



## The Future of the Africa-EU Partnership

### *“Key Messages for the IV Summit”*

6 March 2014, Hotel Renaissance, Rue du Parnasse 19, 1050 Brussels

#### 1. The objective

The purpose of this paper is to inform discussions at the 6<sup>th</sup> and final lunch-time seminar on key messages for the Africa-EU Summit and the future of the inter-continental partnership. The seminar will review the key messages from the past meetings and identify key priorities and actions that participants would like to see being addressed at the Summit of Heads of States and Governments.

#### 2. The process

Five Lunch-time Seminars on the Future of Africa-EU Partnership were organized between November 2013 and February 2014.

- I. Research and Innovation: What avenue for enhanced Africa-EU collaboration? (27<sup>th</sup> November 2013)*
- II. Dialogue and Negotiations in Global Fora: Collaboration for win-win negotiations in multilateral fora? (5<sup>th</sup> December 2013)*
- III. Future Relations and Continental Integration: A “win-win” Partnership beyond aid (12<sup>th</sup> December 2013)*
- IV. Democratic Governance, HR and Fight against corruption (20<sup>th</sup> January 2014)*
- V. Capacity for Peace and Security in Africa: The Way Forward (25<sup>th</sup> February 2014)*

A wide array of African and European High-Level Speakers and important stakeholders participated in each of the seminars. The participants were mainly from AU and EU institutions, African Embassies based in Brussels, African and European think tanks and Civil Society Organisations. All together more than 450 participants attended the seminars.

The participants engaged in forward-looking debates on key issues with a very frank and constructive mind-set. The informal character of these seminars and the fact that discussion took place under the Chatham House Rule contributed to open and successful debates. Each of the seminars generated a set of key messages aimed at informing the Africa-EU Partnership and the IV Africa-EU Summit.

### 3. Main takeaway points

The views and messages conveyed during the first five seminars relate not only to the specific thematic areas of each seminar but also to issues which cut across the entire Africa-EU Partnership. Those *cross-cutting issues* contribute in particular to address important strategic questions:

- Is the Africa-EU partnership still relevant today?
- What are the major bottlenecks?
- What are the critical success factors?

#### ***“Is the Africa-EU Partnership still relevant in today’s multi-polar world?”***

The seminars have recalled that the world is considerably different from the situation which informed the conception of the Joint-Africa EU Strategy in 2007. Africa and the EU have themselves evolved and are constantly repositioning themselves in the new dynamics and in the changing international power-constellations. However, participants acknowledged that Africa and the EU have more to gain now from the inter-continental partnership than ever before. Some of the factors highlighted to justify the *added value of the continent-to-continent partnership* are:

- Africa’s booming markets and Europe’s low market growth rates
- Africa’s aspirations for Regional and Continental Integration and Europe’s success in that area
- Africa’s concern for equitable growth and Europe’s success in integrating the social dimension in its growth strategy
- Africa’s need of an environmentally viable industrialisation and Europe’s environment-friendly governance framework and technology
- The substantial increase in trade, investments and remittances flowing between Africa and the EU
- The opposite demographic trends on the two continents.

There was a general belief that ***“a strong Africa-EU Partnership is not an option but that it is the only option”***. There was also an unequivocal *call for the EU to reprioritize*

*Africa in the EU's investment, trade and foreign policy agenda and for Africa to look at Europe as its closest trading partners rather than an aid provider.*

### ***“Major bottlenecks”***

However, there is a general perception that the significance and the pace of the results so far achieved are lower than both partners and their stakeholders had been expecting. The major bottlenecks of the Africa-EU Partnership as pointed out by participants are:

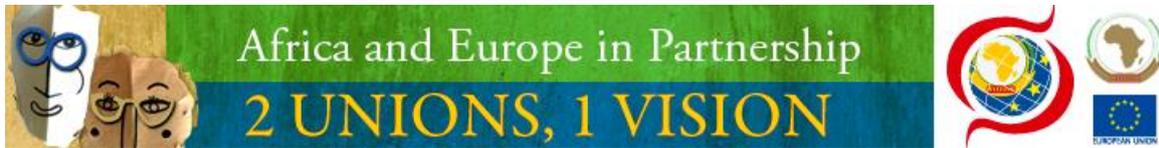
- Political dialogue and stakeholder involvement need to be substantially reviewed and strengthened
- Lack of financial and capacity means on both sides to implement ambitious action plans
- Conversely, results are fewer than initially expected, not happening fast enough and lack visibility. This threatens to erode stakeholder enthusiasm and political momentum.

