Forum: *General Assembly 4th Committee (GA4)*

Issue: *The question of using Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) and Official Development Assistance (ODA) to coerce policy decisions from recipient countries*

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Introduction

For decades, economic growth has been a critical focus on international development. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), acting from 1990 to 2015, saw massive success in MDG 1: Eradication of Extreme Disease and Hunger, cutting extreme poverty globally in half and from 50% to 14% in developing countries. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), advancing new global plans from 2016 to 2030, sets targets at setting economic growth (SDG 8) and improving economic infrastructure (SDG 9).

None of this was or would be accomplishable without transnational economic assistance. Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and Official Development Assistance (ODA) are just two categories to spur economic growth in recipient economies. Recipient countries, to reciprocate and encourage continuations of such economic growth, appeal themselves to their investors. While on some aspects this can be done beneficially, the restructuring of more efficient government financial structures and regulations among them, others cripple a country's ability to be self-governing and encourage countries to sacrifice protection of its working class. National governments that use the latter to their advantage violate the primary United Nations tenant of state sovereignty. The line between intentional exploitation, apathy, and general carelessness of such consequences, however, are unclear.

Though it may be most apparent in less economically developed states (LEDCs), coercion caused by investments is an issue affecting developing and developed states as well, codified into the international economic systems. Still, it is much to the decision of such more economically developed states (MEDCs) to bring more politically sustainable means to encouraging international investment.

Definition of Key Terms

Banana Republic

Banana Republics form when foreign capital overly invests in a single export and are coined after historical American investment in fruit production in foreign nations. Due to such investments, recipient countries of such investments are unable to diversify their economy, and countries become overly invested in a single export, rendering it unstable.

Coercion

The act of coercing is to compel, force, or threaten entity to follow the will of another. In the context of this issue, coercing is done by either government with economic interests or with foreign equity-owning enterprises towards other nations.

Debt Trade Diplomacy

Debt trade diplomacy is the use of excessive loaning to a state to purposefully cause debts that are paid off by favors and debt refinancing deals by the recipient country. It is seen as a tactic used by both China and its Western counterparts.

Dollar Diplomacy

Dollar diplomacy is an American based tactic employed to increase American influence by loaning and giving other monetary favors to countries in need. It is a tactic used by multiple nations today to lobby with other member-states.

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)

Foreign direct investments are a country's private enterprises' control over foreign enterprise or business interests through the acquiring of foreign business assets. They typically occur in open economies that promote free trade and usually originate from more economically developed countries (MEDCs). There are two ways that FDI's can be made. Acquisitions, which make up the majority of FDIs, directly purchase a part of an existing foreign entity. Greenfield investments, on the other hand, are the expansion of foreign businesses that were previously acquired or the creation of new foreign business altogether.

Fiscal Regimes

Fiscal regimes are the set of rules between governments or between a government and its relevant corporations on how profits generated within the state distribute between private parties and the state treasury. One coercion tactic used upon developing states is threatening the pullout of ODAs and FDIs if fiscal regimes do not benefit the organization or country.

Less Economically Developed Countries (LEDCs)

Those posed most at risk of being coerced by foreign direct investments, and official development assistance are LEDCs. LEDCs are countries with low overall economic flow. While LEDCs also previously applied to countries that had slow economic growth as well, international corporation and investment have made most LEDCs developing countries with strong economic growth. MEDCs, on the other hand, are considered to be developed countries or developing countries with large economies. As a result of its strong economic standing, MEDCs are less at risk of being coerced to changing policy to attract such finances, though incidences do occur.

Official Development Assistance (ODA)

The use of government aid from one country to developing countries or their citizens for economic development and welfare. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development – Development Assistance Committee (OECD–DAC) first coined ODAs as in-donor/non-transfer ODAs to be assistances targeting alien recipients in the host country. Such aid is more benign than FDIs in that it offers loans and grants more easily regulated by the recipient government itself. The United Nations (UN) promotes the allocation of ODA budgeting by a proportion of a nation's gross national income to help promote international economic sustainability. While ODAs may not directly threaten the policy of a nation, economic reliance on them could sway a country to adopt foreign policies that are more beneficial to the investing nations.

