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Great Insights

SPECIAL SUMMIT ISSUE

Africa-Europe relations: Time to reboot

**Ensuring a more
effective and beneficial
cooperation**

René N'Guettia Kouassi,
Director of Economic
Affairs, African Union
Commission

**From walls to calls:
Africa and Europe
can shape the future**

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Professor, University
of Cape Town

**Breaking the
silence and the
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Deputy Director,
ECDPM

**'Africa rising' means
taking ownership
of its knowledge
production**

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Chief Executive, SAIIA

ECDPM's Great Insights magazine offers a quick and accessible summary of cutting-edge analysis on international cooperation and Europe-Africa relations. It includes an independent overview of analysis and commentary from a wide variety of experts and high-level officials and provides updates on policy debates in Africa and Europe.

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Editorial

At the end of November, African and European Heads of State will meet for their 5th Summit since 2000.

The Europe-Africa relationship has not always been a good news story. The current partnerships, such as the Joint Africa-EU Strategy and the Cotonou Partnership Agreement, are no longer able to generate major interest and excitement. Step by step, the grand ambitions and aspirations seem to be replaced by short-term crisis management and growing indifference. Undigested history, structural dependency and vested interests still play a major role in the troubled relationship. Clearly, the recipes of the past no longer work.

To rebuild mutual trust, both Europe and Africa will have to design new and more effective types of partnerships and shake off past habits and practices. Both continents urgently need to find credible alternatives to the increasingly contested actions of China and a growing group of new partners that take a strong interest in Africa. At least on paper, the potential for strong mutual interests and shared global agendas between Europe and Africa has never been more promising than today. Both continents are 'condemned' to step up their cooperation in various domains.

Against this background, ECDPM invited a mix of authors - mainly African - with different areas of expertise to write up their perspectives on the evolving partnership. We are happy to present a variety of contributions, each touching upon one or more key burning issues. They focus on the overall state of the partnership, the shared values that are sometimes applied in an inconsistent manner, the complex peace and security and migration agendas, knowledge production, structural economic transformation and the Economic Partnership Agreements, the increasing use of innovative technologies to empower African societies, and the young generations as committed promoters of change.

The contributions are written by (former) officials, representatives from the private sector, civil society and think tanks, academia, journalists and young innovators. Some of the African authors are particularly critical about the partnership with the EU, while others are more moderate. Beyond the façade of the formal partnership with its multitude of official programmes, institutions and meetings, the various articles help to discover another Africa and another Europe with confident, mostly young generations that are showing their creative and innovative force. All contributors have one thing in common: they want to break with the stereotypes and habits of the past and change the course of action in the Europe-Africa relationship!

We hope that you will enjoy reading these contributions in our newly designed magazine.

Guest editor

Geert Laporte, Deputy Director ECDPM

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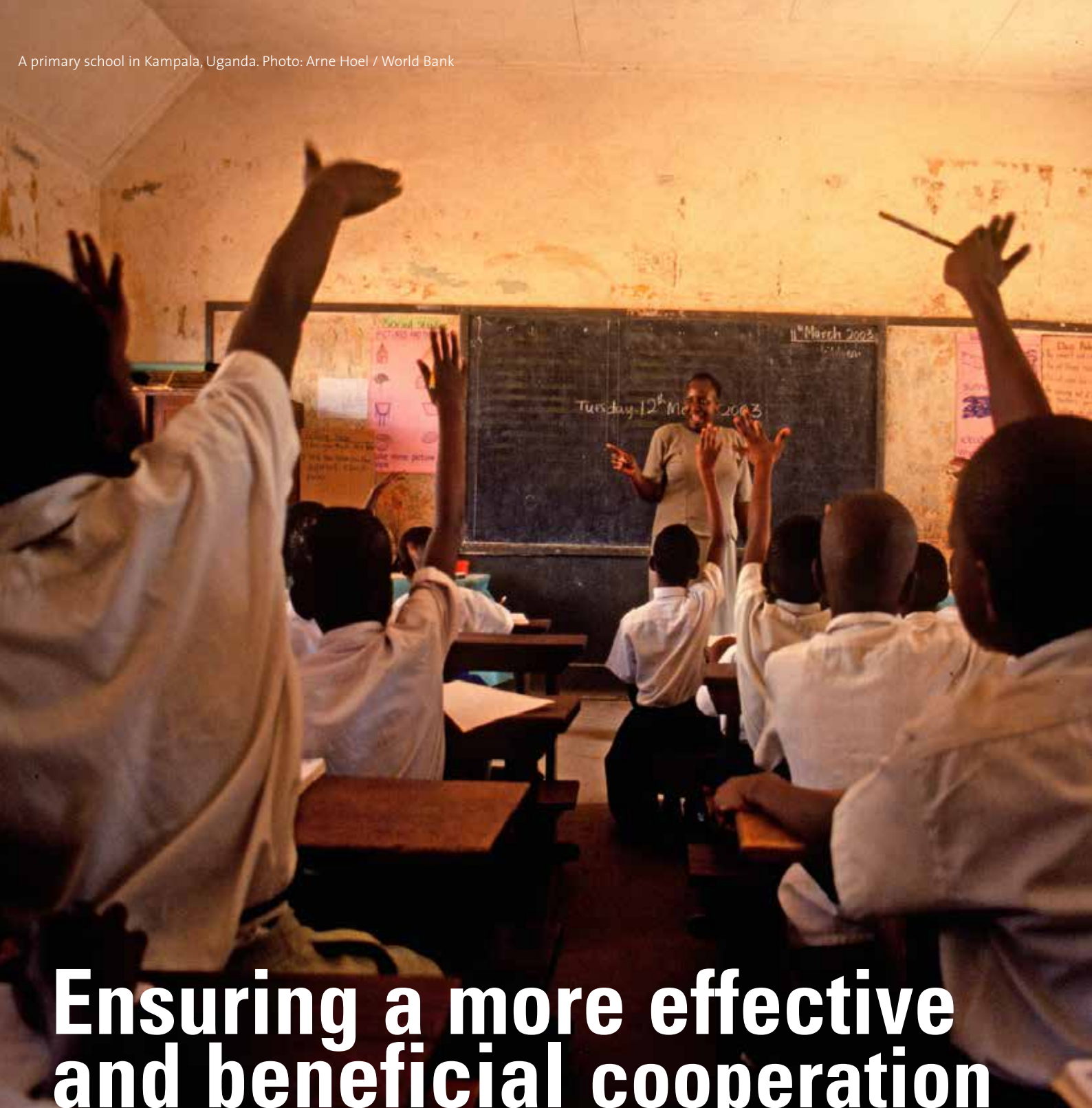
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African market
Photo: Carmen Torres, ECDPM



Ensuring a more effective and beneficial cooperation

Europe's relationship with Africa has been governed by a number of international agreements. In the lead-up to the 5th African Union–European Union Summit in Abidjan at the end of November 2017, many questions arise. Have these agreements delivered the expected results? What should be done to build a mutually beneficial partnership?

By René N'Guettia Kouassi

In parallel there is also the Joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES) that was adopted in 2007 at the Lisbon Summit.

What lessons have we learned for the future?

These are just some of the questions that deserve clear answers to restore the credibility of the cooperation between the African Union (AU) and the European Union (EU).

Breaking with a two headed foreign policy

Europe faces numerous internal challenges, from economics to security and migration. Its external action is also confronted with many challenges

Today the European Union has a two-headed foreign policy when it comes to Africa: a total of twenty-eight (soon twenty-seven with Brexit) bilateral policies and a Community policy skilfully overseen by the European Commission and the European External Action Service (EEAS).

In most cases, however, these policies overlap and even clash, rather than harmoniously coexist. The result is that where a single issue is concerned, Africa receives two or more different, and sometimes contradictory, messages. The European Union needs to coordinate and harmonise its many policies upstream (in Europe) before presenting them downstream (in Africa). This will help prevent the duplications and contradictions that have undermined the image African populations have of Europe.

An African proverb says 'those who don't sleep in a house don't know where it leaks when it rains'.

Freeing ourselves from the stereotypes of the past

Europe continues to treat Africa as a continent on the brink of maturity. The most recent example was Europe's adoption of the External Investment Plan (EIP) for Africa without any prior serious discussion with Africans. Europe behaves like an architect who has decided to design a house for Africa. Although the initiative is certainly laudable, Africans themselves were not informed until the architect, a good Samaritan or a philanthropist, knocked at the door with tools and equipment ready to get to work. An African proverb says 'those who don't

sleep in a house don't know where it leaks when it rains'. It should come as no surprise then, that the fruit-to-flower ratio is often disappointing. Seeing Africa as a mature continent and burying the stereotypes of its past with Europe must be at the very heart of Europe's new approach to Africa

Stopping the cycle of reinvesting undistributed funding

The European Union's effort to help Africa out of poverty and misery are recognised by all. But this unanimity quickly evaporates when it comes to perceptions over the effectiveness of Europe's policies vis-à-vis Africa and the allocation and management of financial envelopes. The Regional and National Indicative Programmes (RIPs and NIPs), among others, are disbursed at a slow rate and Africans find this difficult to understand. As a result, a whole series of unused envelopes are permanently 'recycled', giving the impression of a continuously renewed European commitment to Africa. The extreme sluggishness and complexity of disbursements fuel belief that Europe's aid is deliberately inefficient for one simple reason: to control Africa's development like one might control the growth of a young plant (using precise dosages of water and fertilisation), to prevent the birth of an economic and political entity which tomorrow could become a formidable competitor or adversary.

Adapting cooperation governance to African realities

The first AU-EU Summit in Cairo in 2000 rejuvenated relations between the African Union and the European Union through the adoption of new attitudes and the establishment of an appropriate governance framework. Consequently, Senior Officials' Meetings and Ministerial meetings were organised in between summits. These frameworks allowed the participants of both continents to breathe new life into their cooperation efforts. Today, in between two summits, no other joint have met.

The Joint Task Force which was established after the 2007 Lisbon Summit is in poor shape. The Commission-to-Commission meeting, which was supposed to keep the flame of cooperation alive, is also not doing very well. The Economic Forum supposedly replacing the Task Force has yet to hold its first meeting. In short, unilateral changes in the governance structures imposed by the EU to reflect the development of its own internal institutional apparatus, without prior consultation with African counterparts, have left the AU-EU cooperation looking tired and outdated.

To revitalise the Europe-Africa cooperation there is a need for a mutually agreed governance structure, one which meets the

demands of the modern world. Such a governance structure should boost AU–EU relations by organising a more regular high-level political dialogue between both parties.

Increasing European investment in productive African sectors

To bridge the growing divide between Africa and Europe, Africa needs to structurally transform its economies. In this process, the EU could encourage European small and medium size enterprises (SMEs) to invest in Africa, be it through direct investment, portfolio investment, capital investment or other types of innovative financial injections. These SMEs could have a clear and measurable impact on the living standards of African and European populations. It is high time that European and other economic operators stop seeing Africa as a high-risk continent to invest in. Africa should no longer be seen merely as a continent for short-term investment and floating capitals that can be easily repatriated at the slightest indication of instability. Support for the implementation of Africa's integration initiatives should also be at the very heart of a new type of European cooperation with Africa. Investing in Africa's development means helping African populations out of poverty and misery, thereby shielding them from tribal and ethnocentric inclinations, which can potentially result in all kinds of instability. The recent German Marshall Plan for Africa is a step in the right direction. To ensure greater impact, it should also be supported by German SMEs.

To revitalise the Europe-Africa cooperation there is a need for a mutually agreed governance structure, one which meets the demands of the modern world.

Today Europe remains closely connected with Africa due to cultural and linguistic affinities, not to mention the geographical proximity between the two continents (just 12 kilometres separates them). Those with the largest amounts of resources in every respect have a moral obligation to support Africa as it transforms itself economically and politically. European attempts to help Africa achieve wealth will also generate solutions to the acute economic and social crisis that Europe now faces. Investing heavily in projects with high added value should today be the foremost axe of European cooperation. This will ultimately contribute to a win-win situation for the people of both continents.

Clarifying coexisting AU–EU and ACP–EU policies

AU–EU interactions involve the whole of Africa, while ACP–EU interactions concern only sub-Saharan Africa without the Maghreb region. The EU is connected to South Africa and the Maghreb, through specific cooperation frameworks. In reality, this fragmented European approach has been detrimental to the effectiveness and harmony of the JAES. At the same time, implementation of the ACP–EU Cotonou Agreement has been structurally hampered for a diversity of reasons. What should be done? Should the JAES and Cotonou instruments be streamlined by abolishing one in favour of the other? The Joint Strategy is built on the cardinal principle of treating Africa as a single entity. Is this principle not an invitation to sacrifice ACP–EU on the altar in favour of just one cooperation framework with Africa as a whole? What price would Africa have to pay if this happened? Is the cost of the divorce between Cotonou and JAES that is the deterrent? Should we stay in a bad marriage simply to avoid paying this price? In any event, this is a major concern that will have to be addressed in the ongoing negotiations on the future of the Cotonou Agreement after 2020. A single instrument, not two, would have the advantage of bringing greater harmony, efficiency, visibility and momentum to AU–EU cooperation, enabling it to capitalise on its massive potential.

Africa: a continent struggling to transform itself?

Today, a recurrent theme in the discourse of most African political leaders and even economic decision makers at the national, regional and continental level is the issue of 'structural transformation of Africa' with all the challenges and difficulties involved.

First, there is a widespread consensus that agriculture in Africa has failed. In some parts of the continent, agriculture still cannot perform its primary function, which is to provide the African population with an adequate supply of food, thereby shielding it from malnutrition and structural and endemic famine. Today, Africa imports massive amounts of food to meet its dietary needs. This not only puts a strain on its balance of payments but also increases its food dependence.

