

POLI 212

Introduction to International Politics

Session 1 –SELECTED IGOs- THE WORLD BANK, THE ICC,
the AU, AND THE EU

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Session Overview

– Overview

- This session discusses the activities of certain selected IGOs. We will look at the World Bank, the International Criminal Court, the African Union and the European Union.
- The discussions will center on the reasons for the establishment of these organizations and the organs or institutions through which they carry out their activities.

Session Outline

The key topics to be covered in the session are as follows:

- Topic One: the World Bank and the ICC
- Topic Two: The European Union and the African Union

Reading List

- Bossman E. Asare, 2016. *International Politics: The Beginner's Guide*- Updated and Expanded, Digibooks, Ghana. chapter 5
- Charles W. Kegley Jr. and Shannon L. Blanton, 2010. *World Politics: Trend and Transformation*, Wadsworth: Cengage Learning. Chapters 6 and 14



Topic One

THE WORLD BANK AND THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT



The World Bank

- The World Bank was established in 1944 as the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD). The World Bank is widely seen as the second most prominent IGO after the UN. It is headquartered in Washington, DC, USA. Although it is a bank, the World Bank is more concerned about meeting the demands of its 187 member countries rather than making profits like the commercial banks in the world.
- The bank is owned by the 187 member countries so the management of the bank, at least in theory, promotes causes that benefit the member countries. Apart from contributions from member countries, the bank also borrows money from the financial markets. This suggests that member countries will have to pay some interests on the loans they collect from the bank. In some literature, you will see the World Bank Group instead of the World Bank. The reason is that the bank is made up of different institutions. The addition of the group thus ensures that the bank is presented as a number of institutions working together.



The World Bank (contd.)

- The bank supports developing countries by giving them low-interest loans that they can hardly get in the private and capital markets. It also gives grants to developing countries to support education, road infrastructure, healthcare delivery, public sector management, private sector development, and several others. Many developing countries have received and continue to receive technical assistance from the bank.
- The bank gives long-term financial assistance to developing countries to support a number of development projects. The World Bank comprises of two development institutions-the IBRD and the International Development Association (IDA). Both institutions support member countries in several ways. The IBRD works to decrease poverty in middle-income and creditworthy poorer countries, while IDA focuses on the world's poorest countries, such as those in sub-Saharan Africa.

The World Bank (contd.)

- The bank's management is headed by a President appointed by the US President. The reason why the US President appoints the President of the bank is that, there is an unwritten law which says that the President of the bank must be a US citizen. This means no citizen of any other country can be President of the World Bank. Once the position of President is vacant, the sitting US President will nominate a US citizen for the position.
- The current President of the Bank, Dr. Jim Yong Kim, was appointed by President Barack Obama. However, those appointed must receive the approval of the Bank's shareholders. In recent times non-US citizens have been applying for the position but no one has been successful. The US became the economic power of the world after World War II, and it is therefore not surprising that the countries that met to form the World Bank agreed that the President should go to the US.

The World Bank (contd.)

- The other members of the management team come from different countries. Including the top-level officials, the Bank has more than 10,000 workers working in different countries. There are country offices in several countries headed by Country Directors. In Ghana, for instance, there is a World Bank Country Office which represents the World Bank in Ghana. The primary responsibility of the country office is to coordinate some of the activities of the bank in the country and report on the social, political, and economic development of the country.
- Voting is based on a principle known as weighted voting. Weighted voting means that, each country's vote is dependent on her financial contributions to the Bank. The US gives more money to the Bank than any other country. Because of this, the US has more votes than any other country. The US votes are even more than the entire African continent votes. As a result of this voting pattern, rich countries have more influence in the activities of the Bank than poor countries. The IMF also has the same voting pattern with rich countries dominating in decision making and management.

International Criminal Court (ICC)

- The International Criminal Court (ICC) has jurisdiction over mass killings, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity. In general, the court prosecutes people who have committed genocide. Currently, former Ivory Coast president, Laurent Gbagbo, is facing trial for certain crimes. Former Liberian president, Charles Taylor was sentenced to 50 years by the ICC in 2012. Recently the ICC issued a warrant for the arrest of the sitting Sudanese president.
- The headquarters of the ICC is The Hague in the Netherlands. Some confuse the ICC with the ICJ (an organ of the UN also located in The Hague). The ICJ deals with countries and the ICC is about individuals who have committed crimes against humanity. The ICC became operational in July 2002 following the adoption of the Rome Statute of the ICC in 1998. The Court is independent of the UN system but it collaborates with the UN and other UN specialized agencies to promote international law.

