



## **EU-AFRICA ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL STAKEHOLDERS' NETWORK**

### **European Economic and Social Committee, JDE 63**

### **5 March 2014, Brussels**

#### **DESCRIPTION**

The **EU-Africa strategy** was adopted in 2007 and has become the main framework for inter-continental relations between Europe and Africa. Its goal is to develop a shared vision of the main global issues whilst simultaneously strengthening cooperation in a broad range of areas such as development, governance, human rights, trade, regional integration, food security and migration.

The **next summit** of EU-African heads of state and government will be held on 2 and 3 April 2014 in Brussels. It will set the partnership's priorities for the coming years, including the 2014-2017 Action Plan.

In order to **ensure that the voices of the social and economic stakeholders are heard**, the European Economic and Social Committee, together with the African partners, will organise a meeting bringing together the representatives of the employers, workers and various interests (particularly farmers and consumers) from both continents. This is consistent with the goals of the strategy, which aims to create, inter alia, a "broad-based and wide-ranging people-centred partnership".

The **objectives** of this meeting are to:

- ensure that the political decision-makers taking part in the summit's discussions listen to the economic and social interest groups;
- lay the foundations for regular and structured cooperation which might evolve between the representatives of European and African economic and social interest groups;
- help to consolidate and strengthen the capacities of economic and social stakeholders;
- exchange knowledge and best practice.

The **conclusions** of the economic and social stakeholders' meeting will be summarised in a document that will be sent to political bodies and the main EU and African partners.

In the medium term, it is intended that a meeting of this kind should become a **regular event** in the calendar of a network of economic and social stakeholders, serving to feed into the joint EU Africa Strategy, and particularly into the follow-up to the 2014-2017 Action Plan, by issuing recommendations on its implementation.

## Draft Programme

### 5 March

9.30 – 11.15 a.m. **Presentation of the EU-Africa Summit: Main strands of the debate and outcomes expected from the EU-Africa Summit**

- ❖ **José Maria Zúñiga Narvaiza**, *President of the EESC's External Relations Section*
  - ❖ **Nick Westcott**, *Managing Director for Africa, European External Action Service*
  - ❖ **Marcus Cornaro**, *Deputy Director-General for Development and Cooperation, European Commission*
  - ❖ **Ajay Kumar Bramdeo**, *Ambassador, Permanent Mission of the African Union to the European Union*
- Debate

11.15 – 11.30 a.m. **Coffee break**

11.30 a.m.–1 p.m. **Youth employment**

*Africa's population is very young: one in three of the continent's people is under 25. Young Africans have to overcome challenges to find and maintain a place in the labour market: although accounting for 33% of the population, they are estimated to make up 60% of the unemployed. This not only creates social and economic problems, but also threatens political stability. In Europe, too, youth unemployment is 2.6 times higher than average unemployment. How can these challenges be met? Which areas (education, productivity, etc.) call for priority measures? What are the assessments and recommendations of the economic and social stakeholders?*

Chair: **Brenda King**, *Member of the EESC*

- ❖ **Monica Taylor**, *Member of the EESC*
- ❖ **Jacqueline Mugo**, *Secretary-General of BusinessAfrica*

Discussion

1 – 2.30 p.m.

**Lunch provided by the EESC**

2.30 – 3.45 p.m.

**Food security: What are the priorities in the EU-African partnership?**

*Famines and food insecurity threaten millions of people. In order to feed more than 9 billion people by 2050, food production should be doubled on a sustainable basis. What are the priorities? How can civil society contribute?*

Chair: **Dyborn Chibonga**, *National Smallholder Farmers' Association of Malawi*

- ❖ **Jean Pierre Halkin**, *Head of Unit Rural development, food security and nutrition, Directorate General for Development and Cooperation, European Commission*
- ❖ **Yves Somville**, *Member of the EESC*
- ❖ **Philip Kiriro**, *President of the Eastern African Farmers' Federation and Board member of the Pan-African Farmers' Organisation*

Debate

**3.45 – 5 p.m.**      **Social protection: a mechanism for inclusive development**

*Economic growth alone does not guarantee improved living conditions for all the population. Development should benefit as many people as possible. In 2012, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) adopted a Recommendation on Social Protection Floors in all countries. Social protection floors are sets of basic social security guarantees aiming at preventing or alleviating poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion. How could social protection be better established? What are the priorities according to civil society?*

Chair: **Anne Cécile Coly**, National Union of Autonomous Trade Unions of Senegal

❖ **Griet Cattaert**, International Labour Organisation, Social Security Officer

❖ **Mihai Manoliu**, Member of the EESC

❖ **Adrien Akouété**, Deputy Secretary-General of the International Trade Union Confederation – Africa

*Discussion*

**5 – 5.30 p.m.**      **Coffee break**

**5.30 – 6 p.m.**      **Adoption of the conclusions**

Chair: **Xavier Verboven**, President of the ACP-EU Follow-up Committee

**Practical information:**

Meeting venue: European Economic and Social Committee building (meeting room JDE63), Rue Belliard 99, 1040 Brussels

Interpreting: French, English and Spanish

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