



JAES Civil Society Meeting

Brussels, 29 October 2015

Joint Report

On 29th October 2015, the EC (European Commission) and the EEAS (European External Action Service) initiated a dialogue and exchanges meeting that brought together the African and European JAES CSO Steering Committees (six representatives from the African Civil Society Steering Committee-SC and seven representatives from the EU CSO SC) with the EU institutions – EEAS and EC, the AUC (the African Union Commission), AU ECOSOCC (the Economic, Social and Cultural Council of the African Union) and CIDO (the Citizens and Diaspora Organizations Directorate). The meeting was organized with the financial and technical support of the EU through the JAES-Support Mechanism and was hosted by the AU Mission to the EU.

The meeting was co-chaired by the AU host (Mohamed Igueh, Officer-in-Charge of the Permanent Mission of the African Union to the EU), Kristin de Peyron (EEAS, Head of Pan-African Affairs), Françoise Moreau (EC/DEVCO, Head of Africa-EU Partnership), Professor Dipo Kolawole (on behalf of the African CSO SC), and Steffie Neyens (on behalf of the European CSO SC). The President of AU ECOSOCC, Joseph Chilengi, and the Director of CIDO, Jinmi Adissa, also participated in the meeting.

Relevant experts and members of the EU institutions covering specific themes of the agenda contributed to the meeting: Elisabeth Tison, EEAS, Head of Division covering Human Rights strategy and policy implementation and Vitoria Correa also from EEAS/HR Division; Anna Burylo from the EU Delegation to the AU/Addis; Sofia Lemmetyinen from DEVCO - covering Human Rights, Gender and Democratic Governance; Claude Bochu from EEAS Pan-African Unit, Stuart Forster and Stephanie Truille-Baurens from DEVCO/unit D4 - Africa-EU Partnership, and Marc Kwai Pun from JAES Support Mechanism.

Carolina Quina, JAES Support Mechanism resource person, assisted in the preparation and facilitation of the meeting and two interlocutors (representing the two

CSO SC) were appointed to assist in the finalization of a joint meeting report – Guy Aho Tete Benissan (on behalf of the African CSO SC and regional coordinator of REPAOC – Réseau des platesformes d’ONG d’Afrique de l’Ouest to assist with the French version of the joint report), Eze Chukwuemeka (also on behalf of the African CSO SC and from WANEP – West Africa Network for Peace Building to assist with the English version of the joint report) and Cécile Vernant (on behalf of the EU CSO SC and head of EU advocacy of DSW – Deutsche Stiftung Weltbevoelkerung). See **Annex 1**- for a list of all participants.

The AU host (Mohamed Igueh) made the opening welcoming remarks underlining the importance of institutions and CSO joining efforts to better strive towards a people-centered partnership and concluded by indicating AUC readiness to continue dialogue and exchanges.

Françoise Moreau, Head of the Pan-African Unit at the European Commission, made the initial framing remarks on behalf of DEVCO Director - Koen Doens (unable to attend due to last-minute commitment). Françoise Moreau acknowledged the concerns expressed by CSO and stressed the need for collective efforts to improve civil society inclusion and for mechanisms that would facilitate regular dialogue on the JAES process.

African CSO SC opening remarks (by Eze Chukwuemeka) welcomed this informal meeting, expressed concern over the lack of CSO inclusion and stressed the need for more dialogue to address the challenges ahead, monitor the JAES roadmap implementation and track CSO contributions.

European CSO SC opening remarks (by Gina Wharton) expressed expectations for an open and truthful dialogue to address what is perceived as lack of space and support for CSO inclusion in the JAES process and welcomed the initiative of this meeting (the first of this kind since the IV Summit/ April 2014 bringing together AU and EU Institutions and CSO SCs) as a beginning of a process to improve the current situation.

The morning session addressed the JAES process and framework for a more structured civil society engagement: (1) “JAES and Civil Society” and (2) “JAF and Civil Society”.

1. “JAES and Civil Society”

- ***JAES Reporting – Progress since April 2014:*** presentation by Anna Burylo and Françoise Moreau of an informal reporting table (**Annex 2**) drafted by the EC and EEAS setting out institutional progress made in the 5 key areas of the Roadmap. The EU explained that this reporting table was an internal document, that it’s not exhaustive and should be considered as a “living document”.

- **CSO support through the Pan-African Programme (PANAF):** presentation by Françoise Moreau and Stephanie Truille-Baurens (DEVCO) of the PanAf CSO component and its priority areas, indication that this PanAf funding should not be seen in isolation but as complementary with existing funding mechanisms at national and regional level, that it aims to support civil society at continental level and that it is in line with AU Agenda 2063. The eligibility guidelines are currently being drafted and the calls for proposals will be launched early 2016. It was also indicated that two sessions to give CSO more detailed information are scheduled for early 2016.

The African SC and CIDO representatives expressed concern relating to the fact that the funds will be managed by the EU based institutions and in line with the remarks made in the opening session stated it should be “African driven”.

