



CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA



EURAFRIQUE? AFRICA AND EUROPE IN A NEW CENTURY

Policy Advisory Group Meeting

Centre for Conflict Resolution, Cape Town, South Africa
and the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Maputo, Mozambique

31 October – 1 November 2007

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Introduction

The Centre for Conflict Resolution (CCR), Cape Town, South Africa, and the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) office in Maputo, Mozambique, held a policy advisory group meeting in Cape Town on 31 October and 1 November 2007 on the theme, “EurAfrique? Africa and Europe in a New Century”.

The aim of the seminar was to examine the relationship between Africa and Europe in the 21st Century. The meeting explored three key issues: first, the unfolding economic relationship (trade, aid and debt) between the two continents; second, peacekeeping and military co-operation; and third, migration. Led by these three thematic areas, the policy advisory group discussed and debated the context of the Africa-Europe relationship in detail. The perspectives included in this policy brief emerged from the diverse views expressed at the seminar, as well as from additional research, but do not necessarily represent a consensus position by the group. A fuller report of the meeting will be published in 2008.

The General Context of the Africa-Europe Relationship

Seven years have passed since the Africa-Europe Summit was held in Cairo, Egypt, in 2000. Since then, many geo-political developments have impacted on the relationship between the two continents. These include: the implementation of the Cotonou Agreement of 2000, and the initiation of trade talks between Africa and Europe, namely the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) negotiations. The same period has seen the stalling of the Doha Development Round in the World Trade Organisation (WTO) talks by 2005, the rise of the Aid for Trade programme of 2005, and the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness of the same year.

A new global balance of forces has emerged, and the world is increasingly becoming multi-polar. The “Washington Consensus” of the early 1990s on reducing the role of the state and increasing the role of the private sector has been eroded by three decades of difficult economic reforms in the developing world. Africa is now receiving attention from especially China, which has become the third-largest investor on the continent and has held three summits of the Forum on China and Africa (FOCAC) between 2000 and 2006. In addition to China, Africa is also receiving attention from India and Brazil as a source of raw materials for these rapidly developing economies. These developments are thought to be one of the major concerns for some European governments keen to break the impasse in the Africa-Europe relationship. The development and security agendas in this relationship have also shown themselves to be closely connected, and the issue of migration is increasingly raised at international fora. The firm policy belief in “no foreign boots on African soil” has given way to numerous

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successful and not-so-successful military interventions in African conflict situations involving the African Union (AU), the United Nations (UN), and the European Union (EU). Increasingly, the rich North and the poor South are being confronted by issues of climate change and renewable energy. And the world is becoming more aware of the catastrophic impact of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria on Africa's development and security agenda.

In December 2005, EU leaders adopted a new strategy for Africa with the title, "The EU and Africa: Towards a Strategic Partnership". The purpose of this strategy is to give Europe a comprehensive, integrated and long-term framework for its relations with Africa. This is, however, a one-sided policy document, developed and refined within the EU Commission in Brussels, with little or no input from partner states in Africa. While the post-Cold War era has witnessed dramatic changes, the Africa-Europe relationship seems caught in traditional patterns in which Africa reacts to policy directives emanating from Europe, rather than Africa setting the agenda as an equal partner, and actively participating in policy developments that will fundamentally affect the continent.

1. Trade, Aid and Development

The trade, aid and development relationship between Africa and Europe is undergoing major change. Previously, these three dimensions were captured under the auspices of the Lomé Convention of 1975. In the area of trade, Lomé offered the 78 members of the Africa, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) states non-reciprocal, beneficial access to the EU market. A development package was negotiated within Lomé, which resulted in the European Development Fund (EDF) envelopes. Given the large and diverse membership of the ACP group and its pioneering political position, the ACP-EU relationship has historically been of great significance, particularly to developing countries. However, during the 1980s and 1990s the ACP group's political standing, and the operation and rationale of both trade and aid aspects of Lomé, were steadily eroded.

In addition, the rise of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and the EU's role within the WTO resulted in the Lomé trade preferences becoming something of an embarrassment to Europe. The Lomé Convention gave way to the Cotonou Agreement by 2000, with the major change being the move away from non-reciprocal trade preferences. For the purpose of negotiating free trade agreements with the ACP, the group has been split into six negotiating units – Western; Central; Eastern; and Southern Africa; as well as the Caribbean; and the Pacific. This move alone has been problematic for the ACP, as its members fear the divisions will mean an erosion of the ACP and its relative political position within the EU's network of foreign relations.

While regional groupings are strongly favoured in principle by the ACP, there have been problems of overlap and identity. Concerns over EPAs, and the EU's threatening insistence on the 31 December 2007 deadline for concluding these agreements, remain a major source of tensions and distrust between



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Image source - www.weed-online.org



the ACP and the EU. While ACP members call for greater trade flexibility and understanding, EU members have shown little patience for what they see as the late and inadequate preparations on the part of ACP members.

