculture remains the largest sector, employing over 30% of children aged 10 to 14, especially in rural areas where poverty forces families to rely on child labor for survival.



<sup>19</sup> <https://www.ilo.org/media>



<sup>20</sup>What makes Africa's child labor crisis particularly alarming is the age profile: 59% of affected children are just 5–11 years old, 26% are 12–14, and 15% are 15–17, indicating that child labor in Africa skews much younger than in other regions.

<sup>21</sup>Beyond agriculture, many children—especially from impoverished families—are coerced into commercial exploitation, forced begging, illegal mining activities, and other dangerous activities. These practices not only rob children of their childhood and education but also expose them to lifelong physical and psychological harm.

Urgent, targeted intervention is essential to break this cycle of exploitation and protect the rights and futures of Africa's youngest generation.

### **Migration and Forced Displacement Challenges**

<sup>22</sup>Africa today faces all forms of migration—labor migration, refugee flows, and internal displacement—both within and beyond the continent. Over 31 million Africans live outside their country of birth, though most remain within Africa. Intra-regional migration, especially within West and Southern Africa, far outweighs migration to Europe, which accounts for only about 25% of African migrants.

<sup>23</sup>However, forced migration is rising sharply. Since 2018, the number of forcibly displaced people in Africa has doubled, driven by poverty, conflict, poor governance, and environmental disasters. Nine African countries, including Sudan, DRC, Somalia, Nigeria, Ethiopia, South Sudan, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, and the Central African Republic, account for over 90% of Africa's displaced population.

Refugee numbers have surged, with major crises in South Sudan, Nigeria, the Central African Republic, and Burundi. Initially concentrated in the Horn of Africa, refugee camps now extend across West and Southern Africa. Countries bearing the highest refugee burdens include Ethiopia, Kenya, Chad, and Uganda.

Alongside refugees, Africa has the largest number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) globally, with Nigeria, DRC, and Sudan among the worst affected. This widespread displacement continues to erode developmental gains and fuel irregular, unsafe migration—often with devastating consequences for individuals and communities alike.

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<sup>20</sup> <https://www.ilo.org/resource>

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.dol.gov/agencies>

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.un.org/en/academic-impact>

<sup>23</sup> [Africa Center for Strategic Studies](#)



### **Health Issues and Access to Healthcare**

Africa faces some of the most serious health challenges in the world. Compared to other regions, the continent carries a heavier burden of disease but has far fewer resources to respond effectively. This growing gap in health indicators between Africa and the rest of the world is deeply concerning.

<sup>24</sup>Several factors contribute to this crisis. Recurring natural disasters, poverty, poor economic performance, and frequent armed conflicts have severely affected living conditions and disrupted healthcare systems. Wars in many African countries have not only caused direct loss of life but have also destroyed food supplies and healthcare services, worsening the overall health situation.

<sup>25</sup>Epidemics such as malaria and tuberculosis have hit Africa particularly hard. Sub-Saharan Africa, for example, has been the worst affected by the HIV/AIDS epidemic since the 1980s. Inadequate sanitation, poor access to clean water, and weak healthcare infrastructure make it extremely difficult to control and prevent these diseases.

Poverty remains one of the biggest barriers to better health. Many people cannot afford basic treatment or even the cost of transport to healthcare facilities. Malnutrition, especially among children, is widespread and leads to long-term physical and mental health issues.

<sup>26</sup>The shortage of health workers is alarming. Africa accounts for 24% of the global disease burden but has only 3% of the world's health workforce. In Sub-Saharan Africa, there are just 1.3 health workers per 1,000 people, far below the WHO's recommended 4.5. Only 5% of Africans have access to safe surgical care, and the continent needs nearly 50 times more surgical professionals to meet basic needs.

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<sup>24</sup> <https://assets.kpmg.com/>

<sup>25</sup> <https://jliedu.ch/challenges-facing-public-health-in-africa>

<sup>26</sup> [African Mission Healthcare](#)



The lack of trained professionals, basic equipment, and healthcare facilities—especially in rural areas—makes this not just a regional issue but a global humanitarian crisis. Addressing Africa’s healthcare challenges demands urgent and sustained international support.

## **Educational Challenges**

Education is a fundamental right and a powerful driver of economic and social development. While many African nations have made progress in expanding access to education, deep-rooted barriers continue to prevent millions from receiving quality, equitable, and relevant learning opportunities.

