





# **Europe-Africa Dialogue Process 2003**

**Cape Town, South Africa**

18-20 March 2003

**Nairobi, Kenya**

21-22 August 2003

**Lisbon, Portugal**

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# Europe-Africa Dialogue Process

In 2003, the North-South Centre, in partnership and/or collaboration with Awepa, IEEI, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Parliamentary Forum and the Nepad Secretariat, organised a series of Europe-Africa Dialogue Forums.

The goal of these meetings was to provide an open, pluralistic space for dialogue where representatives of parliaments, local authorities, governments and civil society from the two continents could exchange views and elaborate proposals on how to reinforce the Europe-Africa dialogue as well as the building process of the African Union and Nepad.

This publication, which includes summary reports of these three meetings wishes to offer a global view on the issues that were debated, and on a number of proposals that arose in the course of this process. The present publication is introduced by Ben Türok's paper entitled "Prelude to the Europe-Africa Dialogue".

The Policy Dialogue Unit.





# Prelude to the Europe-Africa Dialogue

1. The proposed Europe-Africa Dialogue has a great deal of potential. The proposal comes at a time of increased European consolidation and of growing African unity. There is now the possibility of continent-to-continent co-operation, which could have global significance. However, for maximum effectiveness the dialogue should be based on mutually agreed principles.

2. Among the issues revealing the interdependence of Europe and Africa are: trade, investment, aid, exposing corrupt practices, overcoming drug trafficking, money laundering, contagious diseases, and the management of population flows.

3. The growing tendency to global multilateralism is a further reason for such dialogue between Europe and Africa, which are linked by geographical proximity and history.

4. For dialogue to be successful it should be conducted without paternalism on the one side and without resorting to blame. We require a dialogue based on an objective understanding of the historical emergence of our respective systems, and in a spirit of mutual tolerance and respect.

5. This dialogue should be conducted at governmental and non-governmental levels in order to ensure the widest acceptance of the outcomes. This is essential as the dialogue may embrace issues, which affect adversely various interests in both continents while nevertheless serving the overall public good of our peoples. There are many examples of vested interests in both continents resisting change. They should not be allowed to block progress, which is in the interests of the majority. The removal of subsidies to farmers in Europe is one such instance, while some commercial farming interests in Africa also oppose socially progressive measures. In addition, many of Africa's primary commodity industries employ cheap migrant labour and are resistant to social transformation. If the proposed Dialogue is to result in the greatest good for the greatest number, it will have

to win the support of the majority in both continents in order to counter the influence of such minority but influential interests.

6. The dialogue will have to identify system failures in each continent and in the relations between them in order to find solutions.

7. Such failures can be found in the arenas of economics, political systems, social structures and cultural matters.

8. A new historical moment is in process due to the new positive initiatives by the African Union to place the continent on a new growth and development trajectory.

9. It is widely accepted that Africa is the poorest continent and the evidence of massive poverty is beyond dispute.

10. It has also been demonstrated that globalisation is associated with the marginalisation of Africa and with the further impoverishment of the majority of its people.

11. While foreign aid is a valuable remedial instrument for poverty alleviation if properly targeted, it cannot serve as the primary measure for such purposes.

12. African experts argue that trade is better than aid, and that the asymmetry of trade relations between Europe and Africa is a major cause of concern. However properly directed aid may help remedy deficiencies in trade promotion.

13. It is therefore vital that the Europe-Africa Dialogue should focus on a rigorous examination of the actual trade relations between the two continents.

14. This should result in creating more advantageous relations, associated with partnerships, which may continue to be unequal, but which will nevertheless be mutually beneficial.

15. It is essential that such partnerships should include projects initiated by African institutions and where control remains the responsibility of both parties.

16. Dialogue should commence with a recognition that the malfunction of systems in Africa serves no one. When air travel is inefficient, when telecommunications do not work, when corruption invades commerce, it is difficult to advance economic interaction. These obstacles need to be identified and dealt with, always recognizing that behind the bad performance of individuals lie systemic weaknesses, which need broad remedial measures.

17. In short, it is vital that both Europe and Africa agree on the principles, which should govern their mutually beneficial relations, and it is hoped that this memo will assist in that process.

