



**COUNCIL OF
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EU-Africa Ministerial meeting Bamako (Mali), 2 December 2005

Communiqué

In the framework of the Africa-EU dialogue, the fifth Ministerial Meeting of the African and EU Troikas met in Bamako, Mali, on 2 December 2005. The Meeting was preceded by a meeting of Senior Officials, held on 1 December 2005. The Meeting of Ministers was co-chaired by H.E. Ambassador Oluyemi Adeniji, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Nigeria and current Chairperson of the AU Executive Council, and H.E. Lord David Triesman of Tottenham, Minister for Africa of the United Kingdom and current President of the Council of the European Union (EU).

The African Troïka was also composed of H.E. Alcinda de Abreu, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Co-operation of Mozambique and the African Union Commissioners, Dr Maxwell M. Mkwezalamba, Commissioner for Economic Affairs and Ambassador Said Djinnit, Commissioner for Peace and Security.

The EU Troïka was also composed of Louis Michel, Commissioner for Development Co-operation and Humanitarian Affairs, Ambassador Georg Lennkh, Special Representative for Africa for the Government of Austria and Koen Vervaeke, Head of the Africa Task Force in the General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union.

P R E S S

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I. PREAMBLE

Ministers recognised the remarkable efforts that have been made in recent months to revitalise and redynamise the partnership between Africa and the EU. Ministers welcomed this new approach and decided to launch a number of new joint initiatives which should be reported upon at the next meeting of the Ministerial troikas in Vienna on 27-28 April 2006. These areas include:

- Enhancing and monitoring the dialogue, notably through elaboration of a joint implementation matrix, a joint EU-Africa strategy and its action plan with a further meeting of officials in Addis Ababa in the first half of February 2006 and enhanced dialogue between Heads of Mission in Addis;
- Finding creative ideas that will lead to the holding of an Africa-EU Summit as envisaged in the Cairo Plan of Action;
- Deepening technical and political co-operation between the African Union and European Union and between AU Organs and EU institutions;
- Establishing a comprehensive dialogue on migration, including at ministerial level;
- Developing initiatives in the areas of governance and infrastructure for the identification of priority actions;
- Considering other thematic joint initiatives that could deepen co-operation and exchange of experience between Africa and the EU, for example in the areas of peace and security, trade, HIV/AIDS, environment and energy and other areas to help achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

II. ENHANCING AND MONITORING THE DIALOGUE

Ministers agreed to actively work towards an Africa-EU Summit. They mandated senior officials to submit concrete proposals for consideration at the next meeting of the Ministerial Troikas.

Ministers welcomed the monitoring matrix presented by the African side and agreed to elaborate a joint matrix for consideration at the next meeting of the Troikas. For this purpose, officials will meet in Addis Ababa in the first half of February 2006.

The African side welcomed the draft EU Strategy for Africa presented by the EU side and look forward to its formal adoption at the next European Council. Both sides agreed to transform this into a joint Africa-EU Strategy and develop an action plan for its implementation. In this regard, Ministers mandated senior officials to submit recommendations to the next ministerial troika.

III. PEACE AND SECURITY

a) Conflict Situations in Africa

Sudan

(i) Darfur

Ministers welcomed the commencement of the 7th Round of the Abuja Talks, and urged the parties to exhibit renewed commitment by negotiating in good faith to reach a final agreement as soon as possible. They again recalled the obligation of all parties to meet the demands of the international community as expressed in relevant resolutions and decisions of the UN Security Council and the AU Peace and Security Council. They noted the progress made in the deployment of AMIS, as well as the support rendered by the EU and stressed the need for additional financial and logistical support to sustain the Mission.

(ii) North-South

Ministers welcomed the progress made in the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) and the establishment of the Government of National Unity. They called on the international community to provide the requisite financial and technical support for the post-conflict reconstruction of the Sudan, including honouring the pledges made during the Oslo Donors Conference, and took note of the efforts being made by the AU Committee of Post-Conflict Reconstruction in the Sudan.

