



Lisbon Africa-EU Civil Society Forum

15th to 17th November 2007

Recommendations from the Working Groups

Of the

Lisbon Africa-EU Civil Society Forum

The Africa EU Strategic Partnership

A joint Africa-EU strategy

Recommendations from the Working groups

WORKSHOP 1: ECONOMY, TRADE AND REGIONAL INTEGRATION

Representatives of African and European Civil Society Organizations concerned with the impact of Trade and investment on sustainable livelihoods of poor people, met in Lisbon from 15-17 November 2007, to review their role in building a people-centred partnership between Africa and Europe.

Context

The approaching Heads of states Summit on the Joint Africa-EU strategy to be held in December and the ongoing negotiations on Free Trade Agreements (Economic Partnership Agreements) offer an important opportunity for Civil Society Organizations to hold governments accountable regarding the outcomes of the process.

The current project which was presented to the ministerial Troika Africa-EU meeting on October 31st is a political fiction, lacking a true vision 7 project for the two continents.

We note with concern that many aid, trade and investment instruments are being negotiated and concluded outside the framework of the joint Africa-EU Strategy.

The current draft text presented to the Africa-EU ministerial Troika meeting of 31 October sounds like political fiction, lacking a true vision for both continents.

Some core principles of the **COTONOU Agreement** are not referred to in this strategy. These should be reaffirmed because they are legally binding.

The new agreements currently being concluded take away people's rights with specific reference to the environment, economic, social and cultural areas.

Investments in, extractive industries for example, displace people, leading loss of livelihoods and sovereignty over local resources. The capacity of host governments in Africa is very limited when it comes to regulating against foreign companies.

Considering the above observations, we recommend that:

- Economic Partnership Agreements (EPA) and other free trade agreements should not be viewed as instruments for promoting integration and sustainable development in Africa. Strategy should invest in two different and complimentary levels of integration with specific reference to the continental one through the African Union (AU) and the Regional Economic Communities respecting local initiatives.
- Considering the impact of EPA on the future of Africa, we suggest the adoption of public policies which promote Right to food and food sovereignty. Africa must have capacity to defend itself through legal instruments targeting subsidised products from Europe for example.

- Civil Society Organizations must review concepts like partnership and identify benchmarks that can help them highlight inequalities. Indicators of equal partnership must be explored further.
- In terms of policy coherence, there are no domestic undertakings by EU in strategy. The EU must therefore implement policy coherence for development.
- AID for Trade should not be used as a bribe and cannot provide a sound logic for development aid.
- Investment must support initiatives towards sustainable development, be transparently initiated and treated.
- Investment must not displace people and lead to loss of livelihoods

Role of Civil Society Organizations

- Civil Society Organizations should monitor EPAs if signed, compliment existing research on negative impact and systematically demand evidence from EU if any exists, that EPAs will have positive impact on sustainable livelihoods.
- In addition, Civil Society Organizations should monitor the broad spectrum of global relations envisaged and guarantee that Strategy is pro-poor, hold governments accountable regarding the implementation of these two key-principles: participation and poverty reduction.
- Civil Society Organizations in Africa and Europe should commit themselves to observe and challenge inequalities through structured information sharing.

WORKSHOP 2: GOVERNANCE AND MUTUAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Context Analysis

1. Aid should be understood as cooperation and not only the business of a small specialized administration – cooperation means that aid is included in a relationship that allows both societies an international opening, exchange, information about the realities that are lived in the different countries – this relation/cooperation builds a “globalization” of solidarity.
2. Governance of aid is based on the relationship “donors – southern governments”. It is necessary to analyze power and responsibility relations between these two groups of partners. It is also interesting to see how these power relations are evolving. The Paris Declaration seems to intend to give power to the southern governments. In fact, it results in strengthening the donors group and the leadership of World Bank. It results also in real weakening of southern governments that lose their room for manoeuvring. It is necessary to evaluate the impact of the Paris Declaration and to reconsider its logic.
3. Aid should be the object of a contract instead of imposed conditionality. It should pay attention to some elements such as:
 - The respect for International Treaties (in particular those dealing with rights);
 - The participation of beneficiaries and Civil Society Organizations, who should be well informed and associated to the projects design as well as involved in its implementation;
 - Standardizing reporting over funds management and activities implementation.

