

**Second consultative discussion with CSOs and LAs
on EU regional programming for Sub-Saharan Africa (2021-2027)**

Online meeting
13 December 2021

Executive Summary

The Directorate General for International Partnerships (INTPA), in coordination with the European External Action Service (EEAS) hosted a second consultative discussion with civil society organisations (CSOs) and local authorities (LAs) regarding the regional multi-annual indicative plan (MIP) for Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) 2021-2027. This discussion aimed to: provide an update of the programming process for the regional multi-annual indicative programme (RMIP) for SSA; provide feedback on the inputs from the March 2021 meeting; and hear the views and contributions of CSOs and LAs on the “advanced” versions of the regional MIPs and Annual Action Plans (AAPs) 2021 and 2022. After a presentation of the RMIP and the two AAPs, five thematic discussions took place, where additional feedback and information on the RMIP and AAPs was provided by INTPA staff.

Participants provided very detailed comments, both in the sessions and in the written feedback, that are summarised here and in more detail in the following report. Participants welcomed the work to date and the feedback on previous input. Many reiterated the need to look at the intersectionality of key issues, keeping in mind their impacts on the most vulnerable groups. This was specifically highlighted in the context of human development and migration, noting the need for a people-centred and rights-based approach, especially in terms of migration, recognising the fluidity of status across an individual’s journey and the need to focus on individual security and well-being.

Being a regional plan, many of the issues are transborder ones, necessitating transborder cooperation. This was highlighted in relation to IDPs, water, wetlands, trade, illicit financial flows, among other topics raised. Other cross-cutting themes that were reiterated by several participants include water, its importance, scarcity, access, and potential role in conflict. Given the importance of access to limited water resources as a factor driving conflict in sub-Saharan Africa, actions to prevent water related conflict should come out more prominently in the action plans for thematic sectors. Related, but expanding beyond strictly water, was the repeated point to include disaster risk reduction, conflict sensitivity, or a humanitarian-development-peace nexus approach and employ related early warning systems.

In terms of socio-economic advancement, some participants encouraged a re-emphasis by the EU on agriculture, agroecology and small holder farmers in order to adapt to meet immediate food security needs and as a larger policy focus, relevant to human development, a just and green transition, fair trade and migration. Several contributors underlined the importance of information and communication technologies (ICT), specifically as part of education skills for teachers and for youth.

Specific issues and recommendations raised in each working group are summarized here:

1. Human development (including health, education, skills)

- Increase and strengthen programmes enhancing equity, reaching vulnerable groups, and better linking education and health.

- Include **sexual and reproductive health** (SRHR) via better data collection, sharing of good practices, and mainstreaming SRHR throughout the RMIP (not just in health but notably in education). Integrate HIV and SRHR with a focus on prevention in adolescent girls and young women.
- Better support water, sanitation and hygiene (**WASH**) facilities by investing in education and hygiene.
- Foster **research and development** on global health challenges by creating an enabling environment, ensuring inclusiveness, and collecting gender disaggregated data
- Foster **education** via training and the continued development of teachers to ensure they have adequate skills. Focus on inclusive education, and develop more IT to bridge the digital divide and facilitate inclusion.
- Support **peer-to-peer exchange** between LAs such as networking, education programmes as a priority, and linking programmes with needs on the ground.

2. Green Transition (including climate change, sustainable energy, agri-food, bio-diversity, water basin management)

- **Climate change mitigation and resilience:** include the NGO network in the governance structure of the Climate Adaptation Fund to ensure access to funding for the most vulnerable groups. Address loss and damage due to climate change as part of future funding plans. Increase the involvement of LAs.
- **Sustainability:** support to green energy transition in SSA (capacity building and enabling the private sector, especially SMEs, social enterprises, cooperatives, women-led business) and promote renewable energy. Clean cooking solutions need to be accessible financially and combined with other renewable energy solutions.
- **Sustainable agriculture and food:** ensure the complimentary of national and regional programmes.
- Involve civil society in the discussion around conservation of people, governance, policy, and law enforcement. The involvement of local authorities was specifically discussed in terms of the COP 10 decision on cross border approaches.¹
- Focus more attention on **water basin management and oceans** as other topics that should be covered.

3. Investment and infrastructures, digital, Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) + Regional integration and trade

- Promote dialogue and make more space for local actors in the area of **digital STI**. Local African platforms exist and need to be reached via multi-stakeholder fora.
- Support **economic integration and trade** that is already taking place, notably the implementation of the African Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement. Make sure that regional integration and trade is complemented with the realities on the ground. Consider partnering specifically with national committees that have been set up. Focus on services, goods, investments, competition, and youth. Specific investments that target the national level, green bonds, gender and youth were encouraged.
- Increase **participation** by involving LAs in the process and engaging African research centres and universities.
- Consider the space for/role of the **EU in relation to other actors** in Africa (e.g. US, China)
- Foster **complementarity** by ensuring that ideas for investment and integration take into account ongoing work and existing projects.

¹ Since 2010 and the plan of action on subnational governments, cities and other local authorities for biodiversity (decision X/22 of the COP10), decentralised cooperation is encouraged, promoted, supported, and acknowledged by the parties as one of the local and regional governments' contributions to the realisation of Aichi biodiversity targets. Decentralised cooperation is key to share expertise on addressing the causes of biodiversity loss, as well as promoting its sustainable use, improving the safeguarding mechanisms of the ecosystems and species, and developing participatory planning, knowledge management and capacity building.

4. Governance, peace and security

- Reinforce African capacities to stop illegal transnational flows.
- Focus on accountability, inclusiveness and equal societies to foster and support **democratic governance** via continental and regional frameworks.
- Reinforce **civic engagement**, namely the dialogue between CSOs and African governance institutions.
- Specifically, regarding the **coordination between the RMIP and other pillars in NDICI**, and the off-budget peace facility, the focus on borderlands and transitional justice was welcome. However, other activities still need to be covered, as they were under the African Peace Facility.

5. Migration and forced displacement

- Ensure that the use of aid money to programme activities on migration, displacement and refugees is not being used to externalise EU internal policy. Migration management seems to have stronger attention than specific actions for rights of migrants. ODA should be used to decrease poverty and inequality and increase resilience; see migration as a force for development.
- There is a need to ensure clarity and oversight of the **flexible mechanism**: will it be used as conditionality, or will it be a tool that will provide supplementary support to countries in crises?
- Recognise the **"fluidity" of status** that changes along a migrant's route. While area-based programming is important, the RMIP should have a strong focus on forcibly displaced people.
- Ensure a **rights based approach** that takes into consideration different aspects of migrant vulnerabilities along the migration route. Use aid to create legal pathways for migration, within certain frameworks. Address cross cutting issues, such as "failed migration" and youth employment, etc. in action plans.

