

5th EU/Africa summit, November 2017

1. "The EU/Africa Summit , a new impetus for the Africa/EU partnership"

This is the title of the new Communication of the European Commission (4 May 2017)

Such an ambitious statement would need certainly to be substantiated explaining :

- what were the fundamental objectives of the Joint Africa/Europe Strategy (JAES) and what is today the status of the partnership;
- what will change after the Summit compared to the previous situation, taking into account the difficulties encountered since the adoption of the JAES in 2007, and the poor results achieved so far and what are the fundamental changes necessary to improve the quality of the partnership and its political scope
- how this new impetus will take into account the profound change of the geopolitical environment since 2007 relative notably to the political, economic and financial crises Europe is facing; the adoption of the global agendas and the need for their urgent implementation both by the European and African countries; and the new challenge of the AU reform and its continental integration process.
- what is the meaning of a strengthened political partnership in this new context, and what will be the best political framework to develop an efficient and credible political partnership based on the principle of ownership and shared responsibility and accountability?

2. Historical background

1. Following the creation of the African Union in 2003, it appeared clearly to the political leaders at that time, that the ACP framework was not adapted to the new political context of Africa and not responding adequately to the need to develop a new political partnership with the AU institutions (mirroring in fact the EU institutions). The adoption of the JAES in 2007 and the holding of the corresponding Summit in Lisbon were meant to be a transitory arrangement since the need to **"treat Africa as one"** was clearly stated in the preamble¹. The commitment to **"adapt the legal and financing frameworks framework as well as relevant cooperation instruments and mechanism"**² was clearly stated. These provisions had been strongly negotiated by the African party and notably the North Africa countries authorities.

¹ Article 6: **"the partnership and its further development will be guided by the fundamental principle of the unity of Africa"** ; art 8^{vi} **"to this end, both sides will treat Africa as one and upgrade the Africa/EU political dialogue, with the AU and the EU at the center"**

² Art9f: **"to work together towards gradually adapting relevant policies and legal and financial frameworks, as well as relevant cooperation instruments and mechanisms to the needs and objectives of the partnership , and to set up a framework that better addresses each other's concerns"**

2. Whereas the JAES was meant to be "an overarching political framework", it appeared as the years were passing by, that it was just an ad hoc apparatus with serious limitations, not at all integrated in any long term political, legal and financial framework; and that the ACP framework was remaining the only such legal and financial and political framework. This is why, the "action plan" adopted in the framework of the JAES was meant to be financed through the existing ACP programmes and financial instruments. And the political dialogue developed under the JAES, through a very cumbersome set up, never reached a satisfactory development, and showed poor ownership³.
3. This situation was rapidly strongly criticized by the H.E. Mr. Alpha Oumar Konaré, then president of the AU Commission at the Lisbon Summit, pointing out in particular the inadequacy of the framework to deal with sensitive political issues such as the EPAs and the pressure on national governments and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs); and the question of migration where already at that time EU withheld associating the AU in a Pan-African political dialogue on migration, considering that North African countries and the other African countries were not all part of the same organization.

Implementation of the JAES

1. The EU decided to create a totally ad hoc institutional structure in order to implement the first plan of action (and joint experts groups). The apparatus was build around thematic task forces and the actions were meant be financed through already existing ACP programmes and instruments; with such a set up the process became rapidly very heavy, only technical, inefficient and bureaucratic. The political dimension and ownership rapidly vanished.
2. The African party has been complaining since the beginning of the implementation of the JAES about the withholding of the EU to treat Africa as one, that the EU cooperation instruments were piecemealing Africa thus a lot of inefficiency, lack of synergies, and missing the critical geopolitical element of the emergence of Africa as a strong regional entity within the global governance.
3. Two years later, the inefficiency of the institutional set up of the JAES and the slow progress in terms of modifying substantially the nature and quality of EU/Africa relationship as originally intended was recognized by many stakeholders. The 13th Africa /EU Ministerial Troika in October 2009 acknowledged⁴ this state of affairs and invited all stakeholders to proceed to a fundamental review of the first action plan and come up, if necessary, with proposals for significant changes to be discussed at the next Troika (end 2010).
4. Unfortunately, no significant changes were proposed at the 2010 Summit; rather the political ambition of the partnership have been gradually reduced, to finally end up with the adoption of a very general road map (rather than an action plan) in 2014, with no commitment attached to it. Meanwhile the bureaucratic functioning of the joint experts groups had been abandoned and the political dialogue on the partnership reduced to its

³ And even rejected by the ACP fearing a competition with the ACP framework.

