



## **Statement of Churches on the EU-Africa-Strategy**

**Addressing Heads of State and Governments in Africa, the African Union and the European Union**

*"We are taking care not to stir complaints about how we handle this generous gift. Our purpose is to do what is right, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of man", (2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 8:20-21).*

### **1. Preamble**

We, the church leaders from African countries meeting under the auspices of the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) and Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM) in Accra, Ghana on 12-13 November 2007, address the Heads of State and Governments in Africa, the African Union and the European Union in order to share our views regarding the joint EU-Africa strategy.

As stewards and shepherds of the African Christian congregation, which accounts for many of the African populations, we believe that eradication of poverty should be the overarching objective of the Joint EU-Africa strategy.

The strategy should also facilitate co-operation that is based on the spirit of trust and true partnership between the two continents. The initiative for joint development of the strategy is a commendable gesture that would avail the necessary trust for strengthening of relations between the two parties.

### **2. Analysis of Situation**

We acknowledge that the African Union and the European Union are developing a common strategy of co-operation covering a wide range of political, social, economic and cultural issues. We understand that this strategy is based on the Cairo 2000 Africa-EU summit.

We are aware that the EU went further and developed a strategy for relating with Africa which later became the EU-Africa Joint Strategy. We are also aware that the Joint Strategy together with the First Action Plan are planned for adoption at the EU-Africa Summit on 8<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup> December, 2007 in Lisbon, Portugal.

We are delighted that many chapters of the Action Plan have mentioned the participation of the Civil Society in the development of the strategy process. We regret, however, that the Civil Society including faith-based organisations were not sufficiently involved in contributing to the development of the strategy and the Action Plan themselves.

We would hereby like to affirm the key role of civil society and faith based organisations in any strategy towards the eradication of poverty, establishment of good governance, economic justice, sustainable development, and peace and security in Africa.

### **3. Issues**

During our meeting in Accra, we discussed the topics contained in the EU-Africa strategy and the Action Plan and other basic issues, which were brought up in a continent wide study on views and perceptions by the church in regards to the EU-Africa strategy.

The study findings indicate that the current EU-Africa relationship does not resemble anything like a partnership between equals. The study reports that the EU-Africa strategy reflects the status quo of the relations and seems to perpetuate the past injustices derived from history of the relationship between the two.

We perceive enormous contradictions in the formulation of the strategy and reality of daily politics. According to the strategy, Africa shall be treated as a whole, but in practice the EU is splitting Africa into four negotiating groups for EPA negotiations, which contradicts the unity Africa is earnestly seeking.

Fruitful partnership would only resort with the owning of the process by the two parties. Such ownership can only be done in a controlled and peaceful atmosphere and not within the acrimony and rushed that seems to be dominating the process at the moment.

We appreciate the objectives of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement, which clearly say that EPAs are a tool for development while also giving negotiators options outside the EPAs. Practical negotiations show that the EU wants to establish a Free Trade Zone and would use all means to achieve this.

It is our belief that the strategy should provide real possibilities for holding governments in Africa and EU responsible and accountable. And hereby appeal to African governments not to politicise the process of the partnership at the expense of the majority of the citizens.

The AACC, SECAM and their constituency are willing to engage themselves in monitoring the process and implementation of the EU-Africa strategy. We therefore expect open and frank discussion that will include all relevant stakeholders at all levels, national, regional, continental etc.

**Having discussed various issues, we would like to express the following concerns:-**

- ***Peace and Security***

We believe that good governance, democracy and human security are the foundations for peace and security. We therefore call upon our governments to foster good governance, democracy and human security.

We recognise that justice and development are factors influencing peace and security. We therefore call upon our governments and the European Union to prioritise justice and development issues. In addition, both the EU and the African states should deal with the proliferation of small arms and light weapons which is important for securing peace and security.

- ***Good governance and Debts***

We recognise that servicing of debts is a burden that is overwhelming many African states by taking up resources that could be used for development purposes. We, therefore, urge our governments to make public the debt register and provide for auditing of all external and internal debts. Secondly, we strongly recommend the cancellation of all illegitimate debts, particularly those contracted under repressive conditions but also debts whose principle has long been settled through huge interests paid so far. Thirdly, ensure that all cancelled debts are used to enhance social programmes that serve the people. We recommend a strong mechanism to monitor the use of the cancelled debts, in which civil society and faith based organisations will be deeply involved.

Good governance is one of the key factors for sustainable development. Our belief is that both the African Governments and the EU cannot claim to proclaim democratic governance

while not making it possible for their people to participate in governance processes like the EU-Africa Strategy.

We call upon our governments to commit themselves to accountability to their citizenry. We call upon the European Union to support this accountability. At the same time, African governments should not be coerced into international obligations that undermine good governance and citizens well being.

- ***International migration***

In an increasingly globalized world, we recognise that the movement of people from one part of the world to another is increasing. We believe that migration is a development issue and that it is not just southerners who migrate to the north but the vice versa too as well as within south and south. Migrants also contribute to the economic development of their countries. We are calling for the rights and the dignity of migrants to be safeguarded. We call upon the African states and the EU member states to ratify and execute all legal instruments on migration internationally agreed upon, in particular the International Convention on the Rights of Migrant Workers and Members of their families. The EU should support African governments in effecting these policies and other initiatives that would encourage young professional people to work and develop their home countries.