<sup>27</sup>Access to education remains uneven across the continent, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, where approximately 28% of children and youth aged 6 to 18—around 98 million individuals—are out of school. Africa accounts for nearly 30% of the global out-of-school population. Educational disparities are influenced by gender, geography, poverty, and disability. Girls, in particular, are more likely to drop out due to early marriages, menstrual stigma, safety concerns, and gender-based violence. Children living in remote rural areas often face long distances to school, while those from low-income families struggle to afford essentials like uniforms, books, or transportation, even when schooling is officially free.

<sup>28</sup>Even where education is accessible, its quality is often poor. Overcrowded classrooms are common, with many public schools accommodating 50 to 100 students per teacher, far exceeding international standards. The shortage of trained educators is a serious concern, as Sub-Saharan Africa is projected to need 17 million additional teachers by 2030 to achieve universal primary and secondary education. Moreover, many school systems continue to use outdated curricula that do not align with the needs of modern labor markets, leaving students ill-equipped for employment. Infrastructure is another major hurdle, with numerous schools lacking basic facilities such as electricity, toilets, libraries, or science laboratories.

<sup>29</sup>Systemic issues further compound these challenges. Many African countries allocate only around 4.5% of their GDP to education, falling short of UNESCO’s recommended 6%. Colonial legacies still shape educational structures, often emphasizing rote learning over creativity and critical thinking. Corruption and mismanagement drain education budgets and hinder reforms. Higher education faces its struggles, including low enrollment rates, a mismatch between degrees and market needs, and a continuing brain drain, as talented students seek better opportunities abroad due to under-resourced universities and limited research facilities.

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<sup>27</sup> <https://www.jica.go.jp/Resource>

<sup>28</sup> [Evolufy Africa](#)

<sup>29</sup> [uis.unesco.org](https://uis.unesco.org)



External disruptions, particularly armed conflicts and forced displacement, also severely affect educational access. Additionally, economic pressures lead many families to prioritize work over schooling, especially when the indirect costs of education become burdensome.

The impact of weak education systems in Africa is far-reaching. It slows economic growth by creating an unskilled labor force and contributes to high levels of unemployment and underemployment. Social inequality becomes more entrenched, increasing the risk of instability and unrest. Furthermore, without proper education, innovation and entrepreneurship are stifled, limiting Africa's potential to compete in the global economy.

In conclusion, the condition of education in African countries remains critical, with a complex web of challenges that span access, quality, equity, and relevance. While strides have been made in expanding primary education, meaningful progress requires deeper investment, systemic reform, and collaborative efforts between governments, civil society, and international partners. Education is not only a right—it is the cornerstone of Africa's sustainable development and long-term prosperity.

## **Impact on Environment and Natural Resources**

The extraction and exploitation of natural resources in Africa have had profound and lasting impacts on the continent's environment. Driven by both domestic demand and global market pressures, activities such as oil drilling, mining, and large-scale land use have significantly altered ecosystems, degraded natural landscapes, and placed immense stress on local environments. These practices often occur with limited regulation, oversight, or concern for long-term environmental consequences, leading to a pattern of unsustainable development. As natural resource extraction intensifies, the need to critically assess its environmental cost becomes increasingly urgent—not only for Africa's future but for global ecological balance.

### **Oil Drilling, Spills, and Explosions**

Oil drilling operations in Africa have led to numerous environmental incidents, including significant oil spills and explosions, with Nigeria's Niger Delta being particularly affected. These incidents have resulted in widespread environmental damage, impacting water, soil, and air quality, and posing health risks to local communities<sup>30</sup>.

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<sup>30</sup>

[Timeline: Half a century of oil spills in Nigeria's Ogoniland | Environment | Al Jazeera](#)





Oil spills are a significant environmental hazard associated with crude oil exploration and processing in Africa, with numerous incidents recorded across the continent<sup>31</sup>. Nigeria, as Africa's largest oil producer, has experienced a disproportionately high number of spills. Explosions and accidents at oil drilling sites and refineries have also caused significant environmental damage and fatalities in Africa. Oil spills and accidents in Africa are often attributed to various factors, including inadequate maintenance of facilities, pipeline vandalism, sabotage, and equipment failure. Human error is estimated to cause 30%-50% of oil spills, while equipment failure accounts for 20%-40%. Blowouts and gas leaks are also prominent causes of accidents in the African region<sup>32</sup>.