⁴ Parties were invited to "present options on improving the implementation of the Joint strategy ...addressing *inter alia* possible content, structure and institutional framework as well as the challenges and shortfalls identified so far. These options should be based on a fundamental review of the structures in place .. and should include proposals for **significant changes** if these are deemed necessary to ensure the effectiveness and credibility of the second Action Plan".

minimum between the Summits⁵. The political engagement of both parties became very limited.

5. To overcome the fact that there was no financing attached to the implementation of the JAES it was decided (much later, in 2014) that a special Pan African envelope would be created under the Development Cooperation Instrument of the European Commission (DCI) thus reinforcing the segmentation of the instruments and making it impossible to create effective and meaningful synergies between the different level of programmes (local, national, regional and Pan African) within the EDF framework supporting the integration process of the AU⁶. The African program, under the DCI restricted the process of joint programming⁷.
6. To date, although the JAES clearly mentioned the setting up of a joint “monitoring, evaluation and review mechanism”, there is no specific evaluation of the effective evaluation of the results achieved by the JAES as regard its proclaimed political objectives, the difficulties encountered and the way forward⁸.

Propositions to give a new impetus to the Africa/EU relations (Communication)

1. political content

- surprisingly enough the Communication does not say a word on what could give a new impetus to the political partnership , although the "global strategy on security and development" adopted recently (2016) by the European External Affairs Services (EEAS) calls clearly for a strengthened new political partnership of EU with Africa in a globalized world, taking into account that Europe needs Africa (as much as Africa does), and must adapt and reinforce its relations with Africa in a new geopolitical context where both entities are facing a series of common challenges (terrorism, migration, climate change, among others). The EU also needs the support of the AU to increase its role in the global governance (notably at the UN)
- The question of the institutional set up for the implementation of the road map and the way forward for a strengthened political dialogue is not addressed. Neither the question of the integration of the JAES in a long term legal political framework, nor in the perspective the future post-Cotonou agreement after 2020 are mentioned (although intense discussions are taking place).
- In the same way, the Communication does not address the question of the unity of Africa despite the commitments made taken in 2007. This denial to treat Africa as one or at least to develop a political dialogue on this issue during the upcoming Summit is indicated by the fact that the forthcoming Summit is still named UE/Africa Summit whereas from the

⁵ Together with the annual Commission to commission meeting .The peace facility , engaged at the level of the AU , is the only innovative instrument that has been created even before the JAES was adopted .it is this instrument which lead to the political dialogue on peace and security .(but its ACP financing needs to be revised in 2020)

⁶ Although it would have been totally possible at that time to allocate a regional pan African envelope in the EDF X and XI .the AU being considered as an eligible region.

⁷ Contributing even to parallel programmes, such as support to democratic government the Civil society, initiated on one side by DEVCO and on the other by EEAS .

⁸ It is interesting to note that the recent global EDF evaluation just released , does not even mention, or even ignores, the financing of the JAES as an issue which should have been taken into account in the design of the future financial instrument to be put in place after 2020.

moment Morocco came back to the AU, the Summit should from now receive the name of AU/EU Summit and should not be called any longer a EU/Africa Summit⁹.

- It is also very striking that the EC wants to put all the questions related to democratic governance (p11) on the agenda, without taking stock of the progress achieved so far¹⁰ within the governance architecture of Africa, and without stressing the need for a proper EU/AU political institutional framework and proper commitments by both parties.

2. Technical and concrete context – a new impetus to preserve European interest in Africa ?

- The "**revitalized common action framework**" that the EC wants to integrate in the new roadmap for the 2018-2020 period is just a long list of actions already on the table, representing the EU new credo regarding its foreign policy and its cooperation policy which is clearly meant to serve the EU interests¹¹.
- All of these actions, including even flagship initiatives, are proposed unilaterally not taking into account any of the AU programmes and policies and legal framework (NEPAD APRM ..)¹² and as such, are a list of actions that are not integrated in any real political cooperation framework, and therefore not part of any binding partnership with joint monitoring and accountability system.
- In other words the EU is keen once more to tell to Africans what is in their interests with the underlying conviction that what is good for Europe is also good for Africa and that Africa should be grateful of the important support AU is receiving from Europe. It appears very clearly that the key objectives for Europe is to stop migration, by all means and to strengthen the economic interests of Europe through the investment initiative and private-public partnerships¹³. The same is true for the energy and climate change programmes, where EU interests prevail.
- On the other hand, the communication does not say a word on the difficulties provoked by the issue of Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs), which has been stuck for 14 years, and subject to considerable pressure from the EU, while undermining the African regional integrating process. This should have been clearly an agenda item of an EU/AU Summit. This silence is all the stranger since the EC has just adopted a reflection paper on globalization¹⁴. In this paper the EC finally recognized the risks and challenges posed by globalization and that its benefits are not shared equally, which is not exactly aligned with the EU's behavior while pushing for the signing of EPAs by African countries or RECs.
- The communication does not say a word on the implementation of the SDGs and the climate change agenda which should be the guiding thread in the strengthening of the EU/Africa partnership. The universal nature of the SDGs and of the Paris Agreement

