

Towards a new partnership between the European Union and the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries after 2020

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Common global interests in a multi-polar world

1. To which degree has the partnership been effective in tackling global challenges?

The Cotonou agreement includes firm commitments to address global challenges such as food security and aid effectiveness. It also includes specific references to the need for mainstreaming environmental issues across all ACP-EU cooperation programmes and at the highest level, making the fundamental link between conserving ecosystems and poverty reduction. This basis led to the adoption of several policy initiatives, such as the joint declaration on the Post2015 framework which was adopted in June 2014. The document highlighted key principles and vision for a fair and equitable global sustainable development framework, such as: being transformative and people centered, addressing the three dimensions of sustainability, promoting good governance, human rights, gender equality.

However, the future EU-ACP partnership should adopt an integrated agenda that better addresses inequalities and looks at problematics across social, economic and environmental dimensions, including access to education, healthcare and resources (for more detail on these points, please refer to questions 7 and 17).

2. What would be needed to strengthen results in this respect and on which global challenges could the partnership add most value in the future, in the context of the new SDGs framework and in relevant international fora?

The new sustainable development goals address global challenges in an integrated way and provide a great opportunity for further tackling them jointly, moving away from the donor-recipient dynamic as they are universally applicable. It also implies a multi-stakeholder dialogue to find out how best to support the SDGs in accordance with country needs and gaps. The Agenda 2030 should be embraced as a new way of working in the context of the future EU-ACP partnership.

The future partnership should also support a development model that addresses all dimensions of sustainable development and is respectful of human rights. It is also crucial for the EU to use the partnership to address its own responsibilities and footprint abroad and to reduce the negative impacts that our development model is having on ACP countries by promoting sustainable consumption and production patterns. This requires the fostering of a policy and market environment that promotes social inclusion and economic wellbeing while living within our planetary boundaries: sustainable trade policies that particularly protect the most vulnerable producers, procurement policies that promote sustainable consumption, incentives that change consumers' behaviours and reward those in the market who work to a high standard of sustainability. The EU should also put forward clear steps and initiatives to address the responsibility of its private sector companies operating abroad and ensure they adopt sustainable, equitable and responsible practices all throughout their supply chain.

The partnership should also define a set of interventions that promote equitable access to resources and services, as well as decent jobs and livelihoods for all people (for more information on this point, please refer to question 8). The revised partnership should then also adopt economic indicators that better measure the partnership's impact on people's well-being and inequality.

Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development (PCSD) should also be promoted as an important mechanism to deliver sustainable development and protect human rights. The article 12 of the Cotonou Agreement, covering this topic, should continue to guide future relations. It serves the purpose of addressing the impacts of EU policies on the achievement of sustainable development in other countries.

Finally, the legal enshrinement of civil society as an actor in the Cotonou agreement should be maintained and strengthened at operational level so that CSOs can engage during all the stages of the future partnership.

Human rights, democracy and rule of law, as well as good governance

3. Have the mechanisms provided for in the Cotonou Partnership Agreement (CPA) (i.e. political dialogue, financial support, appropriate measures, suspension of the agreement) achieved meaningful improvements on human rights, democracy, rule of law and good governance, including the fight against corruption? Should the future partnership do more in this regard, and in what way?

Mechanisms are there but there are many problems to improve the situation relating to human rights, democracy, rule of law and good governance. Regarding human rights, we would like to have specific strategies per country in the future partnership. EU Delegations should be equipped with sufficient human resources and trainings in order to more effectively deal with these issues. They should also be encouraged to build stronger relationships with those civil society organisations that can provide them with their expertise, knowledge and innovative solutions in this area.

4. Has the involvement of local authorities and non-state actors (i.e. civil society organisations, the media), national parliaments, courts and national human rights institutions in the partnership been adequate and useful to promote human rights, democracy and rule of law as well as good governance? Could they contribute more and in what way?

Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) have played an important role in addressing the global challenges identified in the current partnership. CSOs have provided expertise, knowledge and innovative solutions that can support the transition towards sustainable, low carbon and inclusive development paths.

Therefore, the legal enshrinement of civil society as an actor in the Cotonou agreement should be maintained and strengthened at operational level so that CSOs can engage in the process from the beginning, in the political dialogue, the programming of funds, the implementation and review of programmes. In terms of programming, the specific civil society envelope within the development cooperation pillar of the Cotonou agreement should be maintained to ensure that all, including the most vulnerable communities, are heard.

