



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



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TENTH AFRICA - EU MINISTERIAL TROIKA MEETING
Brussels, 16 September 2008
Communiqué

In the framework of the Africa-EU dialogue, the 10th Ministerial Meeting of the African and EU Troikas took place in Brussels, Belgium on 16 September 2008. The meeting of Ministers was co-chaired by H.E. Bernard K. Membe, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the United Republic of Tanzania and current chairperson of the African Union (AU) Executive Council, and H.E. Mr. Alain Joyandet, Secretary of State in Charge of Cooperation and Francophone Affairs of France.

The African Troika was also composed of H.E. Dr. Maxwell M. Mkwezalamba, AU Commissioner for Economic Affairs; H.E. Mr. Ramtane Lamamra, AU Commissioner for Peace and Security and the representative of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ghana.

The EU Troika was also composed of Mr. Louis Michel, EU Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid and relations with ACP countries, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, H.E. Mr. Karel Schwarzenberg and Ms. Helga Schmid, Director of the Policy Unit of the EU High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy.

P R E S S

1. Implementation of the Joint Strategy/First Action Plan

Stocktaking of progress, endorsement of the implementation architecture, involvement of external partners and way forward

Both sides debriefed each other about the consultations conducted since the Lisbon Summit on each continent to define the necessary institutional set up needed to carry out an efficient and speedy implementation of the Africa-EU Joint Strategy and its first Action Plan. The EU side emphasised the recent reform of its Council structures tasked with the follow up of the Africa-EU dialogue and stressed the aid effectiveness and division of labour oriented character of the arrangement made for the implementation of the Joint Strategy. Ministers underlined the necessity to involve key stakeholders in the implementation process, including EU Member States and African countries, African Regional Economic Communities, the Pan African and the European Parliaments, local authorities, and non-state actors from continents including civil societies, the private sector and the academic communities. Ministers also emphasised the important role played by the African *chefs de file* as well as by the AU Permanent Mission to the EU and the EU Delegation to the AU in the further deepening the partnership.

Ministers welcomed the progress report presenting the details of these political and institutional arrangements and adopted its recommendations. They particularly emphasised the need to make speedy progress on the implementation of the eight Africa-EU partnerships and urged all parties to finalise any remaining technical discussions regarding the implementation of the institutional set up. They called upon African and European experts to start the meetings of the informal Joint Experts Groups as soon as possible with a view to achieving together tangible results in time for the next Ministerial Troika which will take place on 20/21 November 2008 in Africa. Ministers requested that efforts be made to allocate funds in order to foster the implementation of the first Action Plan. They also invited the joint AU-EU Task Force and the next meeting of Commissioners of the EC and the AUC to contribute further to the collective efforts to implement the Joint Strategy and its Action Plan.

2. Update on current issues

a. Situations in Africa

Sudan/Chad

Ministers expressed great concern about the continued degradation of the situation in Darfur. They called on all parties to respect their commitment to the cease-fire with a view to create conditions for a re-launch of the political process. They welcomed the recent nomination of Mr. Djibril Bassolé as AU and UN chief negotiator for Darfur. They underlined the importance of accelerating the deployment of UNAMID which has to be able to fully implement its mandate to protect civilians. They recalled that there could not be a re-establishment of a lasting peace in Darfur without a strong commitment of all to fight impunity in close cooperation with the international community.

The African side informed on the content of the communiqué of the 142nd meeting of the AU Peace and Security Council held on 21 July 2008 including its demarche to the UN Security Council on its implementation. The European side took note of this information. Both sides agreed to work closely together to ensure continued progress in the peace process in Sudan.

Ministers expressed concern about the situation between Chad and Sudan, which affect the whole region. They agreed on the urgent need to intensify efforts to resolve the crisis through diplomatic means, including the expeditious implementation of the Dakar Agreement of March 2008.. In this respect, Ministers welcomed the efforts made by the AU, especially the visit of Chairperson Jean Ping and Commissioner Ramtane Lamamra to Chad and the Sudan, in May 2008, and the planned dispatch to the two countries of a fact finding mission, as decided by the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) at its meeting held in Sharm el sheikh, Egypt, on 29 June 2008. They further welcomed the restoration of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

Ministers acknowledged that the presence of EUFOR Chad/RCA in Eastern Chad and Northern Central African Republic (CAR) is an important EU contribution to the efforts aimed at improving the security of refugees and internally displaced persons. Both sides expressed hope that the presence of EUFOR, together with that of MINURCAT and UNAMID, will facilitate the efforts being deployed towards the promotion of lasting peace and stability in the region.

