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**JOINT COMMUNICATION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE  
COUNCIL**

**Towards a comprehensive Strategy with Africa**

## **Towards a comprehensive strategy with Africa**

Africa is Europe's closest neighbour. The ties that bind Africa and the European Union (EU) are broad and deep as a result of history, proximity and shared interests. With the 6<sup>th</sup> Summit between the African Union (AU) and the EU and the conclusion of the negotiations of the new partnership agreement between the EU and the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States, 2020 will be a pivotal year in living up to our ambition of an even stronger partnership. **In Africa, new prospects and challenges are emerging from economic, political, social, technological, demographic, climate and environmental changes.** We need to partner with Africa, our twin continent, to tackle together the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and to further our common interests and future.

Africa, in all its diversity, is home to over 1 billion people. It boasts the youngest, fastest-growing middle-class in the world. Africa's young people have the potential to transform their continent's political, economic and social prospects, but for this they need decent jobs, a place in society, access to social services, energy and infrastructure, and an active role in determining their countries' future. In particular, African women are key drivers of sustainable growth, development and peace. Responding to their aspirations will determine the future of the continent.

**Africa has been recording steady economic growth.** In 2018, six of the ten fastest growing economies in the world were African. Thirty African States are middle-income or high-income countries. The continent's economic expansion has the potential to accelerate and drive broader social and human development with new opportunities arising from the digital transformation, the demographic dividend, low-cost renewable energy, the green transition and a low-carbon, blue and circular economy. This reflects the vision of the African leaders transformative initiatives, including the African Union's Agenda 2063, the African Continental Free Trade Area, the African Visa-free Area, a Single African Digital Market and the Single African Air Transport Market.

**At the same time, a number of challenges remain.** Thirty-six of the world's most fragile countries are in Africa, often weakened by conflicts. The continent hosts 390 million people living below the poverty line. Growth has not always been inclusive, notably due to governance challenges. Africa, as the rest of the world, is also affected by the consequences of climate change, environmental degradation and pollution. The EU and Africa can work together to seize the opportunities and address these challenges and develop actions that ensure stability, peace, security, human rights, democracy, gender equality, sustainable livelihoods, sustainable economic growth based on healthy ecosystems, social cohesion and good governance.

To benefit both continents, **our partnership should be based on a clear understanding of our respective and mutual interests and responsibilities, reflecting the comprehensiveness and maturity of our relationship.** These interests include: developing a green growth model; improving the business environment and investment climate; boosting education, research and innovation, the creation of decent jobs and value addition through sustainable investments; maximising the benefits of regional economic integration and trade; ensuring food security and rural development; combatting climate change; ensuring access to sustainable energy and protecting biodiversity and natural resources; promoting peace and security; ensuring well-governed migration and mobility; engaging together on the global scene to strengthen the multilateral rules-based order, promoting universal values, human rights, democracy, rule of law and gender equality.

Positive developments in one of these areas depend on progress in other areas. Such progress can only be achieved by working together on the basis of shared global commitments, such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and Agenda 2063.

**Africa's potential attracts increased interest from many players on the world scene.** This is a welcome development, as it increases Africa's options and creates room for synergies. It also means that Europe, with the EU and its Member States working together in unison, must adapt the way it engages with Africa, ensuring its positioning is in line with our mutual interests, and giving more prominence to values, key principles, and good regulatory practices. The EU and its Member States are Africa's biggest partner on all accounts, be it in terms of investment, trade, official development assistance, or security. This reliable, long-term, multi-faceted partnership should now also translate into a strong political alliance. Stronger political, economic and cultural ties between Europe and Africa are crucial in a multipolar world where collective action is sorely needed. Enhanced cooperation on global and multilateral affairs will be at the heart of our common action.

To strengthen the EU's strategic alliance with Africa, the European Commission and the High Representative of the Union are proposing to engage discussions with African partners in view of jointly defining at the upcoming EU-AU Summit a new comprehensive EU strategy with Africa that could be built on five partnerships:

1. **A partnership for green transition and energy access;**
2. **A partnership for digital transformation;**
3. **A partnership for sustainable growth and jobs;**
4. **A partnership for peace and governance;** and
5. **A partnership on migration and mobility.**

This new strategy and these partnerships are in line with the common priorities set by the EU and the African Union at the 2017 Summit in Abidjan. It takes inspiration notably from the very fruitful discussions between the European Commission and the African Union Commission, which took place in Addis Ababa on 27 February 2020 and reflects the EU's proposals for the ongoing exchanges with African partners in view of **defining a joint partnership** agenda at the upcoming EU-AU Summit in October 2020. EU-Africa engagement will continue at bilateral, regional and continental level.

#### **I. Partners for green transition and energy access**

The fight against climate change and environmental degradation is this generation's defining task. Therefore Europe and Africa are allies in the development of sustainable energy, transport solutions, farming, circular and blue economies which can underpin Africa's economic growth. To achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, the EU and Africa alike need to opt for a **low-carbon, resource efficient and climate-resilient future** in line with the Paris Agreement. African countries are particularly vulnerable to climate change as it risks jeopardising ongoing progress on sustainable development.

We must work towards healthy ecosystems, limiting and halting global warming, reducing vulnerabilities and enhancing opportunities for people and ecosystems to adapt. This requires

stepping up efforts on climate change mitigation and resilience as well as taking adequate adaptation measures in a socially sustainable way.