The revised partnership should include not only sufficient resources targeting CSOs, but also formal mechanisms to foster their participation. We suggest regular, transparent and inclusive consultations with civil society to identify policies and programmes. We also recommend a structured dialogue during or before the meetings of the joint institutions (the ASEAN and EU-CELAC relations are an example in this regard). Finally, capacity building opportunities should be foreseen to enable an effective participation of CSOs in the process, on the broader framework of the implementation of the SDGs as well.

Peace and security, fight against terrorism and organised crime

5. Are the provisions on peace and security in the CPA appropriate and useful and has the balance between regional and ACP involvement been effective?

6. Should the future partnership provide for more effective joint action on conflict prevention, including early warning and mediation, peace-building and state-building activities, as well as on tackling transnational security challenges? Should this be done in the EU-ACP context?

Sustainable and inclusive economic growth, investment and trade

7. How effective has the partnership been in promoting sustainable and inclusive economic development?

Our vision of sustainable and inclusive economic development starts from people rights, needs and aspirations and is based on a wide range of economic, social and environmental policies that respond to them and concentrate on how the local economy can be put at the service of the people. Our definition of a sustainable economy is one that is viable and socially equitable. It is inclusive, underpinned by gender justice, resilient to shocks and stresses, and brings benefits to all. It is also an economy that is environmentally sustainable, and does not undermine the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Currently, ACP countries are facing:

- Growing inequalities between and within countries
- Unsustainable raw material extractions
- High vulnerability to climate change and natural disasters
- Illicit financial flows depriving ACP economies of great share of potential domestic resources
- Vulnerability to external shocks and markets due to their high dependency on a few commodities and raw material extraction
- Dependency on global value chains at the expenses of local value chains
- Poorly developed and protected local and regional markets and lack of storage capacities
- Growing instability related to social and economic conflicts related to the use of natural resources

In order to integrate the ACP States into the world economy while promoting sustainable development, the future partnership should raise the trade capacities of ACP countries' producers and workers to better make business with European SMEs and support the participation of small businesses in trade schemes that secure added value for producers, including those responding to sustainability (e.g. fair, ethical or organic trade). Fair Trade is an example of how to integrate producers, including the small ones, and workers in global value chains while improving their socio-economic situation. Fair Trade ensures:

- Minimum price and access to pre-financing
- Improvement of livelihoods and protection against price fluctuations
- Minimum price paid on the top that benefits not only individual farmers, but also their communities
- Women's empowerment
- Environmental friendly production methods
- Preservation of traditional farming and agro-ecological practices

The future partnership should also support the development of competitive and inclusive local private sectors.

8. Taking into account the new SDGs framework, should the future partnership do more in this respect, and what?

The articles 34 and 35 of the CPA should be reviewed in order to fully reflect the principles and objectives of the Agenda 2030 and foresee a new approach to economic development that integrates the 3 pillars of sustainable development. This should be linked with the full implementation of the PCSD principle of the partnership and the legal enshrinement of civil society as an actor in the Cotonou agreement. Indeed, CSOs are key actors in accountability and monitoring the implementation of the SDGs.

9. How effective has the partnership been in supporting macroeconomic and financial stability? In which areas would there be added value in ACP-EU cooperation on macroeconomic and financial stability?

10. How effective has the partnership been in improving domestic revenue mobilisation, in promoting fair and efficient tax systems and in combatting illicit financial flows? Would there be added value and more efficiency in stronger ACP-EU cooperation on these matters?

11. Has the partnership been able to contribute substantially to mobilising the private sector and attracting foreign direct investment?

12. How could the potential of the EU and ACP private sector be better harnessed? What should be the main focus of EU and ACP private sector cooperation in a post-Cotonou framework, and what might be the role of ODA in this?

In the area of private sector cooperation, the post Cotonou framework should focus on small scale producers and farmers and on securing an enabling environment for micro, small and medium size enterprises. Civil society actors, including NGOs, producers cooperatives and microcredit initiatives should be fully involved and supported in EU-ACP cooperation on private sector. Beyond more secured, predictable and user friendly legal obligations, a better enabling environment and support should provide access for SMEs and small-scale farmers to:

- Resources and means of production
- Land and property with a particular focus on women and young farmers and entrepreneurs
- Information including on legal framework, markets and governmental decisions and negotiations that have a direct or indirect impact on the local economy
- Knowledge and results of research including on sustainable models and techniques of production tools for learning and exchanging good practice
- Infrastructures adapted to their needs (in particular in rural areas) and storage facilities
- Credit facilities adapted to their needs and capacities

Moreover, the EU should encourage European companies (including SMEs) to source under sustainability schemes such as Fair Trade, integrating cooperatives and SMEs from the South in their value chains as a best practice for their international commitments in Corporate Social Responsibility. It should also facilitate access to capacity building, especially about diversification of products, quality improvements and help to comply with standards and technical requirements.