Over the last few decades, development aid has become a fiercely debated issue, with Western critics pointing out that, despite millions of euros being poured into development in Africa, the continent has not been able to throw off the shackles of under-development, corruption, poverty and instability. From Africa, voices are calling for a strategy to end aid dependency and the endless EU policy directives and documents that do little to change conditions on the ground. The motives behind the selection by donors of certain recipients for political and strategic rather than for socio-economic development and poverty alleviation goals have also been questioned. On the other hand, there has been a renewed interest in what the provision of aid is able to achieve, notably in the work of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Clinton Foundation in an era in which the Bretton Woods institutions – the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) – are losing international credibility. The sentiment that emerged from the Cape Town seminar was that while development aid has serious limitations, it is still part of the solution rather than part of the problem. The EU's \$50 billion-a-year Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and American agricultural subsidies were particularly criticised for hampering Africa's development prospects, since an estimated 70 per cent of the continent's population work in this sector.

The decline in development aid from 0.33 percent of gross national income to 0.22 percent between 1990 and 2001, despite a UN target of 0.7 percent set as far back in 1970, was also criticised, as was the large percentage of aid that returns to donor countries in the form of the purchase of goods from donor countries and technical assistance. Calls were made for donors, as well as recipients, to be held accountable. There were also calls for the annulment of Africa's external debt of \$290 billion which was seen by some as unsustainable and immoral, since much of these debts were accumulated during the Cold War-era by unelected western-backed autocrats such as Zaire's Mobutu Sese Seko, Somalia's Siad Barre and Liberia's Samuel Doe. It was noted that a key factor in realising development objectives is to deepen trust between the two continents and to allow Africa to set the agenda in crafting its development goals, which could then be supported by the EU and other donors.

2. Peacekeeping and Security Co-operation

In the area of peace and security, two case studies were discussed at the Cape Town seminar: the African Union Mission in Sudan's (AMIS) troubled Darfur region, and the EU's involvement in peacemaking and peacekeeping in Africa's Great Lakes region. Problems highlighted in the Darfur mission included: the multiplication of armed factions, which complicated peacemaking efforts; and the inadequate numbers of AU troops (about 7,000) and equipment, a situation which will hopefully improve once AMIS is transformed into the hybrid UN/AU force (UNAMID) by December 2007. More time and effort is needed for African and European mediators and

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peacekeepers to relate to the local population, regarded as an essential part of peacekeeping. The sensitivity of the government of Sudan to the issue of the Hague-based International Criminal Court (ICC) has intensified already deep suspicions of western countries and has proved unhelpful to peacekeeping efforts. The importance of nuanced and accurate media coverage in the West of AMIS's operation was also underlined.

In the Great Lakes region, the chequered performance of the UN there, from Rwanda to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), was discussed, as well as the circumstances and motivation of the EU's involvement, first with *Operation Artemis* in Bunia, northern Congo (2003), and the Eufor mission at the time of the Congo's elections (2006). Although the African Union had broadly viewed both interventions as beneficial, the reasons for them were also internal to the EU, as its members sought a testing ground for its European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) and its Rapid Reaction Mechanism (RRM). There is a need for a discussion on the right balance between African and European forces in the future, especially since, in some circumstances, non-African forces are more vulnerable to attacks from rebel leaders. (The fate of American soldiers in Somalia in 1993 and Belgians in Rwanda in 1994 are clear examples). But there remains an urgent need for greater burden-sharing and the involvement of well-resourced western troops in Africa, preferably under the auspices of the UN.

More general discussions revolved around the issue of human security. The AU's Common Defence Pact of 2004 specifically uses this term. It was recalled that 10 million people had died in over 40 conflicts in Africa over the last four decades. The broad definition of human security as a precondition of development also highlighted the problem of HIV/AIDS and other communicable diseases such as tuberculosis and malaria. Health systems must be supported in Africa to ameliorate this problem.

The question of military interventions also engaged considerable debate, in view of many reservations over the actions of some EU member states, notably France, in the past. Perceptions are widespread in Africa that France, having been discredited by unilateral interventions in Rwanda (1994) and Zaire (1997), may be seeking multilateral EU cover for future interventions. These suspicions have been reinforced by the French-led EU intervention in DRC in 2003 and the proposed EU force in Chad and Central African Republic to support the AU/UN mission in Darfur - all interventions staged in francophone Africa. In view of the developing common European defence and security policy, EU member states should not only seek to intervene under the EU umbrella, but also seek UN authority and African support. Future missions would be well advised to avoid such suspicions and to ensure that the primacy of the world body in maintaining international peace and security is not eroded through EU actions.

Military interventions need to be sustainable. Concern was expressed at the increasing unilateral involvement of the United States in security matters, the impact of its "war on terror" on civil liberties and genuine dissent, and the lack



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Image source - www.content.answers.com

of consultation involved in setting up its Africa Command to be established by 2008. Other military interventions and actions, such as the British in Sierra Leone in 2000 and the French in Côte d'Ivoire from 2002, should also enter the analytical frame, and the unilateral nature of the interventions outside the UN chain of command was criticised.