**Innovation is key** to drive green transition. Investments should therefore be geared towards strengthening scientific capacities in Africa by providing access and local adaptation to technologies. This will enable African countries to pursue a low-carbon, climate resilient and green growth trajectory, that avoids inefficient technologies and resists new investment in coal power generation, deploying instead new renewable energy sources and hydrogen production. Trade should also facilitate the adoption of innovative, sustainable business models and play a leading role to shape a climate-neutral future.

Africa is home to vast **natural capital**, unique **biodiversity and ecosystems such as forests**. This offers significant opportunities for social and economic development and can contribute to lasting nature-based solutions to climate change mitigation and adaptation. At the same time, there is a risk of overexploitation and depletion in addition to the threats posed by unsustainable fishing and management of water resources, pollution, desertification, and, in the case of coastal areas, rising sea levels.

A clean **circular economy** with sustainable and fair **value chains** will be key for the transition to a sustainable economic model. This means that the value of products, materials and resources are maintained in the economy for as long as possible. It also implies that waste is minimised, while natural resources, wastewater and sanitation are managed in a sustainable way. This requires enhanced cooperation between the EU and Africa on a responsible raw materials sector, secure and clean industrial value chains, respecting ambitious environmental and climate standards.

African cities have a key role to play in the green transition; the EU should support the development of green and **smart urbanisation** models and businesses in Africa, thereby tackling pollution.

To address the needs of its growing population and economy, Africa needs to double its energy supply by 2040 while ensuring access to electricity for 600 million people. This means putting the focus on resilient infrastructure, cleaner, more sustainable and secure energy access, maximising renewable energy sources, energy transition and efficiency across all value chains, as well as regional integration for energy security. The EU should build with Africa a strong partnership on sustainable energy for both rural and urban populations.

The EU and Africa must join efforts to reach the Sustainable Development Goal of zero hunger and address the challenges of nutrition and food security by **boosting safe and sustainable agri-food systems**. A partnership on agriculture would support the development of environment-friendly agricultural practices, promote local production and integrate biodiversity concerns. This includes setting sanitary and phytosanitary standards and the protection of natural resources. Trade between the EU and Africa plays an instrumental role supporting opportunities for sustainable food systems.

At the same time, agricultural food production, processing and distribution provides the bulk of direct employment and income in Africa particularly in rural areas contributing thus to a balanced territorial development. It has the potential to provide employment for a significant

part of the 800 million African people that are estimated to enter the workforce within the next 30 years.<sup>1</sup>

**Proposed Action 1 – Partner with Africa to maximise the benefits of the green transition and minimise threats to the environment in full compliance with the Paris Agreement.<sup>2</sup>**

To do this, it is proposed that the EU supports the implementation of Nationally Determined Contributions, help devise ambitious long-term strategies for reducing emissions and contribute to the development of national adaptation plans.

By supporting integrated national financing frameworks, the EU continues working with countries in their efforts to mobilise and align a wide range of financing sources with their sustainable development priorities. The EU should partner with Africa on green finance, on sustainable energy and energy efficiency through the launch of a ‘Green Energy’ initiative, building on the recommendations of the High Level Platform for Sustainable Energy Investments in Africa. The EU and Africa should also share experiences in managing a socially just transition away from fossil fuels.

In partnership with Africa, the EU should encourage better ocean governance, including the development of a sustainable fisheries and blue economy. The EU is ready to scale up the fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing to address the environmental threat it poses to the sustainability of fish stocks, the profits of fishermen and coastal communities who follow the rules.

Finally, the EU and Africa should take joint action to protect and reduce pressure on forests, water and marine ecosystems while enhancing their management by tackling illegal harvesting and combating environmental crime, thereby tackling the drivers of biodiversity loss. This can be done inter alia by launching a ‘NaturAfrica’ initiative.

## **II. Partners for digital transformation**

Access to safe and affordable digital services needs to be ensured for all through **investment** in infrastructure and reliable sources of electricity. Establishing a **regulatory environment** for competitive and harmonised regional connectivity markets is also key. Unfolding the potential benefits of digitalisation requires a robust regulatory framework, in areas such as data and consumer protection, digital financial services, cybercrime and e-governance. Specific **policies** are needed to ensure full digital inclusion and digital equality for women and marginalised communities.

It is estimated that a 10% increase in digital coverage could result in an increase of over 1% in African GDP. Through adequate reforms and investments to support the African aspirations to build a single African digital market, and building on a new digital transformation strategy, Africa can harness digitalisation as a **driver for growth across all sectors** of the economy. Digital infrastructures and support for digital entrepreneurship and

<sup>1</sup> UNDESA world population prospects 2017.

<sup>2</sup> This proposed action is in line with Sustainable Development Goals 2 (zero hunger), 6 (clean water), 7 (affordable and clean energy), 8 (decent work and economic growth), 9 (industry, innovation and infrastructure), 11 (sustainable cities and communities), 12 (responsible consumption and production), 13 (climate action), 14 (life below water), and 15 (life on land).

innovation have the potential to provide much-needed jobs for the 15 to 20 million young people who are entering the workforce every year.

Digital transformation can also modernise traditional sectors such as agriculture; improve access to quality services; increase public revenue; and make the public sector more transparent and accountable, thereby enhancing public trust in governments. It can also transform the **delivery of public services**, including education, training, energy and healthcare, including improving access to health services in remote areas and by facilitating diagnostics and treatments. **E-governance** will protect consumers and privacy and support the fight against corruption. **E-commerce and digital financial services** have the potential to boost Africa's economic integration by improving access to goods and services across the continent. Digital services can also increase access to transaction accounts and digital finance solutions for banking, insurance or payment services, including remittances.