Prof. Ben Türok, MP  
South Africa

4 November 2003.



# Europe-Africa Dialogue on Human Rights, Democratic Governance and the African Union

## Cape Town, South Africa 18-20 March 2003

From 18-20 March 2003, members of parliaments and civil society organisations from Africa and Europe held a Forum in Cape Town.

This Forum provided the participants with a platform to share experiences and perspectives, exchange views and deliberate on the debate on the Pan-African Parliament, the African Union (AU) and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (Nepad) in the light of the Europe-Africa dialogue.

The objectives of the Forum were:

- To open the Europe-Africa dialogue to civil society and to parliamentarians;
- To explore the role and responsibility of parliamentarians in realizing the goals of Nepad and African Union.

The Forum was addressed by the speaker of South Africa Parliament, Dr Frene Ginwala, and the President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, Mr Peter Schieder.

What follows is a summary of the substantive debates that emerged from the two days of deliberation and consultation.

## General Overview

1. The participants welcomed the creation of the AU as a landmark in the process of shared aspirations for African unity.

2. The participants acknowledged Nepad as an African initiated and driven framework for interaction with the rest of the world with the long-term vision of eradicating poverty.

3. These two initiatives are clear signs that Africans want to be the architects of their own efforts and destiny. However, the participants raised some critical concerns about the Nepad initiative regarding its proposed principles and strategies, process and outcomes.

4. Questions were raised as to whether Africans have learnt the lessons necessary to make Nepad a success, given the past experiences of Africa's development efforts, including the Lagos Plan of Action of 1980, the IMF-World Bank imposed Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) of the eighties and nineties, and the African Alternative to SAPs of 1989. The SAPs, especially, appear not to have reversed Africa's underdevelopment.

5. The Forum also raised questions on Nepad strategies for resource mobilisation based on foreign capital flows and market access at the expense of domestic resource mobilization.

6. The participants expressed concerns about the up-down approach used in the formulation of Nepad. Although Nepad documents recognize the notion of citizens' participation, people's ownership needs to be promoted more vigorously. The objectives of Nepad cannot be effectively realized without real popular ownership and full involvement of civil society and of parliaments.

7. The participants welcomed the creation of the Pan-African Parliament (PAP). The Pan-African Parliament will give concrete expression to the vision of a united, integrated Africa.

8. The participants deliberated extensively on the steps that must be taken to ensure a strong, effective role for parliaments

in advancing the objectives of the African Union and those elaborated in the Pan-African Parliament (PAP) Protocol.

9. The participants noted that some countries did not have properly elected and constituted national legislatures, but were instead ruled via one-party systems or military regimes. This reality is contradictory to the PAP Protocol and AU Constitutive Act.

10. Concerns about the PAP having little or no legislative power binding on national governments were expressed by the participants.

11. The participants noted that the experience of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly could be a source of inspiration for strengthening the Pan-African Parliament.

## Recommendations

12. Africans at all levels need to know more about the Nepad and AU process. The participants call the African leaders to draw up an outreach program to popularise the AU and Nepad and build effective mechanisms for ensuring the involvement and active participation of parliaments and civil society organisations (religious organisations, labour organisations and other bodies with roots in the communities) in these processes.

13. A task group including parliamentarians, civil society and academics should be established to disseminate information on Nepad and African Union, to brief parliaments on AU and Nepad matters, and to organize periodic conferences for members of parliament to enable them to upgrade their knowledge on Nepad and AU developments. The AU and the Nepad documents should be made available to all parliamentarians to enable them to hold informed debates on these two processes. Funding should be made available for the above objective.

14. The participants call for further reflection on the relationship between African Parliamentarians, civil society leaders, intellectuals and policy-makers. Consequently, the participants

call for the creation of an Africa Forum at local and continental levels and a task group to create a debate between the parliamentarians and the African political leadership over the Nepad agenda and the AU. The Africa Forum will be a mechanism to bridge the gap between the state and civil society, aimed at facilitating dialogue on a regular basis.