### ***“Critical Success Factors for the Africa-EU Partnership”***

What are the strategic moves that Africa and EU should put into practice to “turn potential into reality”? The views expressed by participants point to the following:

- ***Look at the future:*** take a fresh look to the changing realities, get rid of stereotypes, embrace the “new Africa”, see and project Africa as part of the solution to achieve a better global development and not as part of the problem
- ***Address and resolve the main “irritants”*** which are currently spoiling the atmosphere of the dialogue (EPAs, common but differentiated responsibilities (CBDR)). Some of these outstanding issues tend to have a negative impact on the willingness to broaden and deepen relations and collaboration. This spoils efforts done in international fora and may reduce the scope for “win-win” negotiations in crucial areas such as international trade negotiations, the post-2015 development agenda, Climate Change (in view of UNFCCC Conference in December 2015),.
- ***Regular high-level political dialogue between Summits and revival of the Africa-EU Troika.*** Ensure annual political dialogue on progress and priorities based on a solid monitoring and mutual accountability system. Both cross-cutting and sectoral ministerial meetings are necessary to achieve substantial progress.
- ***Lead the way through “coalition of the willing”*** between peer groups of African and EU ministers and/or “JAES ambassadors” that can be practical mechanisms for reaching useful outcomes including in global fora.

- ***Go beyond aid***: more emphasis on the mutuality of interests and obligations of the partnership; ***apply the principles of win-win***; more explicit expression of common interests to facilitate and deepen the dialogue.
- ***A call for frank and constructive dialogue***: renewed relations and enhanced dialogue should be based on forthrightness, and mutual respect, and avoid prescriptions and conditionality as it is doomed to fail in the long-run. However each partner should respect common values. .
- A call for ***greater inclusiveness of civil society and the youth organisations*** is considered essential, both on the EU and the African side, if the partnership is to remain inclusive.
- The ***strengthening of home-grown reform processes*** and of African ownership are seen as essential.
- Ensure more ***visibility of actions*** and ***establish a dedicated monitoring system to promote mutual accountability and tracking of results***.



## Annex A - Key messages from the first five seminars

This **annex** recalls the key messages of each of the first five seminars. Those messages relate both specific thematic areas as well as to cross-cutting issues of the Africa-EU Partnership.

### ***“What avenues for enhanced Africa-EU collaboration in research and innovation?”***

Participants argued that the Africa-EU partnership needs to:

- ***Mainstream STI within the Africa-EU partnership:*** Technology and Innovation should be factored into other initiatives within the Africa-EU initiatives such as higher education and mobility (Pan-African University), infrastructure (i.e. PIDA), internet access (AfricaConnect) and agriculture (CAADP);
- ***Encourage governments to invest in R&D and STI :*** the inter-continental partnership enables governments, private sector and research institutions to join forces and to identify specific interventions of mutual interests that can be taken forward at the national level;
- ***Enhance the role of the private sector:*** The private sector is essential to transform STI investments into concrete gains;
- ***Apply the principles of win-win:*** the Africa-EU partnership is based on the pursuit of common interests and mutual obligations. These principles should continue to be the basis for future STI initiatives;
- ***Act in areas of comparative advantage:*** African and European actors have complementary assets that should be better used to optimise joint STI initiatives.

