



Declaration
1st Africa – EU Civil Society Intercontinental
Dialogue Forum

November 8 – 10, 2010

Conrad Hotel
Cairo Egypt



INTRODUCTION

The 1st Africa – EU Civil Society Intercontinental Dialogue Forum was held in Cairo, Egypt November 8 – 10, 2010 under the joint auspices of the African Union Commission (AUC) and the European Union Commission (EUC). The forum, among others, reflected on enhancing the role of civil society in the Africa-EU partnership cycle and especially exploring avenues for contributing to the effective strengthening of the joint strategy for development with its people-centered orientation contained in the proposed 2nd Action Plan of the Joint Africa-Europe Strategy (JAES).

ATTENDANCE

The dialogue was attended by a cross-section of African and European civil society representation led by the formal JAES recognized structures of the Steering Groups from the two continents. The participating civil society actors included Trade Union Movements, Academia, Youth, Persons with Disabilities, Women, NGOs cutting across the eight-partnership themes, and the Media. It was also attended by officials of the host country, the AUC and EUC.

OPENING FORMALITIES

The dialogue forum was declared opened by the Deputy Minister of the Arab Democratic Republic of Egypt for Africa Union, H.E. Ambassador Charif Naguib. Other dignitaries that made statements included the Representatives of AUC – Dr. Jinmi Adisa, Director (CIDO) and the EUC – Mr. Michael Ryan of the EU Delegation to Egypt. The African and European Civil Societies statements were through Honorable Saida Agrebi and Honorable Christa Randzio Plath respectively.

DELIBERATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

During the three days that participants met, there were lead presentations by facilitators to stimulate interactive deliberations and discussions as they reflected on the JAES, considered the 2nd JAES Action Plan for 2011 – 2013 as informed by the Assessment Report on the 1st JAES Action Plan 2008 - 2010.

It is to this end that participants notes with appreciation and commendation that:

1. The deep sense of commitment to integrated development by our leaders as encapsulated in the principles and objectives of the JAES; the clarity of thoughts that informed the articulation and interlinking of the eight-partnership themes; the proactive measures aimed at implementing them in the first three years.
2. The scientific approach to service delivery, transparency and accountability adopted by African and European leaders which informed the conduct of an assessment of the first Action Plan (2008 – 2010) that has provided an objective assessment of the progress and challenges encountered in the implementation of the JAES and its thematic partnerships of the first Action Plan (2008 – 2010).

3. The resolve of the 2nd Action Plan (2011 – 2013) to ensure that JAES becomes more people-centered, focused and oriented as a means for facilitating integrated development; and facilitate an inclusive participation by broadening the scope of actors to contribute to the successful implementation to include non-state actors, particularly the larger civil society.

4. The clarity on civil society partnership utilization as indicated in each partnership theme in order to tap from the huge resource potentials and technical expertise available from the civil society in order to reinforce the decisions of ministerial troika in Luxembourg 2009. This is particularly central in the effective sensitization and popularization of the ideals of the JAES to various stakeholders in the bid to overcoming the challenges that mitigated against the first Action Plan (2008 – 2010). and to receive the required feedbacks from the citizenry and stakeholders during the course of implementing the 2nd Action Plan.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

The AU-EU CSO Forum arrived at key and significant conclusions and recommendations.

- 1. Active Civil Society Participation:** The meeting emphasized the role of CSOs as key partner in the cross-cutting themes of all the 8 thematic areas. This is underscored by the overarching role of furthering, enhancing and deepening the Africa/EU relationship and partnership agenda as well as in carrying through the implementation of the important ingredients contained in the Action Plan 2011-2013. The meeting called on member states in the partnership to provide leadership, further space and the environment that is conducive for the active participation of the civil society as key stakeholders in nation building and the implementation of the Action Plan.
- 2. Resource Mobilization and Allocation:** The meeting recognized the continued commitment of the member states to the spirit of the partnership agenda, but deplored the lack of practical commitment of resources by all stakeholders to fully carry out the defined Action Plan. The meeting therefore called on the AU and EU Commissions to commit and allocate specific financial, material and human resources necessary for the effective participation of CSOs in efforts (at national, regional and continental levels) towards achieving the objectives as outlined in the revised Action Plan.