Resource Curse

The resource curse is a scenario where a country rich in non-renewable natural resources goes into economic stagnation after the discovery or extraction of such resources. Of the causes of the resource curse, FDI from large corporations, which often have revenues higher than the GDP of LEDCs, are seen as exploitive measures to further the wealth of developed countries at the expense of poor policy of developing ones.

Background Information

Incentives to accepting foreign economic assistance

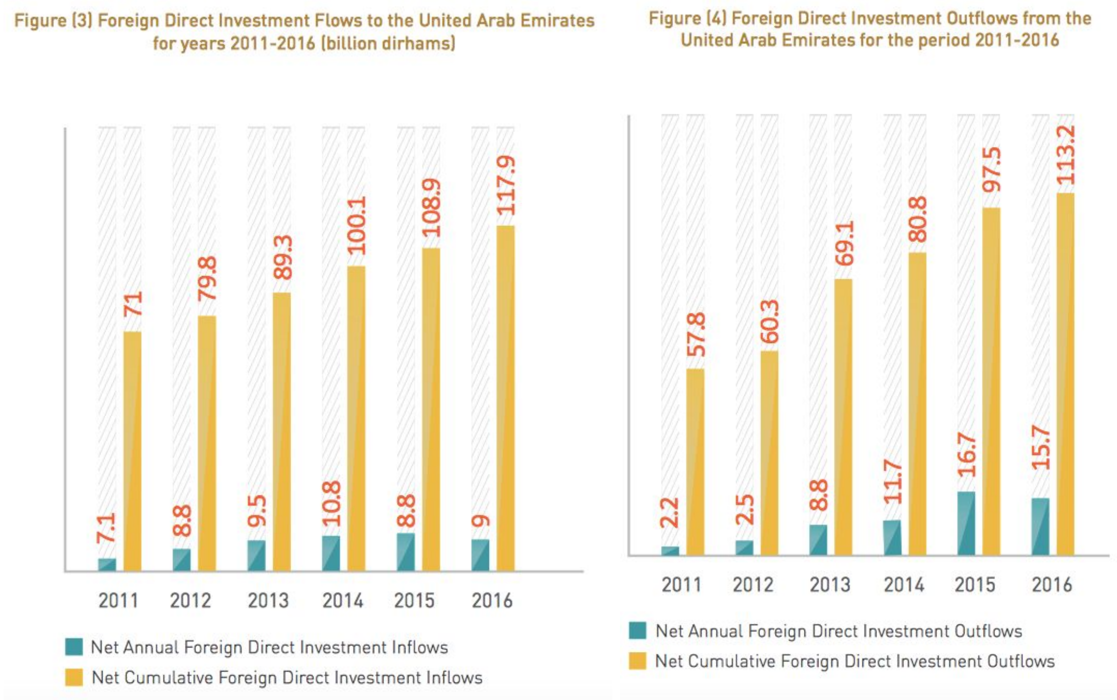
A central reason the issue of coercion for ODAs and FDIs occur is the incentives they provide. Various economic benefits, depending on the purpose of each economic aid, can help increase job prospects, prevent brain drain, and build infrastructure.

