



**PROSPECTS FOR AFRICA –  
EUROPE'S POLICIES**

The VENRO-Project on the  
Africa-EU-Partnership

**The Joint Africa-EU Strategy and Poverty Eradication**

**Common Civil Society Perspectives from Both Continents on  
Gender, Energy and Climate Policies, Trade and Regional Development**

Nairobi, Kenya, April 7, 2009

## Civil Society and the Joint Africa-EU Strategy

In December 2007, the Heads of States of Africa and Europe approved the Joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES) and its first Action Plan (2008-10) in Lisbon. This strategic document sets an ambitious new political framework for Africa-EU relations, one aimed towards converting old donor-recipient relations into a partnership of equals. Civil society should play an important role in the so-called people centred strategy and in implementation of the action plan:

*“We can only achieve our objectives if this strategic partnership is owned by all stakeholders, including civil society actors and local authorities, and if they are actively contributing to its implementation.”<sup>1</sup>*

The Association of German Development NGO (VENRO) started its EU Presidency Project “Prospects for Africa – Europe’s Policies” at the end of 2006. One of the major topics was the setting up of the new Africa-EU Strategic Partnership and the involvement of civil society concerns on both continents. Since January 2009, VENRO has been completing this process and has started a follow-up project.

The present policy paper evolved from a partner conference on gender, energy and trade politics held in Nairobi, Kenya from April 5-7, 2009, organized by Taabco Research and Development Consultants, Nairobi ([www.taabco.org](http://www.taabco.org)) and VENRO.

The energy working group was co-organised by the German NGO Forum Development and Environment ([www.forum-ue.de](http://www.forum-ue.de)). The working group on climate change met earlier, in Bonn on April 3<sup>rd</sup>, because United Nations Climate negotiations were held there during the first half of April.

Participants from twelve African and three European countries met to discuss the prospects, challenges and shortcomings of the JAES with regard to its impacts on poverty eradication and sustainable development, and formulated policy recommendations for African and European decision-makers.

African participants of the conference in Nairobi were partners of VENRO member organizations with expertise in relations between Africa and the EU. VENRO and its members had already worked with them during the Presidency Project and expanded their cooperation for this effort. Key civil society representatives from Brussels and other European networks and platforms were also invited. Important indicators for the selection of the African participants were regional aspects, as the project focuses on Sub-Saharan Africa. At the same time it was essential that members of the crucial African networks participate in the conference, to cover a wide field of representatives of African civil society. Another important factor was the balance between female and male participants.

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<sup>1</sup> The Africa-EU Strategic Partnership, A Joint Africa-EU Strategy, p. 4.

## **Declaration on the Role of Civil Society in the Joint Africa-EU Strategy**

Civil society representatives from Africa and Europe discussed their role in the JAES, and identified the following key aspects:

1. The JAES aims to be people-oriented. In this respect, civil society is an important actor in the JAES. The first year of implementation revealed deficits in this area.
2. Civil society in Africa and Europe must have the opportunity to participate in the implementation and monitoring of the First Action Plan and the conceptualization and drafting of the Second Action Plan. Civil society should participate in the Implementation Teams, the Joint Expert Groups, the Joint Africa-EU Task Forces and be represented in the Troika Meetings.
3. Civil society assumes the responsibility to define its own role rather than having this done by governments. Civil society organizations (CSOs) are development actors in their own right, making significant contributions to all eight themes of the First Action Plan.
4. Civil society's diversity is a strength and should be embraced.
5. Through its participation in the JAES, civil society can give added value because of its additional windows of opportunity, with a view to reaching people in need, especially those on the margins of society.
6. Transparency is needed on all levels in the implementation of the JAES and the First Action plan. This includes access to all working documents and minutes of meetings.

## **Promoting Gender Equality within the Joint Africa-EU Strategy**

As a new paradigm in EU-Africa relations, the JAES claims to be people-centred. It therefore affords opportunity to ensure that its processes, objects and impacts address and reach both women and men in Africa and Europe, irrespective of age, race and social background. To ensure that the JAES contributes to this end, it is necessary to consider gender equality as a cross-cutting issue in all of the eight partnerships and priority actions of the JAES. However, since governance and the enforcement of human rights are core pillars of a functioning and inclusive society, gender aspects in this partnership require special attention.