Somalia

The Ministers deplored the continuation of violence and of the humanitarian crisis on the Somalian territory. They reiterated their support to the Transitional Federal Government (TFG). They welcomed the agreement signed on 9 June 2008 in Djibouti between the TFG and the Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia under the aegis of the Special Representative of the UNSG, Mr. Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah and with the support of the AU. They called on the different armed groups to renounce violence and to join the political process. They marked their commitment to continue the deployment of AMISOM and called for a reinforced support of the international community for the African Union's efforts in Somalia, notably in the UN framework.

They also welcomed the roadmap for the implementation of the understanding reached in Addis Ababa among the leadership of the Transitional Federal Institutions (TFI) signed on 26 August 2008 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The Ministers expressed their concern about the increasing acts of piracy along the coast of Somalia and welcomed the European Union's commitment to contribute to fighting the phenomenon.

Finally, Ministers shared concerns about the delay encountered in the full deployment of the authorised strength of AMISOM. The European Union took note of the African Union's concerns regarding the necessity for the United Nations to deploy an international peace keeping force. In this regard the Ministers highlighted the UN responsibility for international peace and security and its important role in support of the ongoing process in Somalia.

Zimbabwe

The Ministers welcomed the agreement of 11 September 2008 in Harare on a government of national unity. They paid tribute to President Mbeki for his mediation efforts on behalf of SADC and with the support of the AU.

The restoring of a stable political, economic and social situation in Zimbabwe is a priority as well as delivery of humanitarian aid. As the first donor in Zimbabwe, the EU intends to remain engaged in support of the people of Zimbabwe.

The Ministers agreed to follow closely the implementation of the agreement and wish its success. They recalled the importance which they attach to the well-functioning of the government of national unity.

Mauritania

Ministers strongly condemned the coup d'état which took place in Mauritania on 6 August 2008 and the actions taken by the junta, including the creation of a « High State Council » and the establishment of a new government.

Ministers urged the return to constitutional order and the re-establishment of the institutions which the people of Mauritania chose democratically during the legislative and presidential elections of November 2006 and March 2007, respectively. The Ministers supported opening of consultations under Article 96 of the Cotonou Agreement.

The EU side expressed its firm support to the measures taken by the AU in response to the coup d'état, including the suspension of Mauritania's participation in the activities of the African Union and the timely efforts deployed in order to resolve the crisis rapidly. The African side expressed its sincere appreciation to the EU for the strong support rendered to the AU.

Ministers agreed that the AU and the EU would continue to closely coordinate their activities to mobilise the support of the international community in order to return Mauritania to legality and respect the will of the people of Mauritania.

Ministers reiterated the determination of the AU and the EU to make every effort to end the crisis rapidly through the release of the democratically elected president, M. Sidi Ould Cheikh Abdallahi, and his Prime Minister, M. Yahya Ould Ahmed Waghf, as well as the restoration of democratic institutions created after the elections of November 2006 and March 2007.

b. Situations in Europe

Georgia

The EU representatives stated their concern following the conflict that took place in Georgia and of the unilateral decision of the Russian Federation to recognise the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. They underlined that a peaceful and lasting solution of the conflicts in Georgia had to be based on the full respect of the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity recognized by international law. The AU representatives took note of the concern.

The EU representatives informed the AU representatives of the initiatives taken by the EU Presidency to reach an end of the hostilities and to prepare a negotiated and lasting peaceful settlement of the issue. The African Union and the European Union called on the parties to engage in a dialogue on building together peace and stability in that region.

Kosovo

The EU side provided a briefing on recent developments in Kosovo stressing that the EU continues to consider Kosovo as a *sui generis* case which does not create a precedent for other areas.

c. Forthcoming elections

Ministers discussed the forthcoming elections in Africa and welcomed ongoing preparations by the African Union for the successful conduct of these elections. These include preparations for the deployment of election observation missions, guided by specific operational modalities determined by a number of decisions and directives adopted by the AU over the years, to all countries holding presidential and parliamentary elections this year, namely Angola, Rwanda, Republic of Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire, Swaziland and Zambia.

Ministers welcomed the deployment of pre-election assessment missions, guided by the African Union Guidelines for Election Observation and Monitoring and the Declaration of the AU on the principles governing democratic elections in Africa. The Ministers confirmed their commitment to work together in the framework of the Lisbon Strategy in support of democratic elections.

The AU side took note of the commitment of the EU to deploy electoral observation missions in those countries.

d. Food and oil price crises

Ministers expressed concern over the impact of the high food and oil prices, particularly on low-income, food-deficit and oil net-importing countries. Ministers emphasised that not only do higher food and oil prices deepen the poverty of the poorest populations, they also threaten to reverse the progress that has been achieved towards reaching the Millennium Development Goals. They have also triggered social unrest in a number of countries and may pose a threat to stability and human security.

