

# The Aburi Accord

**Topic A:** Ethnic Relations

**Topic B:** Economic Challenges



## **GBSMUN VIII**

Chair: Joshua Kuruvilla

Vice-Chair: George Kunnel

Moderator: Jaron Osman

## **Letter From the Chair**

Greetings Delegates,

My name is Joshua Kuruvilla. I have been a member of Glenbrook South's Model United Nations Team for the past four and I am extremely excited to be your chair for this committee. I am so glad that I will be able to meet each and everyone of you and hope that we all are able to have a productive, insightful, and collaborative Saturday. Outside of school, I am involved with tennis, Math Team, and Medical Chapter. I also love watching the NBA and the NFL. Obviously, the events of what happened in this committee already occurred and the implications of the Aburi Conference were minimal. It is up to you as delegates to change the course of history. Two questions that were especially relevant at the Aburi Accord were the relations between the different ethnic groups and the economic challenges that Nigeria faced as a newly independent nation. The failure of the attendees at this conference to put forth a solution that was enforceable haunted Nigeria for many decades. I am very excited to see the unique and imaginative solutions that everyone will bring to the table.

While this background guide can serve as a basic overview of the current situation in Nigeria during this time period and the issues we will be discussing, this should by no means be the only document that you use for your research. Having a thorough understanding of the root of the problem and the pre-existing tensions will be helpful in committee and can be found online. Please print a hard copy of your paper formatted in Times New Roman 12pt font and double spaced to be turned in at the start of the committee. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at [226101@glenbrook225.org](mailto:226101@glenbrook225.org). See you all in committee!

Thanks,

Joshua Kuruvilla

## Topic A: Ethnic Relations



## **Background**

Nigeria is a country made up of countless ethnic groups, the three major ones being the Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba, and the Igbo. The Igbo, who speak Igbo, a language of the Benue-Congo branch of the Niger-Congo language family, who live primarily in southern Nigeria. Northern, southern, western, eastern or Cross River, and northeastern are the major cultural divisions

among the Igbo. Before European colonization, the Igbo lived in autonomous local communities rather than as a distinct people. However, by the mid-twentieth century, a strong sense of ethnic identity had formed, and



in 1967, the Igbo-dominated Eastern portion of Nigeria attempted to separate from Nigeria as the independent republic of Biafra. By the turn of the century, the Igbo had grown to a population of almost 20 million people. One of Nigeria's three main ethnic groups, Yoruba, is centered in the country's southwest. Benin and northern Togo have much smaller, dispersed clusters. At the turn of the century, the Yoruba totaled more than 20 million people. They speak a Benue-Congo language, which is part of the Niger-Congo language family. The majority of Yoruba males work as farmers, farming staple crops like yams, corn (maize), and millet, as well as plantains, peanuts (groundnuts), beans, and peas as secondary crops. Cocoa is a prominent income crop. Others



work as traders or artisans. Women undertake minimal farm work but control a large part of the complex market system; their standing is determined more by their own market position than by their

husbands'. Hausa are a people who live primarily in northern Nigeria and southern Niger. They are the main ethnic group in the area, which also includes the Fulani, who make up almost half of the ruling elite among the Hausa, having acquired Hausa language and culture. The Hausa economy has been based on intense cultivation of sorghum, corn (maize), millet, and a variety of other crops farmed in rotation and using Fulani cattle dung. Agriculture has provided far more than sustenance, allowing the Hausa to pursue craft specialities like thatching, leatherworking, weaving, and silversmithing. With differing religions and cultural values, these groups were forced together under the colonial project led by the British. At the Berlin Conference in 1884, European powers divided African land into different regions and claimed the land for themselves. Britain took over the region that would come to be known as Nigeria, but forced countless ethnic groups together that historically did not work well together. Although several ethnic groups remained in Nigeria, after independence, many of the ethnic groups joined together in order to make a stronger Nigerian nation.