Within Africa, the African Union (AU) decade of women (2010–2020) as articulated in the AU Gender Policy represents a welcome opportunity to set standards for a gender-just society. Within this context, it links to commitments to gender equality that member states of the EU and AU have made in frameworks such as the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the Beijing Platform for Action, as well as the Maputo Protocol and the Maputo Plan of Action. It is now crucial to ensure alignment, coherence and coordination of the JAES within existing frameworks and future policies, such as the Cotonou Partnership Agreement.

### **Gender Equality within the Partnership of Democratic Governance and Human Rights**

Most member states of the EU and AU have enacted laws guaranteeing citizens' participation in governance, especially at the national level. However, participation of the poor, women, young people and minority groups in issues of governance – particularly at the municipal level - is weak or non-existent. This is especially valid for rural areas of Africa. Significant gaps remain in the implementation and monitoring of gender equality in the relationship between the state and its citizens and the processes therein. This is due among other factors to a lack of political will, failure to allocate financial resources or their inadequacy, and limited capacity in terms of human resources and articulation. These are, however, often underpinned and informed by non-tangible but prevalent structural issues such as attitudes, behaviours, stereotypes and cultural norms as well as religious interpretations regarding the roles of women and men in society. These work to gender inequality and exclude women from equal participation in society and access to their political, social and economic rights and resources, resulting in the particular situation of poverty among women.

Gender equality is central to many EU and AU initiatives, and several instruments have been put in place to make sure that women participate equally in decision-making. However, gender inequality in terms of income, work load, illiteracy and poverty has drastically reduced the numbers of women who hold seats in parliament and participate in decision-making at various levels.

Key pillars of good governance include accountability to all the population, women and men, young and old, fostering social inclusion and promoting democratization and citizen protection. Democracy and governance must ensure that girls and young women are able to participate actively, equally and effectively with boys at all levels of social, educational, economic, political, cultural and civic life and leadership. Civil society organizations (CSOs) are important development actors and agents of change in society, indispensable for democracy and respect for human rights. They are important sensors for situations in society and states and are the intermediaries and links to the grassroots level. Women's rights and development or-

ganizations especially provide platforms for women's voices to be heard, and space for self-organization and self-determination. Thus their effective engagement in the JAES needs to be put into practice.

Gender-based violence remains a challenge for women in both Africa and Europe. It results in both physical and psychological injuries, and hinders women from actively participating in decision-making. Issues such as sexual assault, domestic violence and trafficking require specific gender appropriate responses. The low representation of women in the security sector reinforces institutional discrimination against women and exacerbates their vulnerability to violence.

In order for the JAES to contribute to changing the situation of discrimination against women, African and European countries need to ensure equal protection for all their citizens, independent of their sex. Formal protection by law is often not supported by operational and accessible services. Impunity for crimes like embezzlement and diversion of resources undermine governance and subvert development efforts. This situation calls for respect for human rights and a commitment to independent and effective implementation of the rule of law.

Women's access to sexual and reproductive health services and rights, defined as complete physical, mental and social well-being, is seriously lacking in AU countries. Maternal mortality and HIV infection rates for women remain unacceptably high. The majority of women continue to experience gender-based violence; at the same time, response services and prevention strategies are lacking.

### **Key Demands to European and African Decision-makers**

1. To commit themselves to establish and enforce the goal of gender balance in governmental bodies and committees at national, regional and local levels, as well as in public administrative entities, including the judiciary. This means setting specific targets and implementing measures, if necessary through legislative quotas, in order to substantially increase the number of competent women in all governmental and public administration positions. The European partners should support the monitoring process.
2. To ensure that all actions taken in the framework of the JAES are coherent with economic, social, cultural, political and civil rights of women and girls, specifically:
  - To guarantee sexual and reproductive rights of women and girls. This includes the implementation and monitoring of the Maputo Plan of Action.
  - To guarantee the right to gender-appropriate protection before the law with increased representation of women, geared to gender parity, in security forces as well as training on gender-appropriate responses to crimes against women to prevent and address gender-based insecurities.
  - To include the development of a plan of action against gender-based violence: Provision of multi-sectoral response services and prevention strategies to counter gender-based violence.
  - To realize the right of women and girls to food, specifically through the realization of their right to land and access to the means of food production.