STRENGTHENING OF THE PROVISIONS OF THE DRAFT THEMATIC ACTION PLANS FOR 2011 – 2013

1. Peace and Security

The introduction of initiatives that should facilitate and guarantee:

- (i) Increased commitment by member states to the prevention of hostilities and conflict through proactive early warning and response measures; thus allowing for the popularization, ratification, domestication and integration of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) by AU Member states through concerted civil society activities aimed at advocacy and public enlightenment.

- (ii) Strengthen the focus of peacekeeping operations to allow for the integration of civilian operations and utilization of civilian skills.
- (iii) Post-conflict reconstruction should include employment for affected civilians and the demobilized soldiers.
- (iv) Adoption of mechanisms that strongly prioritize conflict prevention approaches and the integration of civilian operation.
- (v) Engagement of the CSO in greater numbers in the delivery of these initiatives.

Democratic Governance and Human Rights

The need for the introduction of measures that can further contribute to the strengthening of a more transparent and participatory democratic governance through:

1. Evolving concerted efforts by all stakeholders aimed at advocacy for creating awareness and sustaining international best standards and practices through instruments already subscribed e.g. the African Charter on Democratic Governance, NEPAD/APRM.
2. The introduction of caveats that should facilitate the repatriation of proceeds of corruption logged away in European Banks by former African leaders and to discourage the likelihood of future recurrence.
3. We call for the pursuit of democratic governance and human rights initiatives that strongly place the development needs of the African and **European** peoples at the centre.

Regional Economic Integration, Trade and Infrastructure

✚ The Forum noted that current economic partnership agreements are too much export oriented, at the detriment of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and further pose the risk of undermining existing regional integration efforts. New initiatives are needed to build on existing regional structures, address local economic needs and focus on further appropriate infrastructural development, (including rural infrastructural development) as the engine for growth. We observe with concern the real lack of cohesion between the JAES and EPAs and advocate for a more development friendly EPAs.

✚ The Forum called for the harmonisation of trade and investment laws and other procedures to align with national, regional and continental frameworks in order to facilitate investment and the consistent growth of industry from the informal to the formal sectors.

✚ The Forum also called on member states to take immediate steps under this Africa/EU partnership towards the repatriation of corruptly acquired exported funds from Africa to Europe, as needed capital by Africa to develop Africa's infrastructure and ensure the growth of its economies.

✚ The Forum calls on member states to steps under this AU/EU partnership to engage international institutions that corrupt and or collaborate with corrupt African leaders in defrauding the continent, to put a stop to such collaborations.

MDGs

The Forum noted with concern the current state of the implementation of MDG+10 and implores governments to provide adequate funding for MDGs particularly in areas such as providing for the basic needs of the people and develop strategies that are crucial for the development of the needs of the least developed countries as well as the poorest of the poor. Also ensure that the MDGs most off-track needs have special attention to them in order to bring them on track. To this end, we call for greater CSOs involvement in the establishment of a monitoring framework that complies with the principle of transparency and mutual accountability ensuring the progress of the partnership. The Forum recommends greater effort be injected at different levels in order to achieve the set goals.

Climate Change

The Forum calls on the responsibility of EU to pay for adjustment strategies in AU countries because African states disproportionately suffer higher effects of climate change to which they have least contributed.

Energy

The Forum emphasises that energy is key to development and poverty reduction and calls for a broad, sustainable and affordable access to energy resources for Africa. That new partnerships on energy should not be a means to facilitate Europe's access to renewable energy in Africa only, but rather provide African peoples with sustainable and affordable energy both in rural and urban areas, including Solar and Wind energies. That the CSOs are fully involved in the development and delivery of all the emerging strategies.

Science, Information Society and Space

In the development of science and technology, to develop the involvement of the Diaspora and explore and involve their input, build capacity and increase the development of science and technology through increased cooperation with all relevant partners, such as youth, women, etc.

Migration, Mobility and Employment

✓ It is vital to integrate the ILO's Decent Work Agenda into all work of this partnership. Particular attention should be given to improving working conditions of workers in the informal economy and extending social protection to all, including vulnerable groups such as children, women, people with disabilities and migrants.

✓ The Forum called for the respect of all rights including of migrants under international law and for their fair treatment. The need to reappraise the current visa regimes in the spirit of the partnership should be a key. It called on member states to further facilitate the processes and procedures for visa acquisition, as a strategy for reducing prospects of irregular illegal migration.