3. Migration

The issue of migration has recently been included on the agenda of most international meetings. Although it has been hotly debated, Africa and Europe are still a long way from a clear and jointly-owned strategy on migration. These issues must be addressed intelligently through long-term strategies using mechanisms such as the AU/EU troika meetings and the EU/Mediterranean process that focuses on the countries of North Africa.

Three broad approaches to migration have become discernible within Europe: one focuses on containing migration and on physically intercepting and halting would-be immigrants to Europe; a second approach sees migration as a fact and a potential positive contributor to development in Africa; while the third approach examines the root causes of migration and tries to address them in developing countries and by encouraging nationals to remain in their countries of residence.

Containing migration is seen as the first knee-jerk reaction to a phenomenon generally perceived to be a problem in Europe. Increasing numbers of foreigners are regarded as a burden on European social budgets and a threat to local cultures and norms. A more liberal approach to migration would regard the process as a catalyst for development, especially as both skilled and unskilled labour from Africa is contributing to societies in Europe. Proponents of this view argue that an African Diaspora could contribute to influencing Africa policy in Europe, as well as to the building of a knowledge base in Africa as migrants return home. Migration contributes to economic wealth in Africa through remittances from family members abroad. Where and how these remittances are spent is still not well understood, and this remains an area that could benefit from additional research.

But the question remains how to encourage Africans in general not to contribute to the "brain drain" and to apply their acquired skills where they are most needed. The arguments put forward here include: improving governance at home and increasing peace and stability; and increasing the standard of living and creating economic opportunities, thus discouraging citizens from migration. However, there are strong arguments that the opposite is actually true and that, as countries start to develop and improve their governance, education and economic growth, migration occurs as a natural phenomenon.



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Image source - www.invision-images.com

Policy Recommendations

The meeting resulted in 12 key policy recommendations in the three areas of economics, peacekeeping and migration. These are being presented as a contribution to the shaping of discussions at the EU-Africa summit in Lisbon, Portugal, in December 2007.

The Africa-Europe Economic Relationship

1. Despite numerous policy documents, directives, summit declarations and strategy papers between Africa and Europe, little has been done about the implementation or monitoring of these agreements. A framework should therefore be established by which declarations and decisions can be implemented. Equally, a monitoring mechanism should be established to follow up on promises and commitments made by African and European leaders.
2. The Lisbon Summit should be a step towards deepening trust and confidence in the Africa-Europe relationship. A broad review of problems surrounding EPAs should be undertaken in order to ensure the building and maintenance of trust between the two continents. This could grant an extended time-frame before ACP countries are expected to sign up to EPAs. Strategic documents should be jointly developed in future to maximise ownership by both partners and to enhance real partnership between the two parties.
3. The spirit of the AU's inclusion of the African Diaspora as its sixth region (including Caribbean members of the ACP) should be invoked in efforts to ensure the cohesiveness and the unity of purpose of the ACP group, as well as to make sure that the EU's Africa strategy and the philosophy of Cotonou remain in harmony.
4. African leaders should call on Europe to implement reforms agreed to in its Common Agricultural Policy, an initiative which is still widely perceived by Africans to be a profligate programme that contradicts the EU's fair trade policies in an area in which Africa has a comparative advantage.
5. The impact of climate change on Africa should be investigated, especially on the continent's vulnerable and marginalised communities; mutual policies should be developed to avoid Africa's development being adversely affected by this phenomenon.



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Image source - www.tearfund.org

Peacekeeping and Security

1. Relations between the AU and the EU in the field of peace and security have to be based on mutual self-interest. Therefore, through the 15-member African Peace and Security Council (PSC) and sub-regional organisations such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), and the Intergovernmental Authority on Develop-

ment (IGAD), Africa must contribute significantly to defining and supporting its security agenda.

2. Both Africa and Europe should put increased weight and political will behind the creation of the African Standby Force (ASF) by 2010, currently described as a “work in progress” in need of continuing material and capacity-building support. The 250 million euro provided to the African Peace Support Facility (APSF) by the EU in 2004 must be sustained. Pledges made by the UN and Group of Eight (G8) industrialised countries, involving EU members France, Britain and Italy, must also be met urgently.
3. Peacekeeping missions in Africa must be provided urgently with better resources and equipment, particularly attack and utility helicopters, the lack of which has often impeded operations in difficult circumstances.
4. Africa’s human security needs, including tackling of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria, which are all major obstacles to development, must be urgently addressed. Health systems in Africa must be strengthened and resources increased through bodies like the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.
5. Given the strong link between security and development, Europe and Africa should work for the conclusion of an international arms treaty. This could build on such initiatives as the EU Code of Conduct on arms exports and the Wassenaar Arrangement on Export Controls for Conventional Arms and Dual-Use Goods and Technologies of July 1996 (limiting arms exports from OECD countries).



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Image source - www.radiofiji.com

Migration

1. Finally, in the area of migration, the EU should finance training in African countries that are home to migrant doctors and nurses in order to replace skills lost to these countries.
2. More research financing should go towards understanding the phenomenon of migration and its impacts on both the host countries and countries of origin. This could help ensure that migration policies are more effective and mutually beneficial. It could also address the rise in xenophobic immigration policies and of racism in Europe.