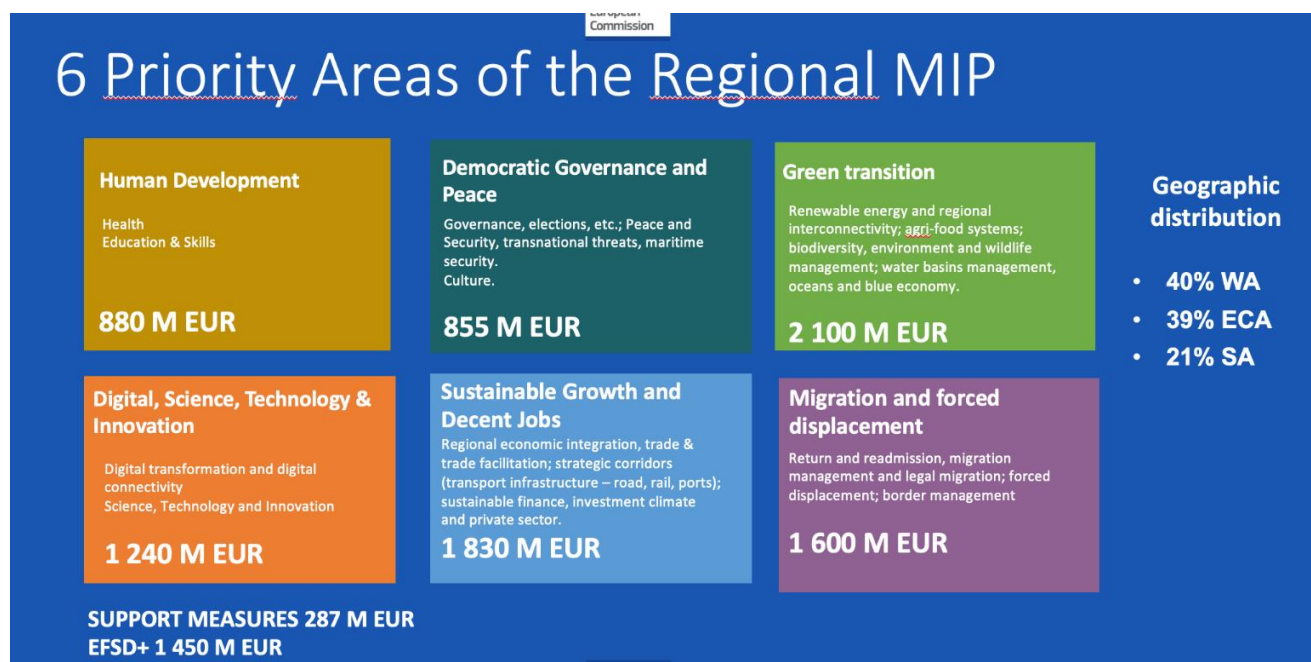
1. Context and Introduction

On 13 December, a virtual consultation on the EU regional multiannual indicative programme (RMIP) for sub-Saharan Africa took place. The session followed a first virtual consultation on the RMIP held in March 2021. This meeting was an opportunity to present the drafted RMIP and discuss its priorities and objectives in the context of the evolving partnership between Africa and Europe between the European Commission (DG INTPA), the European External Action Service (EEAS) and civil society (CSO) and local authority (LA) partners and stakeholders. In addition to this virtual consultation, participants were invited to provide written input by 20 December.

Participants were welcomed by **Marlene Holzner**, Head of Unit of LAs, CSOs and Foundations at INTPA, who stressed that this meeting was designed to provide a follow up and feedback on recommendations made by CSOs and LAs in March 2021. **Alexander Baum**, Senior Advisor at EEAS outlined the context of the consultation, which was taking place as the AU-EU summit, scheduled for February 2022, was being prepared. The summit will provide political guidance for the future relationship between the two continents. Mr Baum added that the RMIP drew on the EU communication on EU-Africa relations, which will also serve as the basis for discussions for the summit. **Hans-Christian Stausboll**, Head of Unit of Regional and Multi-Country Programs for Africa at DG INTPA, thanked participants for their input in March 2021 and clarified that some the recommendations may be better addressed through programming at country level, which compliments the regional programming exercise.

2. Presentation of the Regional Multiannual Indicative Program (RMIP) 2021-2027 and the Annual Action Plans (AAP) for 2021 and 2022

Mr Stausboll presented the six priority areas of the RMIP and stressed that regional funding was set to replace funding previously under thematic programmes.



Mr Stausboll then presented the activities planned under the first **AAP for 2021**, which will cover seven actions for a total of €987M, with €1B earmarked for EFSD+ in a separate AAP. These will target five priorities of SSA RMIP: human development (health); green transition; digital, science, technology and innovation; sustainable growth and decent jobs; and migration and forced displacement.

There will also be a **contribution to three SSA regional Team Europe Initiatives (TEIs)** under actions 1, 2 and 4:

1. TEI on Manufacturing and Access to Vaccines, Medicines and Health Technologies in Africa (MAV+) – €40M (TEI contribution)
2. Digital Health for COVID-19 - €17M (TEI contribution)
3. Investments on regional infrastructures – €750M
4. Regional initiative to promote Investment for Young Business in Africa (IYBA) – €22M (TEI contribution)
5. Emergency Transit Mechanisms (ETMs) to Niger and Rwanda – €56M
6. Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and Central African Republic (CAR) Support Platforms – €75M
7. Support Measures – €20M

The AAP for 2022 is divided into two parts.