Second, it should be noted that industrialisation in Africa appears to be at a standstill despite the adoption of many industrial policies and strategies since the 1960s. While the structural transformation is under way, it is bypassing the secondary sector of the economy. African populations are abandoning rural areas, despite the underdevelopment of agriculture, to move into the tertiary sector. Cutbacks in state structures and their personnel, under the aegis of the Bretton Woods institutions, have been at the expense of industry. Former employees of the state-controlled companies and from the public administration, made redundant as a result of drastic budget cuts, have bloated the formal and informal tertiary

sectors. The industrial sector in Africa has been neglected as a consequence.

Third, Africa still lacks economic and political integration. Multiple initiatives have been taken to find ways to make it work. Yet, the volume of intra-African trade remains negligible. The continent is developing its trade relations with the rest of the world. Likewise, Africans still do not have the right of free movement within their own continent. Creation of a single African currency is a seemingly impossible task, despite it being enshrined in Article 19 of the Constitutive Act of the African Union. The continent is still struggling to standardise its statistical resources. National figures cannot be compared across countries due to a lack of capacity and problems emanating from poor infrastructure and a dearth of adequate, sustainable funding for statistical organisations. Africa also suffers from a lack of integration of its infrastructures. While it abounds in energy sources of every kind, over 70 per cent of its population languishes in the dark. Power cuts are everyday occurrences in nearly every country in Africa. These are a structural barrier to the development of business and to emerging industries and start-ups. Although capable of providing sufficient sustainable energy to a large number of countries, the Grand Inga hydropower project has yet to be completed for example.

Fourth, Africa is getting nowhere fast in terms of governance in the broadest sense of the term. It has ratified the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, which entered into force on 15 February 2012. Leadership changes are often painful and sometimes bloody, and the old habit of amending states' constitutions dies hard. Good economic governance at both the micro (household) and the macro (government) level is proving difficult to establish.

Fifth, it is no exaggeration to say that African schools have missed their mark. After several decades of autonomy in education and training, schools have become factories for producing unemployed job-seekers. The scientific and technological gap between Africa and the developed world is growing at an alarming rate. Consequently, Africa is short on skills to support corporate growth, while at the same time there is mass unemployment among young people leaving universities and schools.

Sixth, Africa is bogged down in a multiplicity of partnerships without an optimal strategy for capitalising on any of these. The various partnerships are quite similar in form and content, covering similar areas of joint interests. The rather small differences mainly relate to funding and implementation mechanisms. Ultimately, however, none of these partnerships have had much impact. Much ado about very few, if no results at all.

It is a self-evident truth that the EU remains Africa's leading economic partner despite Africa's strengthened relationship with China. How can Africa make the most of its cooperation with Europe? Several avenues could be explored to answer this important question.

The dynamics of integration, a lifeline for Africa's partnership with Europe

Africa must speak with one voice when negotiating with Europe. The attitude of each actor seeking to get the best deal is outdated. Indeed, each country has assessed its relations with the EU through its own ideological lens and on the basis of its own comparative, and even technological, advantages. The most powerful countries have always taken it upon themselves to steer cooperation in the direction of their own ideological views and the needs of their economies. This situation has undermined a coherent continental cooperation between Africa and Europe. To reverse this counterproductive trend, it is imperative that all African actors coordinate and harmonise upstream (in Africa) their visions, programmes and approaches in a spirit of African unity and solidarity. Consequently, the individual African countries, the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), the AU and all AU bodies, the African Development Bank and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) have to form a common front in negotiations with European partners. This is vital if Africa wants its voice to be heard and respected.

It is imperative that all African actors coordinate and harmonise upstream (in Africa) their visions, programmes and approaches in a spirit of African unity and solidarity

Breaking from its past with Europe with dignity and responsibility

Although Africa has suffered the double blow of slavery and colonisation, it must break with this painful history and focus on its economic emancipation. In other words, the past should no longer be a millstone around the African neck. Other regions in the world have overcome a similar painful past and seized the opportunities for growth and development. Why should Africa not do the same? Africa must modernise its political discourse, drawing on the virtues of the modern age. It has to look at Europe as a credible partner that can support Africa in its development process. To win the battle of economic and



Africa must modernise its political discourse and engage its youth in a third industrial revolution powered by new information and communication technologies

Kwesi Quartey, the AU deputy Chairperson (left) and Geert Lapoorte, ECDPM's Deputy Director (right) with the author at a meeting in Brussels, Belgium. Photo: ECDPM

social emancipation, Africa must modernise its political discourse and engage its youth in a third industrial revolution powered by new information and communication technologies. Looking at Europe differently could help to establish a new relationship of trust that could strengthen cooperation and make it mutually beneficial.

Stepping up political integration

Promoting state sovereignty has not contributed to the rise of an Africa marching to the same tune. Instead, the cacophony that has emerged has increased divisions, isolationism and nationalism. In negotiations with European partners, each African country or region has been seeking to defend only its own national or regional interests.

This individualistic tendency explains in part the inefficiency of cooperation with Europe, as it has kept Africa from presenting a common front and undermined Africa's clout. Furthermore, it has made it hard for Africa to build respect, to compel Europe to fulfil its obligations and to steer the dialogue with Europe in Africa's favour. The face that Africa has shown to Europe is one of a continent that can be easily manipulated; of an Africa in

which countries can easily be played off against one another; of an Africa in which division is the rule and unity the exception. In response to the many appeals to treat Africa as a single entity, not a one initiative has been taken on the African side to call for a harmonisation of the European cooperation instruments. On the contrary, each institution has defended jealously the existing structures at the expense of African integration and of the coherence of Europe's external action.

The Permanent Representatives Committee (PRC) and the Group of ACP Ambassadors in Brussels: clarifying relationships to boost AU-EU cooperation

The Permanent Representatives Committee (PRC) is one of the constituent bodies of the AU. In almost all cases, the diplomats appointed to it are accredited to the AU Commission, UNECA and the Federal Republic of Ethiopia. The African Ambassadors in Brussels are accredited to the ACP Group, the EU Commission and the Kingdom of Belgium. The PRC and the ACP Committee of Ambassadors have two different mandates. As an AU body, the PRC reports to the AU Executive Council which, in turn, answers to the Assembly of Heads of State and Government, which is the AU's highest authority. This clarification of functions is important

if we are to better understand the role of these two entities in the governance of AU–EU relations. In the execution of its mandate, the PRC oversees and coordinates on the AU Executive Board's behalf the management of all the partnerships of Africa with the rest of the world, including, of course, its cooperation with the EU. On the other hand, the Group of ACP Ambassadors in Brussels, owing to its geographical location in the heart of the EU, believes that it has a natural right to oversee the governance of AU–EU relations, as well as ACP–EU cooperation.

As a result, the Brussels- based ACP institutions believe they have a say on, and even a right of scrutiny with respect to, any undertakings that Addis Ababa might initiate with the EU. This confusion is exacerbated by the fact that EU bodies (the European Commission and the European External Action Service) seem inclined to favour the ACP Committee of Ambassadors in Brussels when it comes to negotiating with Africa on issues related to the future of both continents. The ongoing negotiations on the future of the Cotonou agreements is a case in point. There is every reason to believe that the debate on the subject is being “held hostage” in Brussels while the AU institutions, including the PRC and the AU Commission in particular are excluded from the negotiations.

There is every reason to believe that the debate on the subject is being 'held hostage'...

The ACP Secretariat in Brussels is not accountable to any political authority in Africa. All the African countries participating in the Cotonou Agreement are members of the AU, which should require them to receive their mandates from the governing bodies of the AU. Instead, quite the opposite is happening.

This problem needs to be solved to keep the Brussels ACP group from unilaterally adopting policies that may be at odds with Africa's aspirations as set out in such key initiatives as the Abuja Treaty and the Agenda 2063. The ACP Secretariat should of course, receive its mandate from and be duly accountable to, the decision-making bodies of the AU. These examples call for a clarification of the working relations between Brussels and Addis Ababa. This is an

essential condition to stop sending confusing messages and to further boost AU–EU cooperation.

Conclusion: we need to ensure that cooperation contributes to a shared future prosperity

The principles of mutual respect, joint responsibility and a shared vision with regard to the governance of international public goods must always guide the cooperation between Africa and Europe. No subject can be taboo in the context of AU–EU relations. All issues must be dealt with frankly, in total transparency and without ulterior motives. As the saying goes, 'friendship thrives on truth'.

Yesterday, Europe knew what it was doing in Africa. Today, it knows what it is doing in Africa. And it already knows what it will be doing in Africa tomorrow. Africa, however, is divided and it is still mired in endless questions about the type of partnership it would like to have with Europe. The theme of the 5th AU-EU Summit is one of major importance to both continents: investing in young people to accelerate inclusive growth and sustainable development. Solutions to this serious problem are crucial for both parties, as the vast majority of young people in Africa and a large number in Europe are caught in a trap of mass unemployment for which the consequences are indescribable. The AU and the EU can become part of a dynamic shared future by offering their youth a unique model of shared values such as peace, respect for human rights and freedom of expression. The summit in Abidjan must plant the seeds of this new type of partnership.

The longer version of this text has also been published in French and is available at: www.ecdpm.org/bn96fr

About the author

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The Africa-EU cooperation: Achievements, challenges and future perspectives

24 November 2017 in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire

On Friday 24 November, the African Union Commission, in collaboration with the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) and the European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM), will organise a side event in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, in the margins of the 5th Africa-EU Summit of 29 and 30 November.

The aim of this event is:

- To make a state of affairs of the Joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES);
- To identify challenges and future perspectives for the Africa-Europe partnership also in the light of the upcoming negotiations for a Post Cotonou ACP-EU Agreement in 2020;

- To facilitate a reciprocal political dialogue and to foster a deeper understanding of European and African perspectives on the key issues of strategic interest in the partnership;
- To establish links between the Europe-Africa partnership with the global agendas and cooperation frameworks, including Agenda 2030 with the Sustainable Development Goals.

The seminar will bring together representatives from the African Union Commission, the European Union, Governments, international and regional organizations, the diplomatic community as well as international, regional and national scholars and think-thanks, business leaders, private sector representatives, civil society, media and journalists.



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FROM WALLS TO CALLS: AFRICA AND EUROPE CAN SHAPE THE FUTURE

Walls make a lot of headlines these days. So do sea crossings. Walls signify a desire to exercise sovereign control at a time when we are experiencing an erosion of borders and enhanced human mobility. Sea crossings are a revisit of desperation routes used by those who have nothing to lose but believe they have a lot to gain. In both cases there is drama, emotions and fear.

By Carlos Lopes

Several political actors attempt to put on a brave face and defend the indefensible. Rational explanations vaguely associated with real facts serve to stiffen positions on national threats, security concerns and economic vulnerability. Political debates in Europe are increasingly focusing on the strength of populist proposals and the appeal of fake news based on fear.

Africa, already seen from a negative lens, is broadly perceived as an issue, even by the most progressive and well-intended minds. It is as if the continent next to Europe - and so intrinsically linked to its history - was suddenly seen from a different lens, the demographic bulge lens, so overwhelming and catastrophic. Populists fear migration; others fear the lack of good governance or respect for human rights and rule of law, pre-conditions for modernity. They feel insecure without it being there in Africa, and hide the same fear under patronising attitudes.

One solution for addressing this complexity could be to finally ensure Africa's growth and development. Many blueprints are drafted, refreshing the development industry preferences,

with the best of intentions. New jargon is introduced and a new universal framework is now available. If accepted it could flood the needy countries with new investments and opportunities; which in turn will go a long way to arrest the floods of increasingly young migrants looking for Lampedusa.

This narrative is so dated. But, the problem with dated narratives is that they are partly true.

Leaders from Europe and Africa will meet in Abidjan for another Summit between the two continental neighbours. The high-level representation from Europe will be less than the attained in the previous Summit in Brussels, in 2015. This time some African leaders, uninvited in Brussels, may find a slot for their jets at Felix Houphouët Boigny Airport. The media may capture these gimmicks as the newsworthy part of the gathering. The dated narrative will content the rest. That would be a pity, as the Abidjan Summit should be about something else.

When Jean-Jacques Rousseau wrote the social contract 255 years ago, he called for intergenerational solidarity. His call was

for nothing less than a political treaty, preceded by a study on... inequality! We all understand intergenerational solidarity from parents to children or, at community level, defined by Rousseau as from older to the younger people. After all the basis of the sustainable development concept was coined by the Brundtland Commission in 1987 as the 'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.'

We fast forward to 2017 and observe that most of Europe is ageing and Africa is the youth repository of the world. Its population will be around two billion by 2050 with an average age below 20. Some may think it is insane. But, let's pause. Never in human history have we witnessed this kind of demographic bulge when the rest of the world population ages. How are we going to interpret intergenerational solidarity, say in Europe, when the new generation is in a different continent, perceived by some as far away and unrelated?

The debates on human mobility are just the tip of the Kilimanjaro. If this issue is not properly contextualised and discussed, it will insulate the Abidjan Summit from the real questions:

- Why are Africa's most environmentally-stressed areas the producers of terrorist groups?
- Why are pastoralists having a tough time adjusting to modernity?
- Why are Indians, Chinese, Turkish or Emiratis ready to invest where others hesitate?
- Why is Europe making it hard for Africa to create its own single market?

Answering these questions could open incredible opportunities for cooperation, and... change the narrative.

A proper fight against terrorist groups is not possible without addressing the critical environmental threats the Sahara Sahelian band faces from coast to coast. Pastoralism could be an immense resource to accelerate inclusion and develop regions that require little to advance their people's livelihoods. Improving agricultural productivity can expand the offer for processed food in great demand by middle-class consumers and urban dwellers. Africa's agricultural promise is immense, non-used or misused arable land plentiful and growth potential unmatched anywhere in the world.