## **“Dialogue and Negotiations in Global Fora: Collaboration for win-win negotiations in multilateral fora?”**

Main points that emerged from the debate include the following:

- ***Africa and Europe have a lot of common interests in international climate negotiations.*** Africa's development and financing needs shall be taken into account, but it is vital that all countries of the world enter into binding climate commitments at the UNFCCC Conference in Paris in December 2015. Given the importance of climate change for Africa, the topic should be prominently placed at the Leaders' Summit and declaration in April 2014;
- ***Africa and Europe need to address main irritants.*** If Africa and Europe could reach a shared understanding of common but differentiated responsibilities (CBDF) before or during multilateral negotiations then chances of success will substantially increase. Important 'outstanding issues' such as the Economic Partnership Agreements tend to have a negative spill-over on the willingness to reach compromises in other policy areas that are subject to international negotiations;
- ***The partnership must embrace the 'new Africa'.*** While the partnership objectives and principles should be preserved, the way in which the continents perceive each other require substantial changes. Africa is changing rapidly as reflected in the Vision 2063 process. Only jointly can Africa and the EU successfully influence the changing international power-constellations, as well as ensuring conditions for a sustainable and inclusive economic growth;
- ***A strong Africa-EU Partnership is not an option, it is the only option.*** Given the geographical proximity, Europe's future need for migrants due to its demographic trend, Africa's enormous assets in terms of natural resources and growing population, a strong political and well-functioning partnership between the two neighbouring continents is critical for their mutual prosperity;
- ***Making coalitions for win-win negotiations in global fora*** requires high level political engagement. Regular ministerial dialogues prior to international negotiations are necessary conditions for reaching win-win positions for the benefit of both continents;
- ***Lead the way: 'Coalitions of the willing'*** between peer groups of African and EU ministers and/or 'JAES ambassadors' can be practical mechanisms for reaching useful outcomes in global fora. Such progressive 'core groups' could be established in the area of climate change, Post-2015 Framework negotiations, Peace and Security as well as other areas of joint concern;
- ***Establish Investment guarantees and risk-sharing instruments*** to compete in the African market. Other sources must be leveraged including private equity and

private sector investments as response to climate change and other global challenges;

- ***Building more coherence in policy frameworks at the global level.*** The EU could, for example, improve the effectiveness of its actions through further mainstreaming climate action into development policies;
- Opportunity to emphasise ***Climate Change at the next Africa-EU Summit.*** Climate Change should figure prominently on the agenda or be discussed by African and European Ministers dealing with climate change on the side-lines of the Summit.

## ***“Future Relations and Continental Integration”***

Main points that emerged from the debate include the following:

- ***Take a fresh look at the changing realities:*** The Africa-EU partnership must adapt to the political, economic and social changes happening on both continents and in the international power-constellations.
- ***Change the terms of the relationship:*** There were unequivocal calls for the EU to reprioritize Africa in the EU investment, trade and foreign policy agenda and for Africa to look at Europe as its closest trading partner rather than an aid provider. African countries should start financing part of their regional integration process themselves.
- ***Low intra-African trade should be boosted:*** regional value chains requiring a high level of specialisation provide important opportunities for Africa. The EU – with its successes and failures – offers know-how and capacities that can enrich African decisions in this regard. Political will to push forward the regional integration agenda, to reinforce regional institutions, mobilize investments to national and regional infrastructure development and capacity building will be necessary for a successful outcome;
- ***“Break the ice” by dealing with the EPAs:*** The EPA negotiations put a strain on the Africa-EU relationship and a political solution is needed. Technical solutions exist but an engagement at a high political level is required to push the negotiations forward. The discussion on EPAs should be included in the framework of JAES. Once the EPAs are concluded, Africa and EU could turn to addressing convergence of rules, standards and norms which go beyond the Cotonou Agreement;
- ***Lessons that Africa can learn from Europe:*** African integration requires effective ownership. Meanwhile it is important to look at the EU's experience and how it may be useful for Africa, in particular to help Africa transform economic

growth into well-being. Besides regional integration, addressing regional imbalances is important, through i.e. specific regional policies and tools that promote convergence of less-developed areas. These tools are not yet widely known in the development cooperation circles but are very important to tackle inequalities, promote local economic development, job creation and innovation;