3. To ensure that the following issues of gender equality are adequately included in all processes related to the JAES:
  - To include independent and competent gender experts, one each from Africa and Europe, in all Joint Experts Groups.
  - To strengthen and support CSO participation within the Africa-EU Partnership on Democratic Governance and Human Rights through earmarked technical and financial resources for effective articulation of gender issues. This includes the provision of resources and opportunities for consultative dialogues among representatives of civil society within and between Africa and Europe.
  - To create a thematic partnership on gender in the drafting of the next Plan of Action in order to strengthen the implementation of gender concerns.
  - To develop gender-sensitive monitoring and tracking systems in regard to the inclusion of clearly spelled out and time-bound gender objectives in all thematic partnerships of the JAES. Effective government and monitoring by civil society groups of the JAES will ensure accountability to its commitments.
  - To implement gender-responsive budgets in order to ensure that government budgets reach and impact both women and men as well as boys and girls.
4. We call upon European decision-makers to adopt the gender commitments of the JAES in the implementation of the Cotonou Agreement and especially in the drafting of the country strategy papers. This requires strong reviewing mechanisms both at member-state and EU levels.
5. We call upon African decision-makers to include in the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) time-bound specific objectives and indicators to achieve gender equality and develop and decide upon mechanisms for sanctions in case gender objectives are not met. Also, the Maputo Plan of Action and MDG 5 need to be integrated into the APRM, and objectives and indicators with regard to issues of sexual and reproductive health should be defined together with CSOs and women organizations.

## **Increased Access to Sustainable Energy**

### **Energy Issues at the Crossroads**

Energy security is a major concern both in Africa and Europe. Access to modern energy services that are affordable, climate-friendly and sustainable is lacking for large parts of Africa's population, especially in rural areas. Women are affected differently by the current energy paradigms, but this is rarely reflected in energy policies. These problems cannot be solved with fossil fuel and nuclear technologies. This is not emphasized in the current concept of the JAES. Therefore, new approaches and concerted efforts are needed.

### **New Approaches Needed**

We emphasize the need for improved access to modern energy, meeting the demands of urban and rural areas through renewable energy sources. Decentralized renewable energies have positive effects for energy security, job creation and sustainable rural development and can contribute towards realizing the Millennium Development Goals. This is especially valid for rural areas. In particular, the most promising option for rural energy supply is decentralized renewable energy providing electrification and non-electrical energy options, for example improved cooking stoves, biogas technologies, mobility and water pumps. Energy supply is of significant importance for economic development and poverty alleviation.

Energy security is a significant issue in the JAES. We want to ensure that energy security addresses suppressed energy demand in Africa, including household energy and productive energy needs. Suppressed energy demand is that which exceeds current demands, taking account of poverty and access due to, amongst other things, lack of infrastructure services. It also includes demand currently met through use of heavily polluting fossil fuel.

At the same time we are worried about the talks in the partnership in energy exchange infrastructure between Africa and Europe. We consider discussions, for instance, on gas pipelines from Nigeria to Europe and electricity from the Democratic Republic of Congo to Europe as large-scale ideas that are expensive and inefficient, would not work and would not help either Africa's or Europe's energy security. Against this background, Europe needs to reduce its energy consumption and dependence on imported energy. And Africa needs to harness its energy resources for its own development.

Energy efficiency should be promoted, and imported fossil fuels should be replaced with domestic renewable energy sources.