Despite the hype about technological disruptions on productivity and manufacturing, Africa's low base and huge internal markets (once integrated) offer a large window for industrialisation, partly through commodities value addition. Some technological developments increase Africa's leapfrogging

potential, like reduced cost of renewables and frugal innovation accelerating green industrialisation.

New partnerships are tapping into these opportunities. Paradoxically, those arriving late are the ones establishing a commanding lead in the new Africa. China Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the continent only ranked 6th five years ago, when it was already by far the number one trading partner. This year it has jumped to the top position. Newcomers are overtaking European partners that have a long history of economic presence in the continent.

The discussions with the European Union must centre on the future, economic transformation and industrialisation included. This may be incompatible with the push for the ratification of the current Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs).

How are we going to interpret intergenerational solidarity, say in Europe, when the new generation is in a different continent, perceived by some as far away and unrelated?

There is a high degree of cynicism about the EPAs. It is not a coincidence that Africa's private sector is the most vocal against it. The European Commission cannot deny the lack of transparency, and even imposed secrecy, in the way the EPAs were negotiated. One of the casualties of the EPAs is the fragmentation of Africa trade negotiations in blocks and countries to whom different clauses were offered at the very moment the Continental Free Trade Agreement was supposed to occupy minds. Another is the possible lost opportunity for a real economic partnership based on the future.

Where to start? The best way to begin responding to the populists is to recast the demographic discussion. No one should assume it is easy. Yet, large European migrant populations across the globe know that with time, success is desirable and achievable. Rousseau would also agree.

About the author

Carlos Lopes is Professor at the Graduate School of Development Policy and Practice, University of Cape Town and Visiting Fellow at Oxford Martin School, Oxford University.





EU-AFRICA: BREAKING THE SILENCE AND THE VESTED INTERESTS

The upcoming Summit, the next months and years should provide unique opportunities for Europe and Africa to move into a different type of partnership. Will the EU and the AU seize this momentum or will the success of the Summit in Abidjan be measured by the number of participating Heads of State?

By Geert Laporte

We urgently need to realise that the context of our cooperation has changed dramatically and that our partnership with Africa is outdated. (...) We need to be aware of the urgency and the need to review this partnership from scratch (...). Europe needs to construct with Africa the most important of all its external partnerships (...). We strongly question the pertinence of the ACP Group ...' (*Le Monde*, 29 September 2017)

Just a few weeks before the 5th summit of European and African Heads of State in Abidjan on 29 and 30 November, the largest French private sector association MEDEF gave an urgent wake-up call for a new and ambitious Europe-Africa partnership. This comes at a moment when European and African institutions should be finalising the agenda of the Summit after a long 'sleepwalk' since the last 2014 Brussels Summit.

In the past three years a lot has happened in Europe, Africa and beyond. The European project has been under increasing pressure because of Brexit, the migration and refugee crisis, terrorism and rising nationalism and populism. In Africa, the 'booming continent' discourse seems to be met with growing scepticism. Many African countries are coping with multiple challenges relating to demography, economic transformation,

security, governance and climate change. The Trump Presidency has also put pressure on the current international liberal order and China is increasingly offering an alternative cooperation model fuelled by large financial support to authoritarian African regimes without stringent conditions.

The Abidjan Summit takes place at a moment when Africa features prominently in the European policy discourse on migration and security and in actions with the Emergency Trust Fund and the External Investment Plan. It also happens to be at a moment when the Joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES) celebrates its 10th anniversary and the EU and the ACP Group (largely composed by sub-Saharan as well as Caribbean and Pacific countries) are preparing for a lengthy renegotiation process of the Cotonou ACP-EU partnership that should be concluded by early 2020.

Against this background, one would expect plenty of strategic agenda items for Heads of State to chew on during a Summit, that takes place once in three years. But this urgency does not seem to trickle down to the high-level policymakers and their administrations in both continents. In the same tradition of the past, both sides stress in lofty wordings their 'great attachment to this important partnership amongst equal partners'. At the same time they avoid discussing openly the important, but potentially controversial, issues that risk spoiling the party. Once again, it looks as if the success of the Summit in Abidjan will be measured by the number of participating Heads of State and not by the quality of the dialogue or the concrete outcomes.

Youth as the central theme in a risk-averse partnership

In this context it is not surprising that both parties selected as the theme for their summit *"investing in youth for a sustainable future"*. While the issue

of youth is of great concern to both continents, it is also a safe topic that most probably will generate fairly general statements and policy declarations expressing 'the need to create jobs and tackle the root causes of migration'. It looks as if the underlying frustrations and discontent about the current state of the partnership will be kept under wraps. This would be a pity and a missed opportunity, not at least for the European Commission and the European External Action Service who have expressed the wish 'to lift the political partnership to a higher political stage' in their May 2017 Communication.

Structural imbalances in the partnership

The questions which should be raised are: *why* is it so difficult to openly address issues of disagreement between both continents? *Why* is there still a deep-rooted mistrust among the leaders of both continents? *Why* is it so difficult to build the necessary political traction in the Europe-Africa relationship? The EU transfers aid money to Africa, via its state bureaucracies and elites, and in return expects loyalty to the European agendas. This type of relationship lacks reciprocity and it has given rise to the

generalised perception in Africa that *"the EU sets the agenda and hardly makes concessions on issues that really matter to Africa"*.

Successive Lomé Conventions and the Cotonou Partnership Agreement may have been quite innovative in the previous century. But they also perpetuated a North-South relationship of dependency, based on unilateral aid transfers and a heavy bureaucratic system with strong vested interests.

In spite of all the jargon about an equal 'contractual' partnership, joint decision-making institutions and co-management, the partnership has never been one of



The 4th Africa-Europe Youth Summit
Photo: Africa-EU Partnership.org

equals. Over a period of several decades, considerable financial envelopes of the European Development Fund have created strong vested interests in both Europe, Africa and the ACP-EU institutions. Supported by this substantial aid, the EU could present itself as the “do-gooder” in Africa in a rather patronising and paternalistic way. Aid conditionalities sought to put pressure on African governments to undertake the necessary governance reforms and to accept the EU’s terms for new trade agreements (EPAs). But in the current rapidly changing environment, the recipes of the past no longer work. Africa has become an attractive bride and can select its partners out of a much broader group of candidates. A growing number of assertive African leaders openly question whether foreign aid should still interfere in the internal matters of their countries. In the meantime, we have also learnt that EU aid conditionalities have little or no impact on changing the course of undemocratic regimes in Africa.

Slowly the EU seems to understand these new realities and in various policy declarations on Africa the EU now strongly advocates a 'new and more strategic interest driven type of partnership beyond aid' or a foreign policy that is based on 'principled pragmatism'. But this is only part of the story. While some political leaders in both continents seem to advocate a new type of political partnership, a large part of the European and African 'aid bureaucrats' seem to have the greatest difficulties to do away with the familiar donor-recipient 'clientelistic' systems. This helps to explain why many actors on both sides would rather keep an outlived and asymmetric ACP-EU cooperation system alive than really transform EU-Africa relations. Keeping the status quo and the control over substantial aid resources is the key incentive for these conservative forces. At a moment when the EU and ACP institutions are more risk-averse than ever, it is seen as inappropriate and even



dangerous to change old habits. This is the reason why EU and ACP institutions have built an alliance to protect what exists and to continue with more of the same. It also explains why the important Post-Cotonou issue is not on the agenda of the Abidjan Summit.

It is difficult to understand why the most important high level encounter between European and African leaders has no intention whatsoever to discuss the future of 'the oldest and most comprehensive cooperation agreement' at a moment that this agreement is up for renegotiation. Avoiding any discussion on this matter before and during the Summit may be a convenient approach in the short term but it is a major strategic error in the long run. It is a particularly puzzling decision by the African Union and the African Regional Economic Communities (RECs). Reflecting the emerging but still fragile regional dynamics, they should take a leading role in designing a new and modern type of partnership with the EU that is fit for the 21st century. But because of a lack of strategic vision, and problems

of internal cohesion and capacity, the African regional bodies seem to 'submit' themselves to an ACP-EU 'umbrella' in a partnership of the past that lacks legitimacy, credibility and effectiveness.

Africa has become an attractive bride and can select its partners out of a much broader group of candidates.

Fundamental shift towards a stronger political partnership

So, *what* should be done to reverse this deadlock? *What* should be done to build a more political and strategic partnership between both continents? On the European side, the EU institutions and the Member States could do better in strengthening the coherence of

the foreign policy frameworks and instruments dealing with Africa. The cacophony of sometimes competing initiatives and ad hoc agendas and initiatives (for example, individual Member States responses to the migration crisis) do not contribute to the desirable, more coherent European foreign policy as spelled out in the 2016 EU Global Strategy. Competing silos and interests within the EU institutions and the Member States further weaken the European position and undermine the coherence of action. The negotiations on the next Multiannual Financial Framework and their alignment with the EU Global Strategy and EU Consensus on Development should be a first step in the direction of promoting a more modern global approach.

A stronger and more coherent AU leadership and more assertive and self-sufficient institutions are absolute prerequisites to make Africa and the partnership with the EU work.

The EU would gain more trust and respect on the other side of the Mediterranean if it were clear about its interests rather than stressing over and over again that it is Africa's largest 'altruistic donor'. Avoidance of double standards would also help to rebuild

trust. Playing the moral high ground is good if consistency in external action can be guaranteed, but this is increasingly becoming a problem. The lucrative deals with totalitarian regimes such as Sudan to curb migration and to return refugees are a case in point. They strengthen the repressive apparatus in these countries, which in the longer run will increase the flows of refugees to Europe. For European and African citizens and the younger generations in particular, this 'horse trading' is undermining the credibility of the EU that always reiterated its fullest support to the decision of the International Criminal Court to issue an arrest warrant to president Omar Al-Bashir for crimes against humanity.

There is also homework to be done on the African side. A stronger and more coherent AU leadership and more assertive and self-sufficient institutions are absolute prerequisites to make Africa and the partnership with the EU work. The AU and some of the RECs in Africa have the potential to become representative institutions, but the gap with the European Institutions in terms of powers, capacities and resources is still big. The 2016 Kaberuka Plan has created expectations regarding the sustainable financing of the AU through a levy of 0.2% on imports entering the African continent. This would generate a revenue of more than 1 billion Euros a year to fund the AU's operational programme and peace and security budgets. Structural systems to ensure financial autonomy are essential for the credibility of African institutions. However, this is not only about financial resources but also about strategic leadership and priorities. The AU and RECs should re-assess their strategic interests. In a Post-Cotonou context they should make clear choices and avoid that the EU divides the continent and weakens the African leverage.

In conclusion, the upcoming Summit, the months and years ahead, should provide unique opportunities for Europe and Africa to move into a different type of partnership. Will the EU and the AU seize this momentum? Europe and Africa are 'condemned' to work together because of their strong interdependence. The good news is that Africa has returned to the top table of political decision-making in Europe, albeit for security and migration reasons. Africa and Europe urgently need to find common solutions to the demographic explosion, the growing discontent of the younger generations, the catastrophic impact of climate change, the threats of terrorism, migration and governance issues affecting both continents. On paper, the potential for strong mutual interests and shared global agendas has never been so promising. There is no shortage of strategies and policy frameworks for cooperation. Yet, a forum of genuine and regular political dialogue outside of the Summits is needed, for example, at the level of Ministers of Foreign Affairs. But even with these new levels of political dialogue, it remains to be seen whether both parties will be able to shake off past habits, break with the vested interests of the past and fundamentally change the course of action. More of the same will serve neither Africa's nor Europe's interests.

About the author

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'AFRICA RISING' MEANS TAKING OWNERSHIP OF ITS KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION

African think tanks must move more proactively into the Africa-EU policy analysis and advice realm by exploiting the potential to collaborate with existing EU-Africa research networks. At the same time, African governments should also contribute to 'growing their own' by recognising the role that African think tanks can play in evidence-based research around this important strategic partnership.

By Elizabeth Sidiropoulos

Heralded as a partnership of equals when the EU-Africa partnership was launched in 2007, the aspiration did not mask the many asymmetries in the relationship - from actual human and financial resources to the challenges of coordination between a partially supra-national entity (the European Union - EU) and a purely intergovernmental one (the African Union - AU). Nevertheless, Europe remains a significant external partner. The European Union after all is the

continent's biggest partner in development (EU-28 and bilateral), and a significant trader and investor. Equally important is its contribution to Africa's peace and security architecture.

While some of the EU's members have colonial baggage, the EU is a much more complex institution that defies labelling as an imperialist or colonial power. It's an important global soft power with a

significant multilateral role. And while Africans and Europeans don't always agree, both are convinced of the imperative of multilateralism as the route to a rules-based system rather than one determined purely by the power of the strongest. Africa and Europe are also neighbours, and the migration crisis has brought home, perhaps in the starkest possible terms, that industrialised Europe cannot be an island of prosperity in a (southern) sea of poverty

and instability. Nor can its Member States act with impunity in Libya (and elsewhere), and expect no political and economic consequences for their own territory. There are both value and interest-based reasons for African think tanks to spend more time on in-depth policy research and engagement on Africa-Europe themes.

Changing who determines the debate

Europe has a sizeable research 'industry' that focuses on African issues and the relationship between the two continent. Historically, much of this has been driven by the development dimension of the engagement, but more recently, the underlying driver has become security (countering violent extremism) and migration. These are negative drivers of interest in Africa, and force the Europe-Africa debate into a narrow silo that regards Africa as a threat and source of instability – it's about protecting the 'empire' from the 'Huns', amplified by the populist and xenophobic surge in Europe. It also stands in marked contrast to the manner in which China continues to articulate its engagement with Africa and the opportunities the continent presents. While China is the next global superpower and African states cannot and should not ignore it, the EU's rules-based approach to global issues and its soft power make it an important potential ally and partner on many terrains.

