

Implementation of the Africa-EU Joint Strategy & Action Plan Partnership on the Millennium Development Goals

Meeting of Joint Experts Group 24th-27th March 2009

Co-chairs' Summary of discussion

The second set of meetings of the Joint Experts Group (JEG) of the Africa-EU MDG Partnership took place in Pretoria and London from 24th-27th March 2009. One meeting was held covering each of the JEG sectoral priorities together with an overview session that also covered finance and policy issues. The meetings were designed to review progress in delivering the Action Plan for the Joint Africa-EU Strategy since the previous JEG meeting (November 2008), as well as to identify key deliverables for the Roadmap, to contribute to the forthcoming Ministerial Troika on 28th April 2009 in Luxembourg. There was wide participation from the two Commissions, member states and civil society.

Key **conclusions** of the JEG meetings were as follows:

1. Whilst good progress has been made in mapping activities and results to date in the four priority MDG areas, the work of the MDG Partnership needs to be accelerated.
2. The functioning of the MDG Partnership can be enhanced. This will be achieved by building strong and effective participation of all stakeholders and making more effective use of communication and networking tools.
3. A range of policy measures are required to accelerate progress towards the MDGs in Africa, particularly in the light of the current global economic downturn. Concrete deliverables for the Roadmap should include actions that respond to the crisis and help meet African needs.
4. The Partnership must identify where and how it can add value in making progress on the MDGs, and should focus both on maximising the impact of existing commitments, and on securing additional finance where required, from the international community, particularly from Europe to complement domestic African resources.
5. The importance of early agreement on outstanding issues in relation to financing the Joint Africa-EU Strategy was agreed. The planned AUC-EC workshop on financing was seen as important in this respect.
6. The importance of promoting greater intra African networking and cooperation. Roadmap activities should draw on the established capabilities and experience of African countries in the provision of technical assistance and development cooperation in the various sub sectors. This was an opportunity for greater EU support.
7. The importance of improved statistics to measure progress against the MDGs including support for the implementation of the African Charter on Statistics.

Thematic sub groups on priority actions

8. The Group considered the importance of ensuring the **Finance and Policy base** for the MDGs in the current global economic downturn. Papers on the African and European perspectives were discussed. Various recommendations for enhancing the Roadmap were proposed.
9. The **Food Security** meeting agreed that improved coordination of financing mechanisms to support food security in Africa is essential. This needs to be coordinated through the CAADP framework. Harmonising activities under this framework and improving use of food security information are priorities for the roadmap. Political backing for the CAADP framework is also essential. The outcomes of this meeting could usefully feed into the AU Agricultural Ministerial meeting in April 2009 in Addis Ababa.
10. The **Health** meeting discussed priorities for the Roadmap, noting the huge challenge in reducing maternal mortality in many countries; the need to address health workforce capacity and shortfalls; and the need for further action to reduce HIV prevalence and to tackle other priority endemic diseases. Accelerated action on access to medicines was also noted as a priority for the Roadmap.
11. The **Education** meeting noted the importance of the successful implementation of the Second Decade of Education in Africa, and identified the following key areas for the Roadmap: education management and information systems; education for Vulnerable children; gender equality; teacher development, retention and deployment; and coordination of partners and initiatives. The Group recommended a follow up meeting be convened in Tunis on 27 April to coincide with the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) steering committee meeting.
12. The Group noted the advantages of a social model approach to **disability**. The Group also noted the importance of data on access to services by disabled people and the need for sufficient resources to ensure that disabled people can access services. Regarding the role of the MDG Partnership, the Group agreed to include a concrete deliverable in the Roadmap relating to disability.

Driving the MDG Partnership

The Group agreed on a series of measures to help ensure effective implementation of the Partnership:

- Focal points to be identified to support Chefs de file where necessary;
- Need for adequate financing for activities and participation in meetings;
- Need to support increased capacity within the AUC;
- Use of the joint Africa-EU website and other ICT tools to follow up on agreed actions and keep all interested parties informed.