The EU and the AU agreed that the international community has to give in the short, medium and long term a fully coordinated response to the food crisis as a step towards a global partnership for food and agriculture.

While reminding developed nations of pledges made in the past at international fora such as the Gleneagles G8 Summit, Ministers welcomed pledges of financial support by the European Union, the World Bank, World Food Programme and Food and Agriculture Organization during the recent G8 Summit held in Hokkaido, Japan. Ministers agreed that support in this area will be provided in the framework of country-owned and country-led plans, based on national policies and strategies and noted with satisfaction that such plans are being developed in various African countries in the context of the Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP).

The Ministers agreed to continue their cooperation through concrete projects in the area of energy, notably in the framework of the EU/Africa Partnership on Energy, to improve access to energy for development, to promote renewable energies, and to favour the reduction of energy poverty. To respond in the framework of this Partnership to the challenge of the energy price a special effort will be made to improve energy efficiency and to reduce dependence on fossil energies in concerned countries. They commended the launching of the African Energy Commission (AFREC) during the Meeting of African Ministers in Charge of Energy, held in Algiers from 15-17 February 2008.

e. Climate change/environment

Ministers reiterated their concern over the threats posed by climate change to the attainment of the MDGs in Africa. They also reiterated their concerns over the negative effects on food security, sustainable water supply and extreme weather conditions.

They underlined their joint commitment to the objectives and principles of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol and agreed on the necessity to formulate an effective, comprehensive and global agreement on a future framework for a post 2012 climate change agreement before the end of 2009.

They affirmed the urgent need to work closely together on the development of all elements of a post-2012 climate change framework agreement, specifically in the area of adaptation to climate change and the mitigation of its negative effects and jointly underlined the need to muster political will to take stronger action on climate change and to examine how the international framework could facilitate such action.

They highlighted a shared vision of low carbon development to avoid dangerous climate change and agreed that, in accordance with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, developed countries need to take the lead in paving the way towards deep cuts in global green house gas emissions by 2050 and beyond while developing countries, particularly emerging economies, need to do more to significantly reduce the emission intensity of their economic growth and shift towards a low carbon and climate resilient development pathway.

In this spirit, the EU reaffirmed its determination to help the African continent to move towards sustainable development and to adapt to and mitigate the negative effects of climate change, notably through the integration of climate change considerations into development policy.

Ministers welcomed the recent EU Global Climate Change Alliance (GCCA) with developing countries, which is designed to help Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in particular to increase their capacity to adapt to and mitigate the negative effects of climate change and pursue sustainable development strategies. They agreed that operationalisation of the GCCA in the African continent including its political dialogue component should take place within the agreed Africa-EU Joint Strategy/Action Plan partnership on climate change and with the ultimate objective to adopt a joint EU-Africa declaration at the appropriate political level as soon as practicable in view of the Poznan UNFCCC Conference in December 2008 and the conference in Copenhagen in 2009.

Ministers also welcomed efforts on the African side to address the challenges of climate change, including dedicating the theme of the January 2007 Summit to Climate Change and Development and commended the elaboration of the Plan "*Climate Information for Development Needs: An Action Plan for Africa*. They further welcomed the decision of the Summit urging stakeholders to integrate climate change considerations into development strategies and programmes at national and regional levels and calling upon Africa's cooperation partners to support the Member States and RECs to effectively integrate adaptation and mitigation measures into their development plans and to implement them.

f. Migration

Ministers expressed concern over the xenophobic attacks and discriminatory measures on migrants in Europe and in Africa. Ministers emphasized on the necessity to harness the developmental effects of migration and protection of migrants. They, therefore, urged all EU and African countries to protect migrants at risk of discriminative practices and xenophobic attacks, and to take all necessary measures to protect the human rights of these migrants. The EU took note of the African desire for all signatories to ratify the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Their Families and facilitate the domestication of this convention.

The EU took note of the African concern on the proposal for a EU Directive on highly qualified workers (the EU Blue Card Scheme) in relation to the problem of brain drain in Africa, and stressed that the aim of this proposal was to harmonize existing European legislation. It aims to reconcile migration, employment and development objectives by inserting clauses on circular migration, ethical recruitment and brain drain that will benefit developing countries. The EU expressed its will to promote legal migration in a way which mitigates the brain-drain risk.

Ministers reiterated the need for policy coherence on issues of migration and development, particularly the adverse effects of the phenomenon of brain drain and unethical recruitment on the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and poverty alleviation efforts. In this connection, they recalled the importance that the Africa-EU Strategic Partnership attaches to the Tripoli Joint Africa-EU Declaration on Migration and Development, the Migration Policy Framework for Africa and the EU/Africa Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings, especially Women and Children. They called for the development of regional and national policy and legislative frameworks for their implementation.