For a combination of reasons, African think tanks are not doing as much research or policy engagement as they should on a region that is both close and diplomatically and politically significant.

They cannot rival in resources those of their counterparts in Europe. More importantly, they are not often acknowledged enough by their own governments as potential knowledge banks. They battle for limited financial resources and where these come from external parties, think tanks may be castigated for being agents of imperialism or other forces conspiring against the state. These factors reinforce each other

in a mutually vicious cycle, resulting in African think tanks playing a much more limited role in the policy debates on this and other issues. Ironically, while there are many debates and conferences on Africa-EU in Europe, there are far fewer in Africa where Africans themselves have initiated and funded the conversation.

As the EU-Africa partnership enters its second decade, Africans (governments, businesses, civil society and academics) need to scale up the tools available to engage in a partnership of equals. For all the talk about a post-truth world, independent knowledge and analysis remain imperatives for effective decision-making and policy making in Africa. In fact, they are more important now than ever. The continent boasts many credible and quality think tanks. Over the years they have grown in number and quality and are cultivating networks across the continent. Some of these activities have been spurred by support from external donors, and yet they have developed a momentum of their own.

African think tanks must become the knowledge producers for African states and the AU as these navigate global uncertainty – from Brexit and Cotonou to

the Economic Partnership Agreements in a world where WTO is being undermined, and migration becomes the fixation of the age.

Bolstering impact: independence and evidence-based research

So how do we strengthen African think tanks in the area of EU-Africa research and policy engagement?

Over the last few years, African think tanks have sought to cooperate and exchange views not only on the major issues of the day, but also on the business of think tanks. Both are important if the continent's think tanks are to strengthen their input into policy at the continental and global level, as the research paradigm should not be that when Europe and Africa meet they should talk about development and war on the continent. What happens elsewhere in the world may be equally impactful for Africa-EU relations.

Thus, more effective linkages between African think tanks and the Africa-EU policy world would require a number of elements.

First and foremost, African think tanks need to be recognised as resources by



AFRICAPORTAL

The Africa Portal provides a digital platform for think tank leaders across the continent and beyond to share their informed perspectives on matters related to African development, economics and politics. In a world moving along at breathless speed, accuracy matters. We aim to take you above the noise and bring you information you can trust.

The Africa Portal also curates a comprehensive collection of research material. Our library holds over 5 000 research reports, occasional papers and policy briefs. The entire repository is open access, equipped with a sophisticated search function and available for free, full-text download. The material in the library has been provided by Content Partners of the Africa Portal who benefit from wider dissemination of their research to a global community.

their own governments and social actors. This means recognising the importance of analytical independence and providing instruments to allocate financial resources to 'growing our own', rather than relying on external consultants and analysts. It cannot be achieved overnight and it requires think tanks to constantly seek engagement; regular dialogue changes perceptions.

Second, think tank leaders need to place more emphasis on relations such as the EU-Africa one, which plays such an important role in the continent's affairs. This should include allocating resources to considering and understanding better the dynamics at play in the European Commission and the Council, in the same way that European think tanks analyse and delve into the institutions of the AU. African think tanks should also place a much higher premium on better global understanding rather than only on engaging at the African level. The ongoing challenge is having discretionary funds for such work even in the absence of support from African governments and institutions.

As think tank leaders, we are often caught up in a vortex of proposal writing, project execution and financial constraints, but we cannot abandon our role to think about critical dimensions of Africa's development and stability, undertake evidence-based research and engage with African and European policymakers on our work.

There is much quality policy work on the continent and African think tanks must work together in creating platforms that better profile their work in global media. Pooling communications resources can help to optimise limited dissemination instruments, although the 'democratisation' of the social media space has created many opportunities even for small think tanks to bring their work to the world. Here, initiatives such as the Africa Portal initiative of the South African Institute of International Affairs

African think tanks and the Africa-EU policy world would require a number of elements. First and foremost, African think tanks need to be recognised as resources by their own governments and social actors. This means recognising the importance of analytical independence and providing instruments to allocate financial resources to 'growing our own', rather than relying on external consultants and analysts.

(SAIIA) and the Centre for International Governance Innovation (CIGI) – a one-stop shop for African produced research – are worth leveraging in the EU-Africa debate. Furthermore, to maximise the impact, African think tanks should explore ways to cooperate among themselves on policy research well in advance of major policy windows, such as the Africa-EU summit.

In this regard, existing research networks can also be leveraged more strategically. The annual African Think Tank Summit could become a regular platform for debating and communicating policy insights on Africa's key challenges as well as important external relationships. In addition, such gatherings should also be seen as the opportunities to reflect not only on African themes, but broader global challenges.

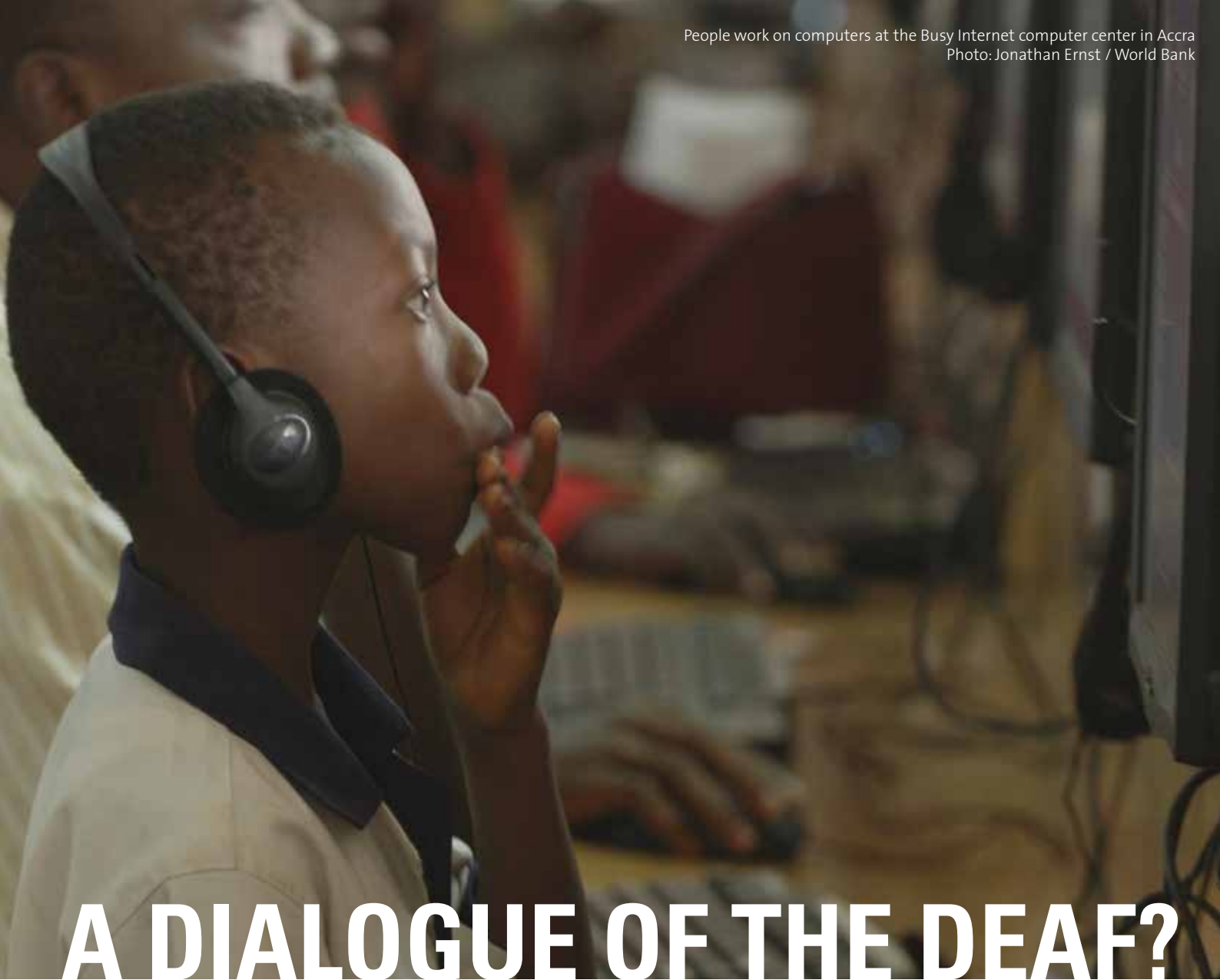
Early in the EU-Africa partnership, the Europe-Africa Research Network (EARN) was established with the aim of bringing together think tanks from both continents to undertake work on this very important relationship. Yet, it failed to build a deep network of collaboration. In-depth research requires financial resources and African think tanks in particular were hamstrung in the type of commitments they could make within the existing means. This compounded the asymmetry that characterised many dimensions of

the partnership. Nevertheless, initiatives such as EARN are vital in building up effective policy engagement by African think tanks. As the strategic partnership enters the next decade, African think tanks should explore the ways to overcome constraints to make this a reality.

About the author

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A DIALOGUE OF THE DEAF?

The European Union (EU) and Africa continue to engage in a dialogue of the deaf, in which both parties are seemingly unresponsive to what the other has to say. A 'Normative Europe' narrative in which the EU is the global guardian of norms and values, exporting them in its external relations, puts the EU-Africa relationship on an uneven keel. Meanwhile media bias and an Africa which engages with the EU in several different configurations means the dialogue of the deaf may well continue.

By **Uzo Madu**

The basis of any healthy relationship is communication, yet the European Union (EU) and Africa continue to engage in a dialogue of the deaf - in which both parties are seemingly unresponsive to what the other has to say. Whilst the EU spends its vast resources attempting to shape norms and values in Africa, it has a paternalistic approach to the relationship, speaking at Africa rather than with Africa, and communicating, at times, for the sake of global agenda setting and positioning rather than having a credible exchange. The

EU-Africa relationship is problematic by definition as Africa is interacting with the European Union in a myriad of different configurations, not only as an institutional whole - the African Union (AU)- but also at the regional and country level. This creates space for a muddled conversation, one that lacks clear and consistent entry points for communication. Outside the strict limits of institutional communication, there is also the cancerous media bias towards Africa from mainstream outlets, which are largely housed in the West and occupy the laptops,

mobile phones and TV screens of a large part of the world. The reduction of the entire continent due to the issues of death, despair, war and disease is reproduced and reinforced by many Western media.

Normative Power Europe

Normative power is a specific form of power - power over opinion or ideological power. According to academics Schiepers & Sicurelli, it enables its possessor to shape global concepts of 'normal' while simultaneously *"depicting other actors as inferior, thereby disempowering them rhetorically"*. The term 'Normative Power Europe' was coined by Ian Manners. He suggests that the EU not only acts to change norms in the international system but that it also should act to extend its norms in the international system. This political backdrop muddies the discourse between the two continents, creating and supporting a context within which the EU is viewed as the global norm and value watchdog, whilst Africa is seen as the laggard, not obeying its master's orders. The conditionality attached to aid funding, albeit rarely implemented, under the controversial Article 97 of the Cotonou Agreement, is an indication of such an approach. This context almost becomes a matter of fact. EurActiv, an online news outlet, recently ran a story with the headline 'EU capacity to promote values in developing world declining', pointing to this "Normative Europe" undertone, whilst a recent Friends of Europe analysis about 'The perceptions of the EU and China in Africa' starts its opening paragraph with *"In Africa, the European Union is perceived both as the home of former*

colonial masters and as the greatest promoter of free trade and liberal democracy". These examples suggest the "Normative Power Europe" narrative is alive and kicking. Thus, the contextual discourse tends to frame the EU-Africa relationship in charitable terms, not too dissimilar from the "civilising mission" narrative used during the colonial period. Normative Power Europe has a role to play in reinforcing European normativity in EU-Africa relations. This narrative informs and shapes global decisions on African interests and clouds the judgement of those in positions of power and influence. A recent statement pointing to a "civilisation" problem in Africa and French President Emmanuel Macron's reference to Comorians as goods not people, reflects accurately the audacity of Normative Power Europe. What President Macron says matters, because he is and will continue to shape the European tone, especially when it comes to its relations with Africa.

I have yet to meet many consultants [who] actually understand how African elections work.

- Nicholas Cheeseman of the University of Birmingham

One should also be particularly mindful of the fact that in Africa the norms and values differ significantly. For example, across different African cultures there are similarities in the way close kinship relations are valued. According to Gabriel E. Idang, Senior Lecturer at the University of Uyo in Nigeria *"The synergetic nature of the society that allows people to build houses and work on farms together is directly opposite to the Western individualistic model"*.

Look who's talking

Africa is interacting with Europe in a myriad of different configurations, not only as an institutional whole - as the African Union (AU), but also at the regional level. The main legal framework for Africa's interaction with Europe is the Cotonou Agreement, an agreement that also includes the Caribbean and Pacific countries and that is, to a large extent, a European invention. On top of this, there are the African Regional Economic Communities (RECs) which are already a spaghetti bowl of overlapping organisations - only six countries retain exclusive membership of one REC, plus the African Union itself only recognises eight of the existing fourteen. Then, there are the country level



interactions between the EU and certain countries. South Africa for example is the only country on the continent that has a strategic partnership with the EU, along with the European Parliamentary Delegation. These complex layers of interactions are a fertile breeding ground for confusion and miscommunication, but beyond that, it also makes creating an African narrative towards the EU extremely difficult. This is why the African Union has called for all interactions between the EU and Africa to happen at the AU institutional level. Thankfully, the 2017 Summit has been renamed into the AU-EU Summit addressing some of these concerns, however it remains to be seen whether this will be implemented in practice.