## **Current Situation**

Struggling with leadership and trust in the government, Nigerian people, however, struggled to form a national identity after earning their independence. A military coup took place on January 15, 1966. Rebel soldiers, led by Kaduna



Nzeogwu assassinated 11 senior Nigerian officials. The rebels, attempting to rid Nigeria of corruption, wanted to cleanse the leadership in all major areas of the country. However, while they were successful in assassinating the leaders of the West and the North, they were unsuccessful in toppling the leader of the region in the Igbo led East. This vacuum of power and



leadership required General Johnson Aguiyi-Irons, the General Officer of Nigeria's military, to step in, drive the rebels back, and assume control over the government. General Ironsi's ascent to power was met with significantly varied responses depending on the

region of the country. The East welcomed this new development, as they saw the new Igbo leader as someone who could stand up against the tyranny of the North, as the North had dominated the politics and elections for quite some time. The North on the other hand, felt that this was an egregious attempt by the Igbo to take over the Nigerian government. While the rebels had been attempting to purify the leadership from all the regions of the government, the fact that they were unsuccessful in the East, and that many of the rebels were Igbo, contributed to the perception that the rebellion was an Igbo led seizure of power.

## **Solutions**

The Eastern region of Nigeria contains significant oil deposits. Oil has been the primary driving force of the economic disparity between the Eastern Igbos and the Northern Nigerians. The oil resources are only present in the East, however, it is controlled by the government in the North. This oil reserve gives the East a bargaining chip when threatening secession. While the Western

and Eastern portions of the country have access to water and contain important trading ports, especially Lagos, the North is landlocked and requires the East or the West to trade with the Europeans. Any attempt by the East to separate themselves may embolden the West to secede as well which would lead the North to be permanently landlocked. Northerners seem unlikely to allow this to happen. The East also has the advantage of having most of the educated Igbo people. Colonialism by the British focused on developing the infrastructure in the East and in Lagos. The British tended to avoid focusing resources in the North as it had already and continued to be significantly influenced by the Arab countries and Muslim values. This disparity in education continued to grow throughout the extent of British rule, leading many of the educated, Igbo people in the East to assume positions of military leadership.

With internal migration present within Nigeria, swaths of different ethnic groups are scattered throughout the country. The dissatisfaction with the present situation has led to the maltreatment of these different groups. Any potential secession would need to find some way to protect these scattered people, as there would be no governing force with their best interests in mind.

Many Nigerians in the North were poorly educated and as a result not present in prominent jobs such as police and the army. Igbo people are much

more educated and make up the majority of the army and police force. The North has an advantage because the Nigerian government is centered there and this government is the only authority in Nigeria that is widely known and accepted by the



international community. There was a Coup d'état in 1966 committed by the Igbos against the Northerners in political and military power that sparked pogroms where many Igbo people across



the country were massacred. Northerners acted on their wrongful perception that the Igbo had attempted to overtake the leadership of Nigeria and retaliated in a devastating manner. These massacres only furthered the tensions between Igbos in the East and Northerners. While there are significant tensions and differences that are present between the ethnic groups within Nigeria, it is clear that they are all interconnected and any solution that aims to simply separate the groups will be met with some resistance from one of the ethnic groups.

Regarding any action regarding the separation of ethnic groups or regions, the international implications must also be considered. Currently, only the entire country of Nigeria is recognized by the international community, and if any region were to secede, the original portion of the country would still continue to be recognized and supported by international leaders. The



international community continues to have economic interests in Nigeria relating to oil, cocoa, rubber, etc. that they would not want to endanger by negotiating with a new party in any

potential secession. With these mostly western nations profiting from the status quo, they will be reluctant to promote any instability, especially when the threat of communism is not clearly present. Without international support and some recognition, it will be difficult for any region to fight and win in any conflict with the mainland for their independence without the support and recognition of a few international bodies. Regarding international influence, Nigeria cannot forget its role as a former British colony. There are still remnants of British influence present within the country, and the original borders for the country were drawn arbitrarily by British colonists. Great Britain may seek to reassert themselves in the region if it appears that the



Nigerians have taken on more than they can handle. Calculations must be taken by all sides involved to develop a solution that is most amiable for all involved parties while also causing the least amount of chaos and disruption to the region and the world as a whole.

### **Questions to Consider**

1. Are there any shared goals between the different ethnic groups?
2. How can the safety of different ethnic groups in regions that are typically not their home be ensured?
3. How can we overcome generational differences and issues with different ethnic groups?
4. Is there a solution that is beneficial for all parties involved?