### **Diamond and Strategic Mineral Exploitation**

The exploitation of diamonds and strategic minerals in Africa has significant environmental and social consequences, including habitat destruction, pollution, and the exacerbation of social issues like human rights abuses. The high demand for these resources, driven by global markets, puts immense pressure on African nations to increase extraction, often at a substantial environmental and human cost<sup>33</sup>.

Diamond mining poses significant environmental risks, leading to widespread land and water degradation. The methods used, such as open-pit, underground, and marine mining, are energy-intensive and can severely disrupt ecosystems.

### **Growth-Sustainability Conflict**

As previously mentioned, many powerful countries and big companies take natural resources like gold, oil, and special minerals from Africa. These materials are used to make things we use every day—like phones, cars, batteries, and even computers. But while these countries make money and build modern cities, the places in Africa where the resources come from get badly damaged. Trees are cut down, rivers become dirty, animals and people lose their homes, and the

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<sup>31</sup> [Latest Nigeria oil spill highlights 'wretched' state of the industry](#)

<sup>32</sup> [Evaluating accidents in the offshore drilling of petroleum: Regional picture and reducing impact - ScienceDirect](#)

<sup>33</sup> [Are Diamonds Bad For The Environment? Stats, Facts & Quotes](#)



air and soil are polluted. The people living near these areas often get sick, and their land is no longer good for farming or clean water.

At the same time, the world is trying to fight pollution and climate change by using cleaner energy—like electric cars and solar power. But to build these green technologies, they still need materials from Africa. This is a big problem because while other countries enjoy clean energy, Africa is left with the pollution from getting those materials.

If the current rate of resource exploitation continues, Africa's natural wealth will not last for the next generation. Overuse of minerals, forests, and fertile land means these resources are being depleted much faster than they can naturally recover. As a result, future Africans may face severe shortages of clean water, fertile soil, and forests, making it even harder to grow food, maintain healthy ecosystems, and build strong economies. People say they want to protect the planet, but if Africa keeps getting harmed, it shows that the world is not truly sustainable. We should all work together in a way that helps everyone and protects nature everywhere—not just in rich countries.

## **Financial and Economic Exploitation**

It's not just about natural resources. MNCs and Global powers have also been financially and economically exploiting Africa, draining it of its wealth. Through unfair trade agreements, tax evasion, profit shifting, and exploitative financial arrangements, these actors drain billions from African economies each year. This ongoing financial and economic exploitation undermines local industries and reinforces cycles of poverty and dependency.

### **Unfair Trade Agreements**

Africa often signs trade deals designed to favor foreign corporations and global powers over national interests. These agreements have long contributed to the economic exploitation of the continent's resources. Many of these agreements allow companies and countries to exploit African resources at minimal cost, receive tax exemptions, grab land without proper consultation of locals, and export goods at very low prices from African countries.<sup>34</sup> For example, agreements like the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) with the European Union force African countries to open their markets to cheap, subsidized European goods, undermining local industries such as agriculture and manufacturing. This results in Africa exporting mostly raw materials at low prices while importing expensive finished products. Countries like Namibia and Botswana have faced pressure and threats of losing important export privileges unless they accept such agreements, highlighting the unequal power dynamics at play.

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<sup>34</sup> <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/should-africa-abandon-western-trade-deals-deep-dive-africas-twig-izvne/>



### **Tax Evasions and Illicit Fund Flows**

Africa loses an estimated \$50 to \$100 billion annually due to tax evasion and illicit financial flows linked to resource exploitation.<sup>35</sup> Multinational corporations, often operating with the complicity of corrupt local elites, use complex schemes to avoid paying taxes on profits made from African resources. Additionally, illegal exploitation by armed groups and terrorist organizations worsens the problem by smuggling valuable minerals and wildlife products, further draining national revenues.<sup>36</sup> These illicit activities not only rob African countries of crucial income needed for development but also fuel conflict, violence, and environmental degradation.