4. Procedures should express trust between parties. On the other hand, it is necessary to simplify the requirements to start aid processes. It is during this phase that excessive bureaucracy is often observed. The final evaluation should allow assessing the results and the quality of fund management. These principles' adoption should go hand in hand with an accountability process of the North and South actors.

Recommendations to Decision Makers

1. **Partnership.** Although the common EU-Africa strategy states that it is a partnership of equals, it actually is a partnership of actors that are equal in status but not in power. Becoming equal in power must be the aspiration of this relationship.
2. **Political Governance.** Flowing from this aspiration, governance must become one of mutual accountability. *E.g. Human Rights in Africa – Migrant Rights in Europe.*

The strategy must have human rights (political, civil, socio-economic and cultural), rule of law, transparency, good governance and mutual accountability at its core. European and African governments must honour their commitment to the various continental and international treaties both in internal and external policies and actions.

The erasure of rights under the fight against terrorism is a clear example of how African and European institutions and instruments have failed to deliver on their mandate. African and European institutions and instruments have too often failed to deliver on their mandate and the member states lacked the will to implement them.

3. **Delivery.** The strengthening of current and development of new home grown African instruments (*example: development of an instrument for civilian intervention in conflicts*) and institutions must be supported. Based on the principle of representation and participation, civil society must be involved in all aspects of the development, implementation and monitoring of those institutions and instruments and their accountability to citizens. Adequate means and clear rules for Civil Society involvement must be part of the operationalisation of the Strategy.
4. **Participation.** Decision and policy making, either in Europe or Africa, must be based in the principles of representation and participation at all levels and stages. Special attention should be paid to capacity building and gender inclusiveness.

Recommendations to Civil Society

The success of the Europe Africa strategy depends on participation of civil society in the overall process and should be one of the criteria of good governance. Civil Society Organizations should be involved and resources have to be allocated specifically for it.

1. **Governance and accountability** should also be strengthened inside Civil Society Organizations and be based in co-responsibility.

- a. Issues of power and resources imbalance between Northern and Southern Civil Society Organizations should be addressed;
 - b. Transparency and accountability between Northern and Southern Civil Society Organizations should be promoted on a reciprocal basis. Northern NGOs should give free access to their strategies, programs and accounts;
 - c. Northern and Southern Civil Society Organizations should make sure they don't speak on behalf of Southern and Northern Civil Society Organizations, respectively, assuming a facilitators role, still recognising that they have more access and influence to their own Governments;
 - d. Civil Society Organizations should encourage the use of creative and innovative mechanisms to facilitate participation.
2. **Communication** plays a central role in governance. In that sense:
- a. Civil Society Organizations should have a strong role in facilitating access to information, to enable participation of all the stakeholders, and in "translating" the different jargons facilitating dialogue between groups;
 - b. Civil Society Organizations, both in the North and the South, should work more on raising awareness on relevant issues as well as on development education – specially regarding the youth – using media (both mainstream and alternative). Solidarity and justice, instead of charity, should be at the core of the communication messages. This would also improve EU-Africa relations.
 - c. Civic and development education for the youth should play a key role in raising awareness on development issues and an approach based in justice more than on charity;
 - d. Civil Society Organizations need to carry out deeper political and power analysis and develop more expertise to participate in political processes in a more informed way.
3. **EU Africa Strategy** should pay special attention to:
- a. Monitoring and implementation needs systematic involvement of Civil Society Organizations at different levels. Northern and Southern Civil Society Organizations should work together on this. This would be an opportunity to set up long term partnerships and be used as a way of developing and consolidating solidarity movements;
 - b. In practice this should be done through North - South platforms, focused on people, which utilises existing¹ relationships and networks;
 - c. The EC should ensure funding to enable Civil Society to be meaningfully involved in the implementation and monitoring of the Strategy.

