



REX/527

**EU and Africa: Making an equal development partnership a reality based on
sustainability and common values (own-initiative opinion)**

OPINION

European Economic and Social Committee

**EU and Africa: Making an equal development partnership a reality based on
sustainability and common values
(own-initiative opinion)**

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1. Conclusions and recommendations

- 1.1 In a rapidly changing world with significant problems but also new opportunities, Europe has an obligation: to use its multi-cultural, institutional and socioeconomic legacy to enable global sustainable development. The challenges faced by developing countries in Africa are very complex and we need to address these in a sensitive and multidimensional approach. We cannot only give well-meaning advice, but massive financial means from the EU and its Member States are also necessary to invest in Africa to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This must be the main purpose of the EU's international partnerships, and respect for **Universal Human Rights (UHRs), which are essential common values, must be the foundation for any political engagement within an equal development partnership with Africa.**
- 1.2 In line with EU's New Consensus on Development, the EESC advocates promoting a decent life and good prospects, creating a middle class and supporting equal partnerships by strengthening sustainable social-liberal democratic structures in Africa, in line with UHRs¹, including **fundamental labour rights** (the International Labour Organisation's (ILO) *Declaration of Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work*, which includes the Core Labour Standards, and the *Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy*), **freedom to conduct a business** and **the right to a healthy environment**, as well as the SDGs. The EESC welcomes the Joint Communication *Towards a comprehensive Strategy with Africa*² and seeks to contribute to the improvement of the new EU comprehensive strategy with Africa.
- 1.3 The current situation reveals critical challenges but also promising prospects for EU-African developmental cooperation. Africa includes many of the world's 20 fastest growing economies. By 2035, it will have the largest potential workforce. A trade and investment partnership on high level, based on UHRs and sustainability, is necessary for both sides, and development must be the focus, instead of using development funds for border security.
- 1.4 The EESC welcomes the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), as it strengthens trade within the continent, lessens dependencies and moves away from a solely overseas-exports-driven approach. It could be an essential first step towards a free trade area between the EU and Africa. The EESC reiterates the important role of organised civil society in the post-Cotonou agreement.
- 1.5 **Long-term investment in intra-African infrastructure** to foster regional value chains and a sustainable local economy makes economic sense, is ecologically sustainable and creates production capacities including local, quality jobs. An approach geared solely towards overseas exports is unsustainable. In particular, intercontinental economic collaboration should favour local production in Africa, whose main sectors should be sustainable agriculture, energy and the circular economy, as well as the traditional sectors related to raw materials and construction, which still need to be reformed in line with the SDGs. Public funds will not necessarily be used for private investments in Africa, to the detriment of conventional development cooperation.

¹ As stipulated in the nine core UN Human rights covenants and conventions.

² JOIN(2020) 4 final.

Therefore, monitoring, checking and evaluation systems that heavily involve of organised civil society are absolutely vital.

- 1.6 Civil society, social partnerships, social market economies and welfare state systems should be successful models for supporting sustainable development in Africa, albeit tailored to the local culture and socioeconomic circumstances. Priorities for supporting African countries should not only account for trade and investment but also, and in particular, tax policy, migration, development, the environment, education, health, and working and living conditions. This is even more important in light of the current COVID-19 (coronavirus) crisis, of which Africa will suffer immensely.
- 1.7 Quality assurance infrastructure should be built to enable African goods to meet the standards of their target markets. Care should be taken to ensure that laws complying with the SDGs are respected. Likewise, human rights due diligence systems, including EU rules, would be very helpful³.
- 1.8 Erasmus+ should be extended to strengthen cooperation between the EU and Africa. The EU-African development partnership must more strongly support the creation of local public education systems, from infant pedagogics up to university level and vocational education and training, including apprenticeships and life-long learning systems. A "brain drain" from Africa to the EU should be avoided. Especially gender mainstreaming and the empowerment of women have a central role in achieving sustainable development.
- 1.9 The empowerment of women in Africa is a priority for the EESC, which urges Institutions and the Civil Society to work in favour of full gender equality in the different social and economic levels and in an active and constant way.
- 1.10 Reversing migration is in many aspects a critical issue. Only economic, environmental and social development will counteract the causes of involuntary migration.
- 1.11 An international African Diaspora Finance Corporation might be an ideal platform to channel investments, governed by African bodies and used for African needs. It could also be an option for EU investors.
- 1.12 Africa grew strongly over the past decade, leading to the prediction that the continent's energy demand will double by 2050, with poverty rates remaining stubbornly high. This would perpetuate, if not exacerbate, sustainability issues in terms of environmental and socioeconomic aspects.
- 1.13 Nevertheless, opportunities could arise: (i) African countries can play a leading role in the conversion of solar energy to electricity using solar photovoltaic technology; this can also lead to the large-scale production of synthetic fuels; (ii) specific possibilities for joint projects, business activities and policies could create a new socio-ecological market economy approach.