The acceleration of the **digitalisation of public administration** is a necessary pre-condition to create value for citizens and businesses across Europe and Africa and an essential element to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. To this end, strengthened cooperation in the implementation of interoperable digital solutions would be useful to address digital skills gaps, promote the use of open data, strengthen cybersecurity and harness new technologies such as artificial intelligence, blockchain and big data. In that regard, capacity building in the public sector is important to support the broader digital transformation agenda.

Digitalisation must be accompanied by **strong measures to ensure security**, resilience and deterrence against cybercrime, including international cooperation within established legal frameworks. The EU and Africa should deepen their collaboration in this regard, including to prevent the exploitation of the Internet for terrorism and violent extremism.

Appropriate legislation and operational capacity will be necessary to achieve progress in these areas and curb online threats to democracy and human rights. With respect to addressing disinformation, the EU has developed useful instruments and will continue to work closely with its African partners to find common approaches and share best practices.

The digital economy calls for better digital skills and literacy and generates high demand for a qualified, local workforce in all sectors that can benefit from the digital transformation. **Quality learning and vocational training opportunities** delivered by public and private institutions must be further developed.

The use of **space data and technology** contributes to smart and safe transport, green cities, sustainable management of natural resources and efficient agriculture. The open and free data provided by the EU Space programmes can boost a nascent African space private sector, enabling start-ups and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to develop local innovative solutions and services. The Earth observation monitoring of natural resources, of land use, of inland water resources, and of marine and coastal ecosystems can underpin policy and decision-making in Africa.

**Proposed Action 2 – Partner with Africa to boost the continent's digital transformation.**<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> This proposed action is in line with Sustainable Development Goals 4 (quality education), 5 (gender equality), and 9 (industry, innovation and infrastructure).

This requires focus on regulatory convergence, including strengthening personal data protection, investment in key enabling sustainable infrastructure, the digitalisation of public administrations for the provision of e-services, greater education and training opportunities as well as increasing secure data flows. The EU should also pursue its cooperation with Africa on artificial intelligence, which should be responsibly developed and used.

### III. Partners for sustainable growth and jobs

The close ties and geographic proximity between the EU and Africa make them natural allies in bringing about inclusive and sustainable economic growth on both continents. Economic opportunities and decent job creation in Africa and the EU could be substantially enhanced through joint action on four priority fronts:

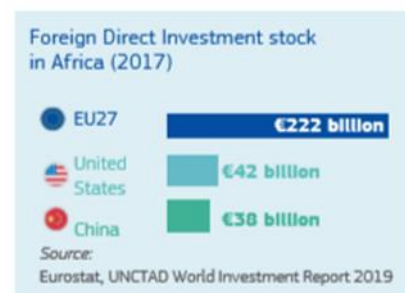
- (a) boosting trade and sustainable investments in Africa;
- (b) improving the investment climate and business environment;
- (c) increasing access to quality education, skills, research, innovation, health and social rights;
- (d) advancing regional and continental economic integration.

The European Green Deal<sup>4</sup>, is both the EU's new growth strategy and a plan to make Europe the world's first climate-neutral continent by 2050. With its huge renewable energy and biodiversity potential, Africa is extremely well placed to develop and implement sustainable solutions as its economy grows.

Building on the initial successes of the Africa-Europe Alliance on Sustainable Investment and Jobs and on the work by the joint task forces on digital economy, energy, transport and rural Africa, the EU proposes to turn the Alliance<sup>5</sup> into the central pillar of economic relations between the two continents.

#### a. Sustainable investments

**Public and private investments are crucial to stimulating entrepreneurship and sustainable economic diversification.** The focus should be: core quality infrastructure that is climate-resilient; access to finance; better data to help identify the most efficient and effective deployment of new sustainable energy sources; the development of a value-adding private sector with high potential for economic growth and the creation of decent jobs. With a foreign direct investment stock reaching EUR 222 billion, **the EU is the largest investor in Africa**, well ahead of the United States (EUR 42 billion) or China (EUR 38 billion)<sup>6</sup>. Under the umbrella of the Africa-Europe



<sup>4</sup> Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, The European Green Deal, 11 December 2019, COM(2019)640 final.

<sup>5</sup> Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council and the Council on a new Africa-Europe Alliance for Sustainable Investment and Jobs: Taking our partnership for investment and jobs to the next level, 12 September 2018, COM(2018)643 final.

<sup>6</sup> United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, World Investment Report 2018, 2016 figures.



Alliance for Sustainable Investment and Jobs, EU instruments, such as the External Lending Mandate, the African, Caribbean and Pacific Investment Facility and, more recently, the European External Investment Plan, have unlocked considerable investments in Africa.

These include investments in transport, clean energy and agricultural sectors and in private sector development. Africa and the EU need to continue working together to further accelerate such sustainable investments.

In accordance with the Commission's proposal for a Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI)<sup>7</sup>, the EU should be able to make **full use of various EU financial instruments**, such as budgetary guarantees and blending under the European Fund for Sustainable Development, which should be rolled-out as of 2021. **Under the proposed NDICI, the External Action Guarantee could provide up to EUR 60 billion in guarantee operations to stimulate sustainable investments over the period 2021-2027, focusing primarily on Africa.**

These operations should be deployed in **coordinated action with European development finance institutions**. Together, these institutions have the biggest presence and focus on Sub-Saharan Africa with a combined portfolio accounting for a third of all development finance institution activity and representing three quarters of the most risk absorbing capital. A more joined-up approach between EU financial instruments and European development finance institutions will increase the mobilisation of private investors and domestic resources, accelerate the shift towards more responsible and climate neutral investments, and spur the development of the private sector in Africa.