## Topic B: Economic Challenges



## Background

When Nigeria first gained its independence from Britain in 1960, the Nigerian economy seemed very promising. At the time, the country held 15 percent of the entire African sub-continent's population and was seen by many as the future powerhouse of Africa. Although certain factors stalled Nigeria's economic growth- a divide between eastern and western/northern Nigerian economies began to be created.

The most prominent ethnic group in the eastern portion of Nigeria are the Igbos, although there are countless other peoples located in this integral region of the country. The one thing that these groups share in common is the eastern Nigerian economy. Eastern Nigeria relies heavily on the palm tree for economic success. This



valuable commodity is used in roofing material, palm wine, palm oil, and palm kernels for foreign exchange revenue. Raw materials are the lifeblood of the economy, although their abundance varies between states and regions in East Nigeria. Most raw materials take the form of palm tree produce,

although rubber, cocoa, fruits, vegetables, the staple root and cereal crops, and tobacco are also

common sources as farming is the main source of income to many. Standard oil is crucial to Nigeria's income across all parts of the country - as is farming - although this is where the economic similarities end. While Eastern Nigeria is fairly well off relative to the other regions, areas such as the North/west also depend on an agricultural based society. This area is most dominated by tribes such as the Yoruba and the Hausi-Fulani. Agricultural sustainability in northern Nigeria necessitates adaptability in both ecological and economic management. Rainfall comes only sporadically but when it does, it is typically heavy, necessitating the use of soil moisture conservation practices by farmers. Millet, sorghum, and cowpea are the principal crops farmed in the area, while peanuts and sesame are important minor crops. Wild foods are also an essential dietary supplement, particularly

during times of food scarcity. Since the dry Saharan heat made much of Southeastern and Northeastern land non-arable, and the dry periods present in north/western Nigeria, competition over suitable growing



land has greatly increased. Since North and western Nigeria have faced economic hardship due to agricultural limitations they resorted to conflict with the East. Northern Nigerian ethnic groups began to clash with Eastern ones over farming land.

## **Current situation**

As their economies diverged and they were met with varying levels of prosperity, hatred has developed rapidly between the different regions of Nigeria and the Igbos, Hausa-Fulani, and Yoruba that dominate each land as they fight for farming spaces. Those in power have often sided with their own ethnic groups rather than the entire population's benefit, which has resulted

in growing tensions between the North/west and East since both regions had non-arable land.

Many Igbos and other ethnic groups are forced to desert their homeland and culture as more and more habitable growing land becomes unsustainable due to unstable Nigerian weather, especially after the drought of 1961. As landless immigrants, they are vulnerable to poverty due to the lack



of jobs available to them. This has hurt the entire population, who may depend on farming as a source of safe income. Furthermore, this situation hurts the Nigerian economy of the North and the East as there is a lack of farming goods to export, due to the lack of space to farm, has led to a loss of

income for the entire country. This has caused the Nigerian GDP to decay and a depression becoming very likely. The Aburi Conference is being held to address these ethnic conflicts, and it is essential that the role of the mixed Nigerian economy be considered and dealt with since it is the root of the problem. It is also being held as a last resort to end ethnic conflicts over land usage and rights as a way to save the Nigerian economy before a depression occurs.

Furthermore, this conference is being held in order to stop the growing divide in economies between eastern and northern/western Nigeria to maintain a balanced society without tension and to avoid any future conflict that may be a result of the divide. Any crop recession that occurs in north/western Nigeria still affects the eastern Nigerian economy, which is why it is important to consider how to maintain an economic balance between all sections of the country to guarantee a future of prosperity for the country past the twentieth century.

## **Solutions**

The Nigerian government has proposed solutions in the past to combat growing poverty rates by reforming its faulty economic system, but these attempts have been unsuccessful. Ethnic groups in seats of power usually hold strong biases for their own section of the country's benefits (i.e. Igbos in power argue for more farming land/rights for Eastern Nigerians). For that reason, measures must be taken to effectively level the playing field for all the regions to ensure equal prosperity in all areas of this diverse country. If this objective can be accomplished, then the tension and division that plagues this nation can hopefully be eliminated. Possible solutions may include efforts to unify the Nigerian economy under one main product of export, resulting in equal distribution of wealth across the country, equal interest and investment by foreign powers, and a means of steady income of the Nigerian government even with a lack of farming land.