15. The participants call on the heads of state and government to accelerate the ratification of the Pan-African Parliament Protocol and ensure its implementation in accordance with the relevant national constitutions.

16. The participants agree that the Nepad and AU objectives can only be reached in a peaceful, democratic environment. Therefore there is a need to intensify efforts towards peace, stability, transparency, participation, good governance and human rights. The participants call for support for peace initiatives.

17. The participants note that conflicts are fuelled by poverty, the struggle for the control of resources and the lack of respect for human rights. The participants condemn all violations of human rights and reaffirm the need to incorporate human rights in peace negotiations; peacekeeping operations, agreements implementations and in post conflict judiciary institution building processes and law enforcement.

18. The participants reaffirm the need to establish as a principle the indivisibility of all human rights, including social, economic and cultural rights. Moreover, human dignity and health issues require more attention, since the HIV/Aids pandemic, malaria and other infectious diseases are exacerbated by conflict and poverty.

19. AU and Nepad documents reaffirm unambiguously Africa's determination to pursue democratic governance and human rights with greater commitment. However, the challenge lies in translating the written texts into real action. The participants recognize the important role of national human rights institutions in preventing or resolving conflicts. More, however, needs to be done to make these institutions more independent and effective. Efforts to establish a common regional secretariat for these institutions should be supported.



20. The participants recall that the right to gender equality is a fundamental human right. All governments and states should ensure the inclusion of women's rights and the gender principle in the AU and Nepad. Affirmative action should be integrated in both processes.

21. Whilst the African Union and Nepad are initiatives and the product of Africans, the involvement of other regions such as Europe is crucial for the success of these initiatives. Therefore participants salute the Europe-Africa dialogue launched by the heads of state in Cairo.

22. The participants note that some progress and positive discussions on principles have been made in some areas such as the return of cultural goods, human rights and democracy. On prevention, management and resolution of conflicts agreement has been substantial. On other key issues like HIV/Aids and pandemics, regional integration and trade, environment and food security discussions continue. On Africa's external debt the lack of progress is clear. To be fruitful, this dialogue must address all the major issues related to Europe-Africa co-operation such as debt cancellation, the democratisation of decision-making in the international financial institutions, the negative impact of the transnational corporations, and the issue of agricultural subsidies.

23. The Europe-Africa dialogue must pursue the creation of partnerships and concrete programs in the areas and sectors of consolidation of democracy and good governance, the rule of law, human rights, poverty eradication and peace and security.

24. To be successful, this dialogue must be taken forward in a way that is fully complementary to the AU and Nepad processes by providing Nepad and AU political and diplomatic support, and ensuring financial support for the development of Nepad and AU.

25. The participants reaffirm the importance of opening the Europe-Africa dialogue to civil society and parliamentarians. Parliamentarians and civil society organisations should establish transparent mechanisms for monitoring, evaluation and accountability of the Europe-Africa dialogue and co-operation. Co-operation

at parliamentary level has to be consolidated. The participants call for the reinforcement of the co-operation between the Pan-African Parliament and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

26. The participants call upon the organizers to convene a regular annual meeting of this nature to consider other issues related to civil society participation in organs of the AU such as the PAP, the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (Ecosocc), Court of Justice and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights.

# Parliamentary Expert Briefing on Nepad

Nairobi, Kenya

21-22 August 2003

From 21-22 August 2003, representatives of African parliaments and civil society organisations held a seminar in Nairobi. This seminar was also attended by members of European parliaments.

The seminar had the following objectives:

- To share information on New Partnership for Africa's Development (Nepad) amongst the parliamentarians;
- To get African parliaments more involved in the Nepad process;
- To collect proposals that will assist in developing parliamentarian's involvement in the Nepad process.

This seminar provided the participants with a platform:

- To brief the parliamentarians on the status of progress made by the Nepad Secretariat in implementing this new African vision;
- To share information and perspectives on the issues concerning the African Peer Review Mechanism, the Pan-African Parliament, the African Union (AU) and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (Nepad) implementation process.

