

Joint Africa-EU Civil Society Statement at the EU-Africa Summit – Brussels 3/04/2014

Excellences, ladies and gentlemen,

The themes chosen for today's Summit reflect what a people-centred Partnership should be: a joint political commitment aimed at securing peace and prosperity for the people of Europe and Africa first and foremost because freedom from poverty and insecurity is an entitlement of the human being. As civil society representatives we wish to remind you of leadership at the service of people.

As you commit to keeping people at the heart of the EU-Africa partnership we stress the importance of finding spaces for people's participation in the partnership and deepening the dialogue between EU and African institutions and their peoples, in addition to the political dialogue you agree to hold.

During an intercontinental Forum in October 2013 civil society from Europe and Africa has concluded that the Partnership must prioritize areas of shared concern where joint EU-Africa initiatives can make a difference such as trade, investments and regional integration, migration, social protection, employment and secured incomes, socio-economic equality and non-discrimination, climate change, land and natural resources management and agricultural policies, conflict prevention and peacebuilding, anti-corruption and efficient and transparent taxation and financial systems.

Human rights must be at the center of the Africa-EU relations, including through the development of a Joint Framework and Action Plan on Democracy and Human Rights committing continental institutions as well as their Member States on tangible actions. We urge you to adopt the protection and promotion of Human Rights and the reduction of inequalities as key objectives of all policies and initiatives related to the Partnership.

As you commit to promote human development, sustainable and inclusive development and growth and continental integration, we urge you to engage in finding solutions to common concerns on the EPAs and consider their impact on partners that experience different development stages.

In all aspects of the Partnership, we ask you to pay special attention to the rights and empowerment of women and girls and to the promotion of the youth including through decent employment, education as a right and training opportunities on both continents. We also encourage you to commit to the establishment of an intercontinental women's forum.

To ensure a people-centered approach, we invite you to recognize civil society's key role in the consultative and implementing structures of the Partnership. We recommend the integration of civil society through the establishment of thematic working groups with a consultative and monitoring role. We also call for the establishment of a secretariat of the Partnership, which would facilitate civil society involvement and information sharing about the partnership and its progress. This requires dedicated resources for civil society participation.

We invite you to read the joint CSO declaration which contains recommendations on a number of key areas and we look forward to working in collaboration on these issues in the context of a new human and planet-centred approach to the post 2015 sustainable development agenda.