African governments and the EU must deal with conditions and persons that perpetuate human trafficking, particularly that of women and children who often end up being used as sex toys.

- ***HIV and AIDS***

While delighted at the encouraging reports of reducing HIV and AIDS prevalence rates across the continent, we are concerned that the AIDS scourge continues to stalk the African continent than any other. While encouraged by the efforts of giving hope to those affected and infected by the condition, we are discouraged by pharmaceutical's desire for super profits in the midst of the dire needs of the infected. We therefore call the EU to commit to not only research for cure but also the affordability of HIV and AIDS related drugs. We also appeal to the African Governments and the EU to recognize that HIV and AIDS is not just a health issue but a social issue and therefore the need to combat conducive conditions for HIV/AIDS prevalence.

- ***Climate Change and Energy***

We are concerned that the consequences of climatic changes are severely affecting the lives of millions of people at the same time, we are witnessing unsustainable use of unrenewable sources of energy at all levels. We urge the governments of European states to make legally binding commitments to effectively reduce their greenhouse gas emissions in accordance to the Kyoto protocol while putting in place social and industrial mechanism that will reduce the use of unrenewable energy.

We urge African countries to establish policy frameworks to respond to climate change and put in place frameworks and mechanisms to protect communities that are particularly vulnerable to climate change while at the same time instituting frameworks that will avail renewable energy for use in their countries.

We further call on the European states to establish frameworks and mechanisms to deliver sufficient and accessible adaptation funds and support particularly to the most vulnerable populations. We urge the European states to reduce their use of non-renewable energies which are a big source of the harm on our environment and intensify the use of renewable sources of energy.

- **Trade and Regional integration**

The ACP countries are currently negotiating Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) with the EU. We are concerned that EPAs will adversely affect the African economic and social development and lead to the increase of poverty levels.

We are aware that the European Commission aims at signing comprehensive EPAs, which go far beyond pure trade agreements but include provisions for services, investment, intellectual property rights, government procurement and trade facilitation. At the same time, we understand that there are a number of highly contentious issues in the negotiations, which have not been solved yet.

We are concerned about the enormous pressure the European Commission is exerting on African governments and negotiators to conclude EPAs the soonest possible. We urge African governments not to sign EPAs until they have weighed their implications to their populations and consulted with all relevant stakeholders including their parliaments.

We have recently learned about the new approach of the European Commission to sign the so called 'interim agreements' for goods only in 2007. We believe that these interim treaties are means of guaranteeing the conclusion of the larger EPAs at a later stage. We are against such an approach and appeal to our governments not to sign these 'interim agreements' in a situation where many questions are still unsolved. At the time, the European Commission has to ensure that trade between Africa and Europe is not disrupted beyond 2007.

We have also learned that within the EPAs country groupings, some individual countries are willing to sign an EPA with the EU. We are very concerned that such initiatives would undermine the regional integration process in Africa and appeal to our leaders to safeguard the efforts already made towards African unity.

The African economies are not ready for competition with the EU.

- **Education**

Education continues to be the main channel for technological and expertise exchange between groups of people and nations. For the African continent both basic and technical education is important adding value to material which would result to higher income gains for their economies. We urge both African and EU governments to invest in ensuring that education in Africa is result oriented and that it serves to support their economic, social and political development.

These we state in the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen

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**Rev. Dr. Mvume Dandala**  
**General Secretary – AACC**

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**Rev. Fr, Francois-Xavier Damiba**  
**Secretary General – SECAM**

**13<sup>th</sup> November 2007**

**This statement has been issued by the following churches/organizations:**

- ◆ All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC)
- ◆ Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM)
- ◆ Anglican Church of Tanzania (ACT)
- ◆ Association of Member Episcopal Conferences in East Africa (AMECEA)
- ◆ Building Eastern Africa Community Network (BEACON) - Kenya
- ◆ Bethel Deliverance Mission International – Ghana
- ◆ Botswana Council of Churches (BCC)
- ◆ Conseil des Eglises Protestantes du Cameroun (CEPCA)
- ◆ Christian Council of Ghana (CCG)
- ◆ Eglise Evangélique Presbytérienne du Togo (EEPT)
- ◆ EL ELYORO Ministry International - Ghana
- ◆ Ethiopian Evangelical Church - Mekane Yesus (EECMY)
- ◆ Ethiopian Orthodox Church (EOC)
- ◆ Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ghana
- ◆ Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT)
- ◆ Evangelical Presbyterian Church Ghana
- ◆ Fellowship of Christian Councils in West Africa (FECCIWA)
- ◆ Ghana Catholic Bishops Conference
- ◆ Liberian Council of Churches
- ◆ Methodist Church in Benin
- ◆ Methodist Church in Ghana
- ◆ Methodist Church in Nigeria
- ◆ Methodist Church in Togo
- ◆ National Christian Council of Kenya (NCCCK)
- ◆ Presbyterian Church of East Africa – Kenya
- ◆ Presbyterian Church in Ghana
- ◆ Programme for Christian – Muslim Relations in Africa (PROCMURA)
- ◆ Tanzania Episcopal Conference
- ◆ Uganda Episcopal Conference
- ◆ World Students Christian Fellowship - Africa
- ◆ Zambia Episcopal Conference