AAP 2022 Part 1

Consists of ten actions for a total of €454M and targets four priorities of the RMIP: human development (education); democracy, governance and peace; green transition; and migration management. These include a contribution to regional TEIs:

1. Support to the implementation of the African Continental Qualification Framework (ACQF II) – €5M (TEI contribution)
2. Intra-Africa Academic Mobility Scheme – €60M (TEI contribution)
3. Harmonization Quality Assurance and Accreditation in African Higher Education Initiative (HAQAA3) – €10M (TEI contribution)
4. European Support for Transitional Justice in Africa – €5M
5. Building West African counter-terrorism capacities – €10M
6. Countering transnational organized crime and terrorist groups by targeting Illicit Financial Flows in East, Southern, Central Africa and Yemen – €5M (TEI contribution)
7. Establishing the conditions for free and safe mobility of persons and migration in West Africa (Free Movement of persons and Migration Phase II) – €33M (TEI contribution)
8. Better Migration Management – Phase III – €40M (TEI contribution)
9. Flexible Mechanism – €200M (TEI contribution)
10. EU contribution to Climate change adaptation and resilience in Sub-Saharan Africa – €86M

AAP 2022 Part 2:

Potentially foresees 36 actions, targeting all priorities of SSA regional MIP. Mr Stausboll presented a summary of planned actions under each priority area:

1. **Human development:** regional dimension and governance of Access to Vaccines, Medicines and Health Technologies (MAV+); youth leadership skills exchange; continental platform on education and training; teacher training initiative.
2. **Governance, Peace and Security, Culture:** AU-EU youth lab; electoral assistance and observation; maritime security; preventing and mitigating conflict in borderlands.
3. **Green transition:** information systems on food security; green energy transition (support to market integration; clean cooking); hydropower (Kariba dam); private sector development on sustainable energy; research and innovation in agri-food systems; great green wall; live-stock economy and pastoralism in West Africa; management of desert locusts and other transboundary pests; NaturAfrica; sustainable use of wildlife; transboundary water management.
4. **Digital and Science, Technology and Innovation:** telecommunication regulatory authorities; digital single market; regional centres of excellences; green transitions related actions.
5. **Sustainable Growth and Decent Jobs:** quality infrastructure and market access; trade in services; digital trade and e-payments; transport facilitation and governance; business incubators; IMF TA centres and regional TA facility.
6. **Migration and forced displacement:** migration and mobility dialogues; regional and multi-country networks; protection, return and reintegration; support to forced displacement situations.
7. **Support measures:** capacity building, TCF and support to OACPS secretariat.
8. **EFSD+:** TA linked to EFSD+ Guarantee Agreements.

Mr Stausboll stressed that while it has not been possible to include all the recommendations provided by CSOs and LAs, this had been done to the extent possible. Examples include: launching a dedicated working group on human development; increasing funds on education to address the needs of children and promote equitable and inclusive education systems; and including a gender lens in programmes to ensure women's participation. He added that now that the programming phase was ending, the real challenge of implementation would begin, for which dialogue and partnership with CSOs and LAs would be crucial. In particular, he stressed the areas of governance and accountability, e.g. on illicit financial flows and ensuring a participative democracy. Mr Stausboll concluded with the hope that dialogue with civil society will continue and feed into policy and strategic discussions.

PFD participants were then invited to pose **clarification questions**. They asked whether a youth summit would be supported alongside the EU-AU summit in February 2022; how the RMIP would support climate change adaptation and mitigation measures to protect those most vulnerable; if and how a multi-sectoral approach to the thematic areas will be adapted, in order to mainstream key priorities; what modalities will ensure that the programme is implemented through decentralised cooperation; if and how a multi-stakeholder approach would be present and if it will include capacity building for local governments. **Mr Stausboll** clarified that many of the issues raised, such as climate change adaptation and mitigation, livelihoods, food security and strengthening LAs, would be addressed through country-level programming. While CSOs and LAs will be engaged at regional level as appropriate, implementation can only be effective if there are strong national components. He clarified that capacity building for CSOs and LAs was a long-term issue, which will go beyond events around the EU-AU summit.

Participants then asked about whether the RMIP health priorities foresaw support to the WHO strategy 2020-25 and a focus on digital health; how it planned to address the gaps in health systems and strengthen African research and development and build the capacity of the pharmaceutical industry in Africa; to what extent sexual, reproductive health and rights (SRHR) would be included under human development; if vocational training and lifelong learning would be included into the section on education and skills and if local actors would be involved in those actions. **Eleonora Martinello** (DG INTPA) clarified that the active participation of stakeholders involved in education and skills was foreseen. **Enrica Pellacani** (DG INTPA) explained that SRHR was one of the priorities under the health cluster, which should be addressed in 2023; she added that a

thematic call on SRHR was about to be launched. **Mr Stausboll** stressed that the EC was aware of the need for interconnectivity between actions and approaches, which will require work with all stakeholders. He confirmed that the WHO strategy, digital health and supporting vaccination campaigns were currently some of the biggest issues for discussion between the EU and Africa, reminding participants of the EU's lead on the COVAX initiative and efforts to build African capacity on pharmaceuticals.

3. Thematic group discussions

The discussion then moved into five **thematic breakout groups**, guided by the following questions:

- What are the CSOs/LAs views on the relevance of the regional action plans for 2021 and 2022 in light of the priorities of the regional multiannual indicative programme?
- What are key areas/ focal points that should be taken into account in the formulation phase of SSA regional initiatives?

1. Human development (including health, education, skills)

Eleonora Martinello, programme manager (education/skills) at DG INTPA opened the discussion in the breakout group by welcoming participants and informing them that it was the first time that a dedicated discussion on education was taking place in this context, in response to comments received in the previous consultation. **Enrico Mollica**, programme manager (health) at DG INTPA presented the developments relating to **SRHR**: the creation of a joint technical working group with member states (Belgium, Germany, Finland, France and the Netherlands) who plan to work on this topic through a TEI. The working group held a joint analysis workshop with SSA CSOs, local and regional authorities and relevant UN agencies to develop an understanding of needs and challenges in the region.

PFD participants welcomed the inclusion of **SRHR** in the RMIP, stressing that it was at times easier to work on this topic at regional rather than national level. They asked about the funding modalities under the planned TEI – if funds would primarily go through member states' development agencies and UN agencies or if any funding would directly benefit CSOs and women's organisations (WOs), youth organisations (YOs) in particular; it was suggested that support should be provided to CSOs working on advocacy to support the ratification of Maputo protocol; for data collection; and for the identification and sharing of good practices. It was stressed that SRHR should be mainstreamed across the human development priority, as it also covers aspects relevant to education, notably comprehensive sexuality education.

Other participants focused on the need for a **multisectoral approach to human development**, including aspects such as Water Sanitation and Hygiene (**WASH**) across the board, given its essential role in pandemic preparedness, promoting **public health** and enabling **education** (e.g. by enabling girls to manage their menstrual health at school). Participants also welcomed the RMIP commitments on health system strengthening and improving the quality of health services; they stressed the need to focus on creating an enabling environment in regional and interregional cooperation for research and development on global health, notably through the European and Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership (EDCTP). They urged greater inclusiveness in the identification of priorities, including by creating stronger links between the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) and the programming priorities; adopting a gender lens in the science, technology and education sector; and gathering gender disaggregated data and measuring gendered impacts.