The seminar was addressed by Hon. Prof. Peter Anyang Nyongo, Planning and National Development Minister of Kenya, Prof. Wiseman Nkuhlu, Chair of the Nepad Secretariat, Prof. Adebayo Adedeji, African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM)

Panelist and former United Nations Under-Secretary General and Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) Executive Secretary, Prof. Ben Türok, member of South Africa Parliament, Prof. Shadrack Gutto, Centre for African Renaissance Studies, University of South Africa, Dr Eddy Moloka, Director of the Afrika Institute, Hon. John Corrie, MP, European Parliament (UK), Hon. Brendan Howlin, MP, Ireland, Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, and Dr Urban Jonsson, Unicef.

What follows is a summary of the substantive debates that emerged from the two days of deliberation and consultation. The Parliamentary Expert Briefing on Nepad was organized by Awepa, in co-operation with the Nepad Steering Committee.

## Nepad Priorities and Goals

1. The participants welcomed the launching of Nepad as a socio-economic development program of the African Union, aiming:

- To eradicate poverty;
- To place African countries, both individually and collectively, on a path of sustainable growth and development;
- To halt the marginalisation of Africa in the globalisation process and enhance its full and beneficial integration into the global economy.

2. The participants noted that before Nepad there was a certain amount of feeling that the whole continent was in disarray. The participants stressed the fact that Nepad - as a holistic, integrated, sustainable development initiative for the economic and social revival of Africa - has the potential to move the continent forward.

3. They welcomed the ten Nepad priority areas and sectors:

- Strengthening of Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution Mechanisms;
- Improving Political Governance and Democracy;

- Improving Economic and Corporate Governance;
- Regional co-operation and integration;
- Capacity building (at country, regional levels);
- Agriculture;
- Human Development (Health and Education);
- Improving access to the markets of developed countries and diversification of production;
- The Environment;
- Building and improving infrastructure (ICT, energy, water and sanitation, and transport).

4. The participants noted the actions already taken by the Secretariat and African governments to translate the vision, principles, objectives and priorities of Nepad into detailed implementable programs and to advance Nepad's goals, including:

- The elaboration of a peace support operation plan related to prevention, management and resolution of conflict;
- The finalization of APRM documents and the appointment of the Panel of Eminent Personalities;
- The elaboration of a comprehensive African agricultural development plan, which will form the basis for concrete projects in specific countries and regions aiming to improve food security;
- The preparation of a Nepad Health Programme, which reaffirms African countries' commitment to allocate at least 15 per cent of their budgets to health and calls on Africa's external partners to contribute \$22 billion annually;
- A Nepad Education Programme that "fast tracks" expansion of primary education;
- The preparation of projects and measures to develop Africa's roads, railways and energy and communications networks;
- The elaboration of the Infrastructure Action Plan, which includes high priority, projects in energy, transport, water and sanitation, and information and communication technology (ICT).

## Peace and Security

5. Participants highlighted that Nepad is not only about trade and economy but also equally about peace and security. Peace

and security are vital to development. The conflicts, which have wracked Africa for years, have disrupted the economic development of the continent, discouraged foreign and domestic investment and prevented its people from settling down and building the continent. It was agreed that parliamentarians can play an important role in this.

6. Recognising the commitment contained in Nepad to peace promotion, the delegates underlined the need to strengthen continental and regional institutions in the following four key areas:

- Prevention, management and resolution of conflicts;
- Peacemaking, peacekeeping and peace enforcement;
- Post-conflict reconciliation, rehabilitation and reconstruction;
- Combating the illicit proliferation of small arms, light weapons and landmines.

7. Participants welcomed the creation of Peace and Security Council and the Africa Peace Fund.

8. Delegates called also for the support of Africa peace initiatives.

## African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM)

9. Participants agreed that on the governance sphere, one of the most innovative achievements of Nepad has been the creation of the African Peer Review Mechanism. The APRM is a voluntary process by which participating countries agree to monitor, review and learn from each other's experiences.

10. Participants welcomed the APRM as a self-assessment, self-judgement and self-correction process, aiming to promote good political and corporate governance, sound economic management and respect for human rights.

11. Participants welcomed the appointment of members of the APRM Panel, and highlighted the importance of the Panel to

remain at all times objective in their assessments and to work with representatives of civil society organisations (including the media, academic, trade unions, business, professional bodies) and parliamentarians.