- **JAES Roadmap Working Groups 2014-2017 – consultation mechanism between CSO and Institutions:** presentation by Kristin de Peyron (EEAS) of a second table mapping current working groups and discussion by the meeting to identify ways for enhanced CSO engagement. (**Annex 3**).

Many of these aspects were followed-up in the final part of the meeting dedicated to conclusions and next’s steps.

- **CSO Forum:** CSO SCs (Gérard Karlshausen -EU SC and Eze Chukwuemeka – Africa SC) led the discussion on recommendations from the 2013 CSO Forum. Several points were raised that will need to be further discussed including the relation with the JAF – see point on “Conclusions” – CSO Forum.

2. “JAF and Civil Society” (due to time constraints this point was addressed in the afternoon session)

- **The Joint Annual Forum and Civil Society:** an update by the EU (Kristin de Peyron/EEAS) and AU (Mohamed Igueh) was given on the preparations of the 1st JAF and discussion on how best CSO could engage in this process (pre-JAF, JAF meeting and its follow-up).

The first part of the afternoon session was dedicated to debriefings by representatives of EU institutions (EEAS, EC, and EU Delegation in Addis) on the following key areas of the JAES Roadmap:

3. Governance and Human Rights:

- An update on ***Human Rights programming under the Pan-African*** programme and other HR programming exercises (by Anna Burylo/EU Delegation to the AU, and Sofia Lemmetyinen/ DEVCO - HR Gender and Democratic Governance/Unit B1) was given to the meeting. The HR action to be financed under the Pan-African Programme was outlined with its objective of strengthening the AU HR system and AGA (including through capacity building, support to the four main AU organs with a Human Rights mandate, support to improve access of African CSO and citizens to HR mechanisms). Readiness to continue discussion based on CSO SC and AU ECOSOCC targeted recommendations to improve coordination was confirmed;
- Debriefing on the ***AU-EU Human Rights Dialogue*** was provided by Elisabeth Tison and Victoria Correa. It highlighted recent developments on HR policies (including HR and democracy plans, renewal of former plan of action, developments in the ratification of AU Human Rights Charter by MS).

The EU also highlighted in its debriefing possible areas for further dialogue (e.g. African protocol on the abolition of death penalty) and identified specific HRs issues as being of particular current relevance – e.g. International Justice system - International Court of Justice (EU seeking AU support), South Sudan inquiry, Transnational Justice (policy framework), linkages between HR and AGA, Elections, Migration and EU-AU cooperation in HRs in general.

During the debate several CSO SCs representatives stressed the importance of joint efforts in the promotion of HR and Peoples rights and a specific reference was made to the added value of involving CSO in the AU Human Rights mission.

Another issue that was addressed was the preparation of the upcoming AU-EU Human Rights Dialogue, scheduled for 24 November 2015, in Kigali and CSO contribution to the debates. There will be a CSO HR Dialogue side event ahead of the official AU-EU Dialogue and it will address the theme of “Freedom of Expression”. Representatives from CSO will, afterwards, be invited to one of the sessions of the official AU-EU Dialogue on HR to present the outcomes and recommendations of their meeting.

4. JAES and Migration:

- Debriefing by Françoise Moreau (DEVCO) and Kristin de Peyron (EEAS) on the preparations for the Valletta Summit and its background (Rabat process, Khartoum process, continental/JAES process, Cotonou readmission agreements, bilateral agreements, etc.), brief presentation of the themes to be addressed (including irregular migration, forced migration, migration and readmission agreements, and Action Plan to be adopted). This briefing was followed by a discussion on how to improve CSO engagement in this process and its follow-up. CSO SCs representatives and ECOSOCC expressed concern over their lack of involvement and requested that the issue of their non-participation and support in the Valletta Summit should be reviewed.¹

The final part of the meeting devoted to *Conclusions and Next Steps* focused on the discussion of recommendations to overcome the challenges resulting from the JAES dialogue structure (agreed in April 2014 during the IV Africa-EU Summit) and its impact on CSO inclusion and engagement.

Both sides acknowledged that finding the right balance between an Institution and State-led process and a “people centered partnership” was challenging and required joint engagement. It was also recognized that an innovative and forward-looking approach will be needed to overcome existing bottlenecks.

There was consensus on the diagnosis of the situation and acknowledgment that the coming months will be crucial to get the process right. Identifying the “entry points” for CSOs and areas where joint work could be mutually beneficial and represent real added value will be a priority. The starting point to consider CSO engagement (both on a thematic basis and in the overall JAES process) was to review, based on the existing JAES group structure, potential openings and consider where civil society could be better

¹ Follow-up note: As a result of the CSO meeting (5th November, Brussels) on the preparations for the La Valletta Summit it was agreed that 2 CSOs representatives would be invited to attend the Summit. Valérie Ceccherini from NRC and Odile Faye, President of the Steering Committee of the MADE Africa network and President of AFARD subsequently attended the Valletta Summit.

engaged. In particular, civil society stressed their view that the JAF (Joint Annual Forum) was an important opportunity for dialogue involving them.