Ministers welcomed the varied efforts by the two Commissions to implement the EU-Africa Partnership on Migration, Mobility and Employment. In this regard they noted with satisfaction that mechanisms for development of such policy and legislative frameworks are being launched by Regional Economic Communities. Both parties recalled their efforts to further structure the dialogue with the African Diaspora and support their role in the development of the African continent. In this spirit Ministers welcomed the first African Union Diaspora Summit scheduled to take place in Johannesburg in October 2008.

g. Discussion on the Principle of Universal Jurisdiction

Ministers discussed and underlined the necessity to fight impunity in the framework of the international law to ensure that individuals who commit grave offences such as war crimes and crimes against humanity are brought to justice. The European Union took note of the African concern as expressed at the AU summit in Sharm el sheikh. The AU expressed concern over the abusive application of the principle which could endanger international law. The EU reiterated its attachment to the fight against impunity.

Ministers therefore agreed that further discussions should be held on the subject between the African Union and the European Union.

3. Briefing on Developments within the AU and the EU

a. Information on the Union Government and the integration of NEPAD into the AU structures and processes

Ministers welcomed the stance of the Assembly at the recent Sharm el sheikh Summit to reaffirm its decision in the Accra Declaration to accelerate the economic and political integration of the African continent, including the formation of a Union Government for Africa with the ultimate objective of creating the United States of Africa.

They noted the request to the Commission to work out the modalities for the implementation of the recommendations on the Union Government by the Committee of Twelve, including the development of the roadmap, and agreed to support each other, wherever possible, in furtherance of the process.

Ministers also welcomed the progress made by the African Union towards the implementation of the Decision of Heads of State and Government of the African Union to operationalise the integration of NEPAD into the African Union Structures and processes so as to promote better management of Africa's new policy architecture for effective delivery and development.

They noted, with satisfaction, the formation of a NEPAD Coordinating Unit under the auspices of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, whose mandate is to develop a roadmap on the integration process and the creation of the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Authority; the finalization of the reporting mechanisms and work programme for the Unit; and progress towards the filling of the vacancy for Chief Executive of NEPAD.

b. Regional integration, the EPA process and rationalization of the RECs

Ministers welcomed the contribution of the Joint Africa/EU Strategy to regional integration in Africa through the programmes and initiatives in support of regional integration and through the partnership on trade and regional integration. In line with the Abuja Treaty, establishing the African Economic Community, they reiterated that trade and integration are essential components of the wider process of regional integration and development and that Regional Economic Communities (RECs) will play an essential role as building blocks of the continental integration process within a flexible and gradual approach. In view of the importance of infrastructure development to integration, both parties expressed the need to reinforce the dialogue in the implementation of the start-up activities of the EU-Africa Infrastructure Partnership/EU-Africa Partnership on Energy with a view to facilitating interconnectivity and accelerating continental and regional integration.

Ministers underlined the importance of coherence and convergence of the integration processes between the AU and the RECs, especially those recognized by the African Union. They reiterated, as agreed in the Cotonou Partnership Agreement (CPA), that Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) should promote poverty reduction, sustainable development and the gradual integration of ACP countries into the world economy and bolster regional economic integration. Ministers reaffirmed the importance of continuing discussions at the political level in order to effectively address the still contentious issues in the context of full and comprehensive EPAs. In this connection the commitment taken in Lisbon will be implemented.

They welcomed the signing of the Protocol on Relations between the African Union and the RECs and expressed the need to support its implementation. This will go a long way in enhancing the relationship between the African Union and the RECs and in developing together a Minimum Integration Programme for the continent. They noted that efforts are being made to harmonize the policies and programmes of RECs and, in this regard, welcomed the announcement at the recent SADC Summit of plans to hold a tripartite Summit, comprising SADC, COMESA and EAC on 20 October 2008.

c. Lisbon Treaty, Neighbourhood policy, including the Mediterranean Union

The Lisbon Treaty is intended to help an enlarged Union to act more effectively and more democratically. The European Council, at its meeting in June 2008, took stock of the situation following the outcome of the referendum in Ireland on the Lisbon Treaty, and agreed to return to this issue at its meeting on 15 October in order to consider the way forward.