⁹ It must not be forgotten , that the ad hoc EU Africa wording , was meant by the EU to underline that Morocco was not in the AU , but was part of the Summit ;

¹⁰ Seem to ignore that the AU has adopted a charter on democratic governance.

¹¹ In the new treaty

¹² For example , the EC propose to do a conference on elections , democratic and governance ; ignoring totally that the AU has adopted a charter in 2007 , on elections democratic governancethat constitute a legal basis for the AU (contrary to Europe)

¹³ although seriously criticized for revitalizing debt in Africa and not adapted to SMEs in Africa

¹⁴ Reflection paper on harnessing globalization.

gives to both EU and AU a common ground from which a shared perspective can be defined in order to create the necessary conditions to engage in a new economic model towards a low carbon and ecological pathway towards sustainable development, thus contributing to a social and political transition leading to a more inclusive and peaceful world.

- It is all the more ironic to hear the EU pretending to help Africa and particularly the youth in the creation of jobs and an inclusive growth whereas Europe is facing the limits of this economic model that is far from being inclusive. Europe is confronted with the fact that the nowadays growth of its economy destroys more jobs than it creates, which leads to a situation of massive youth unemployment. A real partnership between EU and Africa would open a window of opportunity for the young people from both regions to engage in a win-win partnership that could help take advantage of the huge endowment of Africa in raw materials and other commodities, which exploitation could mobilize the know-how of young people from both sides, rather than having the EU mainly concerned about safeguarding the profits of European investors, which are most of the time multinational companies.
- The private sector is seen as the key actor to implement the road map as stated in all the new policy document of the EC. Whereas the international community including the EU have recognized the fact that the SDGs agenda and by extension the 2063 agenda, will be mainly implemented at local level, with the support of local authorities (localization of SDGs) since local population are the most affected by deterioration of the climate, the exhaustion of natural resources it is simply appropriate that the local Authorities should be part of the political dialogue during the Summit, just as the other major stakeholders are, namely the civil society and the private sector. These major stakeholders should be co-implementers of the EU/AU partnership alongside the national governments. Hence the proposal by local authorities to set up an AU/EU local government Forum that will carry the voice of local authorities for it to be considered in any meaningful and impact-oriented AU/EU political dialogue.

3. Financing and implementation

- It is interesting to note that the road map does not give any indication on the financing of all the actions proposed.
- It is instead a shopping list of actions which is essentially a recycling of the activities already programmed and foreseen by the European Commission under the existing regional, thematic, and global programmes featured around the strategic axes of the external policy of the EU (DEVCO and EEAS). Moreover, the EU recognizes today that considering the decreasing trend of the DAC (which financing is in fact targeting an increasing number of activities in the security sector) one should rely more and more on the private sector to be up to the development challenges.
- It is also striking the proposed “action framework” is just for 2 years (2018/2020)! The EC deliberately turns down any engagement on long-term processes beyond 2020 knowing that there is still no decision on the future financing instruments which should be related to the future post-Cotonou cooperation framework to be adopted in 2020.
- The EC (and the EU? ?) deliberately declined to establish a link between the future of the Africa/EU partnership and the renegotiation of the cooperation framework, which should this time consider the need for a regional cooperation framework recognizing the AU as its key partner.