**Western media reporting
(especially in the United States)
is a reflection of the western
institutions, politics and public
policy towards Africa.**
- Ms. Tinga, Blogger

The EU is responsible for the bulk of communications activity on the relationship, specifically 51.8% more. After conducting a search of key terms of both the AU and EU websites, I found that the African Union mentions 'support' in its communications materials referring to Europe 35% of the time, while the EU uses it 73% of the time. Whereas a search of the term "partnership" in communications materials, in those same websites, showed that the EU uses it 43% of the time and the African Union 47% of the time. This indicates the mismatch in narratives. The African Union is framing its communication in reference to Europe mainly in terms of a "partnership" whereas the EU sees itself more in a supportive role.

We should also consider that the EU has vast communication resources to draw from. Not only does it have different communications departments for each of its three main institutions, the European Commission alone has a dedicated Directorate-General for Communication with approximately 300 staff members and in 2016 it reportedly put out a bid for a two-year contract worth €30 million for corporate communication events. In comparison, the AU Commission's third strategic plan (2014-2017) allocates €3.8 million (\$4.5 million) to communicating and engaging with the Member States/stakeholders in defining and implementing the African agenda. The EU also benefits from the weight and credibility of world-leading PR and communications firms housed in their capitals. The African Union has a centralised communications

unit. Furthermore, in bilateral relations it is the task of the individual African countries to report on and communicate the activities taking place between themselves and the EU. This is why delivering on the improvement of Africa's global representation and voice is going to be key to counter this imbalance and to ensure that Africa speaks with one voice on the global stage.

Importing African narratives

The propensity for the African ruling class to select PR and communications agencies from and based in Western capitals like Washington, London and Paris to reshape their image abroad, carries the risk of African narratives being controlled and shaped by those outside the continent and those with less vested interests in its long-term prosperity. For example, stirring up racial tension in South Africa is a remote problem for a London-based firm. It is not that Western firms per se cannot and should not represent African governments or brands; rather it is up to those African governments and brands to choose those with a vested interest in the long-term development of the country or region, rather than mere short-term profits. Let me give you another example. It would be good to choose agencies that have senior staff on the ground, as opposed to flying talent in and out of Europe or America for the duration of the project. It is crucial to be present in local markets and it is even more important in Africa because of its fragmentation, with thousands of languages and cultures. It is vital having people who speak the mother-tongue and know how to navigate the cultures and political processes.

Using the diaspora within these PR and communications agencies can also be a way of bridging the communication gap between Africa and the West – the AU itself has created a sixth African region for the diaspora to increase the participation of actors located outside of the continent. The African ruling class needs to take advantage of its own assets when shaping the narratives for global consumption instead of relying excessively on western constructed narratives.

**Since political risk is ranked
as one of the most important
factors when investing in Africa,
clearly investors' perceptions
of African politics will have
an impact on foreign direct
investment.**

- Victoria Schorr, Afrinnovation

Media bias

Binyavanga Wainaina points to the inferiority narrative, reflective of Normative Europe in action, when Europeans (and Americans) talk about Africa in his seminal essay, 'How to write about Africa'. The reality is that the mainstream media landscape, which is largely Western (read European), develops and perpetuates caricatures of African countries and their people.



The lack of nuance between the *"Dark Continent"* and the *"Africa Rising"* narrative means the elaborate, diverse and textured nature of this 55-country continent housing over 1.2 billion people, is often lost in a monolithic shorthand. There is much less content occupying the vast space between the Savannah's and Safari landscapes of places like Kenya, Tanzania or South Africa and on the other side the poverty, corruption, disease and war which is lazily assigned to 'Africa' as if it were a country. M. Neelika Jayawardane points to this superiority of European values in the context of photojournalism. In a recent Al Jazeera article titled, 'The problem with photojournalism and Africa' she explains that *"unless international news agencies based in North America and Europe such as the Associated Press, Reuters and Agence France-Presse pick your work, you are a nobody."* Africa's truths and stories are therefore a subject to the European, or more widely Western, credibility check before being deemed acceptable for consumption.

What to do?

An answer to the seemingly obligatory prescription that Europe is the gatekeeper of values, specifically in its relations with Africa, according to Ueli Staeger, PhD candidate at the Graduate Institute Geneva, is pan-African decolonisation. In the media context this would mean an increasingly networked media, one which is *"co-creating and collaborating with the audience on news, so their voices are becoming part of the story, and the journalist is no longer some sort of patrician commentator."* according to Anja Kröll, Head of International

African media, has failed to aggressively market an African identity and authenticity to challenge the one imposed by the West.

- Eric Aseka, International Leadership University

News at the Salzburger Nachrichten. This could play a part in the development of the continent. Political decisions are preceded by public discussions, which largely play out in the mainstream media. Decisions can therefore be better made when based on "values of rationality, impartiality, intellectual honesty and equality among participants." Many mainstream (European) media outlets have expanded and continue to expand their African offerings, from the likes of France 24, TV5 Monde Afrique, BBC, most notably with the launch of BBC Pidgin and the launch of Africanews by Euronews; but the real need is for Africa to find its own unified mouthpiece - its own Al Jazeera that speaks to truth, context and most of all delivers news stories by Africans, for the consumption of Africans because for too long, as Professor Eric Aseka, VC at the International Leadership University puts it, *"African media, has failed to aggressively market an African identity and authenticity to challenge the one imposed by the West."* An African Al Jazeera becomes increasingly possible when investments in molding an African narrative come to fruition, not least because of communication investments by key institutions, like the AU, but also its financial independence, which will unlock the continent's ability to shape its own policy remit and conversations, not only with the EU but the entire world.

About the author

Uzo Madu is the founder of 'What's in it for Africa', an online platform dedicated to EU-Africa current affairs.



THE RACE TO CLOSE THE GATEWAY TO EUROPE



As irregular migration to European countries continues, both the EU and its Member States have stepped up their efforts to reach a solution through the transit points in North Africa.

By **Tasnim Abderrahim**

Since the beginning of 2017, nearly 100,000 migrants have arrived in Italy by boat while another 2,410 have died whilst making the treacherous journey. Most of these arrivals, the majority coming from Sub-Saharan countries, depart from the key transit point in North Africa, Libya. As such, Libya remains under the spotlight. Proposals on addressing the crisis in the

central Mediterranean have multiplied since March 2016, when the EU succeeded in sealing a deal with Turkey to curb the flows through the Eastern Mediterranean. The EU has strived to reach agreements with source countries, but with limited success. It then found itself compelled to turn to transit countries in North Africa as a last resort to counter the challenge.

Libya, the gateway to Europe

In late 2016, some European officials proposed to intercept migrants at sea and place them in refugee camps in Tunisia or Egypt where they can apply for asylum before entering the EU. Some even suggested imposing trade sanctions for countries not willing to cooperate with the EU on this issue. These proposals, while not endorsed at the EU level, were rejected by the concerned countries, who argued that they were not main exporters of migrants and that they were already respecting agreements on border management with the EU. A range of initiatives have ensued to find a solution through Libya, a country torn by internal conflict since mid-2014. During the Malta Summit held in February 2017, European leaders adopted the joint communication addressing migration in the Mediterranean. The plan seeks to develop the capacities of the Libyan coast guard, disrupt the smugglers' business model, and support the UN-recognised Government of National Accord (GNA) in managing its southern borders. The plan also stipulates increased coordination with Libyan local authorities, international organisations, and Libya's neighbours.

According to the Malta declaration, EU leaders would continue to support Member States' initiatives seeking to engage with Libya. They thus welcomed the Memorandum of Understanding signed between Italy and Libya in February 2017, according to which Italy would provide the GNA with money, training and equipment to support border management and enhance the capacities of the Libyan coast guard. In a follow-up to the Malta Summit, the EU Trust Fund for Africa adopted a €90 million programme on protection of migrants and improved migration management in Libya. According to figures released by the European Commission, the International Organization for Migration has facilitated the voluntary return of 7,084 migrants between January and September 2017, in comparison to 2,775 in all of 2016. President Tusk announced that the EU has so far succeeded in "the training of Libyan Navy Coastguards, the arrests of more than 100 smugglers and the neutralisation of more than 400 of their vessels". Yet, commitment to this work plan seems to differ among Member States. In the European Council Meeting of last June, President Tusk noted that some Member States are not honouring their financial commitments and that they need to do more.

Italy's migration policy shift

Italy has repeatedly asked for EU support as it found itself turning into a hotspot for migrants. Increased border controls by Austria and France resulted in migrants settling in Italy. Feeling left alone by other European countries, Italy stepped up its cooperation with the GNA. In early July 2017, the EU Commission adopted an action plan to support Italian efforts. A few months later, Italy's policy shift started to bear results, while in August 2016, 21,294 arrivals were registered in Italy, this

number decreased to 3,914 in August 2017. Until very recently, Europe-bound migrants used to be rescued by European ships; now however they are mostly stopped in Libya. This new policy is predicated on several elements, including sealing deals with armed groups who control smuggling hotspots along the Libyan north-west coast, to halt the boats from leaving towards Europe; sending Italian ships into Libyan waters and assisting Libya in establishing its own search and rescue zone; a new NGO code of conduct limiting search and rescue operations; negotiations with tribes in southern Libya to control the borders; and increased discussions with Chad and Niger on migration. While Italy denies reaching agreements with smugglers, many reports note that the Italian government is paying militias usually involved in smuggling to assume the role of pushback. The Italian government reportedly negotiates these agreements and makes payments to these groups through interlocutors such as leaders of local communities. Italy's plan to deploy a mission of navy ships in Libyan territorial waters, along with the possibility of using planes, drones, and helicopters, triggered heated discussions within Libya. While Italy stressed that sending its military mission was upon a request from the GNA, Fayez al-Sarraj, Head of the GNA, initially denied submitting such a request, insisting that his government only asked for training and arms. Politically, Sarraj's rapprochement with Italy did not please his rival in eastern Libya, General Khalifa Haftar, supported by the French, who even threatened to target Italian ships docking in Libyan ports. The proponents of Italy's move argue that migration is a shared concern between both countries and that a solution is needed to protect Libya's borders.



Demonstration: Still struggling for a legal right to stay for the Lampedusa Refugees Photo: Rasande Tyskar/Flickr

France steps in

In late July, France decided to take the initiative and invite the two rivals Sarraj and Haftar for a meeting in Paris, under the auspices of the UN - and without informing Italy. The meeting held on 25 July 2017 resulted in a joint declaration, including an agreement on ceasefire and elections for early 2018. After the meeting, the French President Macron stated that he wanted to establish hotspots in Libya where the migrants' asylum applications can be processed. That same day, Macron said that hotspots are not actually being considered and that instead, France will help to create missions of the Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons on 'African soil, in safe countries', without specifying any timeframe. The French initiative, deemed as a "diplomatic success", was not very welcomed by Italy, who perceived that France should not repeat past mistakes in Libya. The day after the meeting in Paris, Sarraj met with the Italian Premier Paolo Gentiloni in Rome, in a move that emphasises the GNA's need for Italy's support. Sarraj's move could also have been motivated by concerns about the French support for Haftar, the self-proclaimed leader who has enjoyed French's endorsement in recent years.

Light at the end of the tunnel?

While Italy has promoted its recent efforts as a contribution to "Libya's path towards stabilisation", some perceive that its approach could lead to maintaining or exacerbating instability, as it increases the leverage of militias and could potentially result in conflicts between armed groups over controlling the flows. The GNA, while endorsed by the UN, is not a strong partner and the armed militias are not reliable. Besides the focus on reducing migration through the Mediterranean, discussions in Europe are also shifting towards how to deal with the thousands of migrants trapped in Libya. Establishing or improving reception conditions for migrants in Libya in cooperation with international organisations has been repeatedly suggested. It is not clear however, if involving the militias in managing Libya's detention centers is a realistic plan. At the same time, the current decrease in arrivals in Europe could offer a window for discussing more long-term alternatives that could be in the interest of both Europe and Africa.

Towards a mutually beneficial cooperation on migration

Migration currently dominates EU-Africa relations and it ranks high on the agenda for the upcoming Summit. The challenges to a mutually beneficial partnership on migration are numerous. Despite the existence of various frameworks for dialogue on migration between both continents, divergent narratives still impede a fruitful cooperation. While the EU is generally perceived as prioritising return and readmission, African states view migration as an opportunity and emphasize inter-African facilitation of labour mobility and the

creation of more paths for legal migration. This runs counter to the European emphasis on border management and readmission. There are concerns that funding under the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF), designed to address root causes of irregular migration, is being directed towards security issues rather than development.

Despite the existence of various frameworks for dialogue on migration between both continents, divergent narratives still impede a fruitful cooperation.

The push for border management within the continent can ultimately threaten intra-African mobility. Because migration is such a polarising issue in the EU, it has become increasingly difficult to discuss long-term demographic shifts in Europe and legal migration from Africa. This poses the challenge of reconciling short-term with long-term objectives and using different tools for managing migration. Difficult security and economic conditions in the African continent are likely to persist. Current migration trends will continue, especially with such a large youth population. This requires African countries to invest seriously in their human capital. The AU's Migration Policy Framework for Africa adopted in 2006, identifies priorities and provides recommendations for Member States and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) on different migration issues. While this framework promotes the free movement of people within Africa and the protection of rights of refugees and migrants, it lacks the necessary mechanisms to monitor, enforce and guide Member States in developing their own migration policies. What could be needed by the AU and the EU is an intensified dialogue on the migration, development and regional integration nexus that can potentially reconcile conflicting agendas. Migration will continue to be a critical dimension of EU-Africa relations for a long time, but this focus on migration should not override other issues of critical importance.