Participants wondered about the links between priorities under this thematic area to broader human rights issues such as equality and non-discrimination and ensuring that no one is left behind; they stressed their concerns that placing issues such as WASH and pandemic response under the green transition heading would mean that the safety of drinking water and hand hygiene would not be addressed. Others asked about the relationship between this area and the TEI on epidemic preparedness. The need to focus SRHR efforts on

adolescent girls and young women, given the prevalence of new HIV infections in this group and the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on prevention efforts, was stressed. Participants suggested that the EU should also apply a multi-sectoral approach to its own work, with the EEAS being able to promote equity enhancing policies on health. They also expressed a hope that a specific modality for supporting community-led interventions, which are especially key to reaching marginalised communities, would be implemented.

Manuel Couffignal (DG INTPA) confirmed that the SRHR regional programme was designed to strengthen political frameworks and capacities to implement SRHR within health system strengthening agendas, strengthen advocacy and social accountability – all actions which will require support from civil society. The TEI is not intended to be implemented by member states' agencies but rather to pool resources for a broad partnership for implementation through CSOs, the African Parliamentary Forum and UN agencies; many WOs from Africa were included in the initial consultation. Mr Couffignal further clarified that multi-sectoriality on topics such as WASH, education, social protection and nutrition was the intended approach, in particular in regard to pandemic preparedness, where multi-sectoral, inter-disciplinary management on prevention, detection and addressing health threats due to zoonotic and vectoral diseases was foreseen. On research and development, he stressed that DG INTPA was coordinating with DG Research on how to best support African public health institutes, including through the EDCTP. **Silvia Logar**, of the regional health team in DG INTPA added that the intention was to maintain a "health in all policies" approach. While nutrition and WASH were not specifically addressed under human development, they were under green transition.

Ms Martinello discussed the planned programming on **education**, stating that the first programmes under preparation were continuations of ongoing actions – relating to accreditation, qualification, higher education, mobility and fellowships. She clarified that CSOs can benefit from these programmes as members of consortia with higher education institutions; a multi-sectoral approach would be ensured through complementarity with national programmes.

Participants stressed **the important role which can be played by LAs**, who can link education and hygiene, and provide training for teachers; however, this requires capacity building and networking opportunities for these actors. Others recalled the recent consultations on the GAP III and YAP and suggested that the recommendations made in those contexts be taken on board also for the SSA RMIP, in particular: the need to strengthen women's participation and leadership; promoting networking between young leaders in Europe and Africa to enhance youth participation in political life; ensuring that skill and competence training matches the needs of the local market (in line with the AU Strategy for Technical and Vocational Educational and Training (TVET) to Foster Youth Employment)²); and contributing to a multistakeholder approach at local level.

Finally, the **regional focus on supporting teachers** was welcomed, but participants stressed that in addition to training (in particular building skills on inclusive education and information and communication technologies (ICT)), measures that address and support teacher shortages were essential. The role of communities in data collection, analysing and addressing problems was also underlined.

Ms Martinello agreed that recommendations from other consultations would be highly relevant to consider. She stressed that the RMIP foresaw a dedicated result on teachers, focusing on quality of teaching for foundational skills – also relevant to address governance issues. The RMIP will address digital skills for teachers, innovation, learning and teaching ICT and inclusion.

Additional recommendations highlighted by organisations in their written inputs include:

- Strengthen the RMIP via stronger emphasis on the multiple dimensions of human development and their intersectionality. This would allow aspects such as housing and urban development to be addressed, even if these are not a focus of the MIP.

² October 2018, <https://au.int/en/documents/20181022/continental-strategy-technical-and-vocational-educational-and-training-tvet>

- Recognize the role of basic services in human development and an enabling environment, notably the transformational impact of an adequate home providing stability and security for youth.
- Strengthen the inclusion of water, sanitation and hygiene as a critical human development component. Notably, emphasise Health and Hygiene education, and access to water and sanitation facilities. Make financial and technical support available to Sub-Saharan Africa governments to implement costed national roadmaps for hand hygiene and to implement the Southern Africa Development Community health Ministers' joint strategy on strengthening access to hygiene facilities in all settings. Scale up emergency funding for WASH in healthcare facilities.
- Include SRHR in the AAPs 2022 and 2023.
- Address the needs of people with disabilities in both health and education policies and programmes. Specifically, address in priority 1 in Result 1.1: The African architecture for health security and pandemic preparedness is strengthened sustainably; Result 1.3: The Africa-based public health capacity is enhanced; and Result 2.1: Improved teacher governance, training and professional development in basic education.
- In addressing SRHR and education, include a gender-transformative and rights-based approach to counter the digital divide and support challenging gender discriminatory norms, and support for movement building (e.g. support to civil society, including YOs and WOs).
- Strengthen country health and education public systems and country ownership by increasing budget support with aid commitments of three to six years; and promote regional and continental social protection systems and progressive domestic revenue mobilisation.
- Include African regional initiatives strengthening the capacities of governments, oversight bodies and civil society organisations in their work on domestic revenues, expenditures, the fight against corruption and illicit financial flows. This would be in line with the 2020 Addis Tax Initiative Declaration, highlighting the need to support accountability actors.
- Harmonise medicine regulatory systems across Africa, through increased support for the operationalisation of the African Medicines Agency.

2. *Green transition (including climate change, sustainable energy, agri-food, biodiversity, water basin management)*

Enrica Pellacani (DG INTPA) opened the discussion by informing participants of the recent EU pledge to increase allocations for climate change and biodiversity, which resulted in a dedicated budget line of €300M in the RMIP. She stressed that climate change is a crosscutting theme addressed through all priorities. Ms Pellacani also mentioned the increase in biodiversity allocations through the regional envelope as well as the support to the Covenant of Mayors and agroecology. **Gauthier Schefer** (DG INTPA) clarified that the climate change action consisted of two components – one on adaptation and the other providing support to the secretariat of the Covenant of Mayors.

Participants welcomed the allocation of additional funds for climate change mitigation but pointed out that significant resources will be needed to address loss and damage from climate change; they asked whether the climate adaptation fund will contain a programme or provide direct support to countries to ensure a multi-stakeholder mobilisation including LAs in Africa and if beyond LAs, other stakeholders, such as CBOs would have access to resources. Other participants suggested setting up cross-country networks of LAs concerned about the same adaptation and mitigation issues (e.g. coastline, desert issues, oasis preservation, mountain preservation) to allow for exchange of best practice and help access funding from donors.