The benefits of foreign direct investments

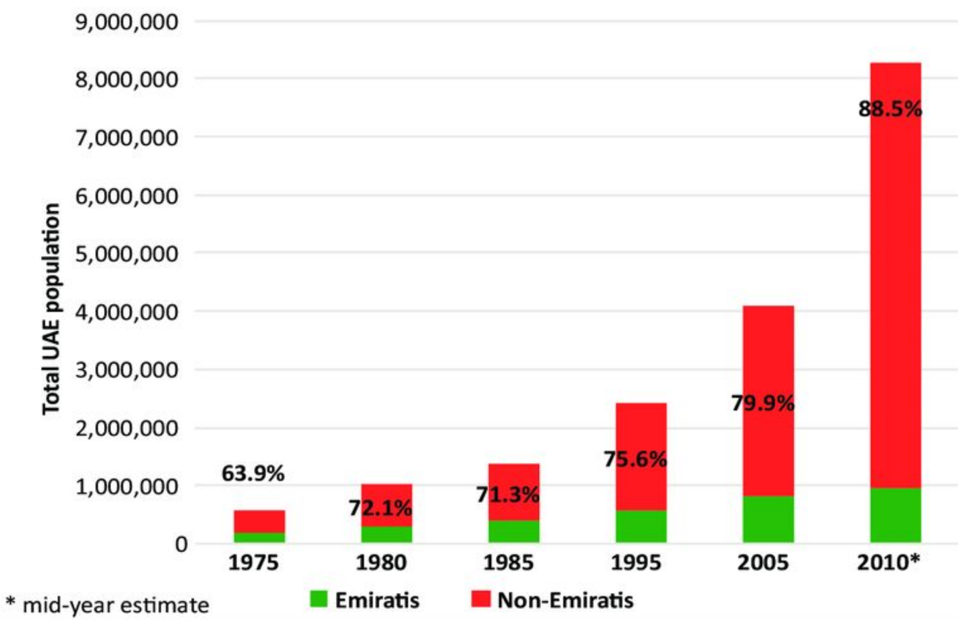
Foreign direct investments draw opportunities for work in the recipient country. While specialized work directly under the investing company, such as managerial roles in the companies regional headquarters, are occupied by workers brought in by the investors, locals have the opportunity to be hired as well. Even without direct control over such newly established businesses, countries look forward to using FDIs to develop supporting economic sectors, such as housing development, food, and service sectors, that will be used by employees directly benefiting off of such development. This gentrification of the recipient company often then offers opportunities for the country to gain a stronger economic footing of its own. Developed countries with established economies are often large attractors of FDIs themselves, as foreign companies look to expanding in more stable economic zones to draw profit from a steady market. In more economically developed countries such as China, FDIs provide the opportunity to gain job opportunities for higher technological manufacturing, many of which rely less on air-pollution causing material. The IMF even lists the use of FDIs as one of the chief drivers of global economic development and advancement of developing economies.

Case study in foreign direct investments

The United Arab Emirate’s rapid growth demonstrates many pluses of accepting FDIs but also highlights sacrifices the country has made in the process. Dubai’s institution of economic zones, where certain sectors of business have minimized to no tax, has drawn massive investment to the region. Ninety of the Fortune 100 companies now consequently have regional offices located in the region. The Emirati government focused on drawing investment to its service and financial sectors and actively partook in supporting Emirati-based companies sending FDIs abroad. This two-part system expanded Emirati business to a global level. There were two parts of the kingdom’s plan that made it unique. The first is the lack of FDIs in the Emirati petroleum industry, which gave the government control over revenue of natural resources as a base source of income. The second is the government's tradeoff for losing its ethnic composition in return for more foreign investment. As FDIs poured into the country, so did foreign workers. Both Dubai and Abu Dhabi, the country’s leading sources of economic flow, took to oversee Emirati employment but accepted a disproportionate amount of foreign workers, leading to the workforce being only 12% Emirati today.