13. In this setting, what opportunities do you see for the new, digital economy?

14. To what extent has the partnership been able to contribute to increase agricultural development and trade?

Agriculture is the mainstay of the global economy, with over a billion people working in the sector. Yet we still face the challenge that young people are abandoning agriculture to migrate to often informal and insecure work in urban centres or on larger farms. Agricultural workers often lack formal contracts, freedom of association, basic health and safety assurances, let alone adequate wages.

Inclusive and sustainable economic growth can only be achieved if farmers have robust livelihoods and if all workers have their rights to secure and safe employment fulfilled and receive a living wage that enables them to survive and thrive. According to the FAO, about 2/3 of the developing world's rural people live in about 475 million small farm households. Many are poor and food insecure and have limited access to markets and services. Their choices are constrained, but they produce food for a substantial proportion of the world's population. The agricultural development we want to see is one that is based on and supports the small scale family farmers in the ACP countries and that develop local markets and sustainable value chains.

15. What has been the contribution of the partnership trade preferences to the integration of ACP countries in the world economy and to its development goals?

Trade preferences have contributed to economic growth and a measure of diversification, but the impact on poverty reduction is less clear. Therefore, preferences need to be accompanied by other policies and Aid for Trade which should promote poverty-reducing and inclusive instruments. Considering the expected revision by the European Commission of the EU Aid for Trade (AfT) strategy, we suggest to revise the EU Aid for Trade strategy to:

- promote responsible and sustainable production methods, the development of local markets and sustainable value chains
- put producers and workers in a better position to advance their efforts towards sustainable development

16. Is there still a need for specific provisions on trade cooperation in the post-Cotonou framework, also taking into account the ACP countries which have not signed an EPA? If so, what could/should they cover?

The economic and trade cooperation should start from the Agenda 2030. The Cotonou successor agreement still needs to contain specific provisions on trade cooperation comparable to CPA art.34-35, i.e. these provisions need to lay down the principles that would govern the EU-ACP economic and trade cooperation, in particular:

- Due regard for the political choices and development priorities of the ACP countries
- Promoting their sustainable development
- Contributing to poverty eradication
- Enhancing sustainable production, supply and trading capacities
- Improving their capacity to handle all issues related to trade and sustainability
- Taking into account the different needs and levels of development of the ACP countries and regions

Human and social development

17. Has the partnership delivered on its human development objective in an effective and efficient way, in particular on poverty eradication, and also concerning gender equality and empowerment of women? How could it be improved?

Even if gender is mentioned as a priority in the CPA, its translation into programming have been very weak. As an example, the majority of the 55 analysed National Implementation Plans does mention gender equality as a challenge in the problematics of the country, often with a focus on gender-based violence. Women are still marginalised, lacking rights to land ownership and access to credit. Female employees are often paid less than their male counterparts and run the risk of exposure to gender based violence in the workplace. Gender norms see women undertaking the bulk of household labour alongside their work, reducing their ability to participate and there are often significant cultural and political barriers to overcome to improve their status. If we just consider agriculture, according to the FAO, removing gender inequalities in agriculture could reduce the number of hungry people in the world by up to 150 million.

The EU should encourage partner countries to adopt non-discriminatory and pro-poor budgets and fiscal policies at all levels, and support and institutionalize a gender-sensitive approach to public financial management, including gender-responsive budgeting across all sectors of public expenditure. ODA is still very much needed and should contribute as a catalyser to capacity development for fair distribution of the existing resources through social protection and social sectors. ODA should be used to:

- Ensure that human development is included as part of the ex ante impact assessment of all policies and programmes and the evaluation of all programmes. This also links strongly to policy coherence for sustainable development, through which EU practices and investments should always positively contribute to further human development
- Build the capacity of the relevant stakeholders, including CSOs, to assess progress in human development

18. Taking into account the new SDGs framework, what are the main challenges related to human development that the future partnership should focus on?

Migration and mobility

19. Has the partnership been a useful vehicle for discussing migration issues and has it positively contributed? Has Article 13 CPA been fully applied?

20. Should a future partnership do more in this regard, and on which particular aspects should it focus (legal migration and mobility, addressing root causes of migration, return and readmission, tackling human trafficking and smuggling, international protection)?

A stronger political relationship

21. How effective has the political dialogue been and at which level is it the most effective: national, regional and through the joint EU-ACP institutions? Should the scope of political dialogue be widened or narrowed?

22. Would a stronger involvement of EU Member States, associating their bilateral policies and instruments to the political dialogue at national level, enhance the dialogue's effectiveness and efficiency?

23. Has the fact that the agreement is legally binding been instrumental to its implementation as compared to other regional partnerships based on political declarations?