Unifying the nation economically could also lead to unifying the nation socially and politically, which is why such a course of action should be considered at this monumental conference. Solutions to end the displacement of farmers may include plans to create equal allotments of land to farm and laws to reduce



competition for farming lands. This legislation must be able to uphold and grant equal farming rights for all ethnic groups in Nigeria to end this conflict. It is of utmost importance for all the ethnic groups and representatives from the different sections of Nigeria to work together and propose a solution that helps all Nigerian citizens; after all, collaboration between the different regions of Nigeria could lead to decreased tensions between the various groups all while fostering economic development and erasing Nigeria's status as a third world country.

## Questions to Consider:

1. What is the most effective way to unify the diverse Nigerian economy?
2. How can social unity between the different ethnic groups of Nigeria be accomplished?
3. How can political unity under a single Nigerian government with equal representation of all ethnic groups be accomplished?
4. How can the North's lower prosperity compared to the East be improved so that all regions have equal success?
5. What is the most effective way to uphold farming rights and equitably distribute farming land to satisfy all regions and groups in Nigeria?

## Resources to Consider (to understand the topic more solely)

- [Nigeria as a whole](#)
- [droughts in nigeria](#)
- [agriculture in Northern Nigeria](#)
- [development of nigerian economy](#)
- [Nigerian Economy overview](#)
- [History of Nigerian Economy](#)
- [Agriculture in Nigeria](#)



## Positions List

### I. Lt.-General J.A. Ankrah

A. He became the head of state and Chairman of the National Liberation Council after the coup in Ghana on February 24, 1966. He offered to mediate the diplomatic meeting between the adversarial sides in Nigeria. As a head of state, he has the power to do all things within the scope of power of a Ghanaian leader

### II. Lt.-Col. Yakubu Gowon

A. He was chosen as the head of the Nigerian government as a compromise following the countercoup by Northern officials in 1966. He wants to find some lasting solution to the issues that plague Nigeria but has to figure out how to heal an ethnically divided country that already distrusts one another. As a head of state, he has significant power in Nigeria, however his influence and power is significantly diminished in the East, leading him to be fearful for his life when presented with the opportunity to travel East for negotiations.

### III. Lt.-Col. Odumegwu Ojukwu

A. He is the Governor of the Eastern region of Nigeria. His primary goal and motivator is keeping the Igbo people safe who comprise the majority of the Eastern region. He favors a heavily decentralized state, where the federal government acts only when an issue affects all the regions. Poor treatment of Igbos in the North necessitates proper protections for the Igbo. He is wildly popular in the Eastern region of the country, however, he exerts little power and influence in the other regions.

### IV. Lt.-Col. Hassan Katsina - Governor Northern Region

A. He is the governor of the Northern Region of Nigeria. He served in Congo assisting international forces there. He was given power by Major Nzeogwu. He utilized senior civil servants who already had administrative capabilities to continue the progress that had been made to modernize the North. He has significant influence in the North while also being motivated by preserving the integrity of Nigeria and the North.

### V. Lt.-Col. David Ejoor - Governor Mid-Western Region

A. David Ejoor was born in the delta state of Nigeria, in southern Nigeria. Is currently the governor of the mid western region of Nigeria and was once a chief in the Nigerian army. He attended the royal military academy and has a strong background in military and army strategy and education. Although a part of the Olukumi group of Nigeria- Ejoor supported the unity of Nigeria. He preached for

a peaceful coexistence between all of the ethnic groups in Nigeria- he preached about unity, peace, and togetherness of Nigeria.

VI. Commodore Joseph Edet Akinwale Wey - Vice President of Nigeria

A. Joseph Edet Akinwale Wey was born in Calabar, Nigeria in southern Nigeria from a Yoruba mother. He is currently the acting de facto vice president of Nigeria and was educated at Methodist schools and army schools. Wey has a serious knowledge of battle plans as he was a naval officer before his role in government. His spot as the vice president gives him immense power and jurisdiction with the government. He often supported Yoruba affairs and power as they were located in western Nigeria- the opposites to the Igbo ethnic group.