However, Africa and the EU need to put the right to food first in their pursuit of energy security through bioenergy. This means that biomass must be produced primarily for domestic consumption. Biomass production (including biofuels) for export should never negatively impact on the human right to food and livelihood or on the environment.

It is of particular importance to enable policy frameworks, energy market regulations and technology transfer as well as appropriate technology research and development to scale up renewable sources of energy. At the moment, significant gaps remain. Furthermore, the partnership should support increased capacity-building in government and CSOs, for instance facilitation of contacts and know-how exchange between relevant European bodies and their African counterparts as well as within Africa and within the EU.

We welcome and appreciate the founding of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), whose members are mainly from Africa and the EU. The partnership should support the work of IRENA in promoting and developing renewable energy sources.

We emphasize the need to mainstream gender in all the various energy policies and programs.

## **Key Demands to European and African Decision-makers**

1. We urge the partnership to recommend that all countries adopt appropriate renewable energy and energy efficiency policies with specific targets and commitments.
2. We demand the establishment of innovative and accessible financial schemes for the development (production, distribution and utilization) of renewable energy technologies in Africa. These should be transparent, participatory and publicly accountable and be able to deliver small-scale solutions to energy needs.
3. We call on the EU member states to pursue actively the rapid expansion of their renewable energy capacities, combined with improving energy efficiency, and to progressively phase out coal and nuclear power plants.
4. We demand civil society participation in the Joint Expert Group on Energy towards preparing Ministerial Troika meetings, and adequate funding by the partnership.

## **Development-oriented Trade Relations, Regional Integration and Infrastructure Politics**

Trade between Europe and Africa could be an opportunity for development, but because of the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPA) negotiations, relations have been distorted. CSOs in Africa and EU have therefore engaged in campaigning for real development-oriented trade relations.

Furthermore, regional integration is an important part of development and therefore is an important section of the JAES. However, the EPA negotiations and process distort rather than foster regional integration.

### **EPAs Contradict the People-centred Spirit of the Joint Africa-EU Strategy**

CSOs have continued to engage in EPA negotiations and have put forward demands that have not been taken into account by the EU. These demands included: removal of the standstill clause; the possibility to make use of export taxes; removal of the Third-party Most Favoured Nation clause; interdiction of non-tariff barriers; flexibility of rules of origin and non-integration of Singapore Issues; intellectual property rights, and services.

The negotiations of the EPAs are a threat to small-scale farmers and women.

The concerns and demands of civil society in the EPA process have been ignored, and against this background, civil society is doubtful whether their concerns regarding the Joint Africa-EU Strategy approach will be addressed.

### **Key Demands to European and African Decision-makers**

1. There is a need for clear and sincere engagement of African and European countries to use trade as a means of regional integration.
2. The EU should address concerns raised by African negotiators and by CSOs regarding the ongoing EPA negotiations.
3. The implementation teams, both at AU and EU level, ought to acknowledge that EPA agreements are not yet signed.
4. Trade relations should be reviewed in a way that changes the forthcoming second Action Plan of the JAES.
5. The Aid for Trade initiative should have additional funding, beyond that for export production. The agreed activities should be under African ownership.
6. EPAs have a negative influence on regional integration. There is a need to re-think the political strategy behind the EPAs.
7. Trade relations between Africa and the EU should be development-friendly, pro-poor and gender-sensitive.

## **Foster the Social and Political Aspects of Regional Integration**

The JAES refers to regional integration with a strong focus on the role of the private sector, meaning big business, ignoring the role of small and medium enterprises and small-scale farmers and women.

The Strategy emphasizes the role of the domestic market and regional integration to “foster sustainable economic growth and development” without focussing on a people-driven, human-centred development. This includes freedom of mobility, social security, strengthening the rights of workers in the informal economy, who are mostly women, and rural development. As stated in the Action Plan, regional integration incorporates economic, social and political dimensions as stated in the Abuja Treaty.

### **Key Demands to European and African Decision-makers**

1. Informal cross-border trade (ICBT) forms are an integral part of regional integration and should be formally acknowledged by governments. The majority of those involved in ICBT are women.
2. The Action Plan emphasizes the role of civil society and other actors in strengthening the integration process. We support this and call on the Joint Expert Groups to involve CSOs as full members.