12. Participants recommended that steps should be taken to encourage countries to accede to the APRM and a strategy be developed to ensure a sustainable funding mechanism to the APRM.

13. All efforts must be done to involve civil society and parliamentarians in this process.

## Constraints to the Implementation of Nepad

14. Participants acknowledge also some constraints within and outside Africa to the implementation of the New Partnership. These include the weakness of African infrastructure, the competitive weakness of African economies, the persistence of tensions or armed conflicts in certain regions, gender inequality, HIV/Aids and its devastating socio-economic impact, weak links between African regional economic groupings, limited institutional capacities to plan and implement development programmes, insufficient efforts to popularise Nepad within Africa and inadequate funding by African governments.

15. In the view of many, the most inextricable of all problems in this respect is the problem of indebtedness. Some countries spend more than 50% of their annual budgetary resources on the servicing of their foreign debt. Questions were raised as to whether African countries can presently or in the future pursue development strategies in an international environment, which has proven to be unfavourable to African economies.

16. Many participants argued that even if Africa were to resolve all the conflicts and adopt and implement the most appropriate social, economic and political policies and development programs, the continent would still not be able to achieve sustainable socio-economic development and growth because of the

unequal and unfair international environment, particularly relating to trade arrangements with the developed countries.

17. However, all the participants agreed that Africa being fully integrated in the world economy cannot de-link herself from the globalisation process. But at the same time, moving forward without a clearly defined strategy would also not work. The challenge for Africa today is not more or less integration into the world economy, but another kind of integration taking into account the African peoples' interests.

18. Therefore it is urgent for African countries to:

- Identify and negotiate new elements and approaches for new forms of partnerships for development co-operation;
- Work for common African positions in international fora;
- Advocate for total debt cancellation as stated already by the 1999 African heads of state call;
- Evolve industrialization strategies for Africa in the face of globalisation;
- Encourage countries to devise creative ways of maximizing the mobilization of domestic resources;
- Promote and accelerate regional and continental economic integration;
- Review the development paradigm. The old paradigm was driven too much by considerations of short-term macro-economic stability, market liberalization, and externally imposed conditionality, which did not sufficiently address the critical need for growth and the structural transformation of African economies away from their overwhelming dependence on primary commodity production.

## Partnership

19. Participants recalled that is not the first time that Africans are developing plans for Africa - for example, Lagos Plan, Abuja Treaty, Cairo Agenda, UN Special Initiative for Africa, etc. Lessons from these past plans can serve for Nepad implementation in terms of challenges related to:



- Ownership (Programs and policies must be internally grounded);
- Partnership (Although the programs may be home-owned, and home grown, it is important to identify the role of partners).

20. Nepad, being comprehensively an African initiative, is proof that Africa recognizes that it holds the key to its own development. Africa will not develop because of the kindness of the rest of the world. Development must be rooted in the African people's resources. Therefore African governments must adopt Nepad priorities, internalise and incorporate them into their country plans.

21. Nevertheless, Nepad also offers an historic opportunity for the developed countries of the world to enter into a genuine partnership with Africa, based on a common vision and mutual interest, shared commitments, obligations and mutual benefits.

22. Number of participants noted that previous "partnership" agreements between the industrialized countries and Africa have been governed by colonial and post-colonial attitudes. However participants noted that these attitudes are changing and have to be changed. There is a growing maturity and critically formal assumptions are more and more critically questioned.

23. Questions were raised on the concrete steps needed to be taken by international institutions and developed countries to support the Nepad process (including ODA, debt cancellation, enhancing flows in private capital - foreign direct investment, and increasing investment in infrastructure, information technology, human resource development - notably in education and health - and provision of greater market access for Africa's trading goods).

24. Delegates acknowledged that the Nepad initiative has been successfully marketed outside the continent, especially to the G8 countries. Africa's developmental needs have been highlighted and put firmly on the global development agenda as never before. The initiative has received endorsement from the rest of the world for its holistic nature, frank assessment of problems and its bold vision.