Ms Pellacani agreed that it was crucial to consider subsidiarity issues, especially working at community level, although this can be a challenge in regional programming. She stressed that the EC was mindful of the extent of needs due to loss and damage, and that its focus was on delivering on the pledge made at COP26, which will amount to at least €300M through the regional envelope. **Mr Schefer** informed participants that the climate adaptation fund has a specific way of funding actions which goes through its board, which includes a coalition of CSOs. He stressed that the support to the Covenant of Mayors was only a part of the EU's response

to climate change at the continental level. **Placido Hernandez Aguilar** (DG INTPA) informed participants that €700M had been earmarked for sustainable energy, including promoting projects on renewable energy. An additional focus would be on clean cooking, which, if addressed at a continental level, could have a positive impact on improving health and stopping deforestation.

Participants pointed out that a combination of solutions and linking initiatives (e. g. reusing waste in agriculture for a circular economy) would be needed to address the outlined goals – these should also be implemented by cooperatives and women-led SMEs. Investments should boost renewable energy and energy efficiency, supporting existing Africa-owned regional initiatives such as the African Renewable Energy Initiative (AREI), LDC Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Initiative (REEEI) and African Renewable Energy Framework (AFRETRAP). On the issue of clean cooking, it was pointed out that the affordability of proposed solutions is key for their widespread adoption; promoting access to electricity can also contribute to this goal.

Mr Hernandez Aguilar stated that objectives on a circular economy would be included into future programming. **Claudia Antonelli** (DG INTPA) presented the planned activities on the agri-food system: research and development for agri-food systems; a dedicated DESIRA+ programme for Africa – development of smart innovation and promoting a participatory research culture on agriculture with farmers, farmer organisations and researchers; a regional programme on the great green wall, including greening the Sahel and ensuring more viable food systems (mainly funded from national envelopes); supporting more effective monitoring and evaluation, promoting coordination on advocacy. In addition, support would be provided to the live-stock economy to promote peaceful pastoralism. Ms Antonelli stated that agroecology will come in through research and development, with applied research at the core of the agenda; the great green wall is also part of the agroecology agenda. She stressed the intention to build on existing programmes.

Participants asked how complementarity between regional, global and national envelopes will be ensured; if it was possible to know at which level a given topic would be addressed and with what allocation; and if regional programmes will allow for small granting to local groups.

Ms Antonelli stressed the EC's commitment to complementarity. She assured the participants that issues such as food security and live-stock economy will be addressed at country level, in collaboration with CSOs. She stated that small grants for local groups may be possible and will be defined during the formulation of the programmes. **Ingeborg Thijn** (DG INTPA) presented the planning on biodiversity, which is focused around three pillars: conservation of nature, development of people, and governance. She explained that Nature Africa programme will have biggest share of the funding, to be implemented through an innovative, people-centred approach, which will be inclusive and community based. It will be split in six regional windows (led by EU delegations in Burkina Faso, Botswana, Kenya, Cameroon, Gabon and one to be identified) and based on studies of needs. Governance pillar will focus on transversal programmes, including the sustainable use of wildlife products. **Cristobal Delgado Matas** (DG INTPA) discussed the programming on water, organised around the continental programme, Blue Africa, focusing on institutional capacity, policy reform and improving integrated water management. A second area will be activities on Lake Victoria: water management, infrastructure, and possibly water corridors. The Joint Research Centre (JRC) will support this work, as well as the centres of excellence in Africa which had previously been engaged. **Laeticia Rivagorda** presented planning on oceans, which should appear in the financial allocations for 2023-24 and be broader than previous interventions, covering ocean governance, blue economy and marine ecosystems, and resource conservation and restoration.

Participants asked for clarifications on whether wildlife trade and regional forest initiatives will be covered, if a regional approach to deforestation, especially in the Congo basin, will be taken and about the future of the Switch Africa to Green initiative. Others suggested promoting the Nagoya protocol on access and benefit sharing around genetic resources. The issues of forest encroachments, post-harvest processing and their links to reduced productivity was brought up in the context of sustainable production, as well as the need to

promote youth engagement in agriculture. The need for cross border cooperation, exchange of knowledge and experience inside Africa and between Africa and other continents was further stressed. Participants also asked about the budget allocation for biodiversity in the AAP2022.

Ms Antonelli clarified that actions on food processing were planned at country level; regionally, this issue would be placed on the agenda and tackled through research to get a better understanding of the post-harvest challenges and solutions. **Ms Thijn** stated that support to the various Multilateral Environment Agreements participation was planned later on. She also clarified that forest actions will be developed under NaturAfrica with a specific, transversal programme on deforestation, as on wildlife trade and trafficking. With regards to the Congo basin, it is one of the NaturAfrica windows; the transversal funding comes also from the RMIP. This will cover the governance pillar of biodiversity and will also be partly funded from the thematic envelope. **Ms Pellacani** regretted that specific financial allocations could not yet be provided.

Additional recommendations highlighted by organisations in their written inputs include:

- Bring justice and equity into the work more systematically by speaking about 'green and just transition' and defining principles for these, to acknowledge the role that social and economic inequalities play in the climate crises.
- Acknowledge that the green transition agenda needs to evolve also in fragile contexts. Funds for climate adaptation and awareness need to support and incentivise social cohesion to fight for climate justice and gender justice.
- Adaptation financing should support partner countries to improve the integration and implementation of Nature-Based Solutions (NBS) into their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs).
- Place the urgent need for a just and green transition in agriculture more centrally in the strategy to bring together climate, biodiversity, gender equality and economic development objectives. Focus on small scale food producers and women farmers and recognize agroecological approaches as a key solution for building sustainable food systems and addressing climate change.
- Increase attention to rangeland, deforestation and aquaculture/fisheries development strategies in the region.
- Recognise the role of green cities. A sustainable and resilient design of the expansion of cities will have major impact on gas emissions, energy efficiency and waste.
- Ensure that disaster prevention and preparedness is adequately integrated to foster resilience. The humanitarian development peace (HDP) triple nexus approach is a key aspect of climate resilience.
- Support climate-resilient WASH programmes across Subs-Saharan Africa. Such programmes can address several key priorities at once and aim to build the capacities of local authorities and service providers to respond to climate change's impacts on WASH.
- Support the increased use of early warning systems and risk assessments. In line with actions to support water related conflict, given the importance of access to water as a factor driving conflict.
- Wetlands should be explicitly recognised as a key element of limited water resources. Conservation and restoration of wetlands are also essential in relation to the Great Green Wall.
- Reprioritise development aid to agriculture and food security in its current long-term budget for the years 2021-2027, as the challenges faced in relation to the climate crisis and food security are enormous and the agriculture and food sector continue to be crucial for the social and economic development of most African countries.
- Increase focus on Resilient Urbanisation or a Green urban transition. The continent is home to the fastest growing urban centers and it should not be measured just by CO₂ emissions but must be widened to cover sustainable means of all resource utilised.

