



Regional Multi-Annual Indicative Programme for Sub-Saharan Africa (2021-2027)

Focus on Annual Action Plan 2025

7th Consultative Discussion

14 November 2024

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Executive Summary

The European Commission Directorate General for International Partnerships (DG INTPA), in the framework of the Policy Forum on Development (PFD), hosted the seventh consultative discussion for participants representing civil society organisations (CSOs), local authorities (LAs), and regional networks to discuss the implementation of the [Regional Multi-Annual Indicative Programme for Sub-Saharan Africa](#) (SSA MIP).¹ The discussion aimed to provide an **update on the implementation of the SSA MIP** and the next steps planned, share the **feedback on the contributions that had been received** from the previous PFD consultation meetings, and hear the views of CSOs and LAs on the **Multi-Annual Action Plan 2025** (AAP 2025). The meeting was structured into two parts: a plenary session for updates on the SSA MIP, and breakout thematic group discussions focusing on: **human development, youth, and culture; governance, peace and security, migration and forced displacement; green transition; and sustainable growth, decent jobs, Digital, STI.**

Laetitia Cadet, Team Leader – Civil Society Policy Dialogue, Unit G2, INTPA, opened the meeting and stressed that such consultation meetings aim to increase the effectiveness of EU programmes and strengthen partnerships. **Daniela Rofi**, Deputy Head of Unit of Regional and Multi-Country Programs for Africa, INTPA Unit A2, also welcomed and briefed the floor on the midterm review of the MIP. **Jorge Pereiro Piñon**, Team Leader, provided an [update on the implementation of the SSA MIP during the 2021-2024 period](#), and an overview of the [AAP 2025](#), and responses to the feedback received from CSOs and LAs on the SSA regional MIP in the last consultation.

The presentations were followed by a question-and-answer session. Some of the issues raised included: the horizontal envelope of investments, and how investments will be programmed and aligned with the six SSA MIP priorities; alignment with the Global Gateway; adherence of the private sector to labour rights, human rights, and environmental, social, and governance standards (ESGs); how the EU is tracking its spending targets in climate change and in funding spent on ODA; and the link between supporting countries in a fragile context and the rapid response pillar. Subsequently, the participants were divided into four thematic groups.

The conclusions of the thematic group on Green Transition were:

- Follow a nexus approach and establish connections between actions with other ongoing and upcoming programmes.
- Focus on food security, which is a substantial challenge in the region, rather than on markets.
- Ensure that all climate change issues are looked into and addressed.
- Pay further attention to inequality and human rights when resources are allocated.
- Connect the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) issues with other programmes, as the current water programmes are more focused on water governance issues.

¹ Previous information and consultation sessions were organised in March 2021, December 2021, June 2022, April 2023, July 2023, and January 2024 to present the SSA regional programming exercise, its mid-term review, and AAPs 2022, 2023 and 2024.

- Pay further attention to the top-down/bottom-up approach and ensure that actions reach the most vulnerable groups.
- Consult CSOs in key dialogues.
- Address the lack of opportunities for CSOs, as resources seem to be allocated to the private sector, with suggestions to have CSOs organised around the action areas to influence programming.
- Expand agriculture in conservation areas to protect natural resources and have connection with "NaturAfrica" which concerns livelihoods in conservation areas.
- Address challenges to build capacities in actions to support agroecological transitions, with references to the Desira+ programme, particularly regarding bio inputs and reducing the use of dangerous agrichemicals. As such, issues of food safety and regulatory frameworks are critical.
- Involve youth and make agriculture attractive to youth, as well as ensure the use of revenue flows and technology to attract youth.
- Ensure that cross cutting and transboundary issues are addressed.
- Reduce the negative impact of nitro resources.
- Focus on indigenous crops and consider linking this with existing programmes.
- Provide further clarification on how money will be divided across food, water, and energy, and on the types of EU private sector that should be reached out to for collaboration, and the nature of such collaboration.
- Encourage a landscape approach when addressing synergies between the different sectors to ensure that elements are connected.

The conclusions of the sustainable growth and decent jobs, Digital, STI group were:

- Ensure that standards set by EU regulators are held, whilst also ensuring the competitiveness of African farmers. It was clarified as well that work is undergoing to assist African partners to set their standards in their regions, with a 2023 action dedicated to assisting SMEs to access EU markets.
- Regarding "Responsible Business Conduct Africa", discussions centred on issues of business conduct, criteria to select countries, and confirming the inclusion of trade unions.
- Take better advantage of this exchange platform for sustainable growth, jobs, and digital, because participation was limited, and suggested including other organisations and stakeholders to make a better use of the platform.
- Regarding the "Enablers to Sustainable Trade and Investment in Africa" action, a question was raised on how effective it was to work with regional economic communities (RECs), noting the focus is on both the regional and continental levels.

Within the human development group:

- Include people with disabilities in the Social Protection Systems Strengthening action.
- Liaise with ERASMUS contact points and their information sessions regarding the "Study in Africa" action, in order to support universities in identifying funding opportunities and partners.
- Focus on primary and secondary education and not only on higher education. It was clarified that higher education is better addressed at the regional level, while primary and secondary education is addressed at the national level.
- Recognise concerns regarding the reductions in funding