The ICC (contd.)

- Presently, there are almost 123 member countries. Some countries have signed the treaty (Rome Statute of the ICC) that led to the formation of the Court but they are yet to ratify it (the treaty). It is expected that the coming years will witness several countries joining the Court. The Court does not try citizens from countries that are not members of the Court. However, once the crime was committed on the territory of a country or state that is member of the ICC, such persons can be tried by the Court.
- In the same way, the Court can try crimes committed in a country that is not a member of the ICC as long as those who committed the crimes come from countries that are members of the ICC. Some leading countries that are yet to be members of the ICC are the Russian Federation, USA, India, and China. Ghana is a member of the ICC and this means any Ghanaian who commits crimes against humanity can be tried by the Court.
- The ICC has four main organs and these are the Presidency, the Judicial Divisions, the Office of the Prosecutor, and the Registry.

The ICC (contd.)

- The Presidency has overall jurisdiction of the Court with the exception of the office responsible for prosecutions. Three persons make up the Presidency. These are the President of the Court, the first Vice-President and the second Vice-President. They are all appointed by the judges of the ICC.
- The Judicial Divisions is made of the all the judges of the ICC. Those who make up the Presidency are all part of the Judicial Divisions. This organ hears the cases that come to the Court and make the rulings as to whether defendants or accusers of crimes against humanity are innocent or guilty. There are three Judicial Divisions- pre-trial, trial, and appeals divisions. Each division performs specific functions in the ICC. In all there are 18 judges. Each division has judges with qualifications based on the activities of the division.
- The Office of the Prosecutor is responsible for bringing charges against those who have committed crimes within the jurisdictions of the ICC. Before they bring the charges they ensure that they do proper investigations and examinations of the alleged crimes. This office is headed by a Prosecutor appointed by the states that are parties to ICC for nine years. There are other Prosecutors that also work in this office.
- The Registry is responsible for the non-judicial administrative work of the Court.

Sample questions

- What is the principle of weighted voting at the World Bank?
- Discuss the relevance of the World Bank to Ghana.
- Describe the functions of the organs of the International Criminal Court.
- Why is it important for the Office of the Prosecutor at the ICC to be independent of the Presidency of the ICC?

Topic Two

THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THE AFRICAN UNION



The European Union (EU)

- The European Union (EU) has 28 member countries from Europe. The EU is a regional and multipurpose intergovernmental organization. It is arguably the most powerful and influential intergovernmental organization in the world. Until recently, the GDP of member countries combined exceeded that of the United States. With a GDP of more than 16 trillion us dollars and population surpassing 500 million, the EU has the second biggest economy in the world as a single entity and third in terms of size of population. The idea of a united Europe emerged after World War II as countries in Europe felt the need to close the chapter on bloody wars. This led to the European Coal and Steel Community. Later on, it became the European Communities. The current name was adopted in 1993 following the [treaty of Maastricht](#) in 1992, which also led to the creation of the euro.
- Member countries tend to show more commitment to the directives of the EU than with other intergovernmental organizations. There are some who even see the EU as a federal system. In this system, the EU is the central government and member countries are the states or provinces. Practically, there are a number of policies in the EU member countries that are EU-directed and member countries are required to follow EU directives in these policy areas. A typical example is tobacco control policy where EU directives have informed policy in member countries (Asare 2007; Asare et al. 2009). It is not that simple for new members to join the EU. There are countries in Europe that are doing everything possible to join the EU. Fundamentally, countries must meet certain qualifications and standards before they can be accepted as members.



The EU (contd.)