25. However the international community must move from mere expression of solidarity and enter into a compact with Africa, which will be in support of development goals mapped out by Africa with the resources and policies of the international partners being devoted to achieving those Africa-determined goals. Delegates called for the monitoring of the international community commitments to ensure that they are met.

26. Many were of the view that, if there is a new rethinking of the partnership, a public opinion campaign should be launched in the industrialised countries emphasising the need for the repatriation of the African stolen wealth.

27. Delegates highlighted that Africa will not be developed only through an international public aid facilitation process. At the same time it would be unrealistic to believe that Nepad will be funded only by private sector initiatives. There is a need for political engagement to increase the public - private sector co-operation to address the lack of investment resources.

## Ownership

28. It is imperative that Nepad should also be firmly anchored within the organized private sector and civil society in Africa countries. Until Nepad becomes owned by the people of Africa, the initiative will not take off. Here also there is a key role for parliamentarians, as elected representatives of the people.

29. The meeting acknowledged the fact that across the African continent, debate about the New Partnership for Africa's Development (Nepad) is heating up among parliamentarians, civil society representatives, church figures, trade unionists. Whatever their particular outlooks, all seem to accept that the New Partnership is now the continent's main official development framework.

30. If the majority of the African people are to identify with Nepad, accelerating the promotion of its comprehension (through an effective communication, outreach and mobilization

strategy) should be given the highest priority by African governments. It is only by doing so that Nepad will become owned by the people and its vision and objectives translated into programmes, projects and budgets.

31. Delegates called for the strengthening of the Nepad ownership at the community, civil society and parliamentarian's levels. Nepad needs to be more explained and accepted by all the African stakeholders, with parliamentarians playing a leading role in this process.

32. Delegates called also for a debate across the continent on the issues of how to release productive potential and energies in the rural areas and to deal with the "capital shortage illusion".

## Civil Society Concerns

33. Participants noted the following six areas of concern raised by civil society organisations on Nepad: Nepad's drafting process, Nepad's conceptual and ideological assumptions, Nepad's conception of the substance of Africa's integration into global economy, Nepad conditionality, Nepad and the African developmental experience, Nepad and the African Union.

34. Nepad has been conceived, drafted and adopted by heads of state and government. Therefore it can be seen as a top-down program imposed from above without the consent or the involvement of the people.

35. Participants noted that recent developments inside Nepad brought some answers to the civil society concerns. Conceptual issues have been comprehensively addressed: Nepad has grown since the release of the base document two years ago. Participants stressed that Nepad has to be seen as a dynamic, open and consultative process rather than a frozen program.

36. It was also noted that there is now clarity on the status of Nepad within the AU process and structures and closer collaboration and harmonization between the AU Commission and the

Nepad Secretariat. The AU-Nepad agenda is a single and indivisible agenda for addressing issues and challenges relating to Africa's development. The participants highlighted that the AU represents a political agenda for the continent, while Nepad plays the role of a collective African economic plan.

## Nepad and African Parliamentarians: Recommendations

37. The participants welcomed the creation within the AU of the Pan-African Parliament, aiming to "ensure the full participation of African peoples in the development and economic integration". They expressed the hope that this deliberative and advisory body to the heads of state should in due course be able to exercise oversight functions.

38. The organizers of the Expert Briefing, in consultation with the Nepad Steering Committee, propose the establishment of a Parliamentary Contact Group on Nepad, to ensure that all parliaments of Africa are fully engaged in the Nepad process. Members of the Contact Group are requested to:

- Serve as personal champions and promoters of Nepad in their respective parliaments, in other parliaments in their region, and in the various regional and continental parliamentary groupings;

- Advise the Nepad Steering Committee on measures to put Nepad on the agenda of all African parliaments, so as to foster debate on Nepad and generate support for Nepad in African parliaments;

- Play a role in reaching out to civil society and promoting outreach activities on Nepad and the AU in their respective countries.