Caption #1: FDI's into (In Dirhams) and out (in USD) of the United Arab Emirates



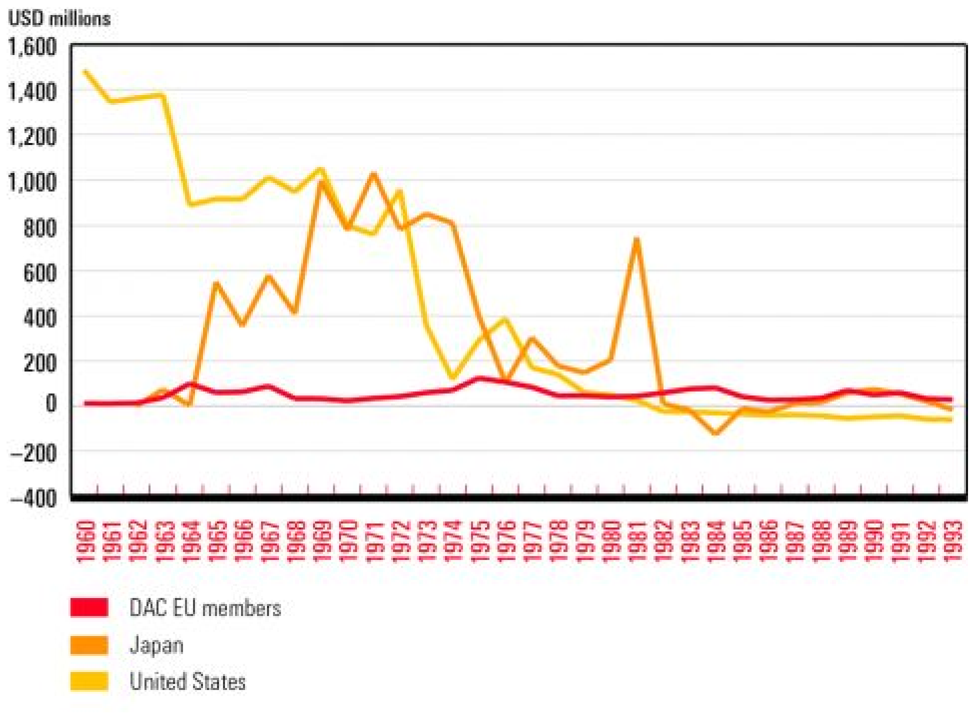
Caption #2: Population Statistics of the United Arab Emirates

The benefits of official development assistance

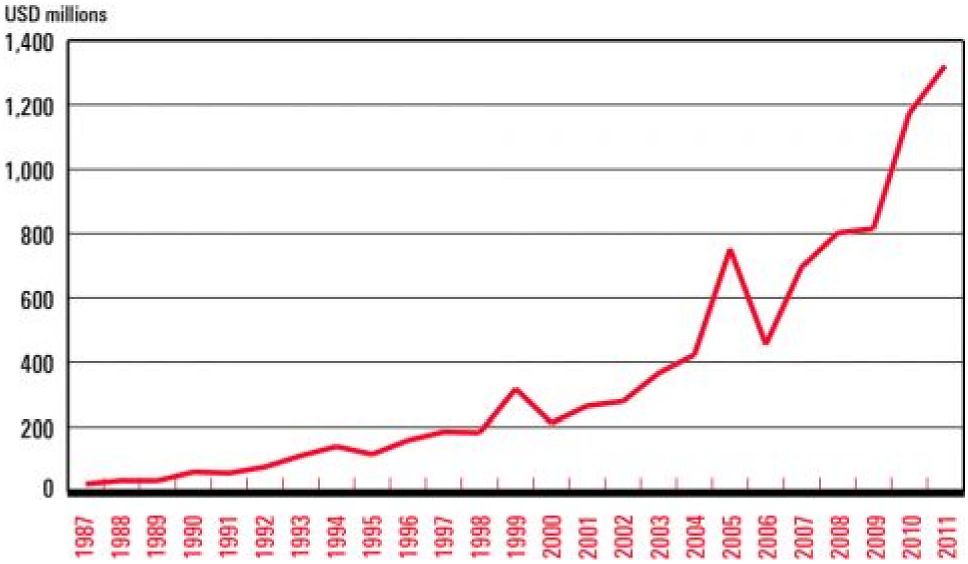
In contrast to the use of foreign investment in most of the world, countries direct ODAs to impoverished regions of the world that need aid through either loans or grants. Idyllically, official development assistance helps improve international order by preventing more impoverished and more unstable regions from spreading disease, fostering terrorism, or falling into conflict, preventing sources of potential disruption to the economies of more developed regions. For recipient countries, these sources of aid are easy ways to fund initiatives that the government still has control over, unlike FDIs, which grow private ventures that may not align with national policy.