Agenda

- The EU proposes to the African party to have the youth as the central point of the agenda. Knowing that the African youth is also a major concern of the African Union, which in fact devoted a whole summit on this question, it is not astonishing that this proposal is acceptable for the African party.
- However, as one can see from a closer examination of the communication, it is clear that the Youth is a good pretext for the Europeans to push their own agenda when pretending that the global support given to Africa will benefit the Youth (alleged creation of jobs; facilitated legal mobility for qualified young Africans):
- The youth as such is not mentioned as a specific item on the agenda but rather as a “virtual red thread “, nor does the communication makes any reference to the recent AU summit devoted to Youth and the need take into account the results and perspectives raised during the AU Summit; in fact an artificial process of consultation of the youth has been launched by the EC on its own initiative, ignoring genuine African processes, without consulting the AU and its body representing the Youth. After this so called consultation there will be certainly a declaration on the Youth, along the lines proposed by the EU .
- It is therefore absolutely necessary to have an explicit agenda beyond the youth since all the propositions mentioned in the Communication document will be raised by the EU and presented during the EU/Africa Summit and be the subject of a “common declaration “. The AU should be fully involved in the preparation and adoption of the agenda of the forthcoming Summit in Abidjan.
- The Summit takes place during a crucial year for the EU/Africa relations as in the coming months (June?) the mandate of negotiation for the post-Cotonou agreement will be adopted by the EU. It is therefore essential that the AU presents its own agenda and strategic priorities for the renewal of the AU/Africa partnership.

Three priorities come prominently : the issue of "treating Africa as one", the post - Cotonou agreement (and the need to regionalize this agreement and to shy away from the obsolete ACP framework); and the issue of migration¹⁵. It would be a political mistake to miss such an opportunity to discuss these critical issues at the highest political level, and pave the way to a partnership that will guide the EU/Africa relations for the next 20 years . There will be no other such opportunity within the 4 years ahead (beside the negotiation itself).

AU versus ACP

- The Summit is a unique opportunity to engage in a political dialogue at the highest level between African and European leaders outside of the ACP context, which means also involving the AU ambassadors of the AU Council of Permanent Representatives in Addis Ababa (and not the ACP ambassadors in Brussels¹⁶). In the Summit the AU leadership should be considered as “guarantors” of the expression of the African political vision and

¹⁵ The Commission thinks that the best political framework is the New York declaration !

¹⁶ The ACP ambassador are today totally “absorbed “ in the day-to-day financial and administrative management of the EDF . The discussion on the next financial framework must take place at the political level related to the future regional agreement to be built around the AU.

agenda. It is clear that to date the ACP context with its specific history and (financial) weight¹⁷ tends to blur the discussion/dialogue on the key political and strategic goals of political partnership between the AU and EU.

- The future of the EU relations with Africa must be based on a political dialogue and a specific financial framework, which also should include the Mediterranean border African countries that are integral part of the AU , but not part in the ACP setting, whereas some of the most sensitive issue of the partnership such as terrorism, security, migration, but also trade and EPAs have to be precisely dealt with in a Pan African perspective.
- It is striking that still in 2017 the European Commission in its Communication speaks of Sub-Saharan countries and Mediterranean countries as totally separated entities (in the European cooperation framework). It is clear that this segmentation of African and the related separated cooperation instruments add to the inefficiency of the dialogue and difficulty to achieve sustainable results. For the European Commission today this can be overcome by ad hoc consultation, including with the Mediterranean African countries, if and when necessary).
- At a time when all African countries are members of the AU, including Morocco, and when the AU is embarking in a new reform agenda, is accelerating its integration process (notably with the creation of a pan-African market), and is strengthening its governance institutions and institutional architecture; at a time when the AU is progressively appearing as the representative of Africa in the global governance¹⁸, it is not acceptable that the EU continues to ignore the unity of Africa and the AU which is its mouthpiece if it has to have a meaningful and sustainable political dialogue and partnership with Africa.
- The renewal of the European cooperation agreement for the next 20 years, following the Cotonou agreement, offers a unique opportunity to adapt the Africa/EU partnership (as was agreed in 2007) to the new geopolitical context, in order that the EU/Africa relationship is anchored in a innovative political and cooperation framework that promotes the interaction and synergies from the local to the continental level of governance, thereby giving an impetus to the process of political African integration (and the strengthening of its institutions), which in turn will increase the relevance and efficiency of the European cooperation with Africa.
- This new impetus and conditions for strengthening the EU/Africa relationship should be part of the agenda at the Summit. The Summit should adopt the principle of a regular political dialogue on this issue with the relevant African authorities during the years 2017up to 2020. The results of the Summit will be key to clarify the issue of the post-Cotonou framework and confirm the leading role of the AU and its institutions in the upcoming negotiations (for the time being this issue is dealt with at the level of the ACP ambassadors in Brussels¹⁹).

¹⁷ It is already agreed that the specificity of an ad hoc financial instrument (such EDF) will be abandoned and that the future financial instrument will be integrated in the EU budget. (as the DCI is) ; which means that the rules and conditions will be totally different.