About the author

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The European Partnership Agreements, under conclusion or negotiation with the European Union, will help to stimulate inclusive growth, but only if governments, business and centres of learning put in place the right framework conditions.

By Stefan Schepers

In a Trap?

African countries find themselves in the middle-income trap or low-income trap, frustrating the hopes of their fast growing population for a better tomorrow. Instead of reform, governments seem to favour the status quo and path dependency. According to the World Bank, the middle-income trap has many causes, differing from country to country, but primarily it results from a lack of investment in science and technology, education and in development of their own innovation ecosystems (World Bank, 2011). The low and middle-income traps are largely homemade.

Of course, there are contextual conditions which are necessary for growth and innovation to succeed. They are in the first place the rule of law and the absence of corruption, necessary conditions for trust of citizens and investors in the government

and for an economically efficient allocation of public resources. Equally important are openness and collaboration with a variety of stakeholders to ensure creativity and serendipity in the public debate. Social inclusion has recently been recognised widely as a key ingredient of successful economic transformation; without a strong and large middle class, who will buy many of the new products and services? In particular, small and medium-sized companies need a solid home base too. The low and middle-income trap is mostly the result of innovation failures: strengths and opportunities available or achievable are underused or not developed because of a failure of systemic innovation. This requires new concepts and methods of governance in the public and private sectors alike (Sefer Sener & Stefan Schepers ed., Innovation, Governance and Entrepreneurship, 2017). Unfortunately, there is no African country among the best performing countries in terms of economic innovation

capabilities and global competitiveness. In the World Economic Forum ranking, African countries are near the bottom of the list, with Mauritius placed highest in 45th place, followed by South Africa in 53rd place. The innovation ranking of INSEAD, Cornell University and the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) explains why the competitiveness ranking is so low. The African country first to appear is again Mauritius in 53rd place, followed, again, by South Africa in 58th place. Why does no African country come near the top 30 of competitive and innovative countries?

Africa's growth is still largely driven by the global commodities trade, with some agricultural and even less manufacturing trade in addition. Its regional market integration is still highly insufficient, depriving it from one important source of internal trade and development. It is importing technology, rather than focussing on improving its education systems which would allow it to develop its own technology. Because of this and for other reasons, it is very vulnerable to developments elsewhere.

But can one expect countries, which are still coping with a multitude of structural problems, to invest in innovation policy when there are so many other pressing demands on public budgets, not least poverty alleviation? Yes. Can countries with limited government capabilities and a small research infrastructure do it? Yes. And can a comprehensive innovation policy facilitate solving the complex structural problems? Yes. There are two serious misunderstandings about innovation policy: it is not a matter of high public spending on research, but of creating the right framework conditions for people and companies, small and large, to innovate in the market; and it does not concern only high-technology sectors, but all sectors of the economy, including the most traditional ones which tend to offer the greatest scope for innovation.

The key objective of an innovation policy is to create value for society by enhancing the quality of life of its citizens and the (global) competitiveness of its enterprises. This happens through intelligent interaction between a variety of stakeholders, principally economic actors (companies and other entities), public governance systems (African Union, regional market structures, national, provincial and even city governments), universities and other centres of knowledge and often also civic society and consumer organisations. It requires leadership and an open, collaborative mindset from governments, not a hierarchical, authoritarian, bureaucratic approach. Africa's surviving communal traditions, its proclaimed Ubuntu, could help to innovate governance to make it appropriate for the 21st century.

Value creation implies to start from broad, inclusive concepts of demand. It requires permanent strategic agility, scanning the global context, scouting for opportunities and attention to

economic and technological continuities or discontinuities. The emergence of novel concepts, processes, products or services, is often the result of out-of-the-box thinking, improvisation, repeated trial and error and the emergence of new tacit and explicit knowledge until some form of consolidation takes place. To achieve an innovative economic and social context, a kind of ecosystem must emerge through careful nurturing and reforms. An ecosystem of innovation aims to emulate nature in its organisational complexity and to create the dynamics, interactions and feedback that produce desired outcomes, spin-offs and cumulative effects. Paradoxically, it requires a parallel effort of construction and deconstruction and of creation of the right framework conditions, which can only be done through consistent holistic steering. (Klaus Gretschmann & Stefan Schepers, ed., *Revolutionising EU Innovation Policy*, 2016).

Or like an antelope forward?

Africa is not lacking so much in capacities, but it does have a serious problem of coherence of vision and purpose, of creating cumulative effects, and of political culture, due to organisational fragmentation, persistence of multiple barriers in markets and the absence of a system approach. It does not have the right culture and governance tools to develop an ecosystem of innovation appropriate for the present challenges, because it continues too much on the government trajectories inherited from the colonial age (Moeletsi Mbeki, *The architects of poverty*, 2009).

It is time for a new approach: developing innovation ecosystems in Africa, responding to its own needs and opportunities and taking the global market context into account. Clear and consistent leadership from the top will be needed to create the framework conditions to facilitate other actors, primarily companies and centres of knowledge and to develop and manage the dynamic interactions which lead to measurable innovation and added value creation. It can be done on a country by country basis, without ignoring the opportunities from cooperation across borders and sectors and cross-fertilisation, and involving business leaders, centres or research and civil society organisations. Correctly assessing contextual change is a difficult task because of a tendency to compare to the past. It is therefore essential to develop a realistic cognitive map, based on an assessment of the interacting developments, with Horizon 2030 and on the basis of foresight studies.

The resulting scan of innovation challenges and opportunities for Africa should be formulated solution neutral. This will enable the emergence of creative ideas, which are the embryonic solutions whose potential impact can then be further analysed. It will also avoid that future innovation efforts are determined by tactical considerations. The persistent gap with the most dynamic economies must be overcome by leapfrogging and by trend mutation. It is not just the case to catch up in sectors of high



innovation and rapid productivity growth, where Africa continues to seriously lag behind, but also in traditional sectors, where there often is competitive advantage, and in public governance, whose policies and accumulation of rules are the main cause of this lack of competitiveness. It requires radical thinking, 'outside-the-box'.

To achieve a higher degree of innovativeness, new methods of governance must be considered and implemented. The focus in innovative economies is on collaborative governance and on public-private partnerships and a learning mindset, moving beyond a culture of regulation and control and towards a culture of appropriate stewardship.

Coherence is a key ingredient to bring cumulative effects in an innovation ecosystem. It demands an overall perspective, based on the long-term foresight and in particular, in the early stage of innovation development when inertia and status quo approaches risk to undermine the need for radical new departures.

To properly align the various agendas, it is essential to involve all the economic actors, because they often possess an understanding of market needs second to none. This demands to develop the culture and the tools which go beyond mechanistic consultation procedures, to bring a shared vision, engagement and cooperation during implementation. Research and centuries of experience show that there is a positive correlation between a society's degree of openness and tolerance for the independent, creative and entrepreneurial-minded and its economic success

Finally, regular peer review, scrutiny of process and evaluation of achievements, or the lack thereof, by independent multi-stakeholder groups of experts, is essential to ensure firmness of purpose and agility of methodologies. Experimenting with fundamentally new methods and abandoning or modifying programmes when they appear not to move fast enough towards tangible results must be a full part of an innovation ecosystem. All this will be a radical departure from existing bureaucratic culture and requires strong leadership support, transparency and communication with stakeholders.

Evaluation is part of constant learning under circumstances of uncertainty. Learning capacities and risk acceptance are major characteristics of an innovation ecosystem. They provide the basis for adjustments and often lead to additional innovativeness, to better value creation and competitive advantage. An exploration of innovation ecosystem development will help to move the economies forward, but it should never be forgotten that the sole purpose is to improve the living conditions of all people.

About the author

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SHARED VALUES? MAYBE. BUT HOW EFFECTIVE ARE THEY?

Since 2007, the African Union (AU) and the European Union (EU) have pursued the joint Africa-EU strategy (JAES), which “reflects the Euro-African consensus on values, joint interests and common strategic objectives”. At a time when both partners are working to replace the Cotonou Partnership Agreement (CPA) in 2020 and on the eve of the 5th Africa-EU Summit, it is a good moment to reflect on the effectiveness of shared values.

By **Léonard Matala-Tala**

The growing number of crises in the EU, in Africa and the world leave Europe and Africa little choice: either they defend their interests at all costs, using even those means which are incompatible with their values or they make these values essential elements of their partnership.

A solemn declaration of values

At the 4th EU–Africa summit in 2014, all parties agreed on a roadmap for five priority areas from 2014 to

2017: peace and security; democracy, good governance and human rights; human development; sustainable, inclusive development and growth, and continental integration; and global and emerging issues.

As the first paragraph of the JAES states, “Africa and Europe are bound together by history, culture, geography, a common

future, as well as by a community of values: the respect for human rights, freedom, equality, solidarity, justice, the

rule of law and democracy as enshrined in the relevant international agreements and in the constitutive texts of our respective Unions.”

Both the EU and the AU share at least the following nine values: peace, human dignity, human rights, gender equality, freedom, democracy, the rule of law, justice and solidarity. The values underlined above will be highlighted as points of comparison. Although solidarity is not literally specified in any

VALUES OF THE EUROPEAN UNION	SHARED AU-EU VALUES	VALUES OF THE AFRICAN UNION
PEACE HUMAN DIGNITY FREEDOM DEMOCRACY EQUALITY RULE OF LAW HUMAN RIGHTS PLURALISM NON-DISCRIMINATION TOLERANCE JUSTICE SOLIDARITY GENDER EQUALITY	PEACE HUMAN DIGNITY FREEDOM DEMOCRACY RULE OF LAW HUMAN RIGHTS PLURALISM NON-DISCRIMINATION JUSTICE SOLIDARITY	PEACE GENDER EQUALITY HUMAN RIGHTS DEMOCRACY RULE OF LAW GOOD GOVERNANCE SOCIAL JUSTICE REJECTION OF IMPUNITY REJECTION OF POLITICAL ASSASSINATION HUMAN DIGNITY REJECTION OF TERRORISM

AU document, it is mentioned here as a shared JAES value because solidarity has traditionally been such a common recurrent theme in many AU speeches.

These values are universal. They apply to all human beings and have been adopted by a number of states and organisations around the world. This universality can be seen in the gradual strengthening of the individual's place in society and in the legal and political frameworks created to protect the individual's autonomy vis à vis power. These two factors promote the establishment of the rule of law, an essential basis for the expression of values. As shared values, they form the very foundations of the edifice on which this Africa-EU partnership is built.

How effective are these values?

Values matter only if they are protected and respected. On the face of it, one might think that there is a great disparity between the AU and the EU in the practical application of these values – the EU being the model pupil in contrast to a faltering Africa. In reality, although Europe's track record would appear more solid, both continents are facing major challenges on an unprecedented scale, all of which constitute pitfalls they can neither avoid nor manage without compromise. Within the EU, member states have integrated these shared values into

their working methods. Their citizens have rights enforceable against the public authorities and guaranteed by two international courts – the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) in Luxembourg and the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR, Council of Europe) in Strasbourg, in addition to the national courts. While peace is now established on EU soil, the current crises are testing such values as the rule of law, solidarity and respect for human dignity – particularly in Austria, Hungary, Poland, Bulgaria and Romania.

The electorate votes for populist parties who claim to have better solutions to key problems (as seen in Austria, France, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland and the UK). The EU finds itself torn between defending shared values and respecting the national identities of its Member States. While the President of the Commission recognised in his State of the Union Address on 13 September 2017 the urgent need to improve the inhumane conditions in which migrants are living in detention and reception centres in Libya, the Visegrád Group (i.e. Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and the Czech Republic) refuses to implement the decision (OJ 2015, L 248, p. 80) taken by the Council of Ministers to relocate refugees to help Italy and Greece, which are currently overwhelmed by the influx of migrants.

On 27 July 2017, the European Commission launched the reasoned opinion procedure which, should these states fail to act, will open the way for a judicial review by the CJEU. On 6 September 2017, that same CJEU rejected (C-643/15 and C-647/15) the appeal brought by Hungary and Slovakia with Polish support against the 2015 decision. Moreover, the reforms introduced in Hungary and Poland (involving the judiciary and the media, for example) call into further question the value of the rule of law. These crises demonstrate the limits of the guarantees put in place to protect these values within the EU. What will happen now that these limits have been exceeded, with Hungary having decided not to comply with the CJEU decision of 6 September 2017? With a growing distrust for the ruling class and given today's political ratings culture, even the law is under pressure. Democracy itself is suffering from the disengagement of EU citizens.

In Africa, peace still struggles to take root in everyday life following chronic political instability. The regularity with which constitutional changes are made to keep the leading president and government in power, the lack of free elections and the failure to respect pluralism are a hindrance to the implementation of the rule of law, even when several AU values emanate directly from it: the rejection



A young Somali girl runs in front of an African Union Mission in Somali. Photo: Stuart Price/UN Photo

of impunity, political assassination and unconstitutional changes of government. In 2008, the AU merged the African Court of Human Rights and the AU Court of Justice to set up a new African Court of Justice and Human Rights. The aim was to establish an effective regional court with the necessary resources to defend the rule of law, human dignity and human rights. But will this court really have the means to fulfil its aims? Will it succeed where the other two have failed? Respect for human dignity is implemented in a variety of ways. While African constitutional texts (e.g. the Maputo Protocol and the constitutions of Burkina Faso, Benin, Ivory Coast, Madagascar, Mali and Nigeria) guarantee the protection of women, mutilation and slavery still occur in some regions. Finally, solidarity, often held up as an African value, has little influence on the ground. Malnutrition in South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo, terrorist conflicts and attacks in certain countries (such as the Central African Republic, Mali and Niger) do not spark strong mobilisation by neighbouring states, or even by the AU itself. Indeed, help has come primarily in the form of foreign aid.