Case studies in official development assistance

It is hard to remember that the Republic of Korea, better known as South Korea, was an ODA receiving country only a couple of decades prior. Following the end of the Korean War, the US, which had held territories over South Korea after the Second World War, loaned South Korea around one and a half billion dollars to rebuild its economy. Focusing on advancing its export market, South Korea invested resources into technological development. Despite having struggled through political instability and dictatorships for much of its early history, South Korea is heralded as an ODA success story, as it joined the OECD-DAC member in 2006 and became one of the leading global economies today. Though South Korea falls short of OECD–DAC targets for sponsoring ODAs, its rapid growth has made it a model for future change.



Caption #4: South Korea loan ODAs based on provider



Caption #5: South Korea ODA output

Key Issues

Coerced deregulation and exploitation of labor to draw in FDIs

The issue with FDIs is often not the investment itself, but the type of investment a nation is looking for. Countries such as the United States often receive FDIs that conduct business with the United States for its large free economy, or with countries in Europe for their skilled workforces. In the least developed or developing countries, investors and research have indicated that the stability and market potential of recipient countries as the most significant factors in selecting the place of investment. Another, more realist reason, however, is that countries that have to lower labor standards, agree to improper fiscal regimes, and enforce a lack in environmental standards to encourage investment. All these lead to future trends in economic development, such as the increase in economic inequality between groups of people and the damage of a vital ecotourism resource.

Foreign incentivisation of lower South, South-East, and East Asian labor standards

One of the primary reasons for development in South, South-East, and East Asia is the profitability of using cheap, large labor factories for the production of more high tech or of cheaper bulk goods. This rationale has been a historical trend with Taiwan being a previous example of mass production and China being one of the largest manufacturing export nations in the world. Many countries accept such realities when it comes to FDIs because they look towards such investments as the only solutions to raising their economy and adding jobs to the market. While China and other East Asian countries are more or less growing a larger middle class and are increasing the labor standards of their citizens, many fear that such income disparities between the managers of FDIs funding the labor and the workers themselves have already set a dangerous precedent. Among the examples of countries that have successfully transitioned out of the low wage, labor stages are countries like Singapore, which has seen stronger development standards in technology and tourism sectors. Singapore has transitioned from being just an FDI receiving nation to also an FDI outputting nation itself as a direct result of gaining wealth. The rest of South-East Asia and South Asia, however, are on the same track for such issues to occur. PricewaterhouseCoopers, one of the largest multinational professional services firms in the world, directly lists "the principal attraction of the ASEAN countries has historically been, and continues to be, their low costs of labor." Apart from issues with labor standards, countries in South and South-East Asia are notorious for lacking enforcement in preventing child labor, which keeps many children out of school and prevents nations from growing a more educated youth to take higher waged jobs (and hence less exploitive FDIs) in the long run.

	Monthly in USD
Cambodia	43
Indonesia	132
Laos	64
Malaysia	N/A
Myanmar	17
Philippines	181
Singapore	N/A
Thailand	79
Vietnam	49

Caption #6: Minimum wage in South-East Asia

	Monthly in USD
Cambodia	101
Indonesia	182
Laos	45
Malaysia	666
Myanmar	N/A
Philippines	212
Singapore	1,639
Thailand	263
Vietnam	107

Caption #6: Average factory wage in South-East Asia (note Singapore's significantly higher wage with more skilled labour-based production)

Exploitation of natural resources as a result of foreign direct investments

Another concern for the use of FDIs is how they can impact a country's fiscal regime. Foreign investors are looking to build large resource extraction products LEDCs often take advantage of their larger capacity to create such infrastructure relative to the recipient countries of FDIs themselves. One of the examples of where FDIs caused the resource curse is Papua New Guinea, where oil corporations took advantage of the discovery of petroleum in the region but agreed to fiscal regimes that did not significantly benefit the region. Promising to bring job opportunity and urban development to the area surrounding its extraction sites, governments like Papua New Guinea have chosen to sign contracts with foreign companies. Alternatives, such as the rise of national extraction corporations in the Gulf States, have proven to be challenging to create, as foreign oil companies are much more established than modern LEDCs.