## **Infrastructure Development**

Infrastructure development is crucial to guaranteeing people basic human rights like the right to food, access to clean water, health care, education, mobility, information and the right of association. Currently, infrastructure development in the Joint Africa- EU Strategy is a top-down process in which communities are negatively impacted. People are losing their livelihoods and their natural resources, like clean water and vegetation.

### **Key Demands to European and African Decision-makers**

1. In contrast, infrastructure development should be a democratic participatory process which takes into account the views and interests of affected communities.
2. Furthermore, programs of infrastructure development should be prioritized and focused on rural agricultural, processing and small-scale business development. In order to enhance livelihoods, value addition and quality production should meet local needs.
3. It is important to provide resources for the development of infrastructure to Africa’s regional development strategies and programs through construction of transport and communication networks to promote sustainable development and poverty reduction.
4. Development of infrastructure should give priority to non-profit public solutions. Mutual cooperation between governments and public utilities in Europe and Africa should be supported.

## **Pro-Poor Climate Change Policies to Safeguard Sustainable Development**

Climate change is affecting all countries, but Least Developed Countries and other vulnerable developing countries are expected to be hit earliest and hardest. Africa will be affected particularly in terms of food security, sustainable water supplies and extreme weather phenomena such as floods, droughts and desertification. In an increasing number of African communities, countries and sub-regions, economies and livelihoods continue to decline due to desert encroachment related to climate change and land degradation.

The Africa-EU partnership on climate change could play an important role in developing effective responses to the multiple challenges of climate change, in particular when taking the following aspects into account:

- Greater African-EU cooperation can facilitate the Copenhagen process;
- Expectations that the EU will build on its legal commitments under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) but also on the partnership process that has been initiated through the JAES;
- African and European CSOs take climate change seriously and see this partnership's contribution to an ambitious climate change agreement as crucial;
- It is not acceptable that EU countries should reduce Official Development Assistance (ODA) in times of economic crisis that is strongly affecting the poorest countries; commitments must be delivered in addition to more climate change related financing;
- Exchange, synergies and coherence between other external policy areas, also in the JAES process, should be promoted and intensified;

However, thus far the Africa-EU partnership on climate change has delivered too limited additional value compared to what is needed. Thus it is considered necessary to outline the following demands in key areas.

### **Key Demands on Adaptation**

Adaptation to the adverse effects of climate change has become an absolute necessity, as climate change impacts in many cases undermine development progress.

#### The EU should

1. support the rapid implementation of African National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs), disaster preparedness and other urgent measures through additional resources provided before the climate summit in Copenhagen in December 2009, in addition to the 0.7 percent ODA commitments;
2. work for more coherence in fund management in a future climate change regime, including a strong role for the UNFCCC, and should raise additional resources, in particular through auctioning the Assigned Amount Units (AAUs) – a Norwegian proposal – possibly connected with the Mexican proposal identifying an “effort-sharing” through the adoption of a formula based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities;
3. increasingly assist African countries in integrating the long-term climate change challenge into development planning, through exchange of experience and financial support.

### African governments should

1. pay particular attention to the most vulnerable people and communities when preparing proposals to the Adaptation Fund, and when implementing adaptation programmes (also with other funds), with the meaningful inclusion of civil society;
2. integrate adaptation into development, also with regard to making use of traditional knowledge and technologies existing in their countries/regions;
3. build on existing experience, lessons learned and other activities, including from other conventions and sectors.

### **Key Demands regarding Mitigation**

Without immediately enhanced action on mitigation, adaptation will no longer be possible for millions of people because of the too drastic consequences of climate change. Recent scientific results suggest that developed countries should reduce their emissions by at least 40 percent by 2020 (compared to 1990). More and more African countries, along with the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), are supporting these demands, as expressed during the recent UN climate change negotiations in Bonn in March/April 2009.

