



CSO Brussels Declaration on the JAES
25 OCTOBER 2013

1. We, representatives of African and European civil society organisations meeting at the Second Africa-EU Civil Society Forum in Brussels on 23-25 October 2013, resolve to take concrete actions to influence the reform of the Joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES) and the implementation of its new Action Plan, which are expected to be adopted by the Africa-EU Summit in April 2014. As in Cairo (2010), we recognise the JAES and the Action plan as important instruments for fulfilling the long-term goal of building a new strategic partnership between Africa and the European Union based on shared history, strong political relationship, common values and close cooperation.
2. At this joint forum, we reviewed the implementation of the JAES and the Action Plan (2011-2013), deliberated on proposals from the EU and AU Commissions for the reform of the JAES thematic priorities, institutional mechanisms and funding instruments and evaluated past experiences and future opportunities for civil society in the framework of the JAES. Having also interacted with high-ranking EU and AU officials who opened and closed the forum, we concluded that the strengthening of civil society participation in the JAES was critical to transforming the partnership between Africa and the EU into a more people-centred and mutually beneficial multi-stakeholder relationship, not a government-to-government project. We observed with particular concern that the current reform proposals limit CSOs' participation in the JAES.
3. We deliberated in plenary and working group sessions, focusing on the six themes of 'migration; food security, climate change and agriculture; socio-economic inequalities; political participation, human rights and transparency; peace, security and governance; trade, regional integration and investments', with gender equality, youth and natural resources management as prominent cross-cutting themes receiving specific recommendations. We agreed that civil society in Africa and the EU should engage in the processes of reforming the JAES and contribute to the formulation of the action plan for the period 2014-2016 in order to influence the decisions and outcomes of the forthcoming Africa-EU Summit in April 2014.
4. Acknowledging the progress, challenges and opportunities of the JAES since 2007 we recommend the following actions for its reform and the revitalization of the Africa-EU partnership:

Structural reforms:

- Recognize the role of civil society organisations as independent actors and integral partners and provide appropriate support for their timely involvement at all levels of decision-making, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the JAES;
- Introduce decision-making, implementing, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for the partnership that include civil society, Member States and the related institutions;
- Adopt an outreach and communication strategy at the intercontinental and national levels



- Articulate clearly the linkage between the JAES and major intercontinental processes, such as the Post-2015 development agenda, in order to maintain the continuing relevance of the strategy;
- Set up inclusive working groups on the thematic priorities of the JAES in which representatives of EU-Africa CSOs will formally participate;
- Set up a permanent political forum where the EU and Africa will discuss priorities or themes and adopt joint positions that will be promoted within international fora;
- Allocate at least two seats for the CSOs at the Africa-EU Summit 2014;
- Establish a permanent secretariat with predictable funding to support and facilitate the engagement of civil society in the JAES;
- Establish an intercontinental women's forum that focuses on women's political, economic and social empowerment;

Thematic priorities:

Migration

- Decriminalize migration and promote the right to freedom of movement;
- Ratify and implement international legal instruments for the protection of migrants' fundamental rights and freedom of movement;
- Delink development aid from migration flow management and border control initiatives;

Democracy, human rights and governance

- Keep a specific democracy, human rights and governance focus in the partnership;
- Promote citizenship and human rights education in order to enhance political participation and civic engagement in political processes in both continents;
- Prioritize a comprehensive approach to initiatives pertaining to the rights of women and their roles at all levels of society, while eradicating violence and discrimination against women;
- Hasten ratification and implementation of mechanisms for human rights protection, including increasing access to justice, promoting legislative capacity and ensuring separation of powers;

Peace and security

- Enhance the partnership on peace and security with a special focus on peace-building efforts;
- Organize an annual conference on peace and security between Africa and Europe and support the national infrastructures for mediation and peace;
- Invest in conflict prevention and early-warning measures;
- Within an integrated response mechanism, ensure predictable funding for Africa-led peace support operations;



Trade, regional integration and investment

- Put the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with Africa on the agenda of the EU-Africa Summit in April 2014 and negotiate development friendly agreements that align the geographical scope of EPAs to the Regional Economic Communities (RECs);
- Ensure that regional integration and infrastructure development is inclusive and gender-sensitive and use strategic social and environment assessments to plan sector and regional infrastructure projects;
- Strengthen regulatory and implementing capacity of African governments and enforce regulation to tackle illicit trade and financial flows;
- Strengthen the implementation of social and environmental standards on trade and investment for EU companies active in Africa;
- Build the capacity of Africa's SMEs and business community to meet the requirements of the EU market and promote socio-economic justice;
- Establish a civil society mechanism to monitor key areas of trade and investment between the EU and Africa to ensure mutual accountability;

Socio-economic inequalities

- Make elimination of socio-economic inequalities a core priority of the JAES and ensure complementarity with other processes to reduce poverty;
- Ensure that voices and concerns of the poor and most marginalised groups are reflected in all formal spaces of the JAES through CSO participation;
- Recognise the centrality and importance of development and global education in both Europe and Africa;
- Adopt and implement joint Africa- EU positions related to social and economic inequalities and promote them in international fora;
- Address issues related to gender, maternal and child health, water and sanitation, disability and employment as key areas to reduce poverty;

Food security, land, climate change and agriculture

- Promote the achievement of policy coherence for development in particular by elimination of targets and subsidies that encourage land grab and food insecurity in Africa, such as biofuels production;
- Ensure the establishment and implementation of the highest standards in responsible governance and protection of land rights, and tenure, climate change, water, fisheries and forests;
- Support climate-friendly and sustainable agriculture as well as small-scale farming as a means to achieve food security within Africa and Europe;
- Ensure that Africa and European governments commit to further ambitious and concrete actions to reduce emissions globally and to commit to a legally binding treaty to fight climate change;
- Strengthen collaboration among all the partners on biodiversity and the protection of natural and genetic resources on both continents and support civil society actors in playing an advocacy role towards public authorities regarding exploitation of these resources.



Funding mechanisms:

- Ensure predictable funding for civil society participation in the JAES and in the implementation of the 2014-2016 Work Plan, including the thematic working groups meetings and other institutional activities;
 - Generate options for equitable Africa and EU funding of JAES structures, personnel and programmes;
 - Ensure a dedicated budget line in the Pan-African thematic programme to support the establishment of an intercontinental women's forum;
 - Provide predictable funding for a permanent secretariat to support and facilitate the work of civil society in the JAES.
5. We are confident that all the stakeholders in the JAES will reflect on these recommendations and take action, accordingly, in support of the reform of the JAES and the next Action Plan at the forthcoming Africa-EU Summit in April 2014.