Lowering of environmental standards as a result of foreign direct investments

While FDIs themselves have been found to have insignificant impact on environmental regulation or pollution indexes in the recipient country, it has been found that FDIs are drawn to regions with loosened environmental standards. The exact effects often differ based on region to region, but tis stood clear that few nations are able to raise environmental standards while attracting FDI. China is in the forefront of this issue, as large manufacturing projects cause environmental damage.

The use of official development assistance for self interest

Official Development Assistance has been seen as much more benign than FDIs, but they still come at their own political risk. Critics point to the fact that the OECD still predominantly sends ODAs to developing nations with stronger ties to the Western sphere rather than to the least developed countries, while others critique the idea that developed countries are seemingly obliged to help other countries out of historical ties. The political impact of ODAs speaks volumes about the policy of other countries. Proprietors of ODAs would refer to how aid, or the lack thereof of it, is a strong punishing tool for corrupt leaders who violate human rights. With the power of ODA put into the wrong hands however brings dire consequences.

Case studies involving the use of Dollar Diplomacy by the United States in the 21st Century

Dollar Diplomacy, first developed in the early 20th Century by President Taft, is an American policy regarding the use of loans and other ODAs to help gain American global influence. While it can be argued that the US has used its ODAs for the better –the OECD reports the United States as being by far the largest contributor of such aid in the world– the dominance of the American dollar as international currency and America's political spheres around the world are arguably a product of its use of donations to influence global politics.

Case studies involving The Belt and Road Initiative and Chinese influence

Many western developed nations are concerned of China's influence on developing countries. Among the terms of China's aid are the acceptance of the People's Republic of China as the legitimate power of the one one of the largest contributors of official development assistance, is loaning to other countries what has been labeled as "debt-traps" to build infrastructure.

One such nation-state is Sri Lanka. In 2017 China and Sri Lanka hit a debt-refinancing deal to give up usage rights over an ODA project by China to construct Magampura Mahinda Rajapaksa Port, a project which aimed to build a port deemed by foreign analysis to be a loan too big for Sri Lanka to pay off. Critics claim that China is using this to create a "debt-trap diplomacy" program to increase its influence in South Asia. Laos' Vientiane–Boten Railway construction was also branded by China as being a way to increase productivity in Southeast Asia. Lao's, having to rely on Chinese aid for the project, agreed to giving China 70% control over the railroad for 99 years at its completion.

Major Parties Involved and Their Views

Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) – Development Assistance Committee (DAC)

The OECD, which first coined the term ODA, is a leading organization in donating aid. Its members are often some of the largest contributors of such aid. However, each have their own aid programs and incentives to do so.

European Union (EU)

Though not a country, the OECD recognizes the EU's internal organizations (not including its composing governments themselves) as key players in doning ODAs. Like with the OECD themselves, the European Union is seen as a more impartial source of ODAs. However, it has been noticed that the EU has a tendency to provide ODAs to previous colonial territories of European countries. Aid, to many members of the EU, is a better solution to crises in Europe such as the prevention of influxes of refugees.

France

France has been noted to largely provide its ODAs to its former colonies and also provide more beneficial FDIs to the region. While it can be argued that the French government is fulfilling its reparations for damages caused by French influence during the colonial and imperial eras, others argue that France has a larger obligation as an MEDC to donate elsewhere as well. The French government, like other European powers, recognize that maintaining political connection with its colonies is crucial.

Germany

Over the past years, Germany has increased its ODA budget significantly. While it does spend ODAs abroad, much of its ODA is targeted nationally to solve the refugee crisis. The OECD-DAC recognizes that "more than half of Germany's increase (US$3.5 billion) was due to refugee costs." However, Germany, under its moderate leader Chancellor Angela Merkel, still has a large interest in following sustainable development, and has been donating "core multilateral ODA and support for specific-purpose programmes and funds managed by international organisations" (Development Initiative, *Final ODA Data 2016*). With the retirement of Angela

Merkel expected at the end of her current term, it is unsure when Germany will continue to support ODA initiatives in the future.