³ EP study *Access to legal remedies for victims of corporate human rights abuses in third countries*, Brussels, (2019).

- 1.14 Agricultural and food industries in Africa should be supported, to improve cultivation, reduce harvest losses and enhance quality standards. Other objectives in the agri-food sector are developing new marketing and production methods, promoting cooperative self-organisation among farmers, food security, and increasing trade along the entire value chain. The EESC particularly opposes "land grabbing" in Africa.
- 1.15 EU and African stakeholders should work together to make the Green Deal a reality to save the planet and create a decent life for everyone. With the institutionalised involvement of organised civil society, we could easily practise self-reflection and avoid past mistakes by new means. Sustainable development can only be achieved if it originates from and is driven from within a country itself.
- 1.16 Adopting a UHR-based approach, developing democratic governance structures, improving economic and financial governance through the transparent management of public finances, and creating a credible system to fight corruption based on an independent judiciary all contribute to establishing strong, self-reliant and stable partners in business and development.

2. **Background and main points of the opinion**

- 2.1 The EU27 is Africa's largest trade and investment partner. The EESC welcomes the Joint Communication *Towards a comprehensive Strategy with Africa*⁴, which proposes partnerships relating to the green transition and energy access, the digital transformation, sustainable growth and jobs, and peace and governance.
- 2.2 Fifty-two African countries have some kind of trade arrangement with the EU. Association agreements exist with four North African countries and Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) negotiations are ongoing with Morocco and Tunisia. The EU has negotiated five economic partnership agreements (EPAs) with regional African organisations. These are based on the Cotonou Agreement and its objective to upgrade trade relations between the EU and African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries to WTO rules.
- 2.3 The EESC reiterates its approach: it wishes to ensure a decent life and good prospects for everyone, create a middle class (being mindful of the correlation between migration and income) and support equal partnerships by strengthening sustainable social-liberal democratic structures. However, pre-existing local traditions and best practices should be respected. The EESC has argued for a development policy that creates good prospects, structures and economic opportunities for everyone in Africa.
- 2.4 Investment from outside Africa is steadily on the rise. For instance, China is investing as part of its Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) and Belt and Road Initiative. Other, less extensive initiatives include the US's Africa Partnership Station and the 2019 Russia-Africa Summit.

⁴ JOIN(2020) 4 final.

- 2.5 **UHRs, including fundamental labour rights, freedom to conduct a business, the right to a healthy environment and rule of law are essential common values.** Together with the SDGs, they form an internationally agreed minimum standard for development programmes and are the basis for an equal development partnership.
- 2.6 These values are in line with the EU's new consensus on development, which also seeks to take into account the impacts on development of other policies through policy coherence for development.
- 2.7 This opinion identifies critical aspects for a serious equal development partnership and analyses the current situation and challenges with respect to EU-Africa relations.

3. **Current challenges**

A decent life, ecological responsibility and good prospects are crucial to our survival. We need to tackle climate change and think more responsibly and cooperatively. The traditional approach of industrial policy and growth is an outdated development model that will destroy the planet and incur massive societal costs. Especially in Africa, people not only need to be lifted out of extreme poverty, but should also be able to actively participate in society (housing, food, health, education). The World Economic Forum's Global Risks Report 2017 emphasised the problem of worldwide inequality as the greatest driver for risks associated with recent policy challenges. Women and vulnerable groups are even more affected and excluded from societal participation when there is a lack of opportunities.

3.1 Economic aspects

- 3.1.1 Many of the world's 20 fastest growing economies are in Africa and by 2035, it will have the largest potential workforce. This is where the global markets, customers and employees of the future are emerging. Therefore, the majority of current global challenges can only be tackled together with strong African partners. An equal trade and investment partnership is needed, based on UHRs and sustainability. EUR 600 billion is necessary annually to achieve the SDGs in Africa⁵. Therefore, the EESC acknowledges the massive need for private investment.
- 3.1.2 Trade policy should consider coherence for development in particular with regard to tariffs, procurement and taxes, should be mindful of existing asymmetries, especially in terms of EPAs⁶, should support regional integration, should include sections on sustainability that are binding and be sanctionable, and should modify investment protection so that all UHRs are respected.