3. Investment and infrastructures, digital, STI + Regional integration and trade

Fabio Di Stefano, Team leader on digital (DG INTPA), opened the breakout discussion by presenting the programming for AAP2021, which consists of a €750m investment programme, addressing digital,

connectivity and transport infrastructure. This will mainly be allocated through blending, meaning that banks and the private sector can apply with investment proposals to leverage EU grants. This initiative has a strong institutional frame, as the EC will sign an agreement with the African Union Commission and have a joint steering committee to ensure political coherence with its own priorities. With regards to digital and STI, DG INTPA is engaged with DG Research and DG Education and Culture to align its position ahead of the policy dialogue; furthermore, a preliminary assessment of possible actions and an inventory of partners' STI in Africa (universities, research centres, etc.) has been launched. On digital, Mr Di Stefano stated that digital connectivity and the regulatory framework were the main priorities, with five sub-sectors identified: regulatory governance (regulatory authorities), data governance, e-government, digital finance, cyber security. Recently, an African branch of the D4D Hub has been created, which acts as a platform for coordination between the EC and member states, with African partners to be added soon. He concluded by informing participants that a digital multi-stakeholder forum coordinated by EC and AUC will take place in January.

Gaëlle Doleans, Programme assistant on regional integration, trade (DG INTPA), explained that work is ongoing on thematic priority areas to identify specific actions. The EC aims to support implementation of different trade agreements, including the African Continental FTA (CFTA), with a view to foster trade for sustainable development by increasing job creation and wages, especially for unskilled workers and women. As the CFTA secretariat is preparing for negotiations on various protocols (services, goods, investment, competition, e-commerce, gender and youth), the EC's goal is to mainstream gender equality, the SDGs and climate change measures throughout its thematic approach. At country level, consultations and multi-stakeholder fora with CSOs, LAs, businesses are planned. Ms Doleans presented the thematic areas of focus for the RMIP: customs, trade facilitation and rules of origin; quality infrastructure and market access; trade in services; digital trade and e-services; competition; investment; property, trade statistics; and trade and labour movement. She informed participants that a consultation process to assess needs in all these areas has been launched for EU delegations. The focus of the 2022 AAP will be quality infrastructure and market access, to which most of the funds are allocated, and trade in services and digital trade. With regards to quality infrastructure, many projects are ongoing on topics such as regulations, services, institutions, regulatory frameworks to ensure compliance of products to standards, and trade facilitation.

Eva Kyriakou, Programme manager on investments (DG INTPA) told participants that investments would be channelled mainly through EFSD+ and the private sector and macroeconomic section. She stressed that many recommendations on targeting macro through regional programming, including environmental and social sustainability, had been taken on board and that gender equality, market systems and social standards were supported horizontally. With regards to AAP2021 actions, Ms Kyriakou outlined a TEI on investing in young businesses through expertise and technical support. In AAP 2022, she presented three actions: IMF and technical assistance centres support; broadening the technical assistance facility for East and South Africa; and an incubators programme.

Participants asked about the data sources for some of the planned indicators; how the effectiveness of actions to promote decent job growth and wage growth would be measured; if the funding provided through EFSD+ would be spent and who the expected partners and beneficiaries would be and if they would include the African Development Bank and national development banks. Others suggested involving LAs on economic integration and trade to a greater extent, stressing that local economic development strategies fit together with regional programmes to strengthen value chains and noted that LAs create the enabling environment for SMEs and women-led business; LAs should further be included in e-governance efforts. It was further pointed out that a challenge in infrastructure investment is de-risking the project preparation phase. Finally, the importance of ensuring decent job creation (guaranteeing labour rights, standards and governance processes like social dialogue) as well as measures for effective economic integration through labour market responses (regional and sub-regional labour mobility and regional social dialogue) were stressed.

Ms Doleans informed participants that labour standards and decent work were not the core focus of programmes in this area but will be taken into account. As an example, a project on quality infrastructure will target specific value chains, selected based on the potential to create decent jobs; there will also be support to the harmonisation of standards, including labour standards. **Mr Di Stefano** assured participants that the EFSD+ funds, €700M of which is earmarked for blending, will certainly be engaged in the four years of implementation. In terms of planned actions, these focus on strategic corridors in the transport sector and energy. For digital, partners are all in the private sector; however, they will not be direct recipients of funds. The main partners for the EC are financial institutions such as the European Development Bank, member state development banks or the African Development Bank. Mr Di Stefano assured LAs that they can be partners in implementing the regional dimension projects relevant in the field. However, with regards to the digital governance regulatory framework, it is not yet clear if it will be possible to support this at the level of LAs, as e-governance efforts are primarily targeted towards central governments. **Ms Kyriakou** clarified that in the context of the EFSD+, IFIs are the main collaborators, who then work with local banks and the local private sector; there is however an openness to expand the base of partners and work with regional development banks.

Participants then asked about the global gateway strategy communication and if it foresaw a role for CSOs, which can be partners in developing regional connectivity and an African green industry. Others wondered about coordination and complementarity between the EU and other donors such as the US and China, who are also present and active on infrastructure projects in the region.

Mr Di Stefano confirmed that the RMIP will implement the main priorities of the global gateway communication. He clarified that in decisions about infrastructure investments, the interest of beneficiaries is the main concern of the EU – however, where relevant and possible, other actors' investments and activities will be taken into account.

