



Joint EU-Africa Strategy
2nd EU-Africa Trade Union Summit, Yaoundé, 4 and 5 October 2010
Joint trade union declaration in advance of the next EU-Africa Summit

Putting Decent Work at the Heart of the Joint EU-Africa Strategy

1. In 2007, the trade unions of the ITUC-Africa and the ETUC welcomed the agreement by the heads of state and the governments of both continents on the principle of a Joint EU-Africa Strategy reflecting the needs and aspirations of the peoples of Europe and Africa. This was solemnly declared and recorded in a document at their first joint trade union summit, held in October 2007 in Lisbon. This document was subsequently sent to the Summit of European Union and African Union heads of state, held in December 2007, also in Lisbon.
2. The European and African trade unions, supporting the central role granted to the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) in the Joint Strategy, insisted that decent work must be placed at the heart of this strategy and thus become the cornerstone of fair, democratic and participatory societies in Europe and Africa. Indeed, the ILO's Decent Work Agenda, which goes far beyond fundamental standards, represents a solid basis for a sustainable and balanced economic and for social development enabling every individual to live a dignified life with a freely chosen productive job, social protection and institutionalised and autonomous social dialogue, all of which must mainstream gender related issues on every level.
3. Taking note of the necessity of promoting the 2008 ILO Declaration on Social Justice for Fair Globalization, which constitutes the expression of the universal nature of the Decent Work Agenda, the African and European trade unions, who met on 4 and 5 October 2010 in Yaoundé, reiterated their commitment to decent work and invited the heads of state of the European Union and of the African Union, who will meet on 29 and 30 November in Libya, to integrate fully the global Decent Jobs Agenda into the main principles of the EU-AU Strategy to be agreed at the official summit, and in its eight partnerships, which would make this objective binding. This question is all the more crucial because the Syrte Summit will focus its work on three priorities - "growth, investments and jobs" – and because to date there has been little or no response to the concrete initiatives which prioritise employment issues.
4. As the foundation for Europe-Africa dialogue and partnership, democracy and good governance must be considered from every angle and include respect for human rights and labour standards, transparent elections, the rule of law, respect for individual freedoms, the reinforcement of institutions, participation of the social partners and the fight against corruption. The full participation of the social partners in the economic and social life, in sub-regional initiatives and in the framework of relations between the EU and the AU not only fulfils the requirements of direct democracy but is also a source of social development, social peace and economic competitiveness. For that reason, the trade unions of Africa and Europe demand that social dialogue, the social partners' instrument of choice that allows socio-economic consensus leading to development, be recognised for its specific role and included clearly in the commitments and proposals for action of the EU-Africa partnership.
5. European and African trade unions consider that the Joint Strategy asserts and recognises that ratification of and respect for fundamental labour and social protection standards is a necessary condition for sustainable development in African and European countries. Trade unions call for the inclusion of one or more proposals on decent work among the high-level initiatives to be presented to the Summit of heads of state as they are essential for the implementation of sustainable development. Similarly, each partnership should contain quantifiable objectives on decent work.