¹⁸ See for example in the UN and World Urban Agenda. Africa has been able to present African proposals at the different UN conferences on climate change, Habitat III , SDGs agenda ...

¹⁹ The ACP ambassadors are today totally “absorbed “ in the day-to-day financial and administrative management of the EDF . The discussion on the next financial framework must take place at the political level related to the future regional agreement to be built around the AU.

- It is important to recall that to date, while recognizing the need for a "regional dimension" of the future cooperation agreement the EU seems inclined to maintaining the ACP umbrella. Its proposal concerning Africa is still very vague and still does not recognize the unity of Africa nor the need to put the AU at the heart of the new framework²⁰ as co-responsible party in the partnership .
- At the Summit , the EU and Africa must engage in the realization of the commitments taken in 2007 and address the institutional memory regarding the long term strategic objectives of the JAES.

Local Authorities and the pre-Summit

- For the Summit preparation a series of preparatory meetings of major stakeholders are planned with the EC unit in charge of the EU/Africa Abidjan Summit. Surprisingly, all key stakeholders are part of this preparatory process with meetings taking place with corresponding Africa/EU stakeholders for the private sector, civil society, and youth, but none for local authorities. It is in order to bridge this gap that United Cities and Local Governments of Africa (UCLG Africa) and the Council of Municipalities and Regions of Europe (CEMR) are proposing to set up a AU/EU Local Government Forum, in order that the political dialogue involves all relevant stakeholders who are party to the governance of both regions. It is proposed to hold the AU/EU Local Government Forum back-to-back to the Summit, the day before the holding of the Summit in Abidjan. A preparatory meeting of the Forum is scheduled in Brussels in July 2017, in the framework of the European Decentralized Cooperation Days organized by the European Commission and the Committee of Regions of Europe. It is advisable that this process has the buy-in of the AU, which it should also follow up closely. One proposal for doing it is to designate one representative of the AU in Brussels to attend the preparatory meeting of the Forum in July 2017.

Expected Results of the Summit

What are the expected results of the summit? A photo opportunity , quick deliverables or dialogue on the fundamentals of the building of an AU/EU partnership?

- whereas the declaration of the 1st Lisbon summit stated that ...“... Our common future requires an audacious approach, one that allows us to face with confidence the demands of our globalizing world ... We are resolved to build a new strategic political partnership for the future ... We are determined to give this new strategic partnership the necessary means and instruments that will enable it to fulfill the Joint Strategy... ” (Excerpts from the Lisbon Declaration – 2nd EU Africa Summit, Lisbon, 8-9 December 2007).
- it appeared as the years went on that the level of ambitions of the AU /Africa Summits was gradually reduced to “ quick deliverables “ , or even a photo opportunity for the EU and African leaders . For the 2017 Summit to take place in Abidjan, the question of expected long-term results is not even mentioned .
- One could have expected that the AU/EU relationship being at a strategic moment , at the crossroads of the renewal of the cooperation framework (2020) and the search of a new

²⁰ The EC just recognizes the role of AU in the peace and security agenda (because of the Peace Facility) ; based on an ad hoc arrangement

political partnership , responding to the challenges of the globalized world , the systemic crises facing both Africa and Europe and the need strengthen Africa as world partner, the objective of the 7th summit would have been to recognize the shortcomings of the present JAES , and to have at last , a serious and credible political dialogue on the fundamental conditions for the building of a new and long term partnership , and the setting up of the appropriate institutional framework and the creation the necessary , means and instrument. The added value of this new partnership being its continental dimension and recognition at last to treat Africa as one .

- Unfortunately, it appeared clearly at the last foreign ministerial meeting, where the president of the AU was invited, that the head of the EEAS (F. Mogherini) continues to avoid talking of any long term political framework for a renewed partnership and maintain the ambiguity on the part of the EU, taking the key issues of peace and security , migration (compact) and investment facility totally out of the ACP context. ²¹
- It is clear that the forthcoming Summit offers the best political opportunity to the African party to clarify this ambiguous position and to establish a clear link with the forthcoming negotiation under the responsibility of DEVCO, and questioning the gap between the 2 entities.
- As a matter of fact, the pre-Summit of local Authorities, based on the African contribution to the reflection on the EU-Africa relations ²² can offer a major support to the AU, to address these issues, and make concrete proposals, integrating the key role of the African local governments in the African political integration process and in the EU/Africa political dialogue.

Rabat, 1 June 2017

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Secretary General

²¹ Whereas the programmes are financed on ACP envelopes

²² UCLGA document June 2016: contribution to the ...