⁵ German Ministry for Development, *Afrika und Europa – Neue Partnerschaft für Entwicklung, Frieden und Zukunft*, (2017).

⁶ Austrian Foundation for Development Research, *The Economic and social effects of the Economic Partnership Agreements on selected African Countries*, (2018), finds detrimental effects of EPA on ECOWAS, tariff reduction may cost billions for our partner countries, public revenue lost for sustainable development; [OJ C 97, 24.3.2020, p. 18](#), REX/516, p. 5.5.

- 3.1.3 The EESC welcomes the AfCFTA, as it strengthens trade within the continent, lessens dependencies and moves away from a solely overseas-exports-driven approach. It favours a free trade area between the EU and the African Union (AU) under a single agreement, which will have to account for the diversity and economic strengths of the individual African states.
- 3.1.4 Increasingly, funds traditionally earmarked for development are being used to leverage private investments, which must not be to the detriment of traditional development cooperation. So called "Green bonds", which are specifically directed towards sustainable projects, could be a good way of channelling private investments in Africa. All investments, public or private, absolutely have to be monitored, checked and evaluated with the involvement of CSOs to guarantee that they are used to achieve the SDGs and development objectives and that they comply with UHRs. At the same time, the EESC has noted that European development funds have been used to alleviate poor working conditions in Africa⁷.
- 3.1.5 Agriculture is a major economic sector in Africa (over 60% of Africans work in agriculture, most often in small subsistence farming). In industrialised and emerging economies, there is a race to secure arable land in Africa⁸. A lack of official or accurate registers facilitates land grabbing and prevents young African people from accessing farmland. Most land-based investments worldwide are being made in Africa, including large-scale EU investments. Development experts warn that in the Guinea Savannah, up to 4 million square kilometres of arable land are becoming the target of international (including European) agricultural concerns⁹. Global food production needs to increase by 70% by 2050¹⁰, which will require an increase of 97% in developing countries, while at the same time arable land is increasingly being used to produce eco-fuels and ingredients for the chemical industry. Food security is even more important due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

3.2 *Social aspects*

- 3.2.1 The concepts of civil society, social partnerships and a social market economy have worked very well in Europe.
- 3.2.2 European Investment Bank (EIB) projects seem to meet broader sustainability objectives and use a better development approach. However, the EP, the EC and CSOs have voiced concerns over the EIB's operations. They have emphasised the need to improve human rights due diligence in its operations. This is of the utmost importance if it is to offer credible support¹¹.

⁷ Based on an oral report from EESC Member Jaroslaw Mulewicz, following a visit during an EESC mission to Bole Lemi Industrial Park in Ethiopia, where Asian textile companies are based. However, the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF for Africa) has to promote sustainable and acceptable employment conditions (which it has done with mixed results so far).

⁸ German Environment Agency, *Globale Landflächen und Biomasse*, (2013).

⁹ Gebauer, Trojanow, *Hilfe? Hilfe! - Wege aus der globalen Krise*, (2018).

¹⁰ See FN 8.

¹¹ EP resolution of 17 January 2019 2018/2151(INI); Commission Staff Working Document SWD(2019) 333 final.

- 3.2.3 Provisions that allow Europeans to dispute laws that comply with the SDGs harm our credibility:
- decent work includes a living wage; disputing this is not in line with the development approach we need to take (e.g. case Veolia v. Egypt);
 - EU investments should be protected, but we have to safeguard labour laws, the environment and consumer protection.
- 3.2.4 Our development partnership must more strongly support the creation of local public education systems, from infant pedagogics up to university level. Special attention should be paid to vocational education, including apprenticeships and life-long learning systems. Europe's experience can be useful in developing educational systems in Africa.
- 3.2.5 The cost of trade in Africa is often very high and many countries do not yet comply with international quality, safety and ecological standards. Quality assurance infrastructure should be built to support that African goods meet the standards of their target markets, also in Africa. In particular, support for African countries should be geared towards environmental, health and labour conditions and protection structures.
- 3.2.6 The European welfare state systems have developed successfully based on solidarity and by being rooted in fundamental values that are shared by all major political movements. Social insurance systems, cooperative models and public services have allowed people to gain wealth and channel market forces not only to reduce poverty and stimulate economic growth, but also to promote participatory democracies.
- 3.2.7 This is even more important considering the challenges of the COVID-19 crisis, of which Africa will suffer immensely. According to UN data, Africa bears 24% of the global burden of diseases, with Malaria being problematic in particular, but has only 3% of the world's health workers. It is well known that countries training health workers suffer financial losses when these professionals emigrate to industrialised countries¹².
- 3.2.8 Only economic, environmental and social development will counteract the causes of involuntary migration. We must include UHRs in our policies to foster the kind of societies in Africa that many African emigrants seek in the EU due to a lack of prospects at home.
- 3.2.9 Reversing migration is a critical issue. e.g., the EESC would like to highlight reports¹³ of a brain drain from Tunisia, where policymakers have to deal with the fact that around a third of IT experts – trained with the help of EU funds – emigrate to work in the EU.

