



## '2020 Unity Conference Agenda Issues — Sub-Saharan Africa

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### **Economic Inequality**

Children International, an NGO, estimates that “589 million Sub-Saharan Africans live without electricity and cook by burning whatever they can find” (Facts). This statistic alone is enough to show the poor conditions many people face when they don’t have access to adequate infrastructure. Without investing in infrastructure we can’t accomplish many of our other goals like avoiding disease and increasing access to education. Investing in sanitation services and building schools allows the people of our nations to live healthier and better lives as well as increases economic development and access to stable jobs. With 41% of the population under the poverty line, even living at less than \$1.90 a day, it is an understatement to say that the region is suffering economically (9 World).

According to Children International, “water and sanitation issues cost these countries more than the total economic aid they receive” (Facts). Because of the lack of funds leftover, little is spent on social services and infrastructure. By investing in infrastructure, introducing municipal internet, providing equal access to improved social services, and demanding reparations for Europe’s colonialism, we will lift Sub-Saharan Africa out of extreme poverty.

### **Economic Inequality Resolutions**

- Each nation is encouraged to adopt federal policies that outlaw discrimination on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, religion, or other protected class, for equal access to social services. Nations that choose to adopt and enforce such policies will be given preferential access to funding from the UN.
- Each nation must double the average government spending on social services from 14% to 28% of their budget OR allocate that money to economic development such as municipal internet, roads, electricity, sanitation, or other communal infrastructure by 2030.
- In order to increase access to jobs and competitiveness in the global economy, a committee will be formed to advocate for an increase in aid from the 7 colonizing nations (Belgium, France, Britain, Portugal, Spain, Italy, and Germany). 3% of the colonizing nation’s GDP is to be put into a trust fund for increasing access to education, to be awarded on the basis of need as determined by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). This money is dedicated to establishing universal primary education through building schools.

### **Climate Change & Environmental Protection**

Climate change is an issue that currently affects us all and will continue to worsen over the coming decades. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) suggests we only have 10 years left to stop irreversible effects. Although we understand that climate action is costly, it’s even more costly not to act. Africa is estimated to be one of the most affected regions in the world with access to food and water already being threatened by rising temperatures. The Water Project Organization indicates “everyday, women and young girls carry more than 40 pounds of dirty water from sources over 4 miles away from their homes,” this forces many girls

to drop out of school to fetch water for their families. Over 2.6 billion people worldwide depend directly on agriculture. A recent cyclone in Zimbabwe, Mozambique, and Malawi, called Idai, killed at least 48 people while affecting millions. These extreme weather events will only increase as time goes on. As a developing continent, Africa must also balance the need for industrialization with the possible environmental effects of doing so.

We will mitigate the effects of water scarcity (and the disproportionate effects on women and girls' education) and build climate resilience against extreme temperatures, loss of agricultural land, and threats to biodiversity by focusing on making new development sustainable, regenerating desert lands, and promoting protection of vulnerable species.

### **Climate Change & Environmental Protection Resolutions**

- As the 2020 Unity Conference chairs, we endorse the Great Green Wall Initiative which aims to restore 100 hectares of degraded land by 2030. From the Green Climate Fund each nation in Africa will receive up to \$200 million for employing citizens in sustainable agriculture, tree planting, and other regeneration of degraded land. In order to curb corruption, all of this spending will be overseen by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP). Nations will be required to submit a funding proposal with a detailed Coordinated Community Plan to be approved by the UNEP.
- The UNEP will also be working with nations to write, pass, and enforce stricter laws regarding the illegal trafficking of endangered species. As a result of the work of the UNEP, each nation will devote 10% of its police force to prosecuting poachers and protecting national parks.
- Five percent of the nation's GDP is expected to go towards conservation efforts and sustainable development; if 5% isn't contributed, the nation will be fined the remaining percentage. The fines will go into a Future Water Fund that rewards nations that take progressive actions against water scarcity.