WORKHOP 3: PARTNERSHIP FOR DEVELOPMENT

Recommendations to Governments/Heads of State:

Preamble:

¹ E.g. Northern NGOs with partners in the South, CONCORD etc.)

Why we talk about Civil Society Organizations and not about Non-state actors?

We consider the concept of “Civil Society Organizations” a more precise definition of what our organizations really are. The concept of “Non-state-actors” includes also trade unions, private sector and all the other actors that are not State public institutions.

We welcome the Joint Strategy as an overall important step in the relationship between the two Continents. We hope that it will promote a real change in the relationship.

However, we are concerned that the strategy must reflect a mutual recognition and understanding of the different contexts. The African Union is a very young structure whilst the European Union is an older and more established institution.

Civil Society has the potential to add real value to this process if involved from the very beginning of the process. However, Civil Society’s representatives who participated in this Forum feel that the short time-frame and nature of consultation processes surrounding the strategy have not been adequate enough in order for the people of the two continents to build ownership of it.

The Strategy does not cover all the important issues affecting the EU-Africa relation, hence the Strategy must be seen as just one part of a bigger picture, that is constantly evolving. In this context, decision makers must ensure that the strategy will be flexible enough in order to cope with emerging challenges and respond to civil society suggestions.

In order for the Strategy to be implemented effectively there is a need to ensure we move beyond cosmetic statements and implement real accountability mechanisms.

Recommendations to Decision Makers:

Decision-makers must ensure there is a real political commitment and will amongst Member-states of both European and African Unions to implementing the Strategy if it is to be successful. Existing mechanisms need to be re-enforced in order to ensure that the promises made are delivered and adequate resources for implementation must be found.

Regarding resources, Governments must first and foremost live up to their aid commitments and avoid diverting funds from established aid commitments, in particular the European Development Fund (EDF). Currently, there are no regional or Pan-African funds dedicated to the Strategy, instead EDF regional funds will be used for implementing EPAs whose negotiation process has been seriously flawed and which the majority of African Countries are not in a position to sign at this time. Additional funds must urgently be found if Governments are serious about their commitment to this process.

The current approach of the action plan provides little emphasis on transversal issues, such as gender, and does not discuss how marginalized groups will be engaged in order to benefit from the Strategy. For the Strategy to really take hold at the grass-roots level, funds must be committed to Local Authorities and Civil Society Organizations for its implementation. This must be accompanied by the willingness of Decision-Makers to provide adequate space for the engagement of Civil Society in participatory processes, from planning to evaluation, including budgeting.

If we are truly committed to a *people-centred partnership*, the role of Civil Society must be emphasised in all processes at local, national, regional, continental and intercontinental levels. We call on Governments to resource our involvement in all phases, including agenda-setting, development, monitoring and evaluation. In particular, we must be involved in communicating the Strategy and ensuring that Citizens know how to get involved in its implementation and assessment. This will only be possible if adequate resources are dedicated to education for development on both Continents.

Recommendations to Civil Society:

We, the participants of this Forum believe that our partnership must be based on the principles of mutual learning, recognition of diversity and independence of Civil Society regarding Governments, the commitment to joint decision-making, joint responsibility and mutual accountability. We must ensure that we work towards common objectives in a shared spirit of solidarity.

Such a partnership can only exist under the conditions of adequate funding and resources, grass-roots ownership of Civil Society, mutual trust and the commitment to the sharing of information, good communication and negotiated timing of our processes.