¹² Kingsley Ighobor in Africa Renewal, Dec 2016 - Mar 2017, *Diagnosing Africa's medical brain drain*

¹³ Oral Report from Kais Sellami, CEO of Discovery Informatique at the Euromed Conference in Barcelona in October 2019.

3.3 *Sustainability aspects*

- 3.3.1 The African economy has grown strongly over the past decade and living conditions have notably improved, yet poverty rates have remained stubbornly high. With its limited economic diversification, persisting inequalities, high unemployment and environmental degradation, the continent still needs to move towards a sustainable development path that can achieve a decent life for everyone.
- 3.3.2 Demand for energy in Africa is expected to double by 2050. These increased needs should be covered by expanding the use of renewable energies. Implementing the energy transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources is essential for mitigating climate change. African countries can play a leading role in the conversion of solar energy to electricity using solar photovoltaic (PV) technology. As well as providing electrical energy for local use, large PV parks can also lead to the production of e-fuels¹⁴. The local population should be able to partake in the gains. Methanol and other synthetic fuels appear to be alternatives to fossil fuels for aviation, but could also prolong the use of internal combustion engines in road transport vehicles.

4. **Policy recommendations**

4.1 *General aspects*

- 4.1.1 A fair and equal development relationship with African states should promote decent work and uphold public services. In particular, trade policy must ensure that UHRs, the environment and the right to a decent life are fully respected. It must also account for the needs of less developed countries. An agreement for the Post-Cotonou era will be a great opportunity only if it creates quality jobs, boosts sustainable growth and ensures the inclusion of organised civil society. Notable development policy experts argue that democratic regionalism should guide the EU's development policy, with particular relevance to Africa and its societies, due to local special circumstances¹⁵.
- 4.1.2 Contemporary, progressive partnerships should reflect the demand for a new form of cooperation between industrialised and developing countries. In particular, establishing these reform partnerships will require a better general environment for private-sector activities and the creation of more quality jobs with an adequate income to enable Africa's young population to have a decent life. This is essential in order to limit young people's desire to emigrate from the African continent for a better future¹⁶. In that regard, the EESC notes its contacts in and its support for the democratisation of Tunisia. The deep and comprehensive Free Trade Agreement,

¹⁴ COM(2018) 773 – A Clean Planet for all – A European strategic long-term vision for a prosperous, modern, competitive and climate neutral economy.

¹⁵ Such as Werner Raza, the Director of the Austrian Foundation for Development Research, at the Conference: *A good life for all needs a different Globalisation*, March 2020, Vienna.

¹⁶ Studies show that a certain level of minimum wage decreases migration pressures, e.g. Clemens, *Does Development Reduce Migration?* (2014).

for which negotiations are ongoing, must consider preserving what was achieved by making sure the Tunisian economy will be able to give its people opportunities and perspectives.

4.1.3 To strengthen and support necessary reforms in Africa, a think tank could be established, with focus on civil society engagement, deliberated economic and structural reforms and the SDGs. It could foster the development of knowledge and competences in Africa and ease the exchange between civil society in Africa and Europe.

4.2 *Economic development*

4.2.1 With regard to the European Green Deal, innovation and a social-ecological transformation should be the drivers of economic development. The focus must be on a fair distribution of wealth and the creation of welfare state structures. The priorities should not only account for trade and investment, but also international cooperation in other matters, e.g. tax policy, migration, development, the environment, education, working, and living and health conditions (especially after COVID-19). An involvement of organised civil society will be decisive in this respect.