### **Social Issues**

#### **HIV & AIDS**

HIV and AIDS<sup>1</sup> are another significant health concern in Sub-Saharan Africa, with 70% of global HIV infection disproportionately concentrated in the region (HIV Infection). As of 2018, 25.7 million people in Sub-Saharan Africa are living with HIV, and an estimated 660,000 die from AIDS-related illnesses annually (Treating). New infection is a significant issue as well, with 1.1 million Africans newly infected with HIV in 2018 (HIV/AIDS). HIV can be transmitted through contact with blood or genital bodily fluids, but not through day-to-day contact such as handshakes, kissing, or sharing food (HIV/AIDS).

In terms of treatment, over half of Sub-Saharan Africa's population with HIV receives Antiretroviral therapy (ART), a combination of medicines used to treat HIV. ART has shown to be very effective in giving people living with HIV longer, healthier, happier lives. However, 10.3 million people with HIV were not receiving ART in 2018, which illustrates the severity of Sub-Saharan Africa's current gap in treatment (Treating). In eastern and southern Africa, the

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<sup>1</sup> Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) is an immunodeficiency infection which eventually develops into Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS), a lifelong condition which weakens the immune system and can be fatal to those who have it.

areas hardest hit by HIV, only 67% of HIV-positive adults are on ART and only 62% of children are (HIV and AIDS).

HIV prevention in Sub-Saharan Africa has a start grounded in legitimate strategies for decreasing HIV infection, but the magnitude of HIV prevention programs is lacking. For example, male condoms have shown to have an 85% or greater protective effect against HIV (HIV/AIDS). However, condom availability falls very short, with “only five countries meeting the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) regional benchmark of 30 male condoms distributed per man per year between 2011 and 2014” (HIV and AIDS). Education is also a key component to HIV prevention, as many people forgo timely HIV diagnosis because of shame, putting them more at risk for developing AIDS (Treating). Accessible resources to prevent or treat HIV, such as male condoms, combined with education on HIV & AIDS, will decrease rates of infection and lead to progress in HIV & AIDS for Sub-Saharan Africa.

## **HIV/AIDS Resolutions**

### **Facilities**

- Sub-Saharan African nations must contribute up to 5% of their GDP to HIV testing and treatment if external aid does not cover costs.  
\*Testing and treatment must include sex workers (“1 million sex workers across the region are thought to be in need of HIV prevention services” (HIV and AIDS)).
- Install public health facilities capable of HIV testing and treatment in geographically-isolated and economically disadvantaged counties. These facilities use national funding and also external aid, if present.  
\*These facilities must not discriminate on the basis of gender, age, or any other applicable characteristic.
- All Sub-Saharan African nations must provide condoms to their populations to the best of their ability (goal minimum per person, when they start becoming sexually active: 30). Condoms will be distributed via the best method for each country (e.g. mail, health centers, driving to isolated communities).  
\*Access to both female and male condoms will be available.
- Continue conducting research to make ART medication taken during pregnancy more effective in reducing rates of mother-to-child-transmission.
- Continue striving for the UN goal that “90% of all people with diagnosed HIV infection will receive sustained antiretroviral therapy” (90-90-90).

### **Education**

- Education includes accurate and comprehensive coverage of sexuality, sexual and reproductive services available to adolescents, and safe sex practices such as condom use, getting tested for HIV and STDs, and knowing the HIV and STD statuses of your sexual partner(s).  
Include that students’ HIV status should not be a source of shame, and neither is it a reflection of your worth or dignity as a person. This education will begin when students are age 11 and will be reviewed annually.

## Female Genital Mutilation

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is a dangerous, significant demonstration of gender inequality in Sub-Saharan Africa. FGM is an operation which removes or irreparably damages female genitalia with the intent of inhibiting sexual pleasure, supposedly to promote premarital virginity and marital fidelity (WHO). FGM is performed most often before puberty, often on girls between four and eight, without anesthesia, with crude instruments such as knives, razor blades, scissors, or broken glass in unsterile conditions (Desert). FGM leaves women with serious physical and mental health problems, which sometimes lead to death. Most of the 200 million women living today who've been subjected to FGM live in Africa, and more than 3 million girls are estimated to be at risk for FGM annually (WHO). FGM is especially a problem in Eastern and Western Africa<sup>2</sup>.