The AU took note of the EU's information on the success of the Paris Summit for the Mediterranean of 13 July 2008, which gave a new impulse to the Barcelona Process by upgrading the political level of the EU's relationship with its Mediterranean partners, by providing for further co-ownership to their multilateral relationship and by making these relations more concrete and visible through additional regional and sub-regional projects relevant for the citizens of the region. The EU and African participants in the process will ensure that all activities within the framework of the Barcelona process: Union for the Mediterranean will be conducted in coherence with the Africa/EU Partnership.

Ministers agreed to hold the 11th Ministerial Meeting of the African and EU Troikas on 20 and 21 November 2008 in Africa.

H. E. Mr. Bernard K. Membe
Minister for Foreign Affairs and
International Cooperation

For the African side

H.E. Mr. Alain Joyandet
Secretary of State in Charge of Cooperation
and Francophone Affairs

For the EU side



EU-Africa Ministerial Troika meeting,

(Brussels, 16 September 2008)

Implementation of the Joint Africa-EU Strategy

and its First Action Plan (2008-2010) : progress and way ahead

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The second Africa-EU Summit, held in Lisbon on 8-9 December 2007, represented a political breakthrough in the relations between Africa and the EU. The new Africa-EU Strategic Partnership is unique both by its continent-wide outreach and its large policy scope. Today, Africa-EU relations go beyond traditional development issues and are conducted through wide-ranging political dialogue and cooperation, covering all aspects of Africa-EU relations as well as global issues and challenges. Both the EU and Africa have made ambitious commitments that require an appropriate institutional architecture enabling both sides to deliver tangible results, in cooperation with all actors and stakeholders.
2. Since the adoption of the first Action Plan of the Joint Strategy, the EU and the African side have taken the first necessary steps towards the implementation. Significant efforts have been undertaken to put in place the required institutional framework, as laid out in the Joint Strategy and the Action Plan, and to prepare for the next phase of the joint work.

3. The present report seeks to inform the competent bodies of both sides on the progress made to date, to enable Ministers to assume their overall political responsibility for the Partnership and to provide guidance for further action. Ministers are invited to take note of the state of play and to endorse the recommendations on the way ahead under Chapter V of this report.

II. PROGRESS ON THE EU SIDE

4. With regard to the working arrangements of the EU Council, a strengthened mandate has been adopted for the Africa Working Group. The Council, aware of the fact that the Joint Strategy has established a new, comprehensive framework for EU-Africa relations, that covers all countries in Africa as well as all thematic areas of the relationship, concluded that none of the existing Council working groups had a sufficiently broad mandate to follow the implementation of the Joint Strategy and its Action Plan. The Council decided that new working arrangements were necessary to overcome the previous fragmentation among different Working Groups, to adopt the necessary cross-pillar approach, to treat Africa as one and to take due account of the pan-African dimension in the new Partnership, as well as to prepare without any delay EU positions on political events and crisis situations. The new mandate of the Africa Working Group thus includes the coordination and the implementation of the Joint Strategy and its successive Action Plans. In order to manage this ambitious agenda, the Africa Working Group has started to meet more frequently, and will regularly discuss, including at Africa Directors' level, policy and strategic issues. In addition, other thematic Council Working Groups and Committees, including the ACP group, the EDF committee, environment experts, and others will contribute to the implementation of the Joint Strategy by mainstreaming it as part of their work.

5. As far as the European Commission is concerned, the Communication to the Collège from Commissioners Michel and Ferrero-Waldner entitled "Follow up to the Africa-EU- Lisbon Summit: engaging the Commission in a partnership of results"(1) sets out a series of measures which the Commission has taken in order to play its pivotal role as motor, facilitator and co-initiator of the implementation process. These measures include the strengthening of internal working methods and coordination arrangements, as well as the mobilization of the necessary resources in the services in charge of implementing the Joint Africa-EU Strategy. In addition, some immediate steps are being implemented, including a stronger role of the Relex Commissioners Group in providing political guidance and the closer association of other Commissioners whose thematic portfolio is involved in the implementation of the Action Plan, as well as greater coherence at Services level, in particular through the strengthening of the Commission's existing Africa inter-service task force. A group of Focal Points from all Directorates General concerned has been set up to follow-up and coordinate the implementation of the partnerships and draft Commission inputs into the annual Joint Africa-EU implementation reports. Key EC Delegations in Africa, including in the Maghreb/Mashrek region, will designate contact points to report and follow-up on the implementation of the Joint Strategy. Delegations should also ensure appropriate liaison with national authorities to promote, in support of and coordination with the outreach exercise of the African Union Commission, the necessary ownership of the Joint Strategy at national level in Africa and in other partner countries. Last, but not least, the Commission proposes to make the agenda of the annual College-to-College meetings between the European and AU Commissions more political and operational. Future meetings will focus on political matters and act as a key building block in the Africa-EU political dialogue. Following the election of a new AU Commission in February 2008, the next such meeting will take place on 1st October in Brussels.

