

Concept Note  
Africa Policy Forum on Development regional meeting Gaborone, Botswana  
8-10 October 2018

I. Background

The European Union has, over the last decade, promoted the comprehensive and progressive participation of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and Local Authorities (LAs) in countries' development processes and in broader political, social and economic dialogues at all levels. Enhancing regular dialogue and consultations with CSOs is one of the principles stated in the Lisbon Treaty, with a view to ensuring consistency and transparency of EU policies. Documents such as the EU Communication on "The Roots of Democracy and Sustainable Development: Europe's engagement with Civil Society in external relations"; the EU Communication on "Empowering Local Authorities in partner countries for enhanced governance and more effective development outcomes" and the "European Neighbourhood Policy" have been critical in EU efforts to improve its cooperation with CSOs and LAs.

The Policy Forum on Development (PFD) is a multistakeholder platform which can be seen as both a catalyst and an outcome of these commitments. The PFD aims to achieve the following objectives: (i) Facilitating dialogue on cross-cutting issues directly related to the role of CSOs and LAs as relevant development actors; (ii) Promoting policy debate, consultation and exchange of information and experiences on EU main policies and initiatives in the development field and (iii) Providing a space for regular update and peer review by all actors.

Africa was home to a PFD multistakeholder consultation meeting in December 2014 in Nairobi and a regional meeting in October 2016 in Dakar. The Dakar meeting introduced the PFD and covered issues including; fragility and migration; influencing the new global agenda; an enabling environment for implementing the 2030 Agenda; and the renewed EU-Africa partnership, specifically in terms of policy coherence.

The key conclusions from the 2016 meeting in Dakar focused on the participation of civil society and local authorities in the design and implementation of development policies. Specifically, the poor enabling environment at national level for many actors was a key area of concern, with recommendations:

1. *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*

2. *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*
3. *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*
4. *Consolidate a stronger dialogue, which helps to strengthen multi-stakeholder participation and engagement in many pro-development agendas*

The Dakar meeting also looked at fragility and migration issues as part of the discussion as to whether Africa was on track to meet the SDGs and the 2063 Vision commitments, noting the gap between the goals and the reality of political commitments. The meeting participants also specifically recommended the greater use of decentralisation and inclusion of youth in decision making. The Gaborone meeting will take into account those discussions and recommendations in its development and outcomes.

## **II. Context and Objectives**

Two years later, and after the African Union – European Union summit in Abidjan in November 2017, PFD members saw the timing as ripe to focus on Africa and continue the dialogue.

The regional meeting is an opportunity to review the main discussions and outcomes of the summit, and look at the implications going forward. Specifically, the regional meeting will look at African Union – European Union summit recommendations around: youth; peace and security; mobility and migration; and governance. The regional meeting in Africa will also look specifically at the progress made by the EU and its partners from the Africa, Caribbean and Pacific Group of states in advancing towards the definition of the provisions governing their future relations, after the release of the respective negotiation directives in June and July 2018. The meeting will also look at the working environment for civil society and local authorities in the region and how Africa can leverage its partnerships in the fight against corruption and illicit financial flows

The two and a half day dialogue will bring together different stakeholder groups from countries across Africa, including civil society, diaspora and foundations, and local authorities representatives. Main objectives of the meeting:

1. To review the key outcomes and follow up to date of the AU-EU summit of 2017, gathering input and further recommendations from participants.
2. To review development goals and commitments for Africa to gauge whether we are on track, including a look at current partnerships and mechanisms,. Within this

context, a specific session on the future of the Cotonou agreement will look at key aspects to take forward and Africa's preparedness and inclusion in the negotiations.

3. To examine anti-corruption commitments and progress in Africa

4. To familiarize participants with the PFD and its ways of working, in order to foster greater networking and engagement from African constituencies.

### III. Participants

As an indication, around 100 participants will be invited from the following constituencies:

NGO	35
Trade unions	12
Cooperatives	7
Associations of Local Authorities	22
Associations of private sector	6

Foundations	4
Diaspora	2
European Commission and European External Action Service	15
TOTAL	103

Participants will be chosen to reflect a good geographic spread and will include organizations which work nationally and regionally. Attention will also be paid to gender balance of presenters and participants.

### IV. Methodology/strategies:

Background papers will be produced on topics as needed. The conference will use various methodologies to enhance participation. Interactive dialogue sessions will be encouraged.

### V. Expected outcomes:

- Information and experiences exchanged on AU-EU summit outcomes with the capture of any specific recommendations emerging;
- Regional concerns brought to the attention of the EU
- Identification of Africa's progress toward meeting development commitments, noting which partnerships and ways of working are successfully and making recommendations on how they can best be taken forward.
- An outcomes document from participants noting common conclusions and recommendations from the CSOs and LAs to the EU

### VI. Timeframe



**Policy  
Forum** on  
**Development**

The proposed date is 8-10 October in Gaborone, Botswana. A preliminary agenda and the participants list will be finalised by beginning of August and invitations will be sent shortly after.