Additional recommendations highlighted by organisations in their written inputs include:

- Actions in the area of private investments and entrepreneurship should give priority to supporting sustainable and inclusive business models (e.g. social economy enterprises, cooperatives, etc.), and supporting small and medium-size enterprises (SMEs) to overcome credit constraints.
- Acknowledge the potential of the housing sector for job creation and growth in Africa, and promote the important role of CSOs as well as LAs in urban renewal, via promoting community uptake of new infrastructures.
- Continue work to support slum upgrading at the regional level.
- Considerations for Persons with Disabilities should be further addressed under result 2.2 (Progress achieved in labour mobility).
- Encourage fair international trade relations; shift the policy focus to strengthening local markets and short supply chains, instead of on export-oriented, long value-chains.
- Include conflict-sensitivity in the outcome and the indicators to ensure adequate implementation of impact assessments and conflict analyses in all investments.

4. Governance, peace and security

Marco Sioli, Programme manager on governance and support to CSOs (DG INTPA) welcomed participants by stating that many of their recommendations from March 2021 had been taken on board. For example, the African governance architecture now includes a component on CSOs; electoral observation which was planned to support only government institutional capacity will now also support networks of CSOs, e.g. for observation, education, awareness raising. **Chiara Raffaele**, Programme manager on peace and security (DG INTPA) presented the AAP for 2021, which will focus on borderlands and consider the feedback provided on competition for natural resources, preventing transnational security threats, improving access to basic services and taking a nexus approach. The AAP 2022 will focus on the Sahel, in particular prevention of conflict

spill over to coastal areas, Lake Chad and the Horn of Africa; it will look at root causes, livelihoods and basic services, with a central role for CSOs and LAs.

Participants asked if aside from countering transnational organised groups the AAPs contained other elements relative to peace and security. Others welcomed the focus on illicit financial flows as sources of instability in the region and asked about how the TEI contribution within AAP 2022 envisioned the role of CSOs.

Ms Raffaele informed participants that not all of the planning was already outlined, but there is an intention to focus on transitional justice in Africa, building West African counter-terrorism capacity and countering transnational crime and organised groups. With regards to the TEI, **Mr Sioli** stated that while this was a work in progress, there was hope for effective participation of CSOs. **Jorge Pereiro Pinon** (DG INTPA) added that the TEI on illicit financial flows was intended to contribute to African capacities in relation to transnational organised crime but would also have a wider aspect. The TEI is currently being finalised, with Germany foreseen to take the lead; outreach to African stakeholders, including CSOs, as well as consultation sessions, are planned for the first quarter of 2022.

Participants then asked about how actions which had previously been under the EU Trust Fund, the CFSP, the EU Peace facility, peace, stability and conflict prevention fit under the new RMIP, and how coordination with FPI would be managed. With regards to capacity building for security and development (CBSD) which falls under all three pillars of the NDICI, they wondered if this would feature in regional programmes or under national security sector support.

Ms Raffaele confirmed that coordination systems are in place for all mechanisms, internally and with other DGs as well as FPI and EEAS, who will manage the European Peace Facility. DG INTPA will focus on civilian and police components of this support. **Mr Pereiro Pinon** reminded participants that the European Peace Facility was off budget due to EU treaty specifications; with regards to thematic and geographic pillars, these will be used as appropriate depending on the action and the area – in particular in the case of CBSD, this funding is a potential rather than a determined envelope, which can be activated in case working with the military is the only means for reaching certain development goals.

Participants asked about the results envisioned throughout the RMIP on democratic governance, rule of law and transparency of elections and how CSOs and LAs, some of whom may be experts with expertise to contribute, may be engaged.

Mr Sioli clarified that there is an ongoing collaboration with AU institutions and the African governance architecture (AGA); in terms of dialogue, working with both institutions and CSOs brings an added value, not just by providing funds but creating linkages between the different actors. He stressed the desire to support regional networks to facilitate exchanges and build the capacity of African partners as well as to work with specialised NGOs who have existing knowledge and expertise on key topics. An example could be the area of digital, in which the EC has limited expertise. **Ms Raffaele** stressed that in the area of transitional justice there was an ongoing collaboration with the AU and specialised NGOs and INGOs, as well as local CSOs.

Participants further pointed out that while the AGA was an important actor, it faced certain challenges and was understaffed, stressing the need to promote concrete outcomes from EU-CSO-AGA dialogues to incentivise participation. Others stressed the importance of programming for the transfer of responsibilities from the European Peace Facility to African Peace Facility or NDICI, which should be planned for this MFF cycle.

Mr Sioli affirmed that that the EC was aware of the limits of dialogues, with CSO participation at times being dangerous, or the added value not being clear; he nonetheless reiterated the determination to involve CSOs into continental dialogue initiatives. **Ms Raffaele** confirmed that the transfer of responsibility for civilian aspects from the European Peace Facility had been programmed.

Additional comments and recommendations highlighted by organisations in their written inputs include:

- Transparency should be a principle that runs throughout the strategy.
- Consider refocusing the peace and security section on a human security approach.
- Consider eliminating reference to a “stabilization” approach, which avoids or denies addressing root causes and structural drivers of conflict, trust between state and society and inclusive and meaningful political dialogue, fairer power structures.
- Mainstream and prioritise access to justice alongside gender and climate change to ensure no one is left behind. This is critical to achieving SDG16 (and in the ongoing Covid pandemic, recovering gains to all the SDGs).
- Ensure that explicit and funded accountability and complaints/redress mechanisms for citizens in the delivery of the programme exist.
- Strengthen support to CSOs networks which work on budget monitoring, accountability and transparency of public finance, and counter the global trend of shrinking civic space.
- Use digitalisation, which will be key for strengthening land tenure rules, land registry systems, and safe cities, as a means of collaboration between CSOs and LAs.
- Include and consult civil society (peace actors at all levels, including those affected by tensions and crises) as a key component of decision-making processes.
- Both the EU and the AU should concentrate on mechanisms that address root causes of problems, including inequality, poverty, climate change and resource management, and not on military responses to security challenges.

5. Migration and forced displacement

Victoria Garcia Guillen, Programme manager and migration advisor (DG INTPA) presented the planned actions in the AAP 2021, which consisted of a continuation of the EU-IOM joint initiative supporting ECOWAS on free movement and mobility in West Africa. She stressed that taking on board recommendations made in March 2021, the focus will be on supporting legal migration and mobility, supporting free movement and the African CFTA. Ms Garcia Guillen stated that better migration management in the Horn of Africa would take the form of flexible programming aligning with national priorities, supporting greater coordination and information sharing between partners, with planning workshops between governments and CSOs, as well as an increased focus on labour migration. With regards to AAP 2022, its focus will be on providing a flexible mechanism supporting dialogues on migration with countries of origin. Ms Garcia Guillen recognised existing concerns about this mechanism but stressed that the funding provided through the flexible mechanism would be additional to ODA, and would not make ODA conditional on cooperation on migration. She stressed the commitment to a rights-based approach and alignment with the priorities of the partner countries and expressed a hope that it would be possible to also fund actions on legal pathways to migration.