Cote d'Ivoire

Ministers took note of the efforts made to finalize the peace and reconciliation process in Cote d'Ivoire, based on the relevant decisions and resolutions of the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) and the UN Security Council. They strongly appealed to the Ivorian Parties to fully cooperate with the international community in order to allow the holding of transparent and credible elections within the prescribed time period. They welcomed the results of the first meeting of the International Working Group (IWG) and looked forward to the second meeting of the IWG, to be held on 6 December 2005.

Somalia

Ministers welcomed the outcome of the recent meeting of the Council of Ministers of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in Johwar, in particular the fact that Somalia now has a Transitional Federal Government (TFG) that should be supported. Ministers encouraged the TFG to maintain a continuous dialogue with a view to reaching out to all members of Transitional Federal Institutions to stabilise the situation in Somalia. Ministers called on all groups to cooperate with the TFG to enable the speedy implementation of the peace process.

Great Lakes Region

Ministers took note of the important progress accomplished in the transitional process in DRC. They urged the parties and the Congolese authorities to spare no efforts in order to achieve peace and reconciliation. They agreed the timetable for elections must be respected. They noted with great satisfaction the voter registration process and the organisation of the referendum and elections. They took note, with satisfaction, of efforts aimed at neutralizing and disarming the armed groups located in Eastern DRC, including the recent dispatch of an AU Reconnaissance Mission to the DRC and the neighbouring countries.

Ministers welcomed the very significant progress made in the reconciliation and peace process in Burundi and reiterated their commitment to support the new Burundian authorities in their peace-building and post-conflict reconstruction efforts.

Ministers noted the progress made within the context of the process of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region and looked forward to the second Summit of Head of States and Government scheduled to take place in Nairobi, in mid 2006.

Ministers agreed on the importance of sustained efforts to end the conflict in northern Uganda and tackle the serious humanitarian situation there and stressed the need for all parties to co-operate fully with the International Criminal Court.

Ethiopia – Eritrea

Ministers called on the two countries to exercise maximum restraint and to extend full cooperation to the international community in order to reduce tension, end the current stalemate and achieve lasting peace. In this respect, they noted the adoption by the UN Security Council of resolution 1640 (2005) and called for its full implementation.

b) Promoting peace and resolving conflicts

Ministers recognised the importance of post-conflict reconstruction and the need to draw lessons from the past and enhance coherence between peace and security and economic reconstruction and development. They agreed on the need to continue to cooperate closely in the implementation of post-conflict reconstruction and development in Africa.

Ministers also stressed the central role played by the African Peace Facility (APF) in the implementation of the Peace and Security Agenda of the AU. They stressed the principles of African ownership, solidarity and partnership that underpin the APF and agreed on the necessity for its replenishment and future financing. In this respect, the African side recalled the importance of the decision on the Peace Facility adopted by the AU Assembly in Maputo, in July 2003.

c) Terrorism

The AU side informed the EU side of its policies aimed at combating terrorism in Africa, including efforts to operationalize the African Centre on the Study and Research on Terrorism in Algiers. Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to increase co-operation in this area.

IV. GOVERNANCE

APRM

Ministers welcomed the progress made under the APRM, noting that 24 countries have now adhered to the Peer Review Mechanism and recently two Member States, namely Ghana and Rwanda, submitted review reports. The EU side reiterated its commitment to support this mechanism. Ministers endorsed the proposal for an EU Governance Initiative aimed at supporting the reforms triggered by the APRM process and encouraged those countries which have not yet adhered to the APRM to do so.

Election Observation

Ministers exchanged views on elections in Africa and agreed to co-operate closely when observing elections. They also noted the AU's efforts to strengthen its election observation capacity through the setting up of an electoral assistance unit in the AU Commission and an electoral assistance fund. The EU side agreed to continue its assistance in this regard.

The EU side expressed its concerns for the post-election situation in Ethiopia. Ministers agreed that where disputes arise over elections, these should be addressed peacefully, democratically and with full respect for the rule of law.

Corruption

Ministers reaffirmed their shared responsibility for fighting corruption including through the return of illegally acquired assets stashed away in foreign banks to their countries of origin. The African side welcomed the paper tabled by the EU on corruption and the various measures taken to advance the fight against corruption. The EU side reaffirmed its commitment to address the legal obstacles to the return of such illegally acquired assets.