Within the AU–EU partnership, shared values are proclaimed loud and clear. But are they adequately protected or even respected? Do we trample on values abroad which we consider sacred at home? The agreements the EU has signed with the armed groups in Libya and Al Bashir’s Sudan on the Turkish model for migration control, the shrinking space left to the opposition and civil society in many African states, and the lack of solidarity on the part of states which are becoming inward looking, are just some examples of the fragility of these shared values.

Certain crises, including migration, are merely the visible effects of values which have long been ignored. We can reverse this trend only by putting the respect of values back at the centre of the agenda. Europeans must encourage reforms in Africa which help to establish lasting peace and the rule of law, rather than supporting regimes which do not respect these values. Their credibility and the success of the JAES are at stake. Jean-Claude Juncker’s appeal in this year’s State of the Union Address bears repeating: “Europe is and must remain the continent

of solidarity where those fleeing persecution can find refuge.” Africans must work together to make these values effective, starting with the rule of law and human dignity. This is the price to pay if African youth are to have enough faith in their continent to stay there and invest in it. The values shared by the EU and the AU need to guide decisions and actions to guarantee the solidity and sustainability of the partnership they want to build.

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THE WORLD IS CHANGING: THE RELATIONSHIP NEEDS CHANGING TOO

If European countries want to safeguard their relations with Africa, they must treat the continent as an equal and valuable partner in practice and not just in rhetoric.

By Jessica Ilunga

Rapid and significant changes in the global arena are reshaping Africa's relations with the rest of the world. As emerging global players are expanding their footprint in Africa, European countries cannot rely on their shared history with the continent to guarantee their place under the sun. Far from being an asset, Europe's colonial past is in fact its greatest liability as its members seem unable to move away from their traditional neo-colonial and patronising attitude towards Africa despite EU leaders' benevolent rhetoric. In this new era, what Africa needs is to be treated as an equal and valuable partner in practice and not just in rhetoric. As we approach 2020 which marks the end of the Cotonou Agreement, the EU has the opportunity to redefine the foundations of its partnership with Africa, which is essential if it wants to keep a decent share of the fruitful African pie.

Adapting to disruptive global forces

The world is rapidly changing and at least three major trends have the potential to reshape Africa's relations with the rest of the world. The first important trend is the rise of emerging economies as major international players. Over the last few years, countries like China, Russia and India have taken a more prominent role on the international scene. Not only has their voice become much stronger on global issues like climate change, but they have also increased their economic footprint in Africa through trade and investment, threatening the long-standing position of European countries. For instance, in just two decades, China has become Africa's largest trade partner and Africa-China trade has been growing at about 20 per cent per year since 2000, reaching \$188 billion in 2015. This is more than triple that of India, Africa's second biggest trade partner. Linked to this first trend is the stronger desire to break away from Western dominance across Africa, especially among its youth. The growing anti-CFA franc movement in Francophone West Africa and the continuous attacks against the International Criminal Court are just a few indicators of the changing attitude of the African population towards the perceived Western dominance and intrusion into African domestic affairs. As today's youth will be tomorrow's ruling elite of the continent, building a good relationship with this youth is essential.

Lastly, a stronger commitment towards regional integration is inciting African countries to focus inward for growth and poverty reduction. After the dramatic failures of the rapid liberalisation policies imposed by international partners, the priorities on Africa's structural transformation agenda are now the deepening of regional integration and the increase of intra-African trade. It can be expected that as African countries are becoming economically stronger and more united, there will be

more resistance to trade and cooperation agreements that are being perceived as detrimental to Africa's integration efforts.

France's declining position in Africa

France has long been criticised for its neo-colonial attitude towards Africa. The debate around the country's colonial past resurfaced during the last presidential election. As a young and seemingly progressive president, Macron's election raised the hope that he would break away from his predecessors' neo-colonial approach towards Africa. His election rhetoric sounded indeed promising and suggested a desire to loosen France's grip over its former colonies.

However, after his election, he made a few PR blunders that have cost him his progressive reputation in African circles. Freshly elected, Macron first came under fire last June after being caught casually joking about Comorian migrants' boats, which are also dubbed the "boats of death" because so many migrants have sunk trying to sail from the Comores island to the French island of Mayotte. Just a month later, he sparked another row when he explained that Africa's problems were civilisational during a press conference at the G20 summit in Hamburg.

With the creation of the Presidential Council for Africa, Macron is trying to give a younger, and more acceptable face to France-Africa relations. Officially, the role of the council is to advise him on African matters and prepare his trips to the continent, especially by helping him draft key speeches relating to Africa. This is an interesting initiative, however it is highly unlikely that this council will contribute to a fundamental transformation of France's Africa policy.

The Council for Africa against the Françafrique Goliath

Without questioning the individual qualities of the council members, it is pretty clear that they do not have the power to counterbalance the influential French institutions and figures who are the cornerstones of the Françafrique system that has been accused of being the source of poverty and political instability in former French colonies.

The economic arm of Françafrique takes the form of post-colonial agreements through which France has cheap and easy access to the natural resources that it needs for its industries. This has been a very lucrative business for France and its largest companies still hold a quasi-monopoly over strategic sectors of Francophone African economies, including electricity, telecommunications, infrastructure, airports and harbours. For instance, Bolloré, which is the region's largest logistics group by turnover, is active in more than 40 African countries. It operates

17 ports in Africa, including those of Abidjan in Côte d'Ivoire, Douala in Cameroon, Libreville Owendo in Gabon and Pointe-Noire in Congo.

Beyond the economic aspect, there is also a cultural resistance in the French population to move away from its traditional policy in Africa. Addressing the wounds of the past is the prerequisite to developing a more equal and trusting relationship between France and its African partners. However, French national identity is intrinsically linked to the country's colonial past, which is seen as a source of national pride and glory. And any criticism of France's colonial legacy is seen as an unpatriotic attack against the country's historic achievements, even if the French empire derived its power from the exploitation of people across the globe. The necessary transformation of the French public opinion is clearly outside the boundaries of the mandate of the council.

The colonial undertone of EU development policy

The EU's development policy finds its origins in the legacy of the French imperial rule in Africa. It is therefore unsurprising that, in spite of an apparent evolution, there remains a strong colonial undertone in the successive cooperation and trade agreements between the EU and African countries.

Signed in 2002, the Cotonou Agreement is the EU's most comprehensive development cooperation partnership with any region in the world. Its core objectives are poverty and the gradual integration of African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries into the world economy. While in theory the agreement is based on the principle of equal partnership, the relationship between the EU and developing countries continues to be deeply unequal with African countries being placed in a subordinate position.

This inequality appears most strongly in the application of political conditionality and the negotiation process of the European Partnership Agreements (EPAs). The Agreement stresses that both partners must promote democracy, human rights, rule of law and good governance. However, in case of violation of one of these essential elements, only the EU has the power to control ACP countries by restricting trade or aid.

Furthermore, the EU did not hesitate to use its superior position to force ACP countries into the EPAs. Several African countries, supported by local civil society groups, openly opposed the EPAs because they contain detrimental policies for their local markets and industries. However, to speed up the process, the EU threatened to not only withdraw foreign aid, but also end the preferential access to European markets for existing export

products from reluctant states. Therefore, even though the EU likes to brand itself as a value-driven institution that promotes peace, security, democracy, and human rights around the world, in practice it tends to behave like an authoritarian bully when trying to secure its economic interests in Africa.

A new approach for a new era

In this new era and given the recent global dynamics, European countries should stop with their patronising development discourse and outdated trade and partnership models. Ultimately, Africa's transformation will come from internal policy clarity. The most pressing challenge for African countries today is thus to clearly define the type of development they want based on their own vision and priority for the future.

Politically, African states do not need external incentives to promote democracy, human rights and good governance. They already know that these universal values are essential. What they need is to be able to internally decide how these universal values can be applied to their own reality. Economically, they do not need help to integrate the world economy. What they need is to stay away from skewed international trade agreements that keep them dependent on raw materials export. Their priority should be deepening regional integration and boosting intra-African trade before opening domestic markets to the pressure of more developed competitors.

Treating Africa as an equal and valuable partner and respecting its policy space are the only way forward for countries that want to preserve their relations with the continent in the future. A mutually beneficial partnership might seem scary for countries which have benefited from such an unfair and unequal relationship for so long. However, in the long run, this is the best option for everyone. After all, an economically strong and politically stable Africa is not only good for Africa. It is good for the world. Not only will it solve security and migration threats, which are the main concerns of European countries at the moment, but it will also give other regions a credible trade partner with an ever-growing consumer market.

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TECHNOLOGY TO EMPOWER SOCIETY: THE BAREFOOTLAW EXPERIENCE

A new generation of young African entrepreneurs are taking on the major challenges in their society, using technology and innovative thinking applied to their local context. They are providing a potential blueprint for solving other problems across the continent. In this regard the Partnership between the African Union and the European Union could play an important role if the available instruments were more flexible to reach out to these younger generations.

By Gerald Abila

Innovation in a global context

In most cases, the word innovation or indeed the words 'innovation' and 'technology', immediately evoke an image of cutting edge devices, systems or applications, developed from the fast-paced Silicon Valley in the US, or other technology leading spaces across the globe. It could be the latest breakthrough in augmented reality technology helping nearly half a billion people to play a game, such as Nintendo's PokemonGo!, or the rapid mainstreaming

of market-changing applications that are turning traditional businesses on their heads, such as Uber or AirBnB, where from having to stand out on the street to hail a taxi, one is now able to order a ride and split the bill, while still at the dinner table with friends. In this context, innovation often challenges a market that is already well structured where the new utility is an improvement on an already existing one. In fact, many of these innovations are based on the best and latest technology available.

Most importantly, when these innovations occur, they almost always need to become global successes to be considered truly 'world changing'. It is only when you use Uber both in New York and in Kampala, that you grasp the level of impact.

The reality is that this context represents a fairly accurate depiction of what innovation is globally today. Innovation is big, it is bold, it is cutting edge and it is leading from the front.

Innovation in the African space

However this is not the full picture. This is only what I would call a 'mainstream' context of innovation as opposed to a 'global' context. Take for example, the financial technology (FinTech) space. Great big leaps on FinTech have come out of Africa, most notably, the emergence and rapid growth of the use of mobile money services.

In Kenya, Safaricom's M-Pesa mobile money service, which enables the telecom network's subscriber to transfer money, pay for services and even take micro loans, has rapidly changed the way the money and finance is accessed in Kenya. The same applies in other African countries where mobile money is used. With little more than a 15 Euro feature phone and a GSM connection, users are accessing and using money in previously unthought-of ways.

From an initial basic service that allowed two people to transfer as little as 0.4 euro (50 Kenya shillings) via their mobile phones, M-Pesa has now more than 26 million users with over 55.9m euro worth of transactions in 2017. The M-Pesa

revolution has set in motion several other innovations, providing service vendors an avenue to collect revenue and a platform on which other service apps can be built to serve the public. Many of these other innovations are run by youthful, energetic Africans who are taking the opportunity to develop solutions for their communities.

What this demonstrates is that innovation can come from anywhere, and still be 'world changing'; it can provide a new and better experience for people, whether it is a new gaming experience or a breakthrough in microfinance that uplifts small scale farmers in rural communities with small loans.

Innovation and technology, the BarefootLaw story

This is where the BarefootLaw story comes in. BarefootLaw was established in 2013 in Uganda as an organisation working in the legal sector on improving access to justice.

It all started from a very modest idea. When I was a student in law school, I started noticing the huge gap in the

knowledge of the law and how this gap affected people's daily lives. It might be a person being held in police custody without knowledge of his or her rights, or people taking justice in their own hands because of lack of trust in the judicial process. It became clear that there was a need to provide this information to the public, to empower people to make better decisions and, ultimately, apply true justice and the rule of law.

BarefootLaw started with a used 3G iPhone, by providing legal information to the public on a Facebook page (www.facebook.com/barefootlaw). Initially, only a few people checked it, inquiring on different sections of the law (to be honest, most of them were law students at my law school and friends). This was hardly an innovation at the time. Facebook had already become a global phenomenon, and pages were being used for everything from news and entertainment to selling products.

However, the demand for this service grew incredibly fast and it was not before long that people started asking for legal support on how to undertake

Barefootlaw in action. Photo: supplied by author



court procedures as they had no money for a lawyer. Indeed, within a short period of time, we were also faced with a challenge to provide this service to those with basic feature phones. We had to expand our work to provide this information on other platforms like SMS (short messaging services), websites, and even using traditional methods of legal aid such as going out into communities.

This was driven by the realisation that for most of Africa, technology does not operate in a vacuum, and services based on new technology such as mobile phones were merely complementing already existing systems and services, simply making them more efficient. It seems that our rapid growth was the result of a big gap in access to legal services in the country. BarefootLaw quickly realised that with such a great need for legal support, there was a need to innovate to bring these services to more people.

Five years on, BarefootLaw provides free legal support to more than 450,000 people every month across all our platforms. In the near future we expect to improve the technologies we use to become even more efficient in providing this service and to expand across borders.

Innovation can also come from unusual locations, using simple technologies. Couple this with youthful energy and beliefs, critical insight on problems and local contexts, then you will see emerging very useful ideas with the potential of being replicated across countries and regions. BarefootLaw is one such example.

More than just a one off

We are only one of several examples of youthful innovations tackling real and present problems in their societies with innovative ideas and making use of

technology for greater impact. In Kenya, Kytabu are providing an enriched learning experience by making curriculum content available on mobile devices, creating opportunities for students and teachers alike. In Ghana, Farmerline uses mobile technology to provide market-driven solutions to over 200,000 farmers to improve their access to markets, inputs and information. And these are just a few examples.