Coherence of geographical scope

24. Could a future framework be usefully opened up to other countries than the current members of the ACP Group of States? Which countries would that be?

25. What kind of framework should govern EU and ACP relations? How could an ACP-EU successor framework relate to the more recent EU regional partnerships with Africa, Caribbean and Pacific States? Could a future ACP-EU framework include distinct partnerships with regional partners?

Essential in this regard are the key principles of the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, which is currently the main international development framework. Its key values and principles, such as human rights and good governance, should be reflected in the partnership. The EU should also encourage its Member States to see EU-ACP relation as a tool for sustainable development.

26. Is there scope for building in more structured relationships with Asia, Latin America, the Middle East and North Africa?

Cooperation tailored more towards groups of countries with similar development level

27. Is the current system of allocation of development resources, based on need and capacities as well as performance, sufficient for channelling funds towards those countries where the highest impact can be obtained? Should allocation of resources continue to prioritise countries most in need, including fragile states?

28. What kind of cooperation could help to cover the specific needs of more developed ACP countries with a view to attaining more equitable and sustainable growth?

ODA should act as a catalyzer of domestic resources and global public goods. Specific activities might include support to innovation, capacity-building, improvements in public financial management with fair distribution of resources. In order to attain equitable and sustainable growth, the partnership should also support a mechanism of match-making between producers and buyers interested in sustainability schemes, such as Fair Trade. It should also create a fertile environment that help small producers to access finances and address the “missing middle”: developing financial instruments must include developing more risk capital funds with substantial scale and leverage and strengthen tools such as seed capital, guarantees and equity.

Strengthen the relationship with key actors

29. Has the current model of stakeholder engagement been conducive to attaining the objectives of the partnership in an efficient way? Which actors could play a more significant role in the implementation of the partnership? How could this be addressed?

30. What could be done to promote effective and efficient involvement of both international and domestic private sector, civil society, social partners and local authorities in the partnership?

31. Should the partnership be open to new actors as referred above?

32. In this regard, should the possibility of opening up the partnership to 'associated members' or 'observers' be considered?

33. How could a new framework promote triangular and South-South cooperation, including the increased involvement of ACP States as development actors in support of other ACP countries?

Streamline the institutional set-up and functioning of the partnership

34. Has the joint institutional set-up (with the ACP-EU Council of Ministers, the ACP-EU Committee of Ambassadors, and the Joint Parliamentary Assembly) been effective in debating and promoting common views and interests and in providing political guidance and momentum to the EU-ACP partnership and the implementation of the CPA?

35. What is the added value of the joint ACP-EU institutions as compared to more recent regional and regional economic community frameworks for dialogue and cooperation?

36. What institutional arrangements would most effectively help address common challenges and promote joint interests?

The participation of civil society, as also defined by article 6 of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement, is key in order to effectively address common challenges and promote joint interests. At the moment the participation of civil society happens rather ad hoc. There is also a lack of transparency in ACP- EU institutions that needs to be addressed in order to enable CSOs to get access to the activities /meetings/decisions of the Joint Council of Ministers and the Committee of Ambassadors.

37. Should a higher degree of self-financing of this functioning (ACP-EU Joint institutions and ACP secretariat) by the ACP States be required?

Better adapted and more flexible development cooperation tools and methods

38. Is there added value in having a dedicated financing instrument in support of the ACP-EU partnership? If so, what are the reasons and how would it differ from other external financing instruments funded by the general budget of the Union? Is this instrument flexible enough, especially to address crisis situations? Can this instrument be deployed differently?

39. What is the added value of the EDF's co-management system involving national authorities in the programming and management of aid programmes, as compared to other EU cooperation instruments in non-ACP countries?

40. Does the current set-up of the programming process and implementation of activities lead to real ownership by the beneficiaries? What could be improved? How can the EU and Member States maximise the impact of joint programming?

41. Does the variety of existing tools adequately support the EU and ACP common principles and interests and are there gaps that should be addressed? How do you assess the effectiveness and efficiency of various implementation modalities?

Policy coherence for development (PCD) is one of the existing gaps under the partnership. This principle is taken forward in current article 12 of the Cotonou Agreement, but the implementation is still weak. There have been several examples of incoherencies between EU policies and development objectives, which include financing for development (and concurrent illicit financial flows); food and nutrition security; and climate change and natural resources. PCSD must hence be scaled up in the future partnership.

42. Should a higher degree of self-financing from the ACP States be required for activities to ensure ownership? Would this apply to all countries? On which principles should this be based?

43. How can the expertise of the EU and its Member States be better mobilised, particularly in the middle-income countries?

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