The prevalence and normalcy of FGM comes from a culture of believing sex is dirty and impure, and that women aren't to make decisions regarding sex themselves. Even though FGM is considered normal, that does not exempt it from being a violent and sexist violation of women's human rights.

## Female Genital Mutilation Resolutions

- Criminalize found practitioners of Female Genital Mutilation in all Sub-Saharan African nations<sup>3</sup> and enforce the ban with jail time in the respective country.
- Give healthcare support to women who have had FGM performed on them.
- Comprehensive adolescent health education includes Female Genital Mutilation: girls learn the dangers of FGM, that sex is natural, not impure, and that they have the right to make sexual and family-planning decisions for their own bodies; boys learn the dangers FGM poses and that women have the right to make sexual and family-planning decisions for themselves.

## Education

The most effective way to change Sub-Saharan African culture regarding infectious disease prevention and social issues is by instituting equally-accessible educational facilities, and mandating accurate, thorough coverage of the topics specified above<sup>4</sup>. However, Sub-Saharan Africa's current education is severely lacking: "Over one-fifth of children between the ages of about 6 and 11 are out of school," and "almost 60% of youth between the ages of about 15 and 17 are not in school" (Education). This problem is accentuated by the projected growth of the region's school-age population (Education). In addition, "Sub-Saharan Africa has the lowest percentage of trained teachers in all three levels of schooling," which is a big area for improvement in education (Quality). Sub-Saharan Africa's schools also discriminate heavily against girls, which presents itself as a large gender gap in school attendance: "Across the region, 9 million girls between the ages of about 6 and 11 will never go to school at all, compared to 6

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<sup>2</sup> See map on page 6 for regions of Africa.

<sup>3</sup> Use this link to see if your country has criminalized FGM (or Googling might be faster): [www.unfpa.org/resources/female-genital-mutilation-fgm-frequently-asked-questions#banned\\_by\\_law](http://www.unfpa.org/resources/female-genital-mutilation-fgm-frequently-asked-questions#banned_by_law).

<sup>4</sup> Educational resolutions specific to HIV/AIDS and FGM are included in those respective resolutions, *not* within the education section. This section's resolutions are dedicated to educational facilities.

million boys” (Education). For example, pregnant young women who weren’t taught sexual education or who were coerced into sex are expelled from school and often prohibited from returning (Africa).

Because of education’s hugely significant role in molding cultural attitudes and knowledge, as well as in giving young adults the knowledge and skills they need to become employed, educating youth on HIV & AIDS, FGM, and other material is necessary to making progress in disease prevention and changing social norms, as well as in teaching youth the knowledge they need to be successful.

### **Education Resolutions**

- All countries sign legislation prohibiting discrimination in education on the basis of sex or pregnancy, and enforce this legislation.
- Give girls sexual education and resources beginning at age 11 to prevent rape and unplanned pregnancy and, because of religious and cultural pressures, child marriage.
- Build primary and secondary schools in areas lacking them currently, or provide transportation to nearby schools if appropriate.
- The top 30 minority world countries<sup>5</sup> (determined by the state of countries’ economies) must contribute through programs skilled teachers to Sub-Saharan African schools; these schools are required to accept teachers from these programs to teach in schools.

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<sup>5</sup> “Majority world country” is more respectful terminology than the outdated “Third-World country,” a classification used during the Cold War, or “developing country,” which some perceive as offensive. “Majority” is used to emphasize the fact that 80 percent of humanity lives on \$10 or less a day (Silver). Minority world countries are the other 20%, like the US and Canada.

## FOSA SUBREGIONS



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