

Statement on the New European Union (EU) Strategy for Africa by the civil society organisations in the East Africa region

1. Introduction

1.1 The process in which the statement was developed

This statement was developed in a regional workshop organised by HORIZONT3000 in Fairway Hotel in Kampala – Uganda on the 11th May 2006. Executives and other leading persons of civil society organisations from Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania attended the workshop. Also present were; the EU Head of Delegation to Uganda who presented a summary of the strategy to the workshop, the Head of Austrian Delegation for Development Cooperation in Uganda who in turn presented a comment on the strategy from the Austrian Government point of view, the Director of HORIZONT3000 - East Africa Region and three members of staff of the same organisation. A representative from the Ugandan Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development also attended the workshop.

The purpose of the workshop was to examine the New EU Strategy for Africa in view of its impact on the work of the civil society organisations and development in the region and workout a common statement to be presented in the international conference **SOUND OF AFRICA** in Vienna in June 2006.

1.2 The purpose of the statement

The statement will be the contribution of civil society organisations in East Africa to the global discussion of the impact of the New EU Strategy of Africa on the civil society organisations on the continent. Other regions in Africa have already organised similar workshops and come up with statements on the strategy. All these statements will be presented in the planned conference.

1.3 Content of the statement

The statement contains;

- 1) A list of key opportunities provided by the new EU strategy for Africa for the civil society organisations to participate in the implementation and monitoring of the implementation process of the strategy.

- 2) Strategic interventions that need to be carried out in order to optimise the use of the opportunities the new strategy provides to the civil society organisations in the region.
- 3) A list of key limitations/challenges posed by the new strategy seen by the civil society organisations in the region.
- 4) Recommendations as to how the limitations and challenges can be dealt with in order to enhance the role of the civil society organisations in the development process of the region.

2. Statement on the impact of the New European Union (EU) Strategy for Africa developed and agreed upon in the regional workshop on the 11th May 2006 in Kampala

2.1 Key opportunities provided by the new EU strategy for Africa to the civil society organisations regarding their work and development in the region

We, representatives of the civil society organisations in the East African region, meeting in Kampala on 11th May 2006 recognise a number of opportunities within the framework of the New EU Strategy for Africa that could be used to enhance the work of the civil society organisations and their development in our region. In our view, the New EU Strategy provides the following key opportunities to the civil society organisations in the region:

- 1) A chance to enhance the synergy effect of the cooperation between governments and the private sector on issues of priority for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.
- 2) A chance to consolidate the North-South and South-South cooperation of the civil society organisations involved in development work in the region
- 3) A chance for enhancing human resources capacity within the civil society organisations themselves and among their target groups through skills transfer
- 4) A chance to undertake collaborative resources mobilisation for development work in the region
- 5) Room for lobbying and advocating for a higher level of engagement of the civil society in the development process of the region
- 6) Room for strengthening the position of the civil society organisations in the region to participate more effectively in the implementing and monitoring the implementation process of the Millennium Development Goals

- 7) Room for more support from the EU to the various actors for identifying and addressing common crosscutting social, economic, political challenges in the region
- 8) Room for support in broadening the horizon of thinking and scope action at national, regional, continental and inter-continental levels of the civil society organisations in the region
- 9) A chance for the civil society organisations to work together with the relevant EU institutions to contribute to the promotion and improvement of the North-South and South-South trade – Thereby putting emphasis on aid for development of trade

2.2 Strategic interventions that need to be carried out in order to optimise the use of the opportunities the new strategy provides to the civil society organisations in the region

In order to optimise the use of the above nine mentioned opportunities provided by the new EU strategy for Africa to the civil society organisations in the region to participate more effectively in the development process of the region, we suggest that mechanisms/arrangements be put in place to enable and facilitate following strategic interventions that need to be carried out:

- 1) Popularising the strategy through intensive networking and information sharing at all levels
- 2) Strengthening networks/coalitions of the civil society organisations in the region
- 3) Promoting and ensuring beneficiary participation and linkages both horizontally and vertically
- 4) Identifying and utilising fora for engaging national policy makers at all levels as well as regional ones like the African Union and ECOSCOC
- 5) Stimulating and sustaining participation of civil society organisations in the development process in the region, including providing more direct funding of their activities
- 6) Partnering with the private sector at all levels for the achievement of the objectives of the new strategy
- 7) Increasing the knowledge base concerning development issues in the region through research, ICT etc.
- 8) Undertaking participatory monitoring and evaluation activities to enhance the effectiveness of the development programmes in the region