39. The Meeting made the following recommendations:

- That each African parliament promotes Nepad as an integral programme of the African Union;

-That each African parliament endorses the Nepad programmes and establishes a Committee or Working Group on Nepad, as called for in the African Parliamentary Union resolution of October 2002, where this has not been done already;

- That all African parliaments consider motions and hold debates on Nepad and on the relevant Country Action Plan of Nepad, and request a briefing by the Executive following AU Summits;

- That African parliaments recognize and advocate the principles of democracy and accountability, as well as the fundamental importance of the separation of powers between the Executive and the Legislature;

- That the Parliamentary Contact Group on Nepad function as a focal point for parliamentary reporting to the Nepad Steering Committee.

40. The Meeting suggests that an initiative be launched to record the character of all parliamentary systems in Africa, and that all African parliaments be requested to prepare a paper on the emergence and development of their parliamentary system.

41. The Meeting calls for an open and inclusive dialogue on the proper utilization of Africa's national resources and the releasing of the productive energies of the people.

42. The Meeting called on the organizers to make a full report of this Expert Briefing proceedings, and make this available to all African Parliamentary Speakers, and called for a further and enlarged meeting such as this to take place in due course.

43. The Meeting requests Awepa to seek support in Europe to reproduce and distribute basic documentation on Nepad as widely as possible in different languages, to campaign for external debt cancellation for African countries so as to release resources for Nepad initiatives, and to support the Parliamentary Contact Group on Nepad.



# The Challenges of Europe-Africa Relations: an Agenda of Priorities

Lisbon, Portugal  
23-24 October 2003

## PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS

### Institutional Development and Co-operation

In recent years a series of promising pan-African initiatives have been taken to address the political and economic problems of the continent (African Union, Nepad, Peace and Security Council, African Peer Review Mechanism...).

What realistic priority actions should be taken to sustain this process of political governance, African continental and regional integration and integration in the world economy?

How can the processes of change in Africa best be supported by the international community, including the European Union? What steps can be taken to effectively contribute to poverty reduction, debt cancellation and gradual integration of Africa in the world economy?

The following priorities for action were proposed during the round table:

#### **Capacity building for development policy**

To make sure that African institutions have the necessary capacities to set and negotiate the development policy agenda. In the round table reference was to the asymmetry between

African and European, or western preparations for dialogue. It was noted that Africa too needs some type of body that could play a role in preparing the development agenda from an Africa perspective, similar to the OECD-DAC type of forum.

### **Capacity building for trade**

There is a need for a mechanism for proper capacity development on trade, which should be integrated in Nepad and African Union initiatives. It is essential that Africa be better equipped to play its role in trade negotiations and integration in the world economy. More than the debate on development aid, trade will become the real battlefield in the future. It was mentioned that the African Union Commission has now a directorate on trade in place that will, amongst others, try to ensure coherence between the various sub-regions in Africa in their negotiations with the European Union.

### **European Union support to home grown African initiatives on governance**

The European Union should express a long-term commitment in the area of political governance. This means that it should not operate in an ad-hoc manner nor that the European Union should dominate the agenda. It was mentioned that the African Union and its initiatives are owned by the Africans themselves and that all European responses should dully take account of African initiatives in the African Union and Nepad framework. For instance, the African Peer Review Mechanism was perceived to be offering a constructive dialogue opportunity to improving good governance in Africa by the Africans themselves. Europe can make a contribution in support of these mechanisms but should avoid playing a too dominant role in these initiatives.

### **European Union support to Africa peace and security initiatives**

The European Union can be of great value when it comes to direct operational support in relation to the creation of the African Peace and Security Council. This could be done amongst



others, by putting its long-term expertise in early warning systems or in the context of Nato at the disposal of the emerging African initiatives.

## Governance and Human Rights

There is an increasing commitment in Africa towards governance, democratisation, rule of law and respect for human rights at national, regional and continental levels.

What priority actions need to be taken to strengthen African institutions and sustain ongoing processes in the area of governance and human rights? How can African civil society play a constructive role in these processes?

How can the European Union increase and adjust its support to state institutions (administration, the judiciary, the police, parliaments...) and non-state actors (independent media, socio-economic actors, civil society in all its variety, etc...) so as to contribute in the most effective way to African efforts in the area of governance? How can the European Union engage in a constructive political dialogue with Africa on these issues, while respecting African ownership?