The following set of “Conclusions” and “Next Steps” were presented at the end and agreed, subject to confirmation in the final joint report.

5. Conclusions

- It is possible to be ambitious about the future of CSO engagement in the JAES and its Roadmap implementation as well as ensuring coherence with the AU 2063 Agenda. Frank and action oriented dialogue can help build the CSO-institutions relationship and build momentum for the 2017 Summit;
- Participants had a shared view on the need to increase the inclusion of CSO in the JAES process;
- The concept of “added-value of CSO engagement” was made several times by different SCs representatives and acknowledged;
- Both sides (Institutions and CSO SCs) conveyed that the recently improved information flow and forward looking dialogue would help take this relationship forward;
- During the discussions several specific aspects were highlighted, including:
 - ❖ *Structured framework*: more structured and systematic engagement with CSO would be welcomed and mutually beneficial. CSO engagement should be based on the definition of priority areas of mutual interest and supported by a clear framework;
 - ❖ *JAES Roadmap*: a readiness from all parties to explore “entry points” in the Roadmap implementation and to discuss better CSO inclusion, including potentially via the possibility of creating, on a case by case basis dedicated fora or open existing ones to CSO participation. Some CSO SCs representatives stressed several times that they considered that use of existing structures essentially linked to the institutions themselves (in substitution of the previous IJEGs) was potentially limiting CSO engagement. A reporting tool to facilitate monitoring the Roadmap implementation and identify issues for specific CSO input would be helpful and of mutual interest (see “Next Steps”);
 - ❖ *CSO – CSO*: the need for support to CSO own networking / consultation processes was stressed by CSOs. Moreover, to facilitate preparation of

meaningful inputs by CSO to joint meetings (JAF, and thematic meetings such as HR Dialogue) early access to draft agendas was important;

- ❖ *JAF*: timely information to allow for similar timely readiness from all parties to ensure good preparation of the 1st JAF meeting would be required – see “*Next Steps*”;
- ❖ *CSO Forum*: It was agreed to explore possibilities for CSOs to meet and exchange in preparation of the JAF – holding a pre-JAF CSO event was proposed by CSO (see “Djibouti Report” on African CSO Meeting, September 2015). In addition, it was agreed to return to the proposal of organizing a joint African-EU CSO Forum based on a more concrete proposal to be put forward by the CSO SCs. To avoid any duplication there is a need to clarify the timeline and relation between African-EU CSO Forum (the last meeting took place October 2013 to prepare CSO input to the IV Summit) and the projected pre-JAF CSO Forum;
- ❖ *Continued dialogue*: reiterated interest and openness in continuing dialogue, including in informal settings such as the meeting of the 29th October;

6. Next Steps

a) CSO to add to documents shared by the EU (EEAS/DEVCO) by inserting CSO inputs to date:

- ***JAES Reporting – Progress since April 2014***: reporting table shared by the EU and presented as a “living document” to continue to be systematically updated and to be added to by civil society via - a new column that has been inserted to allow for CSO SC to give inputs on CSO engagement in the roadmap (see [Annex 2](#));
- ***JAES Working Groups and consultation mechanisms between Civil Society and Institutions***: document shared by the EU containing relevant information on JAES working groups: CSO SC to provide inputs and concrete proposals (see [Annex 3](#));

It was agreed that both SC will consult their networks and make concrete proposals for improved CSO inclusion.

Proposed timeline for inputs: by end of 2015;

b) **Follow-up on Pan African Programme debriefing:** (a) organization of two meetings (Addis Ababa and Brussels) to present the PanAf (CSO support component) and its guidelines.

Timeline: January/February 2016;

c) Continued dialogue: maintain dialogue in informal setting (African and EU CSO SC and both Institutions), to help addressing the many challenges ahead, including the preparation of the 1st JAF Meeting and the issue of CSO participation and CSO side event. A set of priority issues that need further discussion was identified:

- **JAF meeting:** purpose, agenda (based on AU and EU institutions draft proposal), and modalities for CSO engagement;
- **JAF CSO pre-event:** based on CSO SC indications this event should help CSO prepare a coordinated input to JAF itself and the JAES/Roadmap follow-up process;
- **JAF broad stakeholders participation:** participation of stakeholders (Civil Society: NGOs, Economic and Social Actors, Think-tanks, and Youth) in the JAF and Roadmap implementation;
- **CSO forum:** explore possibilities and prepare coordination for the JAES roadmap and future summit.

Proposed timeline: early/mid-January 2016 - based on the indicative date for the holding of the 1st JAF (mid-February - tbc).

These Conclusions and Next Steps will be shared and discussed with the wider CSO constituencies on the African and EU side as well as inside both institutions (AU and EU).