



EUROPEAN NGOs FORUM IN MALI

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**Report of the Workshop Reflection on The European Union's  
Strategy for Africa**

**Organized by :**

**European NGOs Forum in Mali (FONGEM)**

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## I- INTRODUCTION

Participants to the workshop have conducted a one day reflection and have formulated questions and key recommendations on the strategy that the FONGEM speaker will present at the Vienna Conference on June 22-23, 2006. We wanted these recommendations to be clear and based on the experiences of the NGOs that participate to the FONGEM in the framework of their interventions in Mali and their experiences in the West African sub-region. The reflections were focused on these two subjects :

- Human Rights and Governance
- And investing in people (Reinforcement of capacities).

## II- ISSUES

Participants have benefited from the speech of Mr. Franco TRANQUILLI, Chief of DCE on the background of the strategy that comes from the experiences in various agreements between EU and different African regions. He added that the reason of this particular strategy for Africa corresponded to four major needs : - Achievement of the Millennium Goals,- Better coordination between donors, - Better coherence and unique strategy to work together, - Opening of the dialogue with the African continent. He talked at length about the budgetary support, notably about the process of implementation of the 10th European Development Fund (FED) which should be an appropriation of the cooperation process by the African States.

Mr. TRANQUILLI said that the process of consulting will continue in regards to the strategy because there are problems of communication, participation and appropriation. He ended his speech on the fact that civil society seems to be forgotten or seems to be weakly implicated so that it is a must for the civil society to get better organized and implicate itself better.

This useful information has been followed by some reactions of the participants. These reactions are structured around the participation of NGOs as a group of actors of the civil society well organized and operational in the field, mainly in the area of decentralization and governance and finally budgetary support (financial approach and instruments).

Following this speech, the workshop had some major questions namely :

- Is the implementation of the strategy a consensus for all participants?
- Will this strategy bring concrete answers about the development of Africa?
- Will this strategy efficiently contribute to the fight against poverty where different agreements have failed?
- What would be its added value in regard to the contribution of civil society organizations?
- Clearly, how will this new strategy operate with the numerous actors (different interests) and the coexistence of actual agreements?
- Considering the security priority, what could the strategy really do in case of a crisis, a war and conflict prevention?
- Concerning the participation and appropriation where is the voice of Africans? What roles and place the strategy gives to the civil society ?

### **III- THE WORKSHOPS**

#### **A) Workshop 1 : Human Rights and Governance**

This priority line of the strategy touches various areas which are the respect of human rights, good governance, fight against corruption, and political dialogue.

Generally speaking, we appreciate the ambition of the EU to have a strategy that approaches the development of the entire African continent as one entity, however we express a few questions and recommendations about this line of the strategy.

#### **- Our questions :**

##### **1- Respect of human rights**

- In a context marked by aid/budgetary support where the States will make all the decisions on human rights which are generally linked to the underlying causes of poverty and socio-cultural realities that can threaten their governments, how can this strategy impact human rights?

- How can this strategy contribute to ensure the respect of human rights in States marked by clientelism as well as the crisis in the judicial systems?

##### **2- Governance**

- How can governance as defined by the strategy be applied at the level of the citizen ?

- What roles and place does it give to the civil society organizations for the implementation of good governance?

##### **3- Implementation of the strategy**

- How will the strategy in its implementation place mechanisms of monitoring and transparency for the funds that will come through budgetary aid so that this does not become a means to increase corruption in the States where impunity reigns?

#### ***Our recommendations***

1- Beyond States and sub-regional organizations, we ask that the strategy be larger and reach communities, civil society organizations and citizens to make governance a reality at the lowest level (citizen control).

2- We ask for a larger implication of civil society in the development and implementation of the strategy by offering the means to reinforce already gained results in terms of governance and decentralization.

3- Finally, we ask for a better policy for the assistance to development. In order to do that, we ask for a larger implication of civil society organizations in the process of building of the 10<sup>th</sup> FED.

#### **B) Workshop 2 : Invest in people (reinforcement of human capacities)**

#### **Our questions :**

Two lateral questions : Women and Development and Decentralization have been discussed.

##### **1- Women and Development**

The participation, integration and implication of women should be in the center of the strategy.

Which instruments and/or mechanisms will the strategy set so that women become major actors in the different program support to development?

## **2- Decentralization**

What concrete mechanisms the strategy will be set to obtain and succeed in the participation and inclusion of all the populations, notably the nomads in the specific case of Sahelian countries?

What new opportunities does the strategy offer to promote the training of the actors?

## **Education/employment (especially for the 13-25 year olds)**

What mechanisms or financial tools are planned by the strategy for the identification and valorisation of numerous professions linked to (services, production, transformation, agricultural research), factor of creation and promotion of employment for the youth?

What mechanisms or financial tools are planned by the strategy to promote functional education adapted to the socio-cultural context?

What mechanisms or financial tools are planned by the strategy to promote the integration of young people in the professional life?

## **4- Health**

What mechanisms or financial tools are planned by the strategy to promote prevention, education and sanitation?

What mechanisms or financial tools are planned by the strategy to promote the fight against chronic malnutrition which is a real public health issue in Africa?

What does the strategy plan regarding the demographic aspects (family planning)?

What mechanisms or financial tools are planned by the strategy to promote the fight against genital mutilation (advocacy, fight programs)?

## ***Our Recommendations***

The participation of women to the process of development is a prerequisite to the success of the strategy.

❖ We ask that, as major actors, their integration and implication be a condition for any intervention of EU in African States.

The strategy will not be a success if women are not in the center and do not contribute to the different decision-making processes concerning the development of the African continent.

❖ We ask that EU commits to take into account functional education by putting into place financial tools for the creation of employment and promotion of African enterprise in activities such as plumbing, carpentry, electricity, mechanics, building industry etc...

❖ We ask that concrete mechanisms be developed for the reinforcement of instruments of decentralized management of development.

❖ European Union should set financial tools to fund programs based on preventive health besides the curative health, on the promotion of reproductive health while fighting Women Genital Mutilation (FGM) and chronic malnutrition in the Sahel.

❖ EU should reaffirm the importance of demographic issues and family planning.