



Joint SAIIA/ ECDPM event

'Taking Stock of the Joint EU-Africa Strategy and Africa's International Relations'

Summary Report

Villa Sterne Boutique Hotel on 11 March 2010

Introduction

Meeting in Addis in February 2010, African Heads of States discussed a report which reviewed Africa's relations with different international partners. This year will be a milestone in EU-AU relations. African and European Heads of State will meet at the end of November to discuss the framework guiding the relationship between the two continents, namely, the Joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES) and its associated Action Plan.

Given this context, the South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA) and the European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM), long-standing partners, decided to take this opportunity to put together an event to take stock of the EU-Africa relationship and to analyse more deeply some of the successes and failures of the partnership to date.

Romy Chevallier, EU-Africa Researcher at SAIIA welcomed the guests, explained the context and timeliness of the meeting, and made brief introductions to the panellists. Dr. Mzukisi Qobo, Project Head of the Emerging Powers and Global Challenges at the South African Institute of International Affairs delivered a 15 minutes presentation on the state of Africa's international relations. Eleonora Koeb, Programme Officer for Development Policy and International Relations at the ECDPM subsequently delivered a 15 minute presentation on the key challenges facing the Joint Africa-EU Strategy. Following questions for clarification, Ms. Koeb provided a second 15 minute presentation on JAES EU-Africa Peace and Security Partnership, and considered whether it could be considered a model for other JAES partnerships. Thomas Muehlmann, Advisor on SSR/PCRD at the EU Delegation to the African Union in Addis Ababa also contributed to present some of the achievements of the JAES Peace and Security Partnership.

The invitation was extended to all of SAIIA's members, but was specifically aimed at European and African embassies based in Pretoria, South African government officials and non-governmental organisations and academics working in this field. Over 40 participants attended the conference, including representations of the EU Delegation, from embassies of African countries (the High Commission for Mauritius), European countries (Austria, Belgium, the Netherlands, Serbia, Spain, the British High Commission, the Ukraine) and other parts of the world (China, the High Commission of Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago). There was also good representation from the Department of International Relations and Cooperation of the Ministry of



Foreign Affairs of South Africa – both from the European Organisations and African Multilateral desks.

Summary of the presentations

Dr. Qobo (SAIIA): Taking stock of Africa's international relations

Dr. Qobo noted the changing geo-political and geo-economic landscapes in Africa, looking at internal aspects and relations with external players. He highlighted that emerging powers have increased the intensity of engagement with key African states, and have followed trends that have been established by the EU, USA and Japan. This development was then juxtaposed against EU-Africa relations, with Mr. Qobo stressing that it could jeopardise European projects on the continent that focus specifically on good governance models. According to Dr. Qobo, there are perceptions among the Chinese that the EU is keen to constrain China's activities in Africa so as to guard its own soft power elements. Given the varying modes of engagement, as well as codes of conduct, Dr. Qobo's main observation was that the EU faces challenges as a result of the rise of emerging powers, at both a global and African level. Europe thus needs to react and assert itself as a major player. The presentation was followed by a lively question and answer session, which was aimed at clarifying Dr. Qobo's presentation.

Eleonora Koeb (ECDPM): What next for the Joint Africa-EU Strategy? Perspectives on revitalising an innovative framework

Eleonora Koeb stressed that the ECDPM has been engaging with the JAES process since its very beginning as a neutral facilitator. In the context of the reflective period ahead of the 2010 EU-Africa Summit, her presentation was aiming at constructive criticism so as to help close the widely perceived gap between discourse and reality with respect to the JAES, which is threatening its credibility.

While there are some aspects of continuity, Ms. Koeb highlighted the innovations the partnership. In this respect, she noted that it aims to upgrade EU-Africa relations to a strategic political partnership based on joint interests and a common vision. It is meant to enable continent-continent cooperation, especially with a view to addressing global challenges such as climate change, terrorism etc., while fostering integration on both sides. It serves as an over-arching and inclusive framework for EU-Africa relations. However, according to Ms. Koeb there are three major challenges facing the JAES, namely, lack of engagement of all stakeholders, lack of results from cooperation and dialogue in this framework so far, and the fact that political dialogue is not driving partnerships. Furthermore, she argued that there are indications that a genuine change in mentality has not yet taken place, that the JAES is currently not being used as a true partnership between the two players to address important global challenges and that most of the current cooperation could be done through other already existing frameworks. This led her to conclude that there is a risk that the framework will lose credibility if its added value is not clarified.

Eleonora Koeb (ECDPM)/ Thomas Muehlmann (EU): The Peace and Security Partnership – Lessons to be learned for the Joint Africa-EU Strategy

Following questions for clarification, Ms. Koeb provided a second 15 minute presentation on JAES EU-Africa Peace and Security Partnership. This partnership has from the beginning exhibited political momentum, shown results in terms of cooperation and political dialogue and seems to be characterised by a relatively intense and good working relationship and



communication on a day-to-day basis. Ms Koeb presented progress in the three priorities for cooperation under this partnership: Firstly, the political dialogue at many different levels was noted. Secondly, she emphasised the support that it provides in the context of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). Thirdly, it has enabled cooperation on sustainable funding for African led peace-keeping missions in international fora, especially the UNSC. Ms Koeb argued, that the main reasons for the success of the partnership were 1/ a common strategic interest of the AU and the EU in developing APSA and African-led Peacekeeping that is well accepted on both sides, 2/ a well articulated continental African agenda and AU institutional structures and policies that preceded the JAES and 3/ a dedicated financial instrument to implement the priorities decided at the political level. In the other partnerships of the JAES, areas of cooperation that comply with those three characteristics may need to be identified jointly so as to ensure that the basic incentives for active engagement of stakeholders are in place.

Mr. Thomas Muehlmann of the EU Delegation to the African Union confirmed the reasons for the success of the partnership as presented. He further highlighted the added value of the JAES in bringing together 27 EU countries in their support to the AU in the area of peace and security, ensuring that their activities are aligned to the AU's priorities and are complementary to each other. In addition, the JAES helps the EU to better coordinate its different political tools and financial instruments as was described by means of the example of EU support to the Transitional Federal Government in Somalia, which among others receives EU support for SSR, humanitarian aid, technical and financial support to AMISOM as well as political support to the Djibouti process. As a latest element of its engagement, the EU will launch a CDSP mission, called EU Training Mission in Somalia, to support training efforts and to provide specialised training for 2.000 future Somali security forces in close coordination with AMISOM.