## b. Regional and continental economic integration

**Moving economic integration forward at regional and continental levels** is an essential component of a coherent, sustainable economic strategy.

We welcome the African Continental Free Trade Agreement in force since May 2019 - which creates significant momentum for continental integration - and the ultimate ambition of a continental single market. It will increase intra-African trade, including with countries in North Africa, diversify exports, and improve product quality and safety.

Building reliable and sustainable continental energy, transport and digital systems for people, businesses and industries will support the development of value chains that can contribute to an African Continental Free Trade Area. The EU and the African Union have a common interest in a stable, rules-based multilateral trading system centred on the World Trade Organisation (WTO).



<sup>7</sup> Commission proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument, 14 June 2018, COM(2018)460 final.



**Proposed Action 3 – Partner with Africa to substantially increase environmentally, socially and financially sustainable investments that are resilient to the impacts of climate change; to promote investment opportunities by scaling up the use of innovative financing mechanisms<sup>8</sup>; and to boost regional and continental economic integration, particularly through the African Continental Free Trade Agreement.<sup>9</sup>**

The latter will be done by making political, technical and financial support for the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (for which EU support already grew from EUR 12.5 million in 2014-2017 to EUR 60 million in 2018-2020) a top priority. We are ready to share our customs union and single market experience. Cooperation on the strategic corridors that facilitate intra-African and Africa-Europe trade and investment, and improve sustainable, efficient, and safe connectivity between both continents, will also be enhanced by the long-term prospect of creating a comprehensive continent-to-continent free-trade area. EU business associations can play an important role in the Business Forum organised in the margins of the upcoming AU-EU Summit. Cooperation and dialogue, business partnerships along critical value chains, as well as the deepening of Economic Partnership Agreements, and other EU trade agreements with African partner countries, are the tools through which this can be achieved.



\*\*The Agreement in the form of an Exchange of Letters between the European Union and the Kingdom of Morocco on the amendment of Protocols 1 and 4 to the Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreement, which entered into force on 19 July 2019, provides for the extension of tariff preferences to products originating in the non-self-governing territory of Western Sahara.

<sup>8</sup> This proposed action is in line with Sustainable Development Goals 1 (no poverty), 2 (zero hunger), 7 (affordable and clean energy), 8 (decent work and economic growth), and 9 (industry, innovation and infrastructure).

<sup>9</sup> This proposed action is in line with Sustainable Development Goal 8 (decent work and economic growth).

### c. Business environment and investment climate

Boosting private sector investment is crucial to speeding up sustainable economic growth and the creation of decent jobs. Increasing investor confidence in Africa will crucially depend on improved security, effective, transparent and stable regulatory frameworks, combined with investment facilitation and protection, macro-economic stability, robust financial systems, access to credit, innovation and necessary data to underpin the green transition.

Policy reform is also essential in key areas such as: governance; rule of law; the judicial system; public financial management, (including quality and effectiveness of public expenditure); debt management; transparent public procurement; competition; standards and trade facilitation; investment frameworks and green growth taxation. This also includes the fight against corruption, fraud, illicit financial flows, money laundering and terrorism financing.

**Proposed Action 4 – Partner with Africa to attract investors by supporting African states in adopting policies and regulatory reforms that improve the business environment and investment climate, including a level-playing field for business.<sup>10</sup>**

With this in mind, it is proposed that the EU develops more ambitious arrangements to facilitate, attract and support investment in Africa. The EU should further develop the use of platforms such as the Sustainable Business for Africa Platform and the International Platform on Sustainable Finance. In parallel, it is important to promote regulatory reforms and to strengthen the institutional capacity of public authorities, business organisations and entrepreneurs, including social entrepreneurs, while reinforcing capacity-building related to SME access to markets and finance. In this respect, **European business organisations should continue to support entrepreneurship in Africa.**

The EU should also encourage regulatory dialogue with public administrations to exchange good practices. Budget support dialogues should continue to be a key instrument in promoting reforms. Finally, trade agreements and investment provisions to attract, facilitate and support sustainable investment will also contribute to improving the business climate.

### d. Education, skills, research, innovation, health and social rights

Investing in people, in particular in youth, is of paramount importance for building an even stronger partnership between our two continents. Within the next 15 years, some 375 million young people are expected to reach working age in Africa.

Currently less than 10% of African 18-24 year olds are enrolled in some form of post-secondary education or training. Providing young people with education, training and skills and preparing them for the new opportunities of the future labour market is a common strategic priority. In order for young women and men to fully reap economic opportunities, they will need greater access to inclusive and equitable quality education, including higher education, learning and training opportunities. This requires that **special attention be paid to girls and women.** Supporting women's empowerment requires tackling discriminatory regulations and practices and making sure that they have access to knowledge, skills, microcredit and finance for entrepreneurship.

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<sup>10</sup> This proposed action is in line with Sustainable Development Goals 1 (no poverty), 9 (industry, innovation and infrastructure) and 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions).