China

China, recognizing its pollution problem, has recently turned to domestically investing in green technologies to advance its workforce and take dominance in the developing market. China pumped almost $300 Billion into green energy development and companies in 2017, following announcements that the US will pull out of commitments to the Paris Climate Agreement by President Trump. China hopes that with such developments the country will be the dominant power in such energy sources in the near future, gaining them more sustainable and high paying jobs to level out its need for FDIs on energy in the future.

In Africa, China has been donating ODAs and investing in poorer nations than those receiving aid from the US and Europe. China believes that in doing so, it can help jumpstart new economies in the region and also gain traction as a global power, a win-win scenario for bilateral agreements. Like other MEDCs, China recognizes what one may consider adverse effects of ODAs as incentivisations for aid.

Ghana

Ghana, seen as a success story of ODAs, is looking forward to solve issues in disparity regarding its income equality. While Ghana has previously received generous amounts of aid from multiple parties to its more populated Christian south, it now looks to aid from transnational organizations and international organizations for ODAs. Through the Global Fund initiative, Ghana hopes to direct more ODAs towards developing health and education services in poorer, rural desert communities dominated by Muslim communities. Ghana looks at Nigeria as an example where an unequal distribution of aid has led to dire consequences, with the poorer Muslim communities in the North turning to terrorism groups such as Boko Haram to protest the government's large economic development initiatives in the South. "In 10 years' time," notes The Guardian, "Ghana may not require any aid at all."

United States of America

Official Development Assistance

The US, in response to China's use of ODAs to entice developing nations, has condemned China's use of ODAs. In 2015, The Washington Post noted that President Obama claimed China has "been able to funnel an awful lot of money into Africa, basically in exchange for raw materials that are being extracted from Africa…" and that "economic relationships can't simply be about building countries' infrastructure with foreign labor or extracting Africa's natural resources." This is a trend continued by the Trump administration. While the Trump administration has consistently condemned the US's ODAs to foreign countries as excessive, the US remains to donate ODAs both for their own interests and to LEDCs as a whole.

Foreign Direct Investment Interests

Not only is the US a key player in the donation of ODAs, it also stands to be a powerful player in the international market with its use of FDIs. In particular, US oil companies such as ExxonMobil have allegedly been bribing officials to take in FDIs under the promise of economic prosperity, only to take most of its profits for corporate revenue. The US currently stands largely to condone the use of FDIs abroad to increase its economy. However, the Trump administration has recently become more critical of the use of cheap labour abroad, encouraging the movement of investment away from FDIs into US manufacturing to keep cash flows within the US.

However, the US does not only send FDIs abroad to increase influence, it also promotes the use of economic investment in the United States for foreign governments to increase influence with the United States. The UAE spent $14 Million on lobbying in the United States in 2014. The Trump Administration has been harshly criticized for not condemning the killing of Jamal Khashoggi after Trump referenced Saudi Arabia's contributions to the United States by making deals with arms companies to produce weapons to finance Saudi Arabia's influence on the Yemen Civil War.

Timeline of Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events

You must include short sentences to explain the timeline. Otherwise you have to follow the format specified below:

Date	Description of event
August 31st, 2000	***Globalization and its impact on the full enjoyment of all human rights: Preliminary report of the Secretary-General* is published** This report, used by the United Nations for the furthering of the Millenium Development Goals, discusses the negative influence of transnational corporations in the promotion of human rights, as labour restrictions get lowered and maximum profit potential for member states go to such corporations.
December 9th, 2017	**Sri Lanka gives up 70% of rights over Magampura Mahinda Rajapaksa Port to finance its debts to China**

April 24th, 2012	**Promoting productive capacity, employment and decent work to eradicate poverty in the context of inclusive, sustainable and equitable economic growth at all levels for achieving the Millennium Development Goals** This document, published by the Secretary General, aims to promote multiple methods of economic development.
13th September 2018	**PRESS RELEASE - Ground-breaking research sheds new light on development aid to address forced labour, modern slavery, human trafficking and child labour.** The United Nations University Center for Policy Research releases a framework of its findings on the use of ODAs to solve issues with forced labor.

