

Public consultation on the Joint EU-Africa Strategy

**Preliminary report of the Internet
consultation**

Joint expert meeting

23 – 24 March 2007

Introduction

- Public consultation jointly launched by AUC and EC on 5 February
⇒ Aim : to seek the views of European and African civil society on the Joint EU-Africa Strategy
- Public consultation:
 - Joint Internet consultation
 - Various events/ seminars on both continents
- Role of ECDPM: facilitator of the Internet consultation and of the public consultation in Europe, working very closely with the AUC on the consultation in Africa
- Presentation of the results of the Internet consultation so far

Contributions to the Internet consultation

What has been done?

- Website set up in French and English www.europafrika.org, www.europafrique.org:
 - Information hub on the consultation
 - Allowing for on-line contributions
- Internet consultation structured along the 5 clusters: issue papers providing background and key questions for each issue

Contributions to the Internet consultation

What has been done?

- Communication on the consultation:
 - Bimonthly bulletin
 - Invitation and information sent to our network and other institutional and civil society networks
 - Encouraging links to the website, mention in seminars
- ⇒ To link as much as possible public consultation to institutional negotiations

Contributions to the Internet consultation

Results by 12 March:

- 8000 visitors
- 115 commentators, 65% African comments
- 23 comments by various civil society organisations
- 8 position papers received from wide networks

Contributions to the Internet consultation

What does it mean?

- Wide interest expressed:
 - website playing its role in terms of awareness raising
 - dependant on references to it
- Contributions mostly made by individuals: limited representatively
- Level of contributions varies a lot
- Final report of the Internet consultation:
 - To be presented at the end of April
 - Will include more position papers from organisations + results of various events + relevant contributions made in other fora

Process

- Numerous comments on process rather than content
 - Questions raised:
 - Will the limited timeline allow for a proper involvement of civil society, especially in Africa?
- => Need for a second phase until the Summit and third phase afterwards
- Relevance of an Internet-based approach
 - How will the contributions provided influence the outcome of the negotiations?

Shared vision

- Confirmation of the relevance of issues raised:
 - To assess the present partnership
 - To base the new EU-Africa partnership on a set of principles: mutual accountability, equality, ...
 - To redefine common interests
 - To rethink EU-Africa relations in non-aid matters
- Questions raised:
 - How better African unity be reached and what can the EU do to support it?
 - When will EU Member States start treating Africa as one continent?
 - How will the new Strategy deal with the existing current cooperation frameworks?

Governance, democracy and human rights

- Contributions focusing on how governance could be implemented:
 - More attention should be paid to African grown initiatives
 - Collaboration should be reinforced between the different levels of governance
 - EC should provide political support to key players of governance
 - Civil society as ‘producers’ and ‘watchdogs’ of governance => should be better associated to monitoring
 - In a shared vision, it should be possible for the EU and AU to discuss contentious issues (i.e. Zimbabwe)
 - Call for respect of UN Declaration on human rights

Key development issues

- Health and education issues raised such as attention to primary care and neglected tropical diseases
- Migration: attention to brain drain and foreign remittances
- Wide debate on vulnerable groups:
 - Call for better mainstreaming of policies on vulnerable groups
 - Link with MDGs stressed
- Financial resources and development cooperation:
 - Call for debt cancellation
 - Implementation of ODA commitments made is the minimum required
 - Clearer link to MDGs

Trade and regional integration

- How can African integration process be achieved and better supported by the EU
- European agriculture policy: major factor hindering development in Africa
- Need for provision of further EU's assistance in developing good standards animal welfare
- EPAs and trade issues:
 - To grant developing countries preferential treatment
 - To extend timeframe of EPA negotiations
 - To integrate safeguards mechanisms into EPAs and other trade agreements

Peace and security

Confirmation of most points raised in the institutional dialogue

- Priority to supporting capacity building in Africa in its efforts to prevent and resolve conflicts
- What is the most adequate level to address conflict prevention and resolution in Africa? Redefinition of AU-RECs relations
- Acknowledgment of EU commitments but greater policy coherence requested
- Conflict prevention should be prioritised

Conclusion

- First time a public consultation is carried so closely together by AU and EU
- Confirmation of interest but need to have a longer consultation process until and after the Lisbon Summit
- Interest also depends on receptiveness of official process to civil society ideas
- Relevance of issues raised has been confirmed
- New issues raised and conflicting issues pointed out
- Key question: what will the joint Strategy change in EU-Africa relations?
- Need to start talking about next phase

Thank you for your attention...

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*For more information on the public
consultation:*

www.europaffrica.org

www.ecdpm.org