

CONCORD briefing on Human Development and Dignity in EU-Africa pillar of the post-Cotonou agreement

Introduction

Sustainable development cannot only be achieved through a political and economic partnership, as it requires a human-rights based approach through the inclusion of a strong social dimension, as well as a focus on good governance. Therefore CONCORD is calling for the **EU-Africa partnership**, one of the regional pillars of the future ACP-EU agreement, to ensure an integrated approach to sustainable development through the mainstreaming of the four dimensions of sustainability (economic, social, environment, governance) and the adherence to the principles of leave no one behind and respect for planetary boundaries.

A **strong focus on human development**, ensuring a gender-sensitive cross-cutting approach, access to quality education, healthcare services and housing, addressing inequalities and promoting investments in research, is central to lifting people out of poverty and reducing inequalities, as recognised by the international community in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Hence, CONCORD **puts forward the following recommendations to make this a reality in the EU-Africa partnership.**

CONCORD recommendations

Health, Global Health Research and Innovation.

A **health-in-all-policies approach** must be included in the EU-Africa partnership: health must be addressed as both a cross-cutting issue and a specific objective, as part of the human development section of the regional agreement.

Key common objectives must include ensuring equitable access to healthcare, achieving Universal Health Coverage, including sexual and reproductive health and rights, strengthening health systems and reducing the global burden of disease.

The EU-Africa partnership must boost research and innovation **to tackle the persistent burden of poverty-related diseases** such as HIV&AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria, and neglected tropical diseases which have a devastating impact on people's lives and on economic development on the African continent.

Moreover, the EU-Africa partnership must contribute to ongoing and successful initiatives such as the European and Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership (EDCTP), and guarantee that Research and Innovation (R&I) efforts translate into safe, effective, accessible and affordable products and services, through a public health approach.

Science, Technology and Innovation

R&I are powerful drivers for sustainable development, especially in the field of human development. **Sufficient and sustained public funding, including through partnerships**, is critically needed to address societal challenges, especially in neglected areas of research with high potential for societal impact such as food security and nutrition, poverty-related and neglected diseases and climate change.



The EU-Africa partnership must in particular accelerate and catalyse investments in science, technology and innovation collaboration for capacity-building, researchers' mobility and cooperation, the convergence and harmonisation of R&I systems – including regulatory and ethics standards – and open access to research data and results. The future pillar must especially contribute to support R&I areas which have been subjected to systematic sub-optimal investment or market failure.

Gender equality

In line with both the EU's and ACP's negotiation mandates, gender equality must be addressed as a cross-cutting issue in the final agreement.

CONCORD recommends that, in addition to a mainstreaming approach, the EU-Africa partnership also includes targeted actions in favour of gender equality, including a call to all countries to ratify and implement the **Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)**. This goes hand-in-hand with rescinding discriminatory laws and taking additional measures to ensure gender sensitive laws, policies and budgets that support equal rights and women and girls' economic, social and political empowerment.

In particular, it is crucial for the partnership to commit to the eradication of female genital mutilation (FGM) and other harmful practices, as well as the eradication of child, early and forced marriages. The future partnership must also fully commit to the elimination of all forms of sexual and gender-based violence, as well as fully implement the principle of non-discrimination with regards to gender identity and sexual orientation.

The EU-Africa partnership must make a clear reference to the **Maputo Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women** in Africa and its **Plan of Action**, to ensure their full implementation at continental level.

Sexual and reproductive health and rights

Sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) are a precondition for sustainable development. In line with the European Consensus on Development, the EU-Africa partnership must commit to the full implementation of the **International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD)** and the **Beijing Platform of Action**, including the **outcomes of their review conferences**. The partnership must commit to the promotion, protection and fulfilment of the right of every individual to have universal access to quality and affordable comprehensive sexual and reproductive health information, education, including comprehensive sexuality education, and healthcare services. It is also key that the partnership underlines the importance of the link between **SRHR, family planning** and **HIV&AIDS**.

Youth and the demographic dividend

To reap the benefits of the demographic dividend, three areas of investment are necessary and complementary: empowerment, education and employment. The future partnership must include all three areas. **Ensuring that the rights of women, girls and youth are respected and promoted represents a crucial component to harness the demographic dividend.**

Additionally, **youth empowerment** must be addressed as a cross-cutting issue in the future partnership, especially considering the strong focus on youth in the EU-AU Summit in 2017. Nevertheless, the focus on youth must go further than economic empowerment and decent job

creation: the final regional EU-Africa partnership must take a comprehensive approach and also invest in social and political empowerment.

Education

Universal access to inclusive, quality education and training is central to sustainable development, improving quality of life and participation in social, political and economic life. The EU-Africa partnership must **commit to removing barriers to access and completion of education for all, including women and girls, based on equal opportunity and non-discrimination and in accordance with the principle of leaving no one behind**. This applies to all levels of education, from early childhood, to primary, secondary and tertiary education and including technical and vocational training and adult learning.

Urban Agenda and Housing

Currently, 199.5 million people in Africa live in slums, a predominant settlement pattern for African cities. By 2035, according to the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, about half of Africa's population will be living in urban areas. Without intervention and planning for housing, African cities will be unable to manage the needs of this growing urban population.

The future EU-Africa partnership must acknowledge that ensuring affordable, adequate and accessible housing for all has a transformative impact for marginalised and excluded people and can have far-reaching impacts on the health of communities and their socio-economic well-being. The New Urban Agenda (NUA) - a concise, forward-looking and universal framework for actions in housing and sustainable urban development - acknowledges that urbanisation is one of the twenty-first century's most transformative trends and it should therefore be referenced in the EU-Africa partnership as a key policy guidance.

For this reason, **CONCORD calls on the two parties to tackle the improvement of people's lives through the creation of appropriate and affordable access to housing.**

Inequalities

Despite the fact that some African countries have experienced stunning economic progress over the recent years, inequalities remain a key challenge for most of them due to an unfair share of wealth, power imbalances, the poor conditions of the labour market and the unequal access to resources and services.

Moreover, the trend of GDP growth being associated with growing income disparities has been replicated in a majority of [OECD countries](#) over the past two or three decades. Recent estimates by the International Labour Organization (ILO) show that almost one in three workers in emerging and developing countries lives in poverty. This includes two-thirds of workers in sub-Saharan Africa.

In addition, certain social norms enhance inequalities due to discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, sex, age, disability, sexual orientation, religion or migrant status, among other factors.

In order to tackle **inequalities**, **CONCORD calls for prioritising those who are being left behind in all policy areas so as to ensure equal access to resources, capabilities, power and services, as well as for promoting a fair economic model which favours redistributive measures and respects planet boundaries.**