- ***Focus on regional rather than continental integration in Africa:*** as the latter will not be a reality soon regional approaches to social and economic integration should be a priority ;
- ***Nevertheless Pan-African institutions are indispensable:*** One significant area in which they can contribute is the development of statistics and standards, which are of key importance to trade. Here the EU can play an important role;
- ***Increase EU Africa cooperation on regulatory frameworks:*** Participants called for enhanced capacity building in the area of regulatory frameworks, rules and standards, quality control and SPS measures to ensure that African exports can reach global markets;
- ***Move from "aid for trade" to "investment for trade":*** trade facilitation is important to lower costs for African countries. Meanwhile, more attention is needed to build supply side capacities (skills, innovation, access to finance, entrepreneurship, territorial development).

### ***"Democratic Governance, Human Rights and Fight against corruption"***

Main points that emerged from the debate include the following:

- ***Africa and EU have common goals:*** Good-governance, human rights, the fight against corruption, the promotion of greater transparency and accountability, are at the core of EU internal and external action (European Court of Human Rights, the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights, etc.) and are also upheld by the AU as demonstrated by the number of continental frameworks dealing with those issues such as the African Governance Architecture, the African Convention on Preventing and Combatting Corruption and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, etc.
- ***Strengthening of local systems and home-grown reform processes:*** Those elements are seen as of key importance in Africa and EU countries and a way of enabling citizens to use rule of law to challenge those who threaten their rights .
- ***Continental added-value:*** Although good governance, justice, rule of law, the management of natural resources and fight against corruption are exercised at country level, there is an added-value in addressing it at continental level to promote shared values and harmonise standards as well as to ensure exchange of

best practices, at all levels, including in important industries such as the exploitation of mineral resources.

- ***No African or European country can claim absolute insulation from the risk of corruption and bad governance:*** Good governance, including the institutionalisation of rule of law, of strong judiciary systems and fight against corruption is a permanent process; Africa and EU should work together on those issues without pointing fingers at each other.
- ***Yes to frank and serious dialogue*** – No to prescriptions: it emerged from the debate that renewed relations and enhanced dialogue should be based on forthrightness, and mutual respect, and avoid prescriptions and conditionality as it is doomed to fail in the long-run.
- ***Transparency and accountability by citizens and corporate entities need to be reinforced in Africa and Europe*** through the institutionalisation of effective legal and regulatory instruments to curb illicit financial flows including those that could potentially originate from the activities of multi-nationals and through reinforcing the roles of civil society institutions including consumer protection agencies and the strengthening of Parliament to Parliament dialogue;
- ***Africa is not a monolithic block:*** The tendency to treat Africa as a monolithic block should be done away with, especially when referring to issues related to governance, corruption and human rights;
- ***There can be no room for double standards:*** Africa and EU should avoid the application of double standards when taking measures on issues related to democratic governance, human rights, justice, rule of law, corruption and illicit financial flows, and illicit trafficking in general;
- ***Respecting the life of spirit:*** Africa and EU should consider adopting frameworks that meet peoples' identity to address issues relating to human rights such as the cases brought before the ICC;
- ***Universal relevance and/or universal rights:*** the debate underlined the need for addressing this question in an open and balanced manner and highlighted challenges being faced both by the EU and Africa, challenges of universal relevance – such as inequality, unemployment, fight for a sustainable environment, human rights (including rights of minorities), etc.
- ***EU and AU must open further to civil society if the partnership is to be relevant:*** a call for more inclusiveness and more openness to civil society participation, at the various levels was made and considered essential, both on EU and AU side ; examples of possible steps to create a more enabling environment for civil society were given, such as the call for NGOs that have observer status at the ACHPR to be encouraged to participate in dialogues on human rights in the framework of the joint partnership.

