

Jean-Pierre Elong Mbassi, Secretary General, United Cities and Local Governments Africa, reporting back from the Africa Regional Meeting

The Africa's regional PFD was virtually held on 17 July 2020 around 2 issues:

1. what are the EU cooperation priorities relevant to Africa?
2. how do you see the different actors included in the programming process of the EU cooperation?

The participants in the Africa's PFD meeting highlighted 4 areas where EU cooperation priorities are relevant to Africa:

1. Employment, particularly for youth and women, putting emphasis on the importance of local economic development, industrialization and the necessity to create an enabling business environment for the private sector and SMEs for them to contribute to wealth and decent jobs creation and to revenue generation.
2. Migration, with particular attention on the need to shift the focus from mainly security oriented in favor of a more developmental perspective, and to involve the subnational and local governments as front liners in the management of migration
3. Green Development Deal that Africa needs to embrace to initiate her transition towards a low carbon and sustainable development pathway, taking full advantage of the potential of renewable energy and circular economy, and emphasizing on the need to localize the SDGs and the climate agenda, and to pay more attention to the nexus between climate change-agriculture-food security-trade and migration.
4. Digitalisation that the new situation created by the COVID-19 pandemic has helped accelerate everywhere. The participants in the Africa PFD insisted however that digitalization should be people centered in order to allow Africa to leapfrog and take full advantage of mobile and remote solutions and of the creativity of the young people in mastering new technologies.

Process wise, the members of the Africa PFD think that the joint programming process will be key in bringing in all actors involved in the implementation of EU cooperation.

The guidelines to be sent to the EU delegations should provide for the formal organization of structured consultations with the different stakeholders, taking into account the CSOs and LAs roadmaps defined for the implementation of EU cooperation.

Caring about monitoring and evaluation of the impact of EU cooperation also requires that mutual accountability mechanisms are put in place. The proposal that came out is to use the PFD model to design such mutual accountability mechanism at the national and even the local level.

Finally, the PFD members of Africa suggested to explore whether it does not make sense to conclude



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Framework Partnership Agreements between the EU delegations and the coordination of CSOs on the one hand, and the national associations of LAs on the other hand, for the implementation of CSOs and LAs roadmaps designed in the framework of the 2021-2027 cycle of EU cooperation.