¹ Commission Doc. SEC (2008) 353 of 19.03.2008

6. With a view to maintaining the political momentum created by the Lisbon Summit, and in response to the political, operational and organizational challenges posed by the Action Plan, the EU has established Implementation Teams for each of the eight Partnerships. These Teams bring together experts from Member States, Commission and Council Secretariat, and embody the Joint Strategy's principle that the active involvement and contributions of Member States on both sides are essential to deliver on the ambitious agenda. The participation of different Member States in different Teams also contributes to a better division of labour. Since April, the Teams have started to work upon initiative of the Troika and under the overall responsibility of the Presidency. The technical implementation and day-to-day coordination has been delegated to the Commission/Council Secretariat in association with one or more Member States. The necessary arrangements have been put in place to receive the required political guidance and to ensure full transparency and coherence, and in particular to share all relevant information from the Teams with the other EU Member States. The Teams have started to draw up the first suggestions for the implementation of the respective Partnerships and Priority Actions. In this process, the Teams will inter alia establish an overview of ongoing actions, and make first proposals for an indicative implementation roadmap, including early deliverables. They will also address the issue of possible financing sources and mechanisms, as set out under each Priority Action of the Action Plan, and elaborate proposals for the functioning of the future informal Joint Experts Groups agreed in the Action Plan. The Teams will provide the European members of the future informal Joint (African-EU) Experts Groups, and look forward to start working together with their African counterparts as soon as possible.

7. The EU Delegation to the AU in Addis plays a major role in supporting the EU's comprehensive approach to the new strategic partnership with Africa. The European policy objectives – jointly addressing global challenges and supporting African efforts to build a peaceful, democratic and prosperous future – include an enhanced political dialogue and broader relationship with the AU, as well as closer cooperation with the AU Commission in all areas of the Strategy and Action Plan. The Council had therefore decided in 2007 that the best way to strengthen the EU's collective presence in Addis Ababa was to create a new common EU Delegation exclusively dedicated to the African Union, headed by an Ambassador-level official who is at the same time the EC Head of Delegation and the EU Special Representative (EUSR) to the AU. Since Mr. Vervaeke's appointment in December 2007, the EU Delegation to the AU has gradually been built up during the first months of 2008; additional staff for the different sections will arrive throughout 2008 and early 2009. Today, the Delegation has achieved its initial operating capability and functions as a strong and permanent political and operational interface with the AU, its political decision making bodies and its Commission, dealing coherently with all issues of the Partnership. In addition to its political role in strengthening the relationship between EU and AU institutions, and to enhance coordination with other international and multilateral partners, the EU Delegation also plays a crucial role in providing direct support to the AU, in particular by backing the AU's institutional development through the programming and implementation of capacity building programs, including the existing €55m Support Programme for the AU and the substantial other initiatives that this Delegation manages in a de-centralized manner.

8. Beyond EU institutions and Member States' administrations, representatives of European Non-State Actors and Civil Society have also expressed their willingness to become actively involved in the Action Plan implementation. Major civil society organizations (CSOs) established an interim Steering Group for the Joint EU-Africa Strategy, that brings together members from a broad array of non-state sectors and networks. They have identified one contact person per partnership and submitted a detailed proposal on both a methodology for the mapping of existing CSO networks in Europe and Africa, and on their participation in the EU Implementation Teams and the future Joint Experts Groups. The issue of funding their active participation has also been raised and should be addressed. Meetings between Steering Group and the Africa Working Group are foreseen for the near future, as well as with the AU CSO Steering Committee, to discuss how CSOs can best contribute to the implementation and the monitoring of the Action Plan. Major European and African research institutes and think-tanks also created a Europe-Africa Policy Research Network (EARN), with the aim, inter alia, to strengthen cooperation and to provide independent policy analysis and advice on issues relevant to the Joint Strategy and Action Plan.

9. The ad-hoc delegation of the European Parliament for relations with the Pan-African Parliament and the ad-hoc committee of the Pan-African Parliament for relations with the European Parliament met in Midrand (South Africa) in May and in Brussels in September 2008. Through a joint letter addressed to Commissioners Michel and Joiner, both Parliaments confirmed their willingness to be more actively involved in the implementation and follow-up of the Joint Strategy.
10. The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) will soon adopt an exploratory opinion on the EU-Africa Strategy, with a specific focus on job creation in Africa, and has expressed the willingness to share it with ECOSOCC, their AU counterpart.