- **Prioritise areas where there is high level consensus:** Africa-EU partnership actors need to take joint-cognisance of the areas that are still blurred (such as the articulation between human rights and the rights of minorities) by factors such as cultural differences and colonial heritage, and park those requiring better consensus in order not to lose momentum.

## ***“Peace and Security”***

The key messages that emerged from the intensive discussions include:

- **Africa has made a big leap in terms of more effective conflict prevention, management and resolution** through the establishment of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) as embedded in the AU Constitutive Act and the AU Peace and Security Protocol. APSA was launched only ten years ago as a framework for applying the AU principle of non-indifference and ensuring human security. Much has been achieved but there are still important political, institutional and financial constraints to be overcome.
- **Long-term capacity and institutional building:** the Africa-EU Partnership needs to invest more in long-term capacity building of APSA related institutions. The African Peace Facility has so far provided extensive support to operationalization of the APSA but its effectiveness and sustainability has been hampered due to various factors, such as generic capacity absorption constraints.
- **More African ownership and funding of APSA needed:** APSA is still too dependent on external funding to be credible and effective. Although support from the Africa-EU Partnership in particular will continue to be critical, there is an urgent need to mobilise more African funding to strengthen peace and security in Africa.
- **APSA is a means to an end, not an end in itself:** Lessons learnt from pragmatic experience, such as the AMISOM peacekeeping mission, need to be taken into account when reviewing some of the fundamental pillars of the architecture (e.g. the role of the ASF and the RECs).
- **Be clear on what is strategic for Africa and for the EU:** EU and Africa need to focus on mutual interests, be clear about shared objectives and prioritise their interventions in regions where most impact can be made. To achieve this, the two continents must be more strategic about each other and develop a more constructive partnership. There is a need to avoid long bureaucratic shopping lists and one-size fits all approaches.
- **Support in the area of peace and security through the African Peace Facility (APF) has been a game changer** in terms of making possible a growing number of African-led responses to political crises on the continent. The cooperation through this successful instrument should therefore be continued and politically reaffirmed.

- **Support to the African Stand-by Force (ASF) could be adapted** by concentrating efforts and resources where they are most needed as the degree of ASF operationalization differs significantly from region to region.
- The newly established **African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crises (ACIRC)**, which provides for African led and funded interventions, could be a promising mechanism to respond to crises more rapidly and to reinforce the principle of providing African solutions to African problems but there are still unresolved questions on practical issues (e.g. absence of a UN mandate, the funding of ACIRC after the initial 30 days of operation, how it impacts on the relationship between the AU and the RECs);
- **Mediation and peace building need to be given ever bigger attention:** Better and more effective initiatives are required to prevent conflicts, including Security Sector Reform on a national level to support failing national security systems and to prevent regional and international spill-overs.
- **In some cases “global solutions” to “global problems” are needed:** Some problems need more than “African Solutions to African Problems” - they need global solutions to global problems and in this context the Africa-EU Partnership is a framework that can facilitate respective processes;
- **Align interventions with strategic priorities and build more coherence and synergy among instruments:** There is a call for more systematic efforts to avoid a duplication of efforts through overlapping programmes (e.g. APF vis-à-vis the regional EU programmes) while making sure that they address the linkages of relevant issues (e.g. piracy, trafficking, border management, transnational crime).
- **Underline the relevance of the Partnership at the next Summit:** It is critical that the commitment taken at the Lisbon Summit is reinforced and that the coming Africa-EU Summit makes a bold statement on how Africa and the EU want to work together in responding to both “conventional threats” and the “new” security challenges, such as trans-boundary crimes and trafficking, that have a negative impact on both continents.
- On a different note, it was mentioned that **Africa and the EU also share the same vision on peace and justice as enshrined in the Rome Statute establishing the ICC.** On the African side the question of universality of the Rome Statute, particularly in relation to the UN Security Council, is an issue of concern. However, it was stipulated that the forthcoming Summit is not the right occasion to address this topic.