The following points of action were recommended:

### **Provide support to parliaments and the judiciary**

A key priority that was put forward was the need to provide support to African parliaments and the judiciary as balancing powers between government and society. Various initiatives are needed at this stage. It is surprising to notice that the Cotonou Agreement pays more attention to the non-elected civil society than to elected parliaments. Parliaments tend to be the neglected dimension in the governance and human rights debate. There is however an increasing number of initiatives that try to fill this void such as parliamentary support initiatives by the European Parliament, ACP Parliament, UNDP, Commonwealth parliamentary forum and others.

## **Improve electoral systems in Africa**

The reinforcement and improvement of the electoral systems should also be given priority attention. Support should be given to independent electoral commissions and there should be stronger participation of African electoral observers. It was felt unacceptable that in a number of electoral processes in Africa, the European Union was sending large amounts of European Union observers while the African Union hardly had the means to have African election observers.

## **The crucial role of media**

There is broad agreement that civil society in all its diversity should play an increasing role. Human rights organisations and independent civic committees should be allowed to do their work. A special mentioning was made of the independent media, which should get more support. Media is seen as a major force in society able to exercise tasks of accountability and control.

## **Control TNIs**

The role of Western and European based trans-national institutions (TNIs) should be better analysed, since these are seen to have a large influence on African policy making.

## **Conflict Resolution and the Promotion of Peace**

African capacities and institutions (at the continental, regional, national and local levels) need strengthening to better address the structural causes of crisis, to prevent the outbreak of armed violence and to effectively manage and resolve social and political conflict.

How to sustain the progress realised in recent years, particularly in terms of effective governance, regional mediation initiatives, and peacekeeping operations? What lessons can be learned from these African initiatives?

What roles can Europe play in support of such efforts, mainly in terms of institution building at continental, regional and national levels?

The Peace and Security Council has now been established and represents a major step forward. Being an Africa owned process, it requires also a strong international support. In that context, a number of suggestions were made:

### **Be clear about mediation processes in African conflicts**

More work should be done on the Europe-Africa mediation efforts that have been undertaken so far in African conflict situations. Participants were quite critical of the fact that mediation has not worked very well and that it has even been dysfunctional in various parts of Africa (including the Great Lakes region). These failures were mainly due to: problems of clarity of what was required in the mediation process, lack of consultation between actors involved, rivalry between special envoys (each one with it's own views), competition between African countries over the ownership of mediation processes, etc.. In the future content, parameters and the rules of procedure of mediation processes should be clearly defined.

Elements that should be given more attention include:

- The profile and the mandate of the mediator since the competence of the mediators is seen as one of the big problems in most negotiating and mediation processes;

- Capacity building for mediation including techniques and specific skills of mediation (ex. providing chief mediator with competent teams of skilled mediators);

- Better coherence of European Union instruments for conflict prevention, management and resolution;

- Adopting a longer-term perspective. In that respect it was mentioned that if the creation of an open conflict can take two years, the reconstruction and the solution to the conflict may take twice as much time. It is important that no short-term solu-

tions and models are put forward, but that are long term engagements in this process of mediation and conflict resolution;

- Developing the capacity of the African Union to do effective mediation and conflict management. The African Union Commission is willing to invest in this but it is not yet equipped to do so. More reflection is needed on how the African Union can be better equipped for this task, what type of training can be provided, what type of joint operation could possibly be envisaged with the European partners, what type of funding arrangements need to be put in place make sure that the African Union Commission can effectively execute the important tasks in terms of mediation and conflict management.

There were also a number of generic issues relevant to all three themes that were discussed.

### **Integrate governance issues in African education systems**

It was considered important that the African education system reserves a place to the integration of issues such as human rights and peace. At the same time a plea was made to enhance co-operation between African and European universities, particularly to address long-term issues of governance and development.

### **Renew cultural Europe-Africa dialogue**

Both Africa and Europe need to reflect on the type of relationship that they need to develop in the future. Will this be a mutually beneficial type of relationship based on respect or will it still be affected by principles of colonisation or neo-colonisation? Are the values put forward by the European Union such as governance, human rights or democracy "universal values", shared by all Europeans and Africans or do different perceptions exist?

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