- The EU is headquartered in Brussels in Belgium. Apart from Brussels, other cities in Europe serve as the headquarters of some key EU institutions. The European Parliament is at both Strasbourg in France and Brussels; the Court of Justice of the European Union is in Luxembourg; and the European Central Bank (ECB) is in Frankfurt, Germany.
- The most powerful actors in the EU are Germany, United Kingdom, France, and Italy. Individually, each of the four countries has 29 votes, and no other member country is allocated 29 votes. They also have stronger and bigger economies compared to the other EU member countries.
- The official currency of the union is the Euro which is currently used by 19 of the member countries. These countries (called the euro zone) are Austria, [Belgium](#), [Cyprus](#), Estonia, [Finland](#), [France](#), [Germany](#), [Greece](#), [Ireland](#), [Italy](#), Latvia, [Luxembourg](#), [Malta](#), Estonia, the [Netherlands](#), [Portugal](#), [Slovakia](#), [Slovenia](#), and Spain. Although member countries benefit from their membership of the EU in several ways, the EU also supports countries that are not members. Countries in sub-Saharan Africa receive development assistance from the EU as an intergovernmental organization as well as the assistance from some individual EU countries like Germany, France, and the United Kingdom.

EU institutions/organs

- The institutions are the European Council, Council of the European Union (Council of Ministers), European Commission, European Parliament, European Central Bank, and European Court of Justice.
- **The European Council** is made of the political leaders of the 28 countries that make up the EU. These leaders provide the political and policy direction of the EU. At their meetings, the leaders often talk about what a true EU should look like, and they set the policy direction that will guide EU officials in especially Brussels in accomplishing the goals agreed by the political leaders.
- The European Council is headed by a President elected by members of the European Council for a term of two and half years. Until December 2009 this was not a full time position. However, at a meeting in Lisbon, Portugal in 2007, known as the Treaty of Lisbon, EU leaders called for a full time President who would be able to promote the agenda of the European Council.
- Because the members of the European Council are leaders in their countries they mostly meet twice in six months unless in exceptional circumstances will they meet more than twice.

EU Organs (contd.)

- **The Council of the European Union**, usually called The Council or Council of Ministers, is made up of all the ministers of EU member states. Depending on the issue being debated or discussed, the specific ministers from all member countries meet. If the discussion is about education or energy, you will have the ministers responsible for these portfolios or departments meeting to come up with an EU policy in these areas. According to the EU, the Council performs the following functions:
 - The Council of the European Union passes laws, usually legislating jointly with the European Parliament.
 - The Council co-ordinates the broad economic policies of the Member States.
 - The Council defines and implements the EU's common foreign and security policy, based on guidelines set by the European Council.
 - The Council concludes, on behalf of the Community and the Union, international agreements between the EU and one or more states or international organizations.

EU organs (contd.)

- The Council co-ordinates the actions of Member States and adopts measures in the area of police and judicial co-operation in criminal matters.
- The Council and the European Parliament constitute the budgetary authority that adopts the Community's budget.

The Council has a rotational presidency for all the member countries. The EU has a system which stipulates which countries will take over the Presidency when the position is vacant. Both rich and poor in the union have the same access to the Presidency. Those who serve as Presidents do so for six months in the name of their countries. If the issue being debated or adopted by the Council relates to transportation, the minister of transportation from the country that has the presidency will chair the meetings of the Council.

EU organs (contd.)

- **The European Commission**, often called The Commission, is the executive organ of the EU. The Commission comprises 28 Commissioners and the bureaucrats/civil servants who work at the EU headquarters in Brussels. Just like the executive branch of government in most countries, the Commission is responsible for the day-to-day administration of the EU.
- They make recommendations to the EU Parliament and the Council of the European Union on areas of legislation they consider to be important so that lawmakers can pass laws in these directions. The Commission also implements the policies adopted by the EU and ensures that member countries are conforming to EU laws. Each EU member country has one Commissioner.
- Each Commissioner is responsible for a particular office, such as foreign policy, energy, trade, and others. The only exception is the President of the Commission who represents the entire EU Commission as the Chief Executive.

EU organs (contd.)

- The President of the Commission is appointed by the European Council for a five-year term. Appointees are eligible for another term.
- Though the Commissioners are from the 28 EU member countries and must have the approval of their governments to become Commissioners, once a person becomes a Commissioner, they do not work for their countries, they rather work for EU.
- They are required to promote causes that will benefit the EU, not their individual countries. Commissioners are independent of their countries.
- The bureaucrats working in the various departments of the Commission come from the various EU member countries. Some of them are working in specific capacities and others are in general capacities.
- People attribute the strides made by the EU largely to the activities of the Commission.