To increase graduates' employability and their sense of entrepreneurship, education systems need to better align skills and learning outcomes to labour market demand and new emerging sectors, in particular in the digital sector and green and climate-friendly technologies. Incentivising collaboration between academia, research and local business and supporting innovative learning approaches will also be fundamental. Stepping up cooperation in the cultural sector also holds great potential for job creation and closer people-to-people contacts.

**Decent work** opportunities will be key to providing prospects to rapidly growing African youth. This goes hand in hand with a healthy workforce, environment and decent working conditions. In particular, this requires health and safety at work, inclusive social protection systems, universal health coverage, access to quality health services, including family planning, and fighting against inequality and, discrimination, **child labour** (especially in the agricultural sector) and forced labour. It also requires transitioning from the informal into the formal economy. In this respect, effective **social dialogue** with public authorities, workers' and employers' organisations will improve both the social and business climate.

The EU and Africa also have a common interest in promoting investments in basic **health care**, clean water, housing and in developing infrastructure and capacity to cope with outbreaks of diseases.

**Proposed Action 5 — Partner with Africa to rapidly enhance learning, knowledge and skills, research and innovation capacities, particularly for women and youth, protecting and improving social rights, and eradicating child labour.**<sup>11</sup>

**It is proposed that the EU scales up EU-Africa academic and scientific cooperation, including on technical and vocational education and training, and enhancing skills development** (also in association with EU businesses) with a view to creating a knowledge society and economy. The EU should facilitate the mobility of students, teachers, trainers, and researchers. The EU should also support capacity building within Africa; quality training for teachers; the development of research and innovation capacities; harnessing the interaction between education, science, technology and innovation for improved learning. Besides, the EU should seek to engage in labour dialogues with African countries to protect social rights, and, in particular, to eradicate child labour. The EU proposes to upgrade its support to the strengthening of health systems.

#### **IV. Partners for peace, security, governance and resilience**

Ensuring long-lasting peace and security in Africa is as much in Africa's interest as it is in the EU's. Peace and security are key conditions for sustainable development.

While the objective is to achieve peace and security throughout Africa, efforts should be made in priority in regions where tensions are the highest. African states, supported by regional and continental organisations, bear the main responsibility to act, as they are the foremost guarantors of their own security. But the EU is willing to markedly step up its support to Africa in cooperation with the international community. Resilience should in particular be at the heart of African and EU efforts to address protracted conflict and fragility.

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<sup>11</sup> This proposed action is in line with Sustainable Development Goals 1 (no poverty), 3 (good health and wellbeing), 4 (quality education), 5 (gender equality), 8 (decent work and economic growth) and 10 (Reduced inequalities).

Instability in Africa is no longer defined by inter-state conflict but by restricted state control over territories and maritime domains, social cohesion, home-grown extremism, inter-community conflicts, proliferation of armed groups, terrorism and transnational crime, including cybercrime. Climate change, increased competition for natural resources, environmental challenges, lack of basic social services, pandemics, and other health threats are additional sources of instability.

Governments face the challenge of delivering on the political and economic expectations of a growing youth population including on human rights whose neglect are exacerbating latent community tensions.

#### **a. Peace and security**

While many good results have been achieved through the EU-Africa partnership on peace and security – notably captured in the EU-AU Memorandum of Understanding on Peace, Security and Governance – the complexity of the efforts and the deteriorating situation in certain regions require us to markedly step up our engagement together. This means also working with international partners, notably the United Nations. The AU-led “Silencing the Guns” initiative is important in this context.

EU instruments and African capacities should be further aligned. There is a clear need to review and further strengthen our cooperation in a more strategic and tailored way, based on mutual commitments, accountability and ownership. Despite progress on the AU Peace Fund, the financing of African-led peace support initiatives, including through UN-assessed contributions, remains to be addressed. The EU and Africa also need to adapt their way of working together in fragile areas in order to have an impact on governance at the local level.

The EU’s current integrated approach mobilises the full range of its instruments including top political diplomacy, regular consultations, mediation for conflict prevention and resolution, restrictive measures, and cooperation on counter-terrorism, the fight against organised crime including trafficking in human beings, and maritime security. Through the ‘African Peace Facility’<sup>12</sup>, the EU supports African-led peace operations and the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). At the operational level, Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions as well as other security and defence deployments by EU Member States make a tangible contribution to peace and security in the Sahel, the Horn of Africa, the Gulf of Guinea, the Lake Chad Basin and the Central African Republic.

**Proposed Action 6 – Partner with Africa to adapt and deepen the EU’s support to African peace efforts through a more structured and strategic cooperation, with a particular focus on regions where tensions and vulnerabilities are the highest.**<sup>13</sup>