### The EU should

1. commit to much stronger domestic emission reductions than currently planned, in line with the mitigation targets proposed above;
2. acknowledge that the international carbon market is not the appropriate tool to promote low-carbon development and to alleviate energy poverty in Africa, and therefore increase public support for low-carbon development through other means than the carbon market.

### African governments should

realise the potential of, and give incentives to, low-carbon technologies for their development goals and reduce internal barriers that prevent low-carbon development.

### **Key Demands on Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD)**

Preserving forests and avoiding land degradation are important in combating harmful CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and preserving ecosystems that provide livelihoods and adaptation services for many poor people. The climate change partnership must work towards supporting REDD in Africa as well.

### The EU should

1. support the establishment of a robust international REDD fund, taking into account the multiple benefits that avoiding deforestation and forest degradation generate in addition to mitigation;
2. reject the inclusion of REDD into the international carbon market, since this may seriously undermine developed countries' domestic reduction ambitions;
3. support the exclusion of plantations from the future REDD mechanism;
4. prevent companies based in the EU from setting up monocultures in Africa which are not adapted to specific ecological and social circumstances;
5. harmonise EU policies and adjust those that could contribute to deforestation and degradation in Africa.

### African governments should

1. look at the underlying causes of REDD and increase their support for sustainable livelihood strategies;
2. respect and support the involvement of relevant groups such as local communities, indigenous peoples, and women/youth in designing and implementing forest protection programmes;
3. support building local capacity and raising awareness on avoiding deforestation, including through the UNFCCC process.

### **Key Demands on Technologies**

Both for mitigation and adaptation, the expansion and dissemination of relevant technologies play a crucial role.

### The EU should

1. support an ambitious legal framework under UNFCCC which should also facilitate technologies that create synergies with poverty reduction, both in mitigation and adaptation;
2. support the development of Africa's capacity for South-South and South-North technology transfer;
3. support the dissemination of existing technologies in cooperation with Africa.

### African governments should

1. pay particular attention to traditional, endogenous and locally adapted technologies, such as ones related to household energy, which are relevant to both poverty reduction and mitigation/adaptation;
2. emphasize that sustainable technology application demands knowledge sharing and capacity development.

### **The Crucial Role of CSOs in Responding to Climate Change**

Climate change affects all parts of society, and strategies in response to this challenge need to build on CSO experience and inclusion in a meaningful way:

1. The knowledge and experience of civil society, in particular of local communities, indigenous peoples, women's and youth organisations, is crucial to achieving effective implementation and responses to the challenge of climate change, in particular to adaptation and REDD;
2. African governments as well as the EU should meaningfully include CSOs in the preparation and implementation of projects, programmes and mechanisms set up under UNFCCC, in the Africa-EU strategy and elsewhere;
3. CSOs are already contributing and gathering a lot of helpful experience, including certain principles, for policy processes; but meaningful engagement is often limited by the lack of funds provided by governments;

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VENRO is the *Association of German Development Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO)*. It currently has 117 members involved in private or church-based development work and/or emergency relief, as well as development education, public relations and lobby work.

Via networks in the 16 German counties (Bundesländer), VENRO represents an additional 2000 local development initiatives and NGOs.

VENRO aims to intensify the commitment of NGOs for eradication of poverty, the realisation of human rights as well as the conservation of natural livelihoods. VENRO

- represents the interests of development NGOs to political leaders
- strengthens the role of NGOs and civil society in development politics
- advocates for the interests of developing countries and poor populations
- sharpens public awareness of development issues

**Association of German Development NGO (VENRO)**

**[www.venro.org](http://www.venro.org)**

With the project “Prospects for Africa – Europe’s Policies” VENRO seeks an active civil society contribution to the implementation of the Africa-EU Strategic Partnership. The project builds on cooperation with African partners that began during VENRO’s successful EU Presidency Project in 2007. VENRO member organizations then worked together with their African partners to develop statements for policy makers, the media and interested public on the main topics of the project: energy and climate policies; regional integration and trade; and gender.

Further information: [www.prospects-for-africa.de](http://www.prospects-for-africa.de)