4.2.2 Long-term investment in intra-African infrastructure is needed (as opposed to infrastructure to facilitate exports overseas) to foster regional value chains and a sustainable local economy. This makes economic sense, is ecologically sustainable and creates production capacities including local quality jobs. The overseas-export-driven paradigm is still significant in Africa as raw materials have strategic importance to large economies (including the EU and MS). EU investment must take another approach based on a truly equal partnership to ensure that everyone benefits and, in particular, to foster sustainable development in Africa.

4.2.3 An international African Diaspora Finance Corporation could coordinate the use of African diaspora resources for inclusive development and investment in socially responsible ventures and schemes¹⁷ in Africa. It could be an ideal platform to channel investments, governed by African bodies, used for African concerns and an option for EU investors. The investment needed to achieve the SDGs in Africa significantly exceeds the estimated annual savings of African migrants. Hence, more ways of (business) cooperation should take place with the help of diaspora organisations.

4.2.4 As well as exporting raw materials to be processed elsewhere, African countries should be encouraged and helped to establish sustainable domestic industries so that profits generated by the processing of raw materials stay in the country. Revenues from the extractives sector should be invested in infrastructure and social services, and thereby actually benefit the population.

4.2.5 Strengthening public security in order to fight terrorism must stay a priority. However, border security and the provision of weapons have to be handled very carefully. Development must be the focus, instead of using development funds to stop involuntary migration and arming security

¹⁷ GK Partners. (2019) *Strategic, Business and Operational Framework for an African Diaspora Finance Corporation*.

forces: the growing "securitisation" aspect, in development policy is potentially exacerbating the root causes of migration.

- 4.2.6 The EESC calls for EU rules on human rights due diligence¹⁸. It has previously demanded of the EU the binding implementation of human rights due diligence, especially in international value chains by the EU¹⁹. Based on existing measures and EESC concepts (e.g. a rating agency), a binding due diligence system would be very helpful for sustainable development, particularly in Africa, and strengthen the EU's efforts to create an equal development partnership.
- 4.2.7 The merits of SME development and cooperation between African and EU SMEs can hardly be overstated. Mostly, multinational companies are able to manage the risks associated with business ventures in Africa. To be able to use the potential of SMEs in an equal development partnership, SMEs need dependable structures and institutional support. The majority of Africa's jobs are provided by SMEs. Financial services, particularly on a cooperative basis, will have to be improved and (where they do not exist) developed to meet the needs of SMEs, e.g. loans, local currency loans and risk management.
- 4.2.8 The lack of skilled staff is a major obstacle for companies in African countries. Promoting vocational training is thus a matter of the highest priority.
- 4.2.9 "Since taxation matters are tied in with sustainable development goals (SDGs), businesses should duly pay their taxes in the country where their profits are made through the creation of added value during production processes, raw-material extraction and other such activities"²⁰. This principle is of fundamental importance for an equal development partnership. The EESC has also argued for impact assessments of bilateral double taxation agreements conducted by the EU if there was a risk of counteracting EU development policies²¹.

In addition to private investment, tax revenues also play an important role in financing sustainable development. African countries are missing tax revenues corresponding to double the amount of all development funding they receive per year. Measures against tax avoidance and to eliminate corruption and campaigns for more domestic revenues in African countries are essential, combined with training for officials of tax authorities, courts of audit and ministries of finance. Tax havens, either in African states or the EU, hinder sustainable development.

- 4.2.10 Infrastructure is necessary to help companies find financing and support mechanisms and build contacts on the ground. They also need to receive advice in the project planning stages.

18 [OJ C 47, 11.2.2020, p. 38](#); REX/517 p 1.5.3.

19 [OJ C 47, 11.2.2020, p. 38](#); REX/517 and [OJ C 97, 24.3.2020, p. 9](#); REX/518.

20 [OJ C 81, 2.3.2018, p. 29](#); REX/487 p. 1.9.

21 Ibid. p 1.7.

4.2.11 Agricultural and food industries in African countries should be supported so that procedures for improving cultivation are developed, harvest losses are reduced, deforestation stopped and quality standards enhanced. Moreover, the agri-food sector should develop new marketing, modern farming and processing methods, promote self-organisation among farmers, especially in cooperatives, and increase trade along the entire value chain.

4.3 *Social policy*

4.3.1 Including civil society, such as social partnerships at shop and sector level, in the institutional set-up of European states has given the EU an advantage. Organised civil society should be heavily involved in the equal development partnership, as this will create stable structures for all EU activities, especially for business. By that our efforts would not just be focused on profits, but also on sustainable development in Africa, so as to create long-term partnerships based on trust and equality.