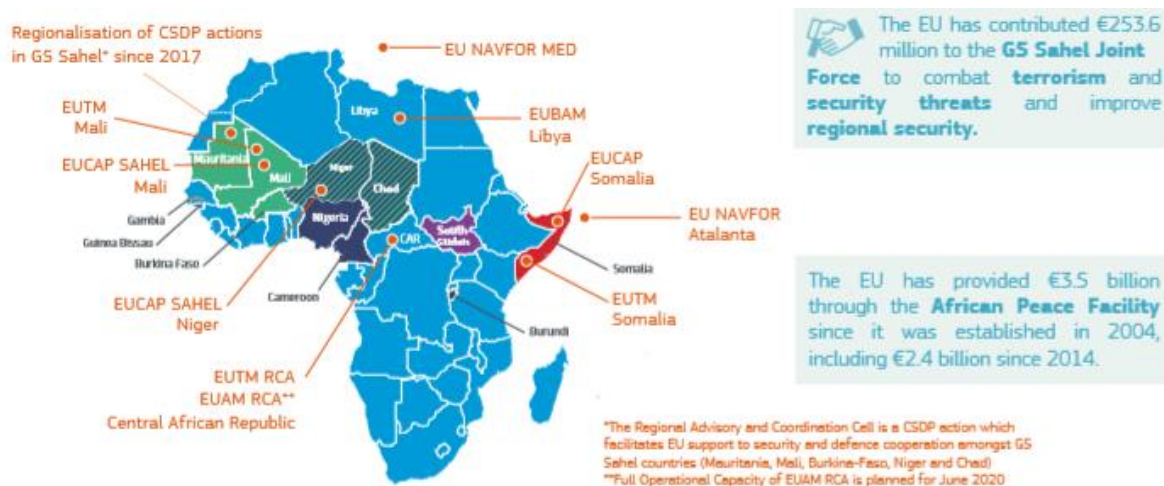
In order to achieve our objectives, summits and high-level diplomacy will notably focus on developing strategies and concrete steps to help solve crises in, for example, Libya, the Sahel, the Great Lakes region, or the Horn of Africa. The EU proposes to support the efforts of its African partners to address the full spectrum of challenges and increase their overall resilience. The EU also proposes to support African capacity in defence and security, using the proposed European Peace Facility, its CSDP missions and security and defence-related tools to better address the challenges faced by African security and defence actors on the

<sup>12</sup> For which the EU has committed EUR 3.5 billion since 2004.

<sup>13</sup> This proposed action is in line with Sustainable Development Goal 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions).

ground. The EU proposes to strengthen its ongoing efforts in ensuring compliance with human rights, protection of civilians and international humanitarian law. Actions will be carried out in close cooperation with EU Member States, the African Union, African regional organisations, the UN and other key partners – including through trilateral AU-EU-UN cooperation. Special attention will also be paid to the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda and of the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda.

The EU should adapt and deepen its support to African peace efforts with a focus on an integrated approach to conflict and crises, acting at all stages of the conflict cycle, investing in prevention fight against radicalisation, resolution and stabilisation and better linking humanitarian, development, peace and security efforts.



### b. Governance, democracy, human rights and the rule of law

**Security and development can only be sustainable in the long term when rooted in full respect of human rights without discrimination on any ground<sup>14</sup>, democratic principles, gender equality and the rule of law.** Recognising that all human rights are universal, indivisible and interdependent and interrelated, the EU, and African countries are committed to promoting and protecting all human rights and fundamental freedoms globally.

Good governance, effective and inclusive economic, social, education and health policies, equal access to basic social services, equal access to and fair redistribution of resources, equal access to justice and open and inclusive societies foster peace and stability and act as a foundation for jobs and growth, attracting investment. The safeguard and protection of children’s rights merits particular attention.

**Proposed Action 7 – Partner with Africa on integrating good governance, democracy, human rights, the rule of law and gender equality in action and cooperation.<sup>15</sup>**

Respect for universal human rights – be they political, civil, economic, social or cultural - will remain a key trait of our partnership with all relevant actors and supporting major

<sup>14</sup> Including on grounds or sex, race, ethnic or social origin, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, disability, age, sexual orientation and gender identity.

<sup>15</sup> This proposed action is in line with Sustainable Development Goals 10 (inequalities), 15 (gender equality) and 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions).

initiatives such as the African Governance Architecture. A more strategic and structured approach to human rights political dialogues with African countries will be adopted, in complementarity with regular consultations with African regional organisations and the well-established AU-EU Human Rights Dialogue.

The EU seeks to continue supporting credible, inclusive and transparent electoral and democratic processes, including through increased coordination between the AU and EU on electoral observations and their follow-up. The EU also intends to step up cooperation on democratic governance and rule of law on both continents, including accountability and transparency of public institutions; independent and impartial justice, corruption and transnational crimes as well as trafficking in human beings.

The EU should support concrete initiatives to reinforce civil society organisations and human rights defenders; to end impunity, ensure redress for victims, and foster reconciliation. Initiatives will be undertaken for and with women and youth (including children), supporting their economic empowerment, ensuring their active involvement in decision-making processes of civic and political life, promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights, and preventing and eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls, including conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence.

### **c. Resilience**

Resilience, peace, security and governance are intimately linked. Therefore EU should partner with African stakeholders to enhance resilience, taking into account full spectrum of challenges deriving from root causes of conflicts to impact of crises. It will be done by deepening EU support to African peace efforts via integrated approach acting at all stages of the cycle of conflicts and crises as they unfold. This entails prevention, resolution and stabilisation efforts by well targeted humanitarian, development, peace and security actions in accordance to their added value and respective mandates.

<p><b>Proposed Action 8 – secure resilience by linking humanitarian, development, peace and security interventions at all stages of the cycle of conflicts and crises.</b></p>
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## **V. Partners on migration and mobility**

Demographic trends, the aspiration for economic opportunity and political stability, flight from crises and conflicts, and adaptation to climate change and environmental degradation, all mean that the levels of **migration and forced displacement** will continue to pose both **challenges and opportunities** for our two continents.