III. PROGRESS ON THE AFRICAN SIDE

11. Following the Lisbon Summit, the AU Commission took active steps to ensure that an effective implementation and monitoring framework is in place. It will be recalled that Ministers on both sides at the Sharm-el-Sheikh preparatory Ministerial meeting and Heads of State and Government at the Lisbon Summit of December 2007 stressed the need to ensure that the relationship between the two continents is no longer business as usual and therefore urged all parties to focus on implementation of the Action Plan.
12. In light of the above, and in an effort to ensure that the views of all stakeholders are adequately reflected in the implementation process, the Commission of the African Union conducted a series of consultations aimed at building consensus on the way forward. In this regard, two regional consultations of Member States were held. The first, held on 19-20 March 2008 in Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso), brought together Member States from the Western, Northern and Central Regions of the continent. The second, held in Maseru (Lesotho) on 14-15 April 2008, brought together Member States from the Eastern and Southern Regions of the continent. The EU side participated as observer in these two meetings. The meetings came up with a series of recommendations covering a wide range of issues and agreed inter alia on the following:
 - a. The structure and composition of the interdepartmental Task Force; and
 - b. African Experts Groups to comprise interested Member States and representatives of the Commission as well as the RECs; and

13. The Commission also held a civil society consultation meeting in Bamako (Mali) on 3-5 March 2008. Civil society made a series of recommendations, including on the mapping process, the establishment of a platform for research institutes and think-tanks, the invitation of representatives of European and African CSOs to express themselves ahead of ministerial Troika meetings, and the creation of a web portal to facilitate consultation with CSOs ahead of key policy decisions. They also agreed on the need to revitalise the Steering Committee established by the Accra Consultation¹ to work with CIDO. Regarding the implementation architecture, civil society expressed the need for their active participation in the Joint Experts Groups. The AU Commission has however decided that time is needed to study the modalities and cost of CSOs' direct participation in the Expert Groups. In the meantime, they should be encouraged to consult and meet prior to Troika meetings and mechanisms established to feed the outcome of such consultations into the Troika meetings.
14. Based on the outcome of these consultations, the following implementation architecture has been agreed upon on the African side:
 - a. **The AU Commission** will play the key role of coordinating the implementation process of the Joint Strategy and the first Action Plan as mandated by the AU Executive Council at the Sharm-el-Sheikh Summit. In order to effectively carry out this mandate and **inter-departmental Task Force** has been formed within the AU Commission: Every department which has an area covered in the Action Plan is represented in the Task Force. The members of this Task Force will also participate in the African Experts Groups. This is to ensure that actions to be implemented within the framework of the eight partnerships of the first Action Plan adequately reflect policies/commitments/decisions taken by the African Union.
 - b. **African Experts Groups.** Eight such groups are being formed. These will comprise interested African countries, the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), and representatives of the AU Commission and specialized institutions. The Experts Groups will conduct an assessment of ongoing projects/programmes as well as existing facilities/tools that can be utilised in the implementation of the various partnerships. They will work together with EU counterparts in the Informal Joint (Africa-EU) Experts Groups to be formed later.

¹ Civil society consultations held in Accra, Ghana on 28 March 2008

- c. The **Troika**: It is the responsibility of the Troika to give political guidance regarding the implementation of the partnerships. The *chefs de file*¹ will also continue to play a vital role in the entire process and make valuable contributions to all preparatory work for ministerial Troika meetings.
- d. The **Pan-African Parliament (PAP)** also has a key role to play in the monitoring and implementation process of the partnerships. The body has made contacts with the European Parliament on this matter. In a meeting held in Addis Ababa between the PAP and the AU Commission on 9 June 2008, the need to establish strong lines of communication between the two organs of the African Union was agreed. The PAP expressed its intention to support the AUC at the level of national parliaments, particularly regarding issues that require action by national executives. The PAP undertook to work closely with the Executive, where necessary, to ensure action on matters relating to the implementation of the Action Plan as well as play an active part in informing African populations regarding developments in the implementation of the Action Plan. Effective communication between the two organs was hence considered vital.
- e. The **Regional Economic Communities (RECs)** will be fully involved in the monitoring and implementation process of the eight partnerships. Therefore the AU Commission will ensure that the eight RECs recognised by the African Union² are engaged with a view to discussing their possible roles in the process. For example, at the last RECs Coordination Meeting held in Sharm-el-Sheikh (Egypt) on 28 June 2008, the RECs agreed that they be fully involved in the implementation process of the partnerships.
- f. The **AU Permanent Representation in Brussels** will continue to be actively involved in the monitoring and implementation process. The Office will play a key role in enhancing communication between the African Union and the European Union. It has been assigned to include the follow up processes as part of its mandate and the AU Permanent Representative in Brussels is fully engaged. Hence, the requisite effort is being exerted with a view to enhancing the Mission's capacity to enable it better fulfil this very important role..