Ms Garcia Guillen outlined the actions on which planning was less advanced, such as migrant protection, return and reintegration, which should have an increased focus on ownership and involvement from community based CSOs and local actors and improved referrals and linkages with national development programmes. This will be linked to efforts to improve social inclusion, address stigmatisation, provide reliable information about risks, protect rights and opportunities along the route, as well as support CSOs active in migration management. She stressed that the objectives on migrant protection and assisted voluntary return have been separated as per recommendations made in March 2021.

Isabelle De Ruyt, Programme manager on forced displacement (DG INTPA) informed participants that a specific objective to address forced displacement now existed in the RMIP. In addition, the EU will support the Global Compact for Refugees, provide support to internally displaced persons (IDPs) at national and regional levels, and fund research, including by African researchers. Political dialogue will take into consideration the Global Refugee Forum and its platforms for cooperation. Ms De Ruyt explained that contrary to the EUTF, programmes will be targeted at migrants and those displaced rather than host communities. Within AAP

2021, the focus will be on the emergency transit mechanism, removing vulnerable people from Libya to Indonesia or Rwanda where they are hosted by transit mechanisms before being resettled; this will pay more attention to psychosocial needs of refugees and their co-existence with host communities. €75M has been allocated to two platforms for cooperation in the Horn of Africa: Sudan and South Sudan, and Somalia. In CAR, where a platform is yet to be announced by the UNHCR, the EC will assist with the displaced population. In the Sahel and Lake Chad, Mauritania will be supported as a host to refugees. The focus will be on durable solutions, climate change adaptation and the smooth transition of humanitarian actions, with the human rights and research components more prominent. €32M will be channelled through grants and therefore accessible to CSOs under the first action on forcibly displaced populations, although other funding will be available to CSOs under the migration heading. In terms of future activities, the AAP for 2022 foresees a programme to address displacement in Burundi, Rwanda, Tanzania and the DRC.

Participants raised concerns about the flexible mechanism as a use of EU ODA as a potential incentive to manage migration flows; they asked about how this mechanism would be monitored. They welcomed the inclusion of legal migration within and outside Africa and refugee protection as specific results, however stating that rights of migrants (not just refugees and asylum seekers) would also merit specific action – the EC was therefore asked to clarify how it planned to avoid protection gaps, and ensure social inclusion and access to services. Participants asked about when country MIPs would be made available and how complementarity between them and the RMIP would be assured. Others welcomed the principle of country ownership but regretted the lack of action to promote the opening of legal migration routes to EU member states. The need for further progress on labour mobility and taking a 'whole of route approach' was stressed. With regards to a rights-based approach to reintegration, participants asked how actions in countries of transit and in communities of origin were planned to be integrated; on forced displacement objectives, it was pointed out that people in the Sahel move in mixed flows and their protection status and needs change along the way. Participants also asked about measuring impact of the actions and if the indicators included psychosocial needs, improved human rights or resilience of migrants or returnees. They pointed out that the emergency transit mechanism in Niger has struggled with managing the returnees from Libya and that improving its functioning will require more than additional funding. Finally, participants asked how the planned TEI be coordinated with other actions, e.g. the one on the Atlantic route.

Ms Garcia Guillen stated that she understood participants' concerns about the flexible mechanism, assuring them that its main objective was to be able to provide emergency funding in case of need, based on a dialogue with partner countries. With regards to actions on legal pathways, she shared that there will be a push for EU member states to provide opportunities for legal migration, and that legal migration was also discussed with partners in the context of labour migration to the Gulf, South-South migration and combatting the trafficking in human beings. With regards to a tracking system for migration actions, the goal was for a better management of mixed migration flows; coordination is ensured through an informal NDICI coordination group on migration with member states. **Ms De Ruyt** confirmed that the EC was aware of the difficulties with the emergency transit mechanism in Niger, and that this will be taken into consideration in planning the action. **Ms De Ruyt** further acknowledged that fluidity of status was indeed very relevant in the Sahel, and informed participants that the EC was considering area-based approaches to not have to differentiate between the status of people to address this.

Additional recommendations highlighted by organisations in their written inputs include:

- Avoid the expression "addressing the root causes of irregular migration," as it depicts migration as a problem to be solved, and "irregular migration" in general, as there is no universally accepted definition.
- Include housing/shelter as a focal area, as adequate and affordable housing, including quality basic services and land tenure security, is a pre-condition for resilience and socioeconomic development of households. The absence of such conditions may turn into root causes of migration.
- Promote dialogue spaces with African and European civil society to facilitate their participation in the design, implementation, and assessment of initiatives.

- Review indicators to include the gender and intersectional approaches and facilitate the gathering of qualitative information.
- ODA should not be conditional and must always be oriented towards DAC objectives. Before taking any action linking mobility and security, an assessment of its objectives, the respect of do no harm principles and the alignment with DAC recommendations must be carried out. Concerns were expressed about ODA diversion when investing in “border management,” and that “awareness raising of the dangers to irregular migration” may be turned into migration deterrence and interference with the right of people to search for a life of dignity.
- Make result 1.6 (Legal migration and mobility) a major priority during implementation.
- Ensure transparency and accountability regarding the SSA Regional Migration Support Program (RMSP) and TEIs. The European Parliament and civil society should have access to information throughout implementation, in particular about the use of the flexible envelope, which amounts to almost 40% of the resources.
- Refer to migration as an integral part of integration and development, as in the Free Movement Protocol to the African Continental Free Trade Area; and support African research on migration to amplify African voices in the migration debate.
- Considerations for Persons with Disabilities are expected to be further addressed in the following results: Result 1.1: Improved protection and assistance to migrants; Result 1.4: Improved rights-based and effective migration governance and management; Result 2.2: Nationally-owned durable solutions for IDPs and host populations supported in full respect of human rights and principle of complementarity; Result 3.1: Partner countries’ capacities to tackle migration and/or forced displacement challenges.

4. Closing

The participants then returned to the **plenary** and rapporteurs from each group presented the key points from their discussions to all those attending. The consultation was closed with remarks from **Mr Stausboll** and **Mr Baum**, who thanked participants for their input and assured them of the EU institutions’ intention to continue and deepen the dialogue.