VII. Colonel Robert Adebayo - Governor Western Region

A. Robert Adebayo was born in 1928 in western Nigeria. He is currently the acting governor of the western region of Nigeria. He has a background in cadet and military training and he used this to an advantage. As governor, Adebayo prompted agricultural expansion services and even created an agricultural institute as a way to increase agricultural productivity. Adebayo cared much about all farmers no matter the ethnic group and wanted to find solutions to increase agriculture in western Nigeria during his rule.

VIII. Alhaji Kam Selem

A. Alhaji Kam Selem was born in the northeastern state of Nigeria in 1924. As an Igbo, he asserted much of his life for the advancement of Igbo affairs and preservation. Alhaji is the Inspector Supreme of the Nigerian Police Department. He is known to be very professional and have a strong relationship with Great Britain.

IX. Major Mobolaji Johnson - Governor Lagos State

A. Major Mobolaji Johnson was born in 1936 to a Lagos Indigene family. Mobolaji is currently the governor of Lagos state in western Nigeria where the Yoruba people dominate. Mobolaji was educated in the military and has a background knowledge of battle strategy and of being a cadet. His main goal was to create several city reforms in Lagos with the help of his cabinet such as making highways and systems of roads. He was a staunch supporter of the Yoruba people and acted in their best interest. He supported the unity of Nigeria as a whole but favored reform and the advancement of the people of Lagos and western Nigeria primarily.

- X. Alhaji Ali Akilu Secretary to the Military Governor-North
- A. Alhaji Ali Akilu was born in Chafe in the Sokoto Emirate. He started a career in civil service and rose up the ranks to obtain a prominent position. He was one of the earliest northerners to obtain a economics degree from London. It was believed that he and Malam Ahmed Talib guided the Northern Civil Service since 1963. After the coup in 1966 he remained in service and continued to attend many peace talks and conferences.
- XI. Solomon Akenzua
- A. Solomon Akenzua was born in 1923 as the son of Oba Akenzua, the Oba of Benin. He attended Kings College in Cambridge to study Law and Administration. He joined the Eastern Nigeria civil service and participated as a district officer for the East during the conference and conflict.
- XII. Hamani Diori- President of Niger
- A. Hamani Diori was working in a school in Niger's capital of Niamey, when he became one of the founders of the Nigerien Progressive Party. He was elected to the French National Assembly in the 1951 election. After Niger was granted self-government in 1958, Diori became the president of the provisional government. He had close ties with France, which was ultimately the reason for the coup against him in 1974. While he was not at the Aburi Accord, use his perspective and regional interests to formulate his viewpoint.
- XIII. François Tombalbaye- President of Chad
- A. Francois Tombalbaye was the first president of Chad. He was the head of Chad's colonial government, but became the president after colonial rule ended in 1960. He ruled as a dictator, but nationalized the country, using more locals for positions of power instead of French. While he was not at the Aburi Accord, use his perspective and regional interests to formulate his viewpoint.
- XIV. Ahmadou Ahidjo- President of Cameroon
- A. Ahidjo became the prime minister under colonial rule and fought for independence with France. Once Cameroon was declared a state, he became the first president in 1960. He established a single party state under the Cameroon National Union. While he was not at the Aburi Accord, use his perspective and regional interests to formulate his viewpoint.
- XV. Jean-Bédel Bokassa- President of Central African Republic
- A. Bokassa was a Central African military leader who overthrew President David Dacko. In his rule, he wrote a whole new constitution and formed a new

assembly. He emphasized strength, fearlessness, and masculinity as a military leader. While he was not at the Aburi Accord, use his perspective and regional interests to formulate his viewpoint.

XVI. David Hunt

- A. He is the British High Commissioner to Nigeria. Previously he served as the High Commissioner to Cyprus. Since Nigeria is a former British colony, Britain still tries to play an active role in Nigerian affairs to keep their interests intact. Britain, along with the rest of the Western nations, wants to see Nigeria stay as one nation as it makes it easier to access natural resources if governments are only dealing with one government on the Nigerian side. While he was not at the Aburi Accord, use his perspective and regional interests to formulate his viewpoint.

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