Relevant UN Treaties and Events

- Cooperation between the United Nations and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (A/RES/73/259)
- Towards global partnerships: a principle-based approach to enhanced cooperation between the United Nations and all relevant partners (A/RES/73/254)
- Promoting productive capacity, employment and decent work to eradicate poverty in the context of inclusive, sustainable and equitable economic growth at all levels for achieving the Millennium Development Goals, 27 July 2012 **(E/2012/xx)**
- Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, October 21st 2015 (A/Res/70/1)
    - SDG Goal 8
    - SDG Goal 9
    - SDG Goal 17

Evaluation of Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

Of many previous solutions implemented, most are oriented towards the improvement of labour standards once national economies have reached a certain capacity of sustainability. The United Nations Economic and Social Council credits “Countries that have been most **successful in skills development** (for instance Costa Rica, New Zealand and South Korea,)” in effectively turning ODAs and FDIs to “sustain a ‘virtuous circle’ of coordinated policies linking education systems, skills formation, employment and decent work." This is implemented through **an increase in vocational education** and then an encouragement of liberal tertiary education. Countries such as Singapore hold a large standard over learning, and many social welfare funds in states successfully transitioned from developing to developed grow larger skilled workforces that draw in FDIs that do not look for a coercion of policy but rather an encouragement of higher standards of living. It has been noted that the most beneficial FDIs often go to nations with the most skilled workforces and that nations that fail to do so often remain in poor economic situations. Another method is the accruing of social welfare programs, such as healthcare, that help to solve impacts of manual labor.

Of all these solutions, one blatant reality is that it leaves generations in a countries incipient developing stages to suffer. While one can argue that such a process is a natural step in the development of countries, there is still more that can be done to ensure that human rights and environmental sustainability is followed.

Few solutions have been implemented to try to decrease the political impact of ODAs, however, as those often involve both politically and economically powerful nations. Countries like the US, Russia, and China choose countries to either sway over or let go depending on their political worth to the respective countries. While such action has helped to neutralize some of the coercion such aid directs,

A final solution that has been used before is the **provision of aid by multinational bodies** such as the OECD–DAC and the Global Fund initiative started by former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan. Funds directed to such organizations for ODAs or for the assisting of garnering FDIs are often directed for the best interest of recipient countries and decrease chances of coercion. However, countries that direct help this way often do so because they do not have the policy infrastructure to implement ODAs themselves. Once nations have a stronger capacity, they look to directing aid that is most beneficial to their interests.

Though not a solution to the issue, many countries have accepted the political effects of ODAs and FDIs as a realistic consequence of aid. To governments of select member-states, the changing of policy for the increase of aid is an obligation the member state has to potentially provide a more economically sound future for its citizens. The leaving of indirect coercion for recipient countries to reciprocate, to many, is the strongest incentive available for ODAs to be given at all.

Possible Solutions

One possible solution to deal with the issue is to **increase accountability of nations that condone the use of FDIs to coerce policies** poor in environmental standards or labor rights. While many current organizations only condemn the recipient country of aid for lax labor laws, condemning MEDCs can have a stronger impact in redirecting resources elsewhere.

Increasing direction of ODAs to educational infrastructure, while encouraging better FDIs to recipient countries, could be a way for MEDCs to influence the political viewpoint of a country through classrooms.

The encouragement of **ODAs from international organizations** to recipient countries instead of bilateral government agreements still stands to be a clear solution to the issue. While incentives for doing so are difficult to achieve –nations still wanting to dictate how they direct their aid– such methods are still the most objective way to provide aid. In particular, organizations such as the OECD note the lack of aid to the least developed nations. A phenomena, the organization notes, to be a consequence of disinterest of MEDCs to provide aid to countries that cannot reciprocate little political and economic favors in return. Granting control of aid to international organizations, moreover, gives recipient countries more control over the type of aid they receive, ensuring that aid is best used by each country.

Another solution is to increase transparency of deals nations are making with other **governments or with corporate interests**. With both ODAs and FDIs, experts claim that transparency will help organizations raise earlier red flags about potential debt-traps and coercive intent of foreign powers.

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