### **Debt Traps and Resource-Backed Loans**

Many African countries have taken resource-backed loans, borrowing money against future resource revenues such as oil or minerals. While these loans can finance infrastructure projects, they often come with opaque terms that favor lenders and multinational corporations. China, in particular, has become a major provider of such loans in Africa, offering large sums for infrastructure development in exchange for guaranteed access to resources like oil, copper, and cobalt. When commodity prices fall or repayment becomes difficult, countries are forced to allocate large portions of their resource income to debt servicing, leaving little for social services or economic development. Countries like Angola, Chad, and the Democratic Republic of Congo have experienced severe financial strain due to these loans, which also undermine their sovereignty over natural resources. The heavy reliance on raw material exports to repay debt reinforces economic dependency and vulnerability to global market fluctuations while giving lenders like China significant leverage over African economies.<sup>37 38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> [Discussion on enhancing mechanisms for curbing illegal exploitation of natural resources by armed and terrorist groups in Africa.](#)

<sup>36</sup> [An introduction to illegal wildlife trade and its effects on biodiversity and society - ScienceDirect.](#)

<sup>37</sup> [Natural resource-backed loans are a disaster for Africa, warn IMF and the African Development Bank](#)

<sup>38</sup> [Africa's \\$824 billion debt burden and opaque resource-backed loans hinder its potential, African Development Bank President warns](#)



## CASE STUDY: DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is one of the world's richest countries in terms of natural resources, holding vast reserves of minerals such as cobalt, copper, gold, diamonds, etc. Yet, this wealth has been a curse rather than a blessing for most Congolese people. The exploitation of these resources has been marked by foreign interference, multinational corporate greed, corrupt local elites, and widespread human rights abuses.

For decades, neighboring countries like Rwanda and Uganda have played a direct role in the illegal extraction and smuggling of Congolese minerals. During periods of armed conflict, especially in the late 1990s and early 2000s, armies from these countries, along with their Congolese allies, systematically looted the DRC's resources. Senior military officials and political leaders in Rwanda and Uganda became wealthy from this plunder, while millions of Congolese civilians suffered from poverty, displacement, and violence. The United Nations and Amnesty International have documented how this pillaging fueled ongoing conflict and resulted in the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Congolese civilians.<sup>39 40</sup>

Multinational companies, especially from China, have also been deeply involved in resource exploitation. Chinese firms such as China Molybdenum and Zhejiang Huayou Cobalt have invested billions of dollars in DRC mining operations, particularly for cobalt and copper, which are vital for global electronics and electric vehicle batteries. These companies have been accused of numerous abuses, including forced evictions, unsafe working conditions, and even violence against local workers. For example, China Molybdenum's expansion of the Tenke and Kisafu mines led to the DRC army being deployed against artisanal miners, resulting in deaths during protests. Zhejiang Huayou Cobalt has faced criticism for sourcing cobalt from mines where child labor and dangerous conditions are common. Major tech companies like Apple, Microsoft, and Dell have been linked to these supply chains, raising concerns about complicity in human rights abuses.<sup>41</sup>

The scale of resource extraction is staggering. The mining sector accounts for over half of the DRC's Gross Domestic Product, with cobalt production alone making up more than two-thirds of the world's supply. However, the benefits rarely reach ordinary Congolese citizens.

The DRC's resource wealth has also attracted Western and South African companies, many of which have been implicated in illegal or unethical practices. Reports by the United Nations have

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<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2023/09/drc-cobalt-and-copper-mining-for-batteries-leading-to-human-rights-abuses/>

<sup>40</sup> [SECURITY COUNCIL CONDEMNS ILLEGAL EXPLOITATION OF DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO'S NATURAL RESOURCES | Meetings Coverage and Press Releases](#)

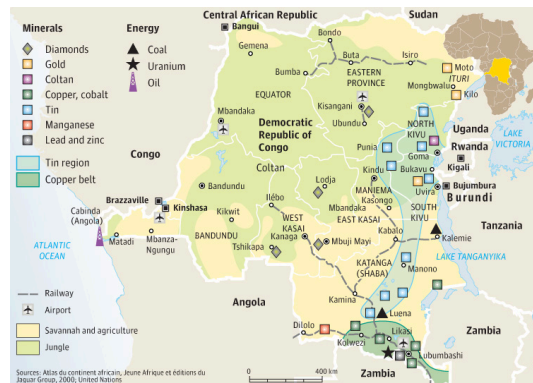
<sup>41</sup> [Major tech companies accused of child labour in Congolese cobalt mines](#)



named companies and individuals from South Africa, Europe, and elsewhere as participants in the illegal exploitation of Congolese resources, often operating through opaque deals and corrupt networks. The legacy of colonial-era exploitation has persisted, with local elites and foreign actors enriching themselves while the majority remain in poverty.