We call on Civil Society to consider the following recommendations for agenda-setting, joint action, lobbying, monitoring and evaluation:

- Recognising the need to build trust and invest our own political will,
- Being open, listening to each other and reaching out to other Civil Society Organizations and Social Movements
- Creating innovative mechanisms for ensuring ongoing dialogue
- Re-enforcing partnerships in the context of development education in Europe with a focus on new Member States, in order to raise awareness regarding Developing Countries, of which, in general, they don't know much about.
- Utilising creative media and communication strategies in awareness raising and setting the agendas
- Developing strategies for dealing with the power imbalances and different capacities between Europe and African Civil Society
- Creating our own spaces to learn from each other and share experiences
- Ensuring the use of existing Civil Society structures for monitoring in order to avoid duplication, resource drain and potential for division amongst the Organisations
- Strengthening African and European Civil Society structures, in particular to support marginalized groups
- Analysing the true state of the relationship between the European and African Unions and their own Citizens
- Improving ties between Civil Society and the elected Representatives
- Sharing good practices and lobbying strategies, including for Civil Society consultation and involvement

Good practices:

- AIDWATCH,
- SOCIALWATCH(Benin)
- Malawi – Participatory budgeting - Strategic Participation and lobbying of Parliamentary Committees - budget tracking by Civil Society - Decentralization of planning for a local level.
- 15% Campaign – commit Governments to funding health out of national budgets to ensure long-term investment in systems and infrastructure - to be complemented with donor aid
- Sharing of good practice examples of consulting Civil Societies in both Europe and Africa

Other issues:

- Possibility of a scoring system for the Strategy
- Co-operation along thematic lines.
- Avoid overlap of projects
- Re-enforce Civil Society capacity to support marginalised communities to access budget support
- Re-enforce sustainable financing through innovative schemes such as micro-finance
- Re-enforce through training of Civil Society Organizations capacity to distribute aid

WORKSHOP 4: MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Conceptual precision:

Migrants are those who live out of their Countries of origin.

Double Citizenship:

The Civil Society Organizations recommend:

1. The adoption by all Countries of a legislation that allows Migrants to benefit from a true double citizenship;
2. The adoption by all Countries of mechanisms that allow and encourage the participation of the Migrants on the political activity, both in the Countries of origin (on presidential and legislative elections) and in the welcoming Countries (on local elections);
3. Hearing of the Migrants' associations on the decision processes that concerns their situation.

Role of the Civil Society Organizations:

The Civil Society Organizations should:

1. Promote the ratification by the Governments of the Human Rights Conventions related to Migration, namely the United Nations Convention on the Protection of the Migrant Workers and their Families;
2. Establish a better and stronger relation with the Parliaments, promoting lobbying;

3. Alert the Decision Makers and the Populations for the need to suppress policies and political measures that originate economic and social injustices, menace the Populations livelihoods and generate Migration;
4. Promote further networking among each other, not only with Development NGO, but also with Trade Unions, Farmers Organizations, Labour Associations, Migrant Associations, strengthening and narrowing relations between these Civil Society actors in order to create joint strategies and implement actions at different levels (North-North, South-South and North-South);
5. Assure that the agreements and treaties to be signed between EU and African Countries and/or Institutions respect the Food Sovereignty and Food Security for the Populations;
6. Establish joint lobbying strategies with their partners in the North and in the South (specially on Countries where elected Parliaments do not exist) to defend actively the rights of the Citizens.

Mobility:

The Civil Society Organizations recommend:

1. That mobility should be considered as a right of each Citizen, rather than a mean to economic, political and social accomplishment;
2. That priority should be given to the long term visas for Migrants, instead of the short term ones, in order to allow the Migrant to plan his/her life in longer terms;
3. The adoption of the free circulation and full mobility principals not only in a South-North direction but also in a North-South direction, including the possibility of non return to the Country of origin;
4. The adoption of legislation that facilitates the mobility, allowing bigger and better opportunities for the Migrants to participate on the development of their Countries of origin, including on the political processes.

Transfer of funds:

The Civil Society Organizations recommend:

1. That all Countries adopt safe, cheap and transparent ways of transferring the Migrant funds to their Countries of origin.

Diaspora:

The Civil Society Organizations recommend:

1. That all the Countries of origin face their Diasporas as an opportunity for development rather than as a threat.