Well-managed migration and mobility can have a positive impact on countries of origin, transit and destination alike. African migration and mobility flows are largely intra-African and regimes for free movement are being put in place at both regional and continental level. Some African Union Member States host a substantial number of migrants, refugees and forcibly displaced persons and thus face significant challenges and opportunities. Migration also represent challenges and opportunities for EU Member States.

Since 2015, the EU and African countries have developed a **joint approach** to managing migration and mobility.<sup>16</sup> This approach has led to a reduction in irregular arrivals in Europe, improved cooperation on the fight against migrant smuggling, and in developing more sustainable approaches for refugees in hosting countries in Africa.

Yet significant challenges remain. Sub-Saharan Africa hosts more than a quarter of the world's refugee population. Dangerous journeys and attempts to cross the Mediterranean continue to cause loss of life and to fuel criminal business. To address such challenges Africa and the EU need a **balanced, coherent and comprehensive approach to migration and mobility**, guided by the **principles of solidarity, partnership and shared responsibility** and based on the respect for human rights and international law. The joint goal for EU and African partners should be sustainable and effective migration management.

Across all activities, the EU will continue to pay particular attention to respecting its core values and in particular to taking into account the particular needs of persons in vulnerable situations, including women, children, unaccompanied minors and persons with disabilities.

The protection of those in need, such as refugees, internally displaced persons and other vulnerable displaced persons should remain a common priority. The EU remains committed to helping African partners address refugee crises and find durable solutions for refugees in hosting countries. The EU should equally continue efforts to resettle persons in need of international protection to Europe.

Strengthened engagement to prevent irregular migration and putting an end to the loss of life at sea is needed. This includes stepping up the fight against the smuggling of migrants, with an emphasis on addressing the role of criminal networks and should go hand in hand with the fight against trafficking in human beings. Capacity building for effective migration management, including effective border management is particularly important, and the EU should continue to support African partners in this area. Further action is also needed to tackle the root causes of irregular migration and forced displacement building on the varied support provided through the EU Trust Fund for Africa.

Cooperation on return and readmission, and effective return rates should be improved. The EU and Africa should work towards more efficient and sustainable mechanisms, including through support for voluntary returns, and through the effective implementation and conclusion of readmission arrangements. Returns should be accompanied by sustainable reintegration in the countries of origin.

In parallel, stepped up cooperation on legal migration can provide significant two-way benefits, providing employment opportunities that match the needs of the labour market on both continents. Projects on legal and circular migration and labour mobility with African countries and efforts to improve the development benefits of migration, including through facilitation of remittances, could significantly contribute to regular and safe migration and mobility.

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<sup>16</sup> This includes the joint Valletta action plan, the Khartoum and Rabat processes, the EU partnership framework on migration for bilateral relations with partner countries, the joint AU-EU-UN Trilateral Task Force on Migration, or the commitment to develop a joint framework on continent-to-continent migration and mobility dialogue.



**Proposed Action 9 – Partner with Africa to ensure a balanced, coherent and comprehensive approach to migration and mobility .<sup>17</sup>**

This will be done by embedding migration and mobility in a balanced manner in our overall partnership at all levels. We will pursue a ‘whole-of-route’ approach, working with countries of origin, transit and destination. A strong focus on improving migration governance, partner countries' ability to better manage their borders, strengthening capacities and evidence-based cooperation will also be applied.

At continental level, the EU proposes to put in place a joint framework for the Continent-to-Continent Migration and Mobility Dialogue and continue to enhance the AU-EU-UN trilateral cooperation, building on the successful experience of the Task Force on Migration. At regional level, the EU proposes to advance the implementation of the Joint Valletta Action Plan and the Khartoum and Rabat processes together with the AU, the UN, the EU Member States and regional organisations.

At bilateral level, the EU should develop tailor-made dialogues and partnerships as part of its overall relationships with African countries. It is important to ensure the complementarity and the added value of the existing and future cooperation frameworks.

**VI. Conclusion: working together to implement the partnership**

In order to achieve the ambitions outlined above and effectively implement the new partnership, the EU and Africa have to find ways to work more closely together.

**a. At global level: strengthen rules-based multilateralism**

The African Union and the EU are committed to the international rules-based order and the multilateral system, with the United Nations at its core.<sup>18</sup> We share the conviction that no global challenges can be solved by any single country or group of countries. Global cooperation and regional integration offer the best guarantees for international stability and economic growth. We therefore have a shared interest to cooperate on multilateralism and common agendas (e.g. climate action, digitalisation governance etc.) that can be addressed effectively only together. Together, Africa and Europe form the largest voting bloc in the UN. By pooling forces, we have brought about key international agreements such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, and are committed to their implementation. This approach should be pursued also in the various specialised UN agencies. Africa and the EU should seize every opportunity to continue to act together effectively in all strategic areas of mutual interest across the three pillars of the UN and ensure cooperation and alignment of positions whenever relevant. We should also partner and seek alignment in all other multilateral fora, such as the G20 and the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

Collective action and outreach in support of the international rules-based order and the multilateral system is required by all EU and African Union members. In an increasingly competitive world where ideas circulate freely and values come under threat, particular attention will be paid to public diplomacy in support of multilateralism across both

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<sup>17</sup> This proposed action is in line with Sustainable Development Goals 1 (no poverty) and 10 (inequalities).

<sup>18</sup> As reflected in the Treaty of the EU, the African Union's Agenda 2063, the Global Strategy for the EU's Foreign and Security Policy and the European Consensus on Development.

continents, and around the world, by reaching out to young people, academics and other stakeholders who collectively shape the future world order.

