



**Re-defining AU-EU Partnership
Perspectives of CSOs, Private Sector and Local Authorities**

Communiqué

1. Preamble

From the 8th to the 10th of October 2018, Gaborone, Botswana played host to the Africa Regional Meeting of the Policy Forum on Development (PFD). The Policy Forum on Development (PFD) is a multi-stakeholder platform that brings together Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), Organized Private Sector and Local Authorities (LA) from around Africa to dialogue on critical development issues. The PFD recognises the European Commission's 2012 communication on the "The roots of democracy and sustainable development" which clarifies the definition of CSOs in all their diversity and specificities. The PFD is supported by the European Commission and provides a platform where identified stakeholders' together with EU Members States meet to debate on development matters. The regional PFD is organized on a rotational basis in addition to an annual global meeting.

The 2018 edition of the Africa PFD focused on the recommendations which emanated from the November 2017 African Union (AU) – European Union (EU) Summit of Heads of States and Governments; the vision for the proposed post-Cotonou framework, and further examined the AU theme of the year on Combatting Corruption.

2. Observations

The Africa PFD witnessed extensive deliberations across critical development and governance issues. Subsequently, at the end of the three days, the PFD observed the following:

- I. A mutual and balanced relationship between the African Union (AU) and the European Union (EU) is essential for both to play a leading role in world governance, now and the future. However, this relationship ought to be further cultivated and effectively harnessed for mutual benefit and to foster meaningful outcomes.
- II. The PFD as a multi-stakeholder platform should be a model that seeks to contribute to facilitating dialogue across crosscutting development issues and sustain critical platforms that promote knowledge and information sharing between the two continents.
- III. Climate change is a real challenge to both continents and is already disrupting livelihoods.
- IV. Rising inequalities on both continents is an issue of political and social concern for sustainable peace and development.
- V. Africa has a youthful population that can be a demographic dividend or a bulge. This youthful population is often lacking requisite skills and competences to express their ingenuity and play their rightful role in the overall development of their societies and continent at large.
- VI. Existence and implementation of institutional frameworks and mechanisms that support



effective governance systems are either lacking and/or not fully enforced in many countries. These countries also demonstrate very little corresponding political will to introduce and implement such systems.

- VII. Development at the national level has not been inclusive and has not reached the farthest behind in the spirit of the leave no one behind principle.
- VIII. Leadership has a fundamental role in determining the development trajectory of States. The challenges in quality leadership can be directly attributed to slow development.
- IX. Corruption and illicit financial flows hurt everyone as necessary resources that are meant for the general good of huge populations are diverted for personal gain. The overall attainment of both the Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) face existential and attainment threats due to pervasive corruption.
- X. The evolving global context of migration greatly impacts on socio-cultural dynamics. The EU Neighbourhood Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) and the upcoming UN Global Compact on Migration presents a great opportunity to reengage on these issues.
- XI. The proposed European Investment Plan has the potential to contribute to Africa's development. However, the involvement of the local private sector is so far limited.
- XII. The 20-year Cotonou Partnership Agreement comes to end in February 2020. The upcoming Post-Cotonou agreement negotiations provides a unique opportunity to re-define the AU-EU partnership.

3. Recommendations

In the spirit of dialogue and partnership of the PFD, the following recommendations were thus put forward:

- I. Future AU-EU partnerships, including the bi-annual Summits of Head of States and Governments should embrace a multi-stakeholder approach that ensures the voice, contributions and priorities of all stakeholders are incorporated in all mechanisms. AU and EU should take steps to ensure that they are aligned in their future visions regarding the direction of the partnership, and the impact they will make.
- II. The AU and EU should deliberately initiate and sustain mutually beneficial development models which will directly translate into clear improvements in the political and socio-economic wellbeing of the respective populations. These models should include development frameworks that adhere to the SMART principle that demonstrate clear-cut linkages between the initiatives and their impact.
- III. Multi-stakeholder and multi-level engagement that seek to promote wider ownership and deepen local stakeholder reach across all spheres of society should be initiated. Therefore, a PFD approach should also be implemented at the national level to ensure important voices and concerns that represent the critical mass of societies are



adequately captured and taken on board.

- IV. Given the persistent challenges of climate change, the partnership must adopt a sustainable approach to strengthen adaptation and mitigation interventions at all levels. The partnership should also support the implementation of the nationally determined contributions as prescribed by and agreed under the Paris Agreement.
- V. The AU-EU partnership should strive to deliberately target inclusion and justice at all levels as a priority agenda.
- VI. The AU-EU partnership should give higher attention to making adequate investments in the continent's youthful population, training them in requisite skills and competencies, providing opportunities and the enabling space which is essential to transform the continent to a digital age and a knowledge economy.
- VII. The AU-EU partnership should promote enabling environments that foster the contribution of all stakeholders to build effective institutional frameworks that are required for effective governance and development across the continent.
- VIII. Strengthening local structures and fostering inclusive development initiatives should be at the heart of national efforts at implementing both the Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- IX. The AU-EU partnership should promote the building of resilient institutions and capable leadership that is able to deliver on development outcomes.
- X. Anti-corruption efforts must go beyond lip-service. The AU-EU partnership should encourage Member States to efficiently use existing mechanisms to curb corruption and illicit financial flows, and where necessary, push for the creation of new mechanisms that can decisively combat corruption.
- XI. The AU-EU partnership should push towards a deeper understanding of migration issues and advance a common descriptive narrative that abolishes the innate contestation between the opposing views of migration being exclusively a security issue or it being a multi-dimensional human rights issue.
- XII. The implementation of the EIP should enhance an enabling business environment following a structured dialogue between all parties involved, including local private sector to ensure mutual benefits as well as inclusive economic development.
- XIII. Negotiations for the Post-Cotonou Agreement should be undertaken in a timely manner and should take into adequate cognisance lessons learned from implementing the initial 20year Agreement, as well as changing dynamics and realities of the signing parties. African countries must anchor their negotiations within their commonly adopted visions and goals, especially Agenda 2063, Agenda 2030 and the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), and marshal the best strategy to realise these.



4. Conclusion

The Africa PFD was a rallying point for advancing the development and governance dialogue amongst critical stakeholders. The Forum, like other previous editions saw the active participation of Regional Institutions, Civil Society Organizations, Local Authorities, Organized Private Sector amongst other actors.

The Forum afforded the relevant partners a platform to reinforce commitments that promote mutually agreeable and beneficial African Union (AU) – Europe Union (EU) relations. In this regard, the Forum noted that identified gaps that exist within the current working frameworks as constituted, remain subject to further engagement with the relevant stakeholders as the debate remains an ongoing one for enhancing future relations and promoting safer, just and equitable societies for all.