**BarefootLaw provides
free legal support to
more than 450,000
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While the impact of our organisation (and many others across the continent) might not yet be described as 'world changing', the numbers indicate that we are having a real impact on individuals and communities and, more importantly, we are doing so in a unique way.

These innovative initiatives are filling a gap that should be filled by proper working governance or market systems. Not only they help to solve specific social needs; they also allow us to learn a lesson on identification of the market and on usage and context of resources.

What more can be done and who can take part

And yet, this is only the beginning. At BarefootLaw for example, we are exploring automation and machine learning for some of our services. There is a lot to learn, and this is where the cutting edge/ leading edge technology spaces worldwide should work together to create useful knowledge exchanges. For many others, attracting the right kind of

capital to support their growth is crucial. While venture capital has increased across the continent, there is still a big need for long term capital, as the space within which many of these entities operate is not yet well defined, and a lot of learning needs to happen.

There is also a need to partner with different entities and institutions - such as the European Union - with a global footprint to help jumpstart the scaling across borders. Therefore, more international organisations with interest in bringing socio-economic change ought to look into how to partner with innovation on the continent and the ways their work can be extended.

There is a need for the governments in Africa to set priorities and create enabling environments for innovations to prosper. This could be through the establishment of youth innovation grants, or the provision of subsidies to youth innovators on the continent.

If the innovation that is happening in Africa can be fostered - through partnership and support, it would empower and encourage young entrepreneurs to challenge the current status of their communities and bring change through entrepreneurship and innovation.

This is why innovation and technology in Africa will play a big role in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and in doing so, contributing to building a prosperous continent for generations to come.

About the author

Gerald Abila is the founder of BarefootLaw.





The European Union (EU) has been a long-standing partner for peace since the African Union (AU) came into existence. As the AU marks its 15th year, it is useful to reflect on what the partnership between the two continents and organisations has achieved and to identify specific initiatives for the future in terms of ongoing cooperation.

By Tim Murithi

Making the AU Fit for Purpose

In January 2017, to mark the 15th year since the organisation was formally launched, the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government adopted a report titled *The Imperative to Strengthen Our Union*, containing recommendations for institutional reform of the African Union. This report was compiled by President Paul Kagame of Rwanda with the collaboration of a panel of senior African leaders. The report identifies climate change, violent extremist ideologies, disease pandemics, and mass migration as being amongst the key issues that urgently need to be addressed by “focused and

effective regional organisations”. The Kagame Panel report laments: “the unfortunate truth is that Africa today is ill-prepared to adequately respond to current events, because *the African Union still has to be made fit for purpose*. This is a forthright and honest appraisal of the state of the African Union 15 years after it was launched with much fanfare and great expectations in 2002 in Durban, South Africa. The 15th year of the African Union’s existence also marked the arrival of a new leadership team when, in March 2017, Moussa Faki Mahamat, the former Chadian foreign minister, became the chairperson of the AU Commission and Kwesi Quartey,

the distinguished Ghanaian diplomat, became his deputy. It is promising that Moussa Faki and his team of Commissioners are approaching their mission at the AU with a degree of pragmatism about the constraints and possibilities they face. Specifically, on 14 March 2017, during his first public address as the AU Commission chairperson, Moussa Faki outlined six priorities, including the need “to reform the structures” of the organisation to make it “a tool capable of translating into reality the vision of our leaders and aspirations of our peoples”. In addition, Moussa Faki emphasised the need to address the continent’s conflicts and enhance the participation of women and young people in promoting peace, development and the revival of the continent. Moussa Faki also identified the promotion of economic integration with a specific focus on “increasing inter-African trade and free movement of people so that Africans can finally cease to be foreigners in their own continent”. He argued for the revitalisation of Africa’s private sector to enhance wealth and job creation, and for strengthening Africa’s engagement in international relations. These are all important entry points for the EU to revitalize its engagement with the AU and advance the strategic partnership.

The next decade of the strategic partnership between Europe and Africa will witness a reconfiguration of the nature of the relationship as the African continent begins to assert itself more on the global stage.

A perennial constraint in the African Union’s ability to assert itself on the international stage is its reliance and dependency on donors to pay salaries and finance its operations and programmes, including in the sphere of peace and security. The EU has been a key partner in this regard. However, there have been increasing levels of criticism, from observers and political leaders, about the AU’s inability to own their peace and security initiatives. Specifically, this remains a challenge for the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) and the African Governance Architecture (AGA), and has raised questions about the true “ownership” of Africa’s institutions. Consequently, in July 2016, the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government adopted a decision on financing of the Union to institute a 0.2% levy on eligible imports. The importance of this decision was

reiterated in the report ‘*Securing Predictable and Sustainable Funding for Peace in Africa*’ by Donald Kaberuka, the AU High Representative for the Peace Fund. This is the first genuine attempt to wean the Union and its institutions off its donors, particularly in the sphere of promoting peace and security. Over the next decade of the EU-AU strategic partnership, both institutions should support this levy initiative, to avoid insinuations that the AU is not “owned” by Africa. Concretely, the EU can further assist the AU in policy reflection on the use of levies to financing international organisations. The prospective income stream generated by self-funding will enable the AU to underwrite its own initiatives and provide a basis for the organisation to engage more effectively with African citizens across the continent.

Consolidating Peace and Accountability

The UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and in particular Goal 16, calls for the consolidation of peace, security and access to justice. This means that over the next decade of the strategic engagement, both the EU and the AU will need to focus their energies on national and regional reconciliation processes across the continent through the promotion of accountability, redress, and restitution. Africa’s experience in dealing with the past and managing societal tensions means that ‘dialogue platforms on diversity’ could help European communities to learn from their African counterparts, given the rising tide of identity politics and problematic posture towards immigrants in some countries. This would also challenge the perceived trend in knowledge and skills transfer from Africa to Europe, which has historically been unacknowledged and under-emphasized.

The next decade of the strategic partnership between Europe and Africa will witness a reconfiguration of the nature of the relationship as the African continent begins to assert itself more on the global stage. This is however not a reason for Europe to become concerned or inward-looking because such a remaking of global order will ensure that prosperity will increase on both sides of the Mediterranean sea, which will ultimately be beneficial for the people of both continents.

About the author

Professor Tim Murithi is Head of Programme at the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, Cape Town, and Extraordinary Professor of African Studies, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, South Africa. He is editor of the Routledge Handbook of Africa’s International Relations.





HOW TO RENEW THE EU-AFRICA PARTNERSHIP THROUGH TRANSCONTINENTAL YOUTH NETWORKS

The African Union (AU) declared 2017 the ‘year of harnessing the demographic dividend through Investments in Youth’ and the European Union (EU) renewed its Youth Strategy; this is timely given the focus of the upcoming AU-EU Summit on ‘youth’.

By Yentyl Williams and Celine Fabrequette

The upcoming Summit on ‘youth’ is a unique opportunity to place youth integration and inclusion in policy and decision-making processes at the heart of relations between the African and European continents. Yet, *the new strategy must be innovative, visionary and dedicated.*

First, the renewed partnership must be innovative through the development of joint objectives to ensure young people play an active role in the decision-making and the implementation of the partnership.

Second, it must be visionary by going beyond mere strengthening of relations on a nation-to-nation or region-to-region basis, but also through horizontal and vertical cooperation with youth civil society to support the reframing of social, economic and political values.

Third, it should be dedicated to harness the already innovative initiatives that young people are implementing to empower

their peers – be it on entrepreneurship, education and political engagement – to bring a transformative change to our societies, which can adequately prepare us for the global and common concerns of our generations. So, strong partnership with youth organisations, including youth civil society and youth diaspora organisations, will be key for the revitalisation of the EU-Africa partnership. A case in point is the innovation and the vision demonstrated by the youth-led and youth-owned trans-continental network ACP YPN, the African, Caribbean and Pacific Young Professionals Network in Brussels (EU).

Innovation - horizontal & vertical youth cooperation

The African, Caribbean and Pacific Young Professionals Network (ACP YPN) provides a platform for young people to have an active role in policy-making processes at the national, regional and international levels. The platform was inspired

by the legally binding commitments that the EU and the ACP group of states took on youth cooperation (Article 26 Cotonou Partnership Agreement). The team used new technology to build its trans-continental “Youth Expert Database” for young people to realise their potential and to stimulate the use of this ambitious commitment on cooperation.

All of ACP YPN’s activities and advocacy contribute to ensuring ‘responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels’ (target 16.7) to provide solutions for youth and institutions globally (in line with the Sustainable Development Goal, SDG 16). In particular, with the forthcoming revision of the EU-ACP partnership, ACP YPN established horizontal and vertical cooperation to ensure the inclusion of youth in the consultation process launched by the EU. The network was the only youth-owned organisation to submit a response to the European Commission’s consultation on the future of ACP–EU Partnership.

ACP YPN carefully analysed where youth had been left out of the partnership, for more than forty years, and created the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly Youth Forum. The Forum established a formal space for young people to meet with 100+ EU and ACP parliamentarians for the first time since parliamentary meetings began in 1963 and was recognised as an official parliament by the JPA in 2016. The Network has also become member of the EU-Caribbean Forum Joint Consultative Committee that monitors the Economic Partnership Agreements. The organisation had been already monitoring trade agreements in the European Parliament for the past three years.

Vision – Co-developing a youth-centered partnership

Innovation cannot last without a vision. Horizontal and vertical cooperation shows that effective youth participation is possible but it must be accompanied by visionary institutional partnerships. In this case, efforts cannot come only from young people but also from the institutions.

The AU is already engaging with youth from the diaspora, also known as the 6th region. ACP YPN is a member of the AU Youth Advisory Board (YAB) at the African Union Headquarters and a member of the AU Youth Diaspora Task Force of the AU mission to the EU. The network, inter alia, collaborates with the AU Youth Division to develop and implement activities and pilot initiatives with other African and diaspora youth organisations to foster youth employment. The network is a direct interlocutor to the AU institutions and their youth programmes.

In the run up to the AU-EU Summit, ACP YPN has been actively harnessing the interest the Institutions have in youth partnerships – through its active participation in the EU-Africa

Civil Society Organisation Forum, or in its co-hosting of the S&D Africa week’s Youth Workshop at the European Parliament – to ensure that innovation is always coupled with vision. It is therefore not surprising that ACP YPN was the co-organiser of the Africa-EU Youth summit and it actively participated in a variety of different initiatives promoting young people’s issues. These include the Pan African Youth Union (PYU), The African Diaspora Youth Network in Europe (ADYNE), the European Youth Forum, the Network of International Youth organisation in Africa (NIYOA) and the African Diaspora Youth Forum in Europe (ADYFE).

Innovation cannot last without a vision. Horizontal and vertical cooperation shows that effective youth participation is possible but it must be accompanied by visionary institutional partnerships. In this case, efforts cannot come only from young people but also from the institutions.

Dedication – looking to the future together

What we need to see now, is dedication. Transcontinental youth-led and youth-owned organisation like ACP YPN can offer much food for thought. It is key to keep on learning from the lessons and existing best practice: this is the only way to generate the innovation and vision that is needed in a renewed EU-Africa partnership dedicated to be with youth.

About the authors

Yentyl Williams (left), is the President and founder of the ACP YPN and Celine Fabrequette is the Secretary General of the ACP YPN.



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Mariella Di Ciommo, 6 November 2017

In one of his humorous talks, the Swedish statistician Hans Rosling shows us a beautifully designed data story on the emergence of 'the middle': people out of extreme poverty who however still live below acceptable standards. Across two centuries, we progressed from a poverty-ridden world to one with a big gap between the rich West and the rest.



What the Dutch iron lady has in store for Europe and Africa

Ewald Wermuth and Jeske van Seters, 30 October 2017

Sigrid Kaag has been appointed as Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation of the Netherlands. The media referred to her as the Dutch iron lady in her role as head of the international mission overseeing the destruction of Syria's chemical weapons. What can Europe and Africa expect from her in this new position?



Trade and food security in West Africa

Bruce Byiers, 30 October 2017

'The West African economy is an informal economy. So trade facilitation is about working with informal trade'. So stated Laurent Bossard, Director of the Sahel and West Africa Club (SWAC) at the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs recently. Bossard's comment came during the presentation of SWAC's work on cross-border cooperation and policy networks in West Africa and on West African food markets.



A message to African and European leaders: 'More of the same is not good enough'

Geert Laporte, 23 October 2017

In a few weeks' time, African and European leaders will gather in Abidjan for the fifth AU-EU Summit. There are plenty of important issues for them to chew on and yet, the agenda once again stays clear of the potentially controversial topics that divide both continents.

OUR NEXT ISSUE OF GREAT INSIGHTS WILL BE ON MIGRATION, JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2018, VOLUME 7 - ISSUE 1

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africa-europe relations 2017

On 29 and 30 November, African and European leaders will gather in Abidjan for the 5th AU-EU Summit. Their goal: to strengthen political and economic ties between the two continents, discuss the future of the Africa-Europe partnership and talk about issues of common concern.

Which issues will European and African leaders discuss exactly? Which topics will they stay clear of and why? What is the current status of the relationship and how can it be strengthened? Will both parties be able to shake off past habits, break with the vested interest of the past and fundamentally change the course of action? How can we make sure to link up discussions on the Africa-Europe partnership with negotiations on the future partnership between the EU and African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group of States?

Ahead and after the Summit, ECDPM will try to answer these questions. This dossier collects our analysis, blogs and events linked to the Summit. In the weeks to come, you can expect many new blogs, articles and publications – **so stay tuned.**

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