**Proposed Action 10 – Partner with Africa to strengthen the international rules-based order and the multilateral system, with the UN at its core.<sup>19</sup>**

Regular political dialogues with African counterparts on cooperation in the multilateral system at bilateral level and within the UN, should address issues ranging from new global challenges to cooperation on UN Security Council-related matters. The EU should endeavour to establish a more structured trilateral AU-EU-UN cooperation across areas of mutual interest. It should also support necessary reforms and modernisation of existing multilateral institutions to ensure that they are fit for purpose. With a view to supporting efforts to give a stronger voice to Africa in the UN, international financial institutions and other multilateral organisations, the EU supports the AU's application for enhanced observer status in the WTO.

**b. At bilateral level: intensifying cooperation with Africa**

The AU-EU Heads of State and Government summits and ministerial meetings will provide political steering to EU cooperation with Africa. Coherence should be ensured between this strategy and the legally binding agreements between the EU and African countries, both through the protocol covering Sub-Saharan African countries under the new partnership agreement between the EU and the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States as well as through the association agreements between the EU and North African countries. Such coherence will be ensured by building on the existing governance structures, such as the summits, ministerial meetings, Commission-to-Commission and the Political/Peace and Security Committees. It should also open dialogues with key actors, such as young people, women, business leaders, civil society organisations, academia and think tanks.<sup>20</sup> The EU should be ready to support the institutional reform process initiated by the AU. The EU should also continue to work with the diasporas to enhance the different ways in which they can contribute.

Beyond formal dialogues, the EU and Africa should seek ways to intensify people-to-people contacts through exchange programmes, joint research activities or twinning initiatives between academic and cultural institutions, private sector, businesses, agencies and utilities, parliaments, local authorities or cities and regions. The EU proposes to work with its African partners to address fragility, enhance resilience and use the tools at its disposal in a coherent way. Facilities should support political and policy dialogue through the rapid mobilisation of specific expertise and the creation of knowledge platforms accessible to the various stakeholders. The successful experience of the Sectoral Task Forces set up under the Africa-Europe Alliance for sustainable investment and jobs should be continued and possibly replicated. Exchanges of best practices and expertise should be promoted.

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<sup>19</sup> This proposed action is in line with Sustainable Development Goal 17 (partnership).

<sup>20</sup> The sectoral policy dialogues under the Africa-Europe Alliance (on Digital Economy, Transport, Rural / Agriculture and Sustainable Energy Investments) offer a model that needs to be deepened and expanded. For example on Green Transition.

### **c. On the EU side: acting in unison and mobilising the means**

The EU remains Africa's biggest partner in terms of investment, trade and development. To ensure that the EU's substantial engagement with Africa delivers the expected results, the EU should increase strategic and operational **coordination and joint action at headquarters and partner country level with EU Member States and other actors**, such as the private sector, development finance institutions, banks, development implementing agencies, export credit agencies, local authorities, civil society organisations or cultural, educational and research institutions. Better leveraging and coordination of the considerable participation and work by the EU and its Member States in International Financial Institutions is key. Ongoing efforts, such as the 'Working Better Together' approach via joint programming and joint implementation, are already supporting a coherent and coordinated European strategic approach at country level.

The strategic importance of the EU-Africa partnership must also be matched by the **resources mobilised** to support it. The Commission proposed that the new Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument as of 2021 includes over 60% of funds available to it to Sub-Saharan Africa and the EU's neighbourhood countries.

Corresponding to the 'policy first' principle, the EU should deploy its instruments in full **alignment with EU external policy objectives, standards and rules, and in coherence with internal policies**.

In line with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the EU should step up its engagement with EU Member States and institutions, including European development finance institutions, to **mobilise private finance**. To attract international investors, the EU should continue leading innovative efforts to set up a financial system that supports sustainable growth. In doing so, the EU will build on initiatives such as the **External Investment Plan, the Africa-Europe Alliance for Sustainable Investment and Jobs** and the **International Platform on Sustainable Finance**.

The success of the Africa-EU partnership will be measured by the concrete outcomes of the actions developed in this document and by the tangible results the partnership will have achieved for citizens on both continents.

*To sum up, it is proposed that the EU partners with Africa on the following 10 actions:*

- 1. maximise the benefits of the green transition and minimise threats to the environment in full compliance with the Paris Agreement;*
- 2. boost the continent's digital transformation;*
- 3. substantially increase environmentally, socially and financially sustainable investments that are resilient to the impacts of climate change; promote investment opportunities by scaling up the use of innovative financing mechanisms; and boost regional and continental economic integration, particularly through the African Continental Free Trade Agreement;*
- 4. attract investors by supporting African states in adopting policies and regulatory reforms that improve the business environment and investment climate, including a level-playing field for business;*
- 5. rapidly enhance learning, knowledge and skills, research and innovation capacities, particularly for women and youth, protecting and improving social rights, and eradicating child labour;*
- 6. adapt and deepen EU support to African peace efforts through a more structured and strategic form of cooperation, with a particular focus on regions where vulnerabilities are the highest;*
- 7. integrating good governance, democracy, human rights, the rule of law and gender equality in action and cooperation;*
- 8. secure resilience by linking humanitarian, development, peace and security interventions at all stages of the cycle of conflicts and crises;*
- 9. ensure balanced, coherent and comprehensive partnerships on migration and mobility;*
- 10. strengthen the international rules-based order and the multilateral system, with the United Nations at its core.*