Ministers reiterated the need to work together to encourage their respective Member States to ratify the UN and AU Conventions against corruption, and to support the establishment of anti-corruption institutions and mechanisms.

Ministers also agreed to promote active co-operation concerning the return of cultural goods and artefacts to their countries of origin. Both sides agreed on the need for implementation of the decision to produce an inventory, with the assistance of the EU and UNESCO, and to report at the next meeting.

OTHER ISSUES

The EU expressed its concern at developments in Zimbabwe. The EU welcomed recent efforts by the United Nations Secretary-General and others to address the situation there. Ministers agreed on the need to encourage meaningful internal dialogue as the way forward.

V. REGIONAL INTEGRATION AND TRADE

Trade

The EU side reiterated that it will continue to assist African countries to gain increased access to European markets, and to support capacity-building for trade negotiators and producers.

Ministers endorsed the EU's proposal for the establishment of an EU-Africa Partnership on Infrastructure and to ensure its implementation.

The African side reiterated its commitment to establish a business-friendly environment in Africa and reaffirmed its appeal to the EU to encourage the European private sector to increase its investment in Africa. In this regard, Ministers welcomed plans to convene a Europe-Africa Business Forum in 2006 and looked forward to early agreement on this.

The African side expressed its gratitude for the support the EU has provided Africa so far to address problems encountered by producers and exporters of cotton, and looks forward to further measures to address the remaining problems.

We agree on a front-loading of commitments in the areas of tariff elimination, elimination of export subsidies and substantial reduction of trade-distorting subsidies for cotton.

Doha Development Round

Ministers agreed on the importance of a successful conclusion of the Doha Development Agenda negotiations and the need for significant progress at the WTO Ministerial Conference in Hong Kong.

Both sides agreed to work towards a balanced and substantial outcome of the negotiations including aspects of particular concern to the development of African countries.

Both sides called for agreement in Hong Kong on duty-free and quota-free access for all LDCs, in line with the Arusha benchmarks for development.

EPAs

Ministers expressed appreciation for the progress made by the Joint Contact Group, particularly in the area of monitoring EPA process to ensure that EPAs are recognized as an instrument for development and poverty reduction. The EU side pledged to assist and support the African side in the improvement of quality and standardization of products.

Regional Integration

The EU side agreed to support efforts currently being made by the AU (in collaboration with the Economic Commission for Africa) to rationalise the Regional Economic Communities, and also agreed to support the capacity-building of the RECs.

VI. KEY DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

Migration

Ministers emphasized the need to look at migration holistically as an issue of human rights, social cohesion, economic integration and development. They agreed to launch a comprehensive dialogue on migration issues. This would be further strengthened by an Africa-EU joint ministerial conference dedicated to migration as proposed by the EU for 2006.

Ministers agreed to update if necessary the Joint Africa-Europe Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings, especially Women and Children before the next ministerial troika meeting with a view to its early adoption and implementation.

Africa's External Debt

Ministers agreed to submit the joint EU/Africa Experts' Report on Africa's External debt to the Africa-EU Summit for a political decision. The African side called on EU member states and others to follow the example of the G8 and cancel the debt of African countries.

Outcome of the UN Summit – reforms and achieving the Millennium Development Goals

Ministers agreed that all elements of the reform of the United Nations be given equal attention, in particular issues of development, reform of UN institutions such as the General Assembly, ECOSOC, Security Council and Human Rights Commission. They agreed on the importance of establishing and operationalising new institutions such as the Peacebuilding Commission and increasing the African voice in the Bretton Woods institutions.

The EU side agreed to help Africa to accelerate progress towards the MDGs, in particular through speedy implementation and joint monitoring of the commitments in the EU Strategy for Africa.

HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases

The African side invited the EU to support AU Member States in the local production of generics especially those used in the treatment of HIV, AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis. The EU side pledged support in building the capacity of AU Member States so that they can take advantage of the flexibilities in the WTO/TRIPS.

Ministers noted the gravity of the Avian Flu crisis. The AU side requested the EU to help AU Member States to stockpile Tamiflu and Relenza, which are the currently known effective drugs for Avian flu. The EU side took note of this request and pledged support wherever possible.

For the EU side

For the African side