¹ Currently : Algeria (Peace and Security), Burkina Faso (Migration and Human Trafficking), Egypt (Cultural Goods), Ethiopia (Cultural Goods), Gabon (HIV/AIDS), Kenya (External Debt), Morocco (Environment), Mozambique (HIV/AIDS), Nigeria (External Debt and Cultural Goods), Senegal (External Debt and Migration), South Africa (Regional Integration and Trade), Tunisia (Food Security and ICT), Zambia (Governance).

² ECOWAS, ECCAS, SADC, COMESA, EAC, AMU, IGAD, CEN-SAD

- g. **Civil Society:** African civil society will work closely with the European civil society in the implementation process. It has been agreed that the Steering Committee set up during the Accra civil society consultation be revitalised to work closely with CIDO, particularly on issues such as mapping. Other stakeholders such as ECOSOCC, research institutes and think-tanks will also play a role.
- 15. The process has been given further momentum by an AU Executive Council Decision at the Sharm-el-Sheikh Summit, calling upon Member States to express interest in the eight partnerships, to allocate the necessary human, material and financial resources and to propose projects for implementation. Member States, Regional Economic Communities and other stakeholders have been urged to take active part in the implementation of the Action Plan under the coordination of the AU Commission. Already, a number of Member States have responded to this call either by submitting project proposals, expressing interest in the various partnerships, or pledging experts for participation in the African Experts Groups.
- 16. Regarding the communication of the Joint Strategy, the Commission of the African Union and the EU Commission have started to develop a joint AU-EU website on the Africa-EU Strategic Partnership to disseminate information, documents and events updates, and have launched the first media outreach activities and other communication tools. In the same vein, the AUC and the EC jointly organised a high level Forum on the theme "Media and Development". This event, which aimed at highlighting the importance of the media for sustainable development, took place from the 11th to 13th September 2008, in Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso).

IV. WAY AHEAD

- 17. Ministers are invited to endorse the following recommendations:
 - a. **All key actors** – continental, regional and sub-regional institutions on both sides, but also individual African countries and EU Member States, as well as non-state actors, including civil societies, the private sector and other stakeholders – should live up to their commitments and provide their required inputs and resources for the successful implementation of the Action Plan.
 - b. The **Pan-African Parliament (PAP)** and the **European Parliament (EP)**, the **AU Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC)** and the **European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)**, as well as local authorities from both the African and EU sides should establish mechanisms for closer cooperation, dialogue and active involvement in the context of the Action Plan implementation.

- c. The continued engagement of **Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)** in the implementation and monitoring of the Action Plan is vital. Hence, CSOs from both sides should elaborate before the next Ministerial Troika meeting joint consolidated proposals in this regard, including the pursuit of the analytical work for the EARN initiative and the mapping of European and African civil society networks that can contribute to the implementation of the Action Plan.
- d. It is necessary to initiate an effective dialogue with key **international partners** on the Joint Strategy and on their possible contributions to the implementation of the eight Partnerships.
- e. It is important to establish efficient lines of **communication** between the AU and the EU, and to better inform African and European citizens, as well as media, researchers and other partners on the progress and results of the Strategic Partnership. In this context, there is need to address communication as a cross-cutting priority in all eight partnerships. The EU and AU Commissions should look into possibilities to further improve the communication on the Joint Strategy and the Action Plan.

18. Ministers are invited to task Senior Officials to :

- a. finalize, by mid-October 2008, the respective internal preparations, so that concrete progress can then be made towards **joint implementation** of the agreed activities in the eight partnerships.
- b. establish the **informal Joint Expert Groups** that will bring together African, European and other key actors (including non-state actors) with the necessary competence and commitment to do concrete work on the respective priority actions, and hold first meetings before the next Ministerial Troika meeting in November 2008
- c. **pursue the Action Plan implementation in a balanced way** in all eight Partnerships, paying equal attention to political initiatives and concrete cooperation activities;
- d. task the **Joint AU-EU Task Force**, in line with the agreed institutional architecture, to contribute to the implementation of the Joint Strategy. The two Commissions and the Council Secretariat should, therefore, examine possibilities for this Task Force to ensure the operational continuity of the eight Partnerships, and to include in the composition of the Task Force appropriate representation from the future informal Joint Experts Groups, while maintaining efficient and effective working arrangements.

- e. achieve tangible results in time for the **next Ministerial Troika** which will take place on 20-21 November 2008 in [...]. At this occasion, a joint progress report on the implementation of the Joint Africa-EU Strategy and its first Action Plan shall be submitted.
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