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LE PRESIDENT

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Discours d'ouverture de Herman Van Rompuy Président du Conseil Européen au Sommet EU-Afrique

Merci beaucoup pour vos chaleureux mots de bienvenu. Je voudrais également remercier notre hôte pour l'accueil extraordinaire que vous nous offrez.

En atterrissant a Tripoli j'ai ressenti de l'émotion. En juin 1958 en rentrant du Congo avec mes parents et notre famille nous avons fait escale. Je suis de retour 52 ans après.

Nous sommes dans un endroit historique ici à Tripoli. Les cotes septentrionales de l'Afrique lient les deux continents depuis des millénaires, à travers la Méditerranée – 'Mare Nostrum', comme disaient les Romains. Les chemins que l'histoire a empruntés pour lier nos continents sont multiples. Nous savons que nous ne pouvons pas défaire le passé. Chaque Sommet UE-Afrique nous offre une opportunité de façonner l'avenir de ce partenariat, ensemble.

Les chefs d'état et du gouvernement de l'Europe et de l'Afrique ont choisi une nouvelle perspective il y a trois ans à Lisbonne. Désormais l'objectif est un partenariat fort entre égaux, au-delà des modèles établis et des ordres du jour limités. Désormais il existe également un engagement à traiter les questions globales qui nos concernent tous et à impliquer les parlements et la société civile. Je salue leur participation active dans notre Sommet [aujourd'hui et demain] ; et je pense aussi aux représentants des entreprises de deux côtés.

Notre Sommet est lui-même un signal fort. L'Union européenne et l'Afrique sont appelées à collaborer et à saisir les opportunités offertes par notre potentiel combiné énorme. La Stratégie de Lisbonne est crucial à cet égard.

Dans cet effort nous ouvrons de nouvelles pistes prometteuses mais nous faisons face également à de grands défis. Les conflits armés continuent à menacer voire à détruire le progrès dans plusieurs pays. L'insécurité, le terrorisme et les menaces internationales ne se limitent plus à quelques régions spécifiques mais sont alimentés par des réseaux en Afrique et Europe. La pauvreté prive des millions d'hommes et de femmes d'une vie digne malgré les progrès qui ont été réalisés les dernières années. Le Sommet de Cancun sur le changement climatique, qui s'ouvre dans une semaine, nous rappelle d'autres défis mondiaux.

P R E S S E

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At this 3rd Summit, we, the African and European leaders, should act in order to catalyze change and to reach results.

The first Summit in Cairo in 2000 launched the process; the second one in Lisbon in 2007 defined the 'new' agenda; and the third one here in Tripoli should produce concrete results. Our Summit is therefore rightly dedicated to "Investment, economic growth and job creation".

In a highly interdependent world economy, there are no easy recipes. But I am convinced that we can find ways of mutually beneficial cooperation, notably via the private sector. We need to transcend the state dependent economies which have performed so poorly over decades of development cooperation.

Broad-based economic growth is the best engine of sustainable development. In Europe's experience, the perspectives for economic growth are closely linked to elements of 'good governance'. Africa is not an exception; in fact, many African countries are testimony to this rule. The dynamics of prosperity set in where business-friendly policies attract private investment, where corruption is not tolerated, where the rule of law is respected and transparency valued, and where governments invest in the education and well-being of their citizens, also for women and children.

For the creation of growth and jobs, the rise of dynamic "South-South" trade and investment relations is a very important sign. The EU welcomes and sup-ports these developments, knowing that economic growth is not a zero-sum but a win-win game. The benefits of productivity, competitiveness and trade ultimately can become benefits for all.

Africa has without doubt the world's greatest potential in this respect. You have shown positive growth rates in recent years. You will soon embrace 20% of the world's population, and they will no doubt call for more than the current 2% of world trade.

Unlocking Africa's enormous potential, raising people out of poverty and helping them on the path to more dignified and productive lives, will require both more domestic growth and more international cooperation. It cannot be done solely through foreign aid. But neither can we do it without it. Our challenge is to better link aid to set domestic growth into motion.

The EU will continue to fully assume the responsibilities it has taken up in this regard. We already account for more than a half of global Official Development Aid. We remain committed to increasing our aid spending to reach the collective target of 0.7% of Gross National Income by 2015. We assume that over the next three years more than € 50 billion of aid will be made available to support the overall objective of our Partnership. Yet, the ultimate responsibility for Africa's success rests with the governments and peoples of Africa.

Africa is becoming a key player in many areas of global governance: be it in peacekeeping, the fight against drug trafficking, addressing Climate Change, economic renewal – or crimes against humanity. Africa has been instrumental in the setting up of the International Criminal Court and enabling its mission of bringing justice to the victims of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity.
The EU firmly supports the International Criminal Court. I know that both the EU and the African Union fully subscribe to the principle of the fight against impunity. Let us continue working together in preserving the Court's value and independence.

The AU's leadership role and the close partnership with the European Union is obvious in peace and security issues which we will address in more detail tomorrow.

The EU also seeks close cooperation with the AU in the field of political governance. We appreciate the African Union's emerging role as an important norm setter, notably in the strict policy on unconstitutional changes of government. This internal process goes together with a higher impact and visibility at international level, including through the AU's presence at the G20. These are truly important and potentially 'game changing' developments.

Thus, I am looking very much forward to our discussions today and tomorrow. We have a real chance to strengthen our partnership. Maybe Europeans and Africans will feel one day, again, that the Sea which links our two continents really is for both sides 'Mare Nostrum', or Our Sea!