6. The trade unions of Africa and Europe are very keen to see the seventh partnership on "Migration, Mobility and Employment" properly conducted and in this respect wish to insist to the African and European heads of state that:
- Migration issues should be addressed taking into account the equal treatment of workers, irrespective of their origin or the causes of migration (including the deficit of decent jobs) and from the angle of their social impact in the countries of origin and the host countries. Reflection on the subject of the rights of migrant workers (in conformity with special purpose ILO instruments) and co-development must be included. This initiative echoes the trade unions' position in 2007.
 - The EU and the AU develop a programme to **regularise the situation of workers in the informal economy to ensure that they enjoy social protection and decent working conditions**. The informal economy, which does not guarantee workers' rights, impedes rather than promotes African development.
 - An action plan that includes precise objectives to be discussed in the EU-UA's Joint Expert Group (JEG) in coordination with the ILO and with experts from the Ministries of Employment and Social Affairs of both regions. This action plan, which will then be presented to the summit of heads of state, should contain ambitious projects such as:
 - aiming to **create opportunities for decent jobs** for **young people and women** in particular, through an increase in the number of active labour market policies and industrial and development policies that include intensive programmes of investment in the labour force. Ambitious proposals must emphasise the creation of green jobs that will allow for a just transition;
 - ensuring effective protection of fundamental labour rights;
 - strengthening public employment services, developing **vocational training** and facilitating the development of a system of recognition of professional qualifications between countries and between the two regions;
 - implementing a harmonisation of labour market information and analysis systems, for both the formal and informal economies;
 - ensuring effective implementation of a social dialogue at national, sub-regional, regional and bi-regional levels;
 - organising universal social protection mechanisms.
 - This forthcoming action plan should also include elements encouraging the development of ambitious programmes in the areas of the social economy and sustainable development, based on knowledge sharing between the two regions. **The social economy** is indeed recognised as an important response to the global crisis, whereas the challenges of **sustainable development** cannot be ignored and raise the question of a just transition;
 - **Vocational training** must be included both in the chapter on decent work of this seventh partnership and in its initiatives focusing on **education, in connection with national decent work programmes**.
 - An explicit reference to the **social partners (trade union organisations and employers' organisations)** and to the need for **social dialogue between the two regions**, a subject addressed in earlier proposals but disregarded during this phase of the negotiations, should be presented in the next text of the seventh partnership.
 - European and African trade unions ask the heads of state and governments to make a place for the participation of professional organisations at all levels, particularly in meetings monitoring the implementation of the action plan.

- The trade union organisations must be fully involved in the joint expert groups (JEGs) of each region and in the bi-regional negotiation teams, and taking their views into consideration must also be a priority.
7. European and African trade unions once again stress the urgency of making financial resources available for the implementation of the different abovementioned initiatives. Otherwise, implementation of the Millennium Development Goals could be compromised, along with recovery from the global crisis. At a global level, everyone agrees that the promotion of the Decent Work Agenda is indispensable for the reactivation of the global economy and for the fight against poverty and insecurity. The Summit conclusions must necessarily express a position of political coherence along the lines of the Global Jobs Pact.
 8. As regards the process itself, the trade unions insist that the representatives of the Ministries for Employment and Social Affairs of the AU and EU countries participate, with the trade union organisations, in the JEGs to discuss advances within the partnership. This is important in order to allow the strengthening of the "decent jobs" agenda and to ensure that migration alone is not the sole priority of all the initiatives put forward during the first phase of the Partnership.
 9. European and African trade unions support the decision to include climate change among the priority subjects of the Joint Strategy. Although the entire planet is feeling the effects of the deterioration of the environment, it is the developing countries that are the most seriously affected. In particular, climate change creates real dangers in terms of food security and the right to water of the peoples of Africa. Cooperation in this area must lead to a sustainable link between ecological preservation, economic growth and the creation of decent jobs. The trade unions also consider that the EU and all industrialised countries (whether signatories or not) should become part of the scheme established by the Kyoto Protocol.
 10. Trade between Africa and Europe emerges as an equally important subject. For the African countries, trade is an essential catalyst for the creation of wealth and increased opportunities for decent jobs. Any trade agreement between Africa and Europe must stem from and be guided first and foremost by an economic development programme that is systematically well explained and based on a strategy of agrarian transformation and long-term industrialisation and must influence trade, macroeconomic, investment and other policies. Negotiation of the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) under way between Africa and Europe was launched and is proceeding in the absence of such a strategy and programme. The trade unions find that another approach is therefore necessary and feasible. They wish to see this question taken into account in the Africa-Europe strategy to effectively integrate Africa into the global economy and in order that this integration will result in a large number of decent jobs.
 11. Ensuring peace and security in Africa must be a priority. African and European trade unions are convinced that the EU-Africa Strategy can help the African Union to improve conflict management, but also to prevent conflicts, in particular by improving the standard of living of the African people through the implementation of the ILO's Decent Work Agenda.