EU organs (contd.)

- **The European Parliament** is the lawmaking organ of the EU and it is located in Strasbourg, France. It approves the budget of the EU and passes laws aimed at improving the overall objectives of the EU and citizens of the EU, not member countries per se.
- Lawmakers are from all the member countries and they are directly elected by voters in their various countries.
- There are more than 700 lawmakers representing the 28 member countries. Both the Council of the European Union and the European Parliament make decisions on new EU laws that guide the activities of other EU bodies and member countries.
- **The Court of Justice of the European Union** comprises three courts- [European Court of Justice](#), the [General Court](#) and the [Civil Service Tribunal](#). Each court performs specific functions. The European Court of Justice, for example, is responsible for interpretation of EU law. Each member state has one judge serving on the European Court of Justice.

EU organs (contd.)

- **The European Central Bank** is located in Frankfurt in Germany. It is mainly responsible for the monetary policy of the 19 EU countries that use the euro and the supervision of the financial institutions/banks in the Euro zone.
- Monetary policy involves policies to control the supply of money in order to avoid problems like inflation, stagflation, and unemployment.
- The Bank also maintains the purchasing power of the euro and price stability in the countries that use the euro.
- Stagflation is high levels of inflation plus unemployment.

The African Union

- The African Union (AU) was formed in 2001 after calls by several African leaders for a more 'perfect union.'
- The formation of the AU ushered in a new era of emphasis on responsible governance at least based on how some African leaders saw what the AU would accomplish. The AU came to replace two organizations, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the African Economic Community (AEC).
- The objectives of the AU are broad and they include political, social, and economic reforms of the continent. More importantly, the AU works to end all forms of conflicts, promote human rights, champion democratic governance and economic development, among others (Asare 2009).
- The emergence of the AU has also been viewed as an effort by Africans to find solutions to the problems plaguing Africans

AU institutions

- **The Assembly of the Union-** comprises the political heads of the member countries of the AU. This organ is largely responsible for providing the political direction of the organization. It performs several functions including adopting policies to enhance the integration of the African economies in a manner that develops the continent politically, socially and economically.
- **The Executive Council of Ministers-** this organ is made up of the ministers from all the member countries of the union. Depending on the type of policy being considered, there are some specific ministers that will meet to deliberate on it. Their main function is to monitor the implementation of AU policies in their specific countries. Since the AU is committed to a deeper form of integration like the EU, the respective ministers are to ensure the AU-wide policies are implemented in their countries to ensure convergence of policies in the member countries.

AU organs (contd.)

- Other organs of the AU are the Pan-African Parliament, Peace and Security Council, the Economic, Social and Cultural Council, the Commission (responsible for the daily administration of the AU), the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, the Permanent Representatives Committee, the Specialized Technical Committees, and the Financial Institutions.
- Some of these institutions are yet to be fully established. In general, one can argue that the AU is work in progress. Unlike the EU, the AU does not have stringent qualifications for countries to become members.
- AU is yet to be a leading actor in the domestic affairs of the member countries. Although the capital of the AU is Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, not all the AU organs are headquartered there. The Pan-African Parliament is based in Midrand, South Africa and the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights is headquartered in Arusha, Tanzania.

Sample questions

- What are the key institutions of the AU?
- Describe the main organs of the EU.
- Distinguish between the European Council and the Council of the European Union.

Conclusion of Session 11

- In this session, you have been introduced to four intergovernmental organizations notably the World Bank, the International Criminal Court, the European Union, and the African Union.
- Now you should be in a position to explain to others the various organs of these IGOs and the reasons for their establishment.



References

- Bossman E. Asare, 2016. International Politics: The Beginner's Guide- Updated and Expanded, Digibooks.
- Charles W. Kegley Jr. and Shannon L. Blanton, 2010. World Politics: Trend and Transformation, Wadsworth: Cengage Learning.
- Asare, Bossman (2009) The African Union, Multi-level Governance and Accountability in Africa, *Legon Journal of International Affairs*, 6 (2): 121-137.