- 9) Simplifying and popularising relevant development framework documents e.g., NEPAD, EAC Treaty, and the new EU Strategy for Africa in order to achieve a wider understanding of these documents among the stakeholders and thus enhance their implementation

2.3 Key identified limitations/challenges posed by the new EU strategy for Africa to the civil society organisations in the region regarding their work and development

Although the new EU strategy provides many opportunities as described above, it also poses some limitations/challenges to the work and development of the civil society organisations in the region. The following are the main limitations / challenges identified by the civil society in the region:

- 1) The role/mandate of civil society organisations is not clearly described in the new strategy. Furthermore, civil society organisations are not homogenous in terms of capabilities, focus and location. This aspect also needs to be catered for in the strategy or at least in other arrangements related to the strategy.
- 2) Many members of the civil society organisations in the region lack information about the new strategy. In addition, since these organisations did not participate in the development of the strategy there is no ownership of the document among them. Something needs to be done about this.
- 3) The network of the civil society organisations in Africa is in its present state too weak to respond to the strategy. It needs strengthening.
- 4) Mechanisms for enhancing sustainability aspect of development work foreseen in the new strategy are not well articulated in the document.
- 5) The modality of how development works to be carried out by civil society organisations within the framework of the strategy is not clear. - The new strategy seems to be more of a bilateral nature; - EU and African national governments.
- 6) The strategy appears too prescriptive and thematic; allowing very little room for flexibility.
- 7) The principle of equality stressed in the new strategy in dealing with the various actors is not applicable; probably “equity” would be a more appropriate one.
- 8) The new strategy does not contain a well-formulated monitoring evaluation plan/milestones.
- 9) The strategy seems to lack a mechanism for checking corruption.
- 10) Proposed resources (budget) for funding civil society organisations to participate in the implementation of the strategy are inadequate.

2.4 Recommendations as to how the identified limitations/challenges posed by the new strategy to the civil society organisations can be dealt with in order to enhance their role in development work in the region

The limitations/challenges posed by the strategy to the civil society organisations in their work and development in the region mentioned above need to be mitigated in order to enable these organisations to participate effectively in the development process of the region. For this purpose we suggest the following measures:

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1. Link the strategy with the Cotonou Agreement, where the roles of civil society organisations are explicit. Thereby the diversity of civil society organisations should be recognised and catered for in all the arrangements related to the document that will be made in the process.
2. Develop and implement a communication programme for informing and explaining the new strategy to the members of the civil society organisations in order to enhance ownership of the strategy by the organisations. Increased ownership of the new strategy will consequently strengthen their commitment to the implementation of the strategy.
3. Strengthen ECOSOC and other regional networks/platforms to enable them to play an effective part in the implementation of the strategy.
4. In implementing the strategy, the focus should be put on empowering the African peoples and not business as usual.
5. Modalities/mechanisms for the participation of the civil society organisations in the implementation process of the new strategy should be more precisely defined as soon as possible during the interactions between the EU and representatives of the civil society organisations.
6. The implementation of the strategy should be flexible to allow room for financing important aspects of development not captured in the document and for responding to unforeseen circumstances related to development. This is because 10 years is a long time; a lot can happen during this period to warrant unforeseen interventions in the development process of any country.
7. In the partnership for development the civil society organisations in the region would prefer that the principle of equity be used rather than the principle of equality.
8. Develop and use a monitoring and evaluation plan with clear milestones for the implementation of the new strategy.
9. Build in/strengthen mechanisms in the process of implementing the new strategy in order to be able to check corruption more effectively.
10. Increase the resources for funding participation of civil society organisations in the region in the implementation of the new strategy.

3. Conclusion

Much as the response and contribution from the EU will be essential in working out and implementing all the measures proposed in this statement, the civil society organisations in the region recognise that they also have important contributions to make to the same cause. We thus, declare our commitment and readiness to play our part whenever this is called for.