4.3.2 Erasmus+ should be extended to strengthen cooperation between EU and African states. The professional abilities and knowledge of African graduates must support sustainable development in their countries of origin. A "brain drain" from Africa to the EU should be avoided. Education is a major stepping stone to improving the conditions of, in particular, women and vulnerable groups and our support should be targeted accordingly.

4.3.3 COVID-19 makes the challenges even greater. Many health systems are currently overwhelmed. We will have to provide even more support to the African states so that they can implement strong health care systems that are ready for challenges like COVID-19 on a bio-medicinal and social-medicinal level. Good health care must not be hindered by a poor economy, a lack of governance, poor accessibility or a lack of trained personnel. Well-built welfare states in Europe have largely proven themselves in the face of the current challenge and could be used as a role model to improve health care systems in Africa, in particular.

4.3.4 African diaspora organisations in the EU need to be involved when creating an equal partnership between the EU and African states. They can offer financing and know-how and can make it clear that a UHR-based approach will strengthen the African structures required for stable business, social engagement and a healthy environment. They know about the EU implementation of the UHRs, to operate in EU frameworks, and could serve as a bridge for EU activities in their countries of origin.

4.4 *Sustainable development*

4.4.1 Sustainable development can only be achieved if it originates from and is driven from within a country itself. Africa's own development capacities must be supported so that reforms are initiated, everyone gain decent prospects and both private and public investment on the continent can pay off.

- 4.4.2 Africa needs a new approach to industrial policy that is organised sector by sector and coordinated internationally to create larger markets and stronger incentives for sustainable industries, especially those not relying on fossil fuels²².
- 4.4.3 When it comes to e-fuel production using PV technology, location matters in terms of economic efficiency²³, with the "sunbelt" of the equator appearing to be the ideal area²⁴. This sector may also have a favourable impact on economic development for African countries, potentially enabling them to participate in international energy projects. Any development aid in this sector could not only have a positive impact on the countries receiving it, but also on the consumers of energy in developed countries²⁵.
- 4.4.4 The SDGs offer a relationship based on UHRs between the EU and its African partners, working together in the sense of the Green Deal to save the planet and create a decent life for everyone. With the institutionalised involvement of organised civil society, we could easily practise self-reflection and avoid past mistakes by new means.
- 4.4.5 All stakeholders, including social partners and other CSOs, must push for projects, business activities and policies that create a new socio-ecological market economy approach. As well as economic aspects, fundamental social and biophysical issues (such as climate change) need to be more strongly considered. Hence, in addition to solely economic indicators, those taking into account holistic aspects of well-being for everyone must be considered in relation to sustainable development²⁶ in an equal development partnership.
- 4.4.6 Many agricultural investments have dubious impacts on communities. There are regular reports of human rights violations and investors renegeing on deals to build infrastructure or create jobs for local communities, including European investors. The EESC is particularly opposed to "land grabbing" in Africa. Impact evaluations, conducted with the involvement of organised civil society, need to be more rigorous and must have consequences for investors that fail to comply with UHRs and the SDGs. One option is to support the creation of land registers and organising resident farmers to create cooperative undertakings that are stronger in international markets. This will help the EU and Africa to meet their common objectives, as it creates structures that allow for an equal playing field with its African partners and strengthens them vs. other major economic players.

22 Victor, Geels, Sharpe, *Accelerating the Transitions*, (2019).

23 Janina Scheelhaase et al., *Transportation Research Procedia* 43 (2019) 21–30.

24 Prognos (2018), *Importance of liquid energy sources for the energy transition*.

25 Radermacher F.-J. (2019), *Die internationale Energie- und Klimakrise überwinden*.

26 Stiglitz, Joseph; Sen, Amartya; Fitoussi, Jean, *Report of the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress* (CMEPSP), (2009).

4.5 Cooperation and strengthening of civil society in African states based on UHRs and the SDGs – the EU's road to success for an equal development partnership

4.5.1 Adopting a UHR-based approach, developing democratic governance structures, improving economic and financial governance through the transparent management of public finances, and creating a credible system to fight corruption based on an independent judiciary all contribute to establishing strong, self-reliant and stable partners in business and development. Organised Civil participation could definitely ensure that all these measures are implemented.

4.5.2 EU promises have to deliver tangible results. Only by compliance to UHRs and achieving the SDGs will we be able to break free of dependencies and become equal development partners.

Brussels, 16/09/2020

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The president of the European Economic and Social Committee
