

**Regional Policy Forum on Development Africa
(Dakar, Senegal 3-4 October 2016)**

Conclusions and recommendations:

1. New global Development objectives are accompanied by a demand to shift from aid to development and to establish more effective mechanisms to encourage sustainable development. Unfortunately, current instruments for cooperation at continental, regional and sub-national level are unfit for implementing solutions to tackle African challenges and needs. There is a strong need to treat Africa as one in the new setting of the regional scene. Can African stakeholders support the set up of new mechanisms that contribute better to effective development?
Recommendation: Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), Local Authorities (LA) and the private sector call for the adoption of new mechanisms that reflect Africa's vision for unity and demand to be better represented in regional forums at African level and African governments should involve them in the design of new development plans.
2. The upcoming conferences: the New Urban Agenda (NUA) to be adopted at the upcoming in the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development in Quito, Ecuador (Habitat III); the COP22 Low-Emissions Solutions Conference in Marrakesh (Morocco) and the Second High Level Meeting of the Global Partnership for Effective Development in Nairobi (Kenya) are key gatherings to advance in tackling many of the challenges that the continent faces, including poverty, poor infrastructure and the need for climate change mitigation and adaptation. However, rather than new commitments, African countries should focus on what is on the table, and put it into action. **Recommendation:** Build the capacities of African countries ensuring that the funds available target capacity constrains, including the abuse of land ownership, align to country plans, target poverty eradication and adaptation to climate change as a priority.
3. The SDGs have proven to be a good mechanism to increase the participation of different actors, including CSOs, LAs and the private sector. In parts of the continent Agenda 2063 is also encouraging active multi-stakeholder platforms and coalitions. However, despite that, an enabling environment for stakeholders other than the national governments and administrations remains limited in practice in many parts of Africa. **Recommendation:** Encourage and support African national governments to put in place an enabling environment for the initiatives and actions of all actors, and support the building of coalitions to ensure that all pro-development actors, in their own capacity and with their own experience, have a complementary role to play in achieving development goals
4. There are areas like the protection of human rights, the promotion of decent work and the fight against unemployment and underemployment (even for the educated youth), the fight against social and economic exclusion, and the support of gender equality and food security require special attention in many African countries to ensure that development is not just limited to a few. **Recommendations:** Safeguard a level playing field that lives up to the agreed "nobody is left behind" and development programmes focus on key aspects to achieve that purpose, especially targeting the youth.

5. Both **Agenda 2030 and the AU 2063 Vision** are becoming points of reference for many countries in the continent, conforming a shared roadmap and encouraging an increased harmonisation between countries and regions. In Parallel, the thinking and objectives of both are being aligned with many existing national development plans. However, there is still a large gap between political commitments, participation of civil voices and actual implementation. **Recommendation:** Mobilize to ensure that governments and partners live up to their commitments and put in practice institutional and legal mechanisms as well as funds and programs that ensure that the implementation of the SDGs become a reality.
6. Despite the increasing importance and participation of CSOs, their situation is not improving in different parts of Africa, putting in danger their essential role to contribute to development and reach out to the most marginalized. **Recommendation:** Emphasize the importance of CSOs and encourage both their work and active participation, including the needed resources, particularly in those countries and regions where they are more vulnerable.
7. Decentralization is not effective yet in many parts of the continent. LAs need to be better involved in order to share both ideas and means to deliver better services to citizens. This is particularly important in the context of Agenda 2030, since it is widely acknowledged that no goals will be achieved without a proper engagement of the local level. **Recommendation:** Promote an inclusive territorial approach to the SDGs, adapted to different contexts and needs, that integrates a more effective public-private partnership and, in that way, encourage a more effective use of resources, capacities and investments to the subnational levels of government.
8. The European Union is a key partner in development efforts. At this particular moment it also plays an important supporting role in many areas, from the consolidation of democracy and of the rule of law, to a better use and management of natural resources. Besides, its commitment to support CSOs and LAs has continued to increase. **Recommendation:** Consolidate a stronger dialogue, which helps to strengthen multi-stakeholder participation and engagement in many pro-development agendas, from policy design to evaluation, support research and advocacy capacities of all actors.
9. Bad governance, corruption and risks to human security remain a major setback for different parts of the continent. In the context of fragile states, these risks spread beyond national boundaries and hampers the needs of profound transformation of African economies and societies, and permanently challenge the creation of a more encouraging prospect for the continent as a whole. **Recommendation:** Support with effective and integral solutions more effective Development efforts/instruments to reduce the path towards increased fragility in the region.
10. Despite the recent progress noticed in terms of democracy and peaceful transition in many African countries, there is a lack of engagement of governments with regards to human displacement. Migration movements are more and more the result of factors like increased insecurity, democratic recession and growing social inequalities, which are taking place in different parts of the continent. **Recommendation:** Strengthen the current debate and cooperation about migration, including a closer examination of both the root causes and the consequences of migration for the continent, taking into consideration the key role of local authorities in managing migration trends and their consequences, and involving the youth in the decisions taken.