Human rights abuses are widespread. Forced evictions, child labor, and environmental destruction are common in mining areas. Amnesty International and other organizations have documented cases where entire communities were displaced to make way for mining projects, often with little or no compensation. The scramble for resources has fueled ongoing conflict, corruption, and instability, making it nearly impossible for the DRC to achieve sustainable development or peace. An estimated 40,000 children work in DRC's cobalt mines, some as young as six years old, often in hazardous and inhumane conditions. Forced labor is widespread, with workers facing dangerous tasks, low wages (sometimes as little as \$2 per day), and frequent abuse.

In summary, the exploitation of the DRC's resources is a complex web involving neighboring countries, multinational corporations, corrupt officials, and armed groups. Despite generating billions in mineral wealth, the Congolese people continue to suffer from poverty, violence, and environmental harm, while foreign and local elites profit. Addressing this exploitation requires international accountability, transparent governance, and a commitment to ensuring that resource wealth benefits the people of the DRC rather than perpetuating cycles of abuse and deprivation.







## CONCLUSION

Through this study guide, we have examined the deeply ingrained and multi-layered problem of resource exploitation in Africa, from its colonial history to its present-day effects like environmental degradation and socio-economic marginalization of vulnerable groups. The agenda lays down how past trends of external domination and internal governance problems have put the continent in a vulnerable position, where human development, environmental sustainability, and economic independence are frequently sacrificed.

We have analyzed the intricate roles of world powers and multinational companies, whose geopolitical stakes, economic interference, and strategic agendas have determined the course of Africa's development. Of equal importance are Africa's internal challenges — including child labor, illiteracy, forced displacement, weak health facilities, and endemic discrimination — that have continued to discourage the equitable utilization of Africa's immense natural and human endowments.

As representatives of the United Nations Commission on the Development of Africa (UNCDA), your challenge is not only to comprehend these problems but to address them from a solution perspective. You will be required to prepare wide-ranging, practical, and implementable solutions that deal with economic exploitation, foster human development that is inclusive, defend the environment, and reposition Africa in the world economy.

This committee requires not just diplomatic finesse but the value of morals — a devotion to justice, equity, and the long-overdue empowerment of African peoples and nations. Delegates are called upon to advocate with empathy, accuracy, and critical awareness of the problems being debated.

Ultimately, the measure of this committee's success will be your capacity to re-imagine a world in which Africa is no longer viewed as a continent to be plundered, but as one whose human and natural resources are valued, preserved, and utilized to benefit its citizens. Make this not only a discussion. Make it the start of accountability, change, and a new model of global partnership.



## EXPECTATIONS FROM THE DELEGATES

To ensure a fair, enriching, and intellectually honest Model UN experience, we have outlined a few key expectations for all participating delegates. As delegates, you are expected to uphold the highest standards of integrity, authenticity, and respect throughout the conference. All work you submit or present must be your own. **Plagiarism and the use of AI will not be tolerated under any circumstances.**

Delegates should take care to ensure that their contributions reflect their understanding and analysis, rather than copied material. While the study guide offers a strong starting point for your research, it should not be treated as your sole source of information. We strongly encourage you to explore a wide range of credible materials, such as United Nations reports, academic publications, policy documents, and reliable news sources. This will help you gain a deeper and more accurate understanding of your country's position and the wider global context of the issue.

Moreover, all delegates are expected to maintain a respectful and diplomatic attitude at all times. Constructive dialogue, active listening, and mutual respect are essential to meaningful discussions and consensus-building.

By adhering to these principles, you contribute not only to the success of the committee but also to a meaningful and respectful learning environment for all.



## **QUESTIONS A RESOLUTION MUST ANSWER**

- Q1. What can be done to limit foreign involvement in African regions and increase local business opportunities?
- Q2. How can already existing measures to eliminate child labor and human exploitation in extractive industries be strengthened? Also, what new measures can be taken?
- Q3. How can we ensure access to quality education and healthcare in underdeveloped African regions?
- Q4. What environmental regulations and monitoring mechanisms can be put in place to reduce ecological damage caused by oil drilling, mining, and deforestation, keeping in mind the current economic condition of Africa?
- Q5. What can be done to increase Africa's negotiating power to protect African resources from unfair trade deals?
- Q6. What steps can be taken to enhance resource management mechanisms in Africa?
- Q7. What legal and institutional reforms are necessary to prevent tax evasion and illicit financial flows?
- Q8. What measures can be taken to ensure local communities' safety and involvement in negotiations related to African resources?
- Q9. How can the DRC ensure fair labor conditions and eliminate child labor to minimize exploitation in large-scale labor industries?
- Q10. What alternatives can African countries resort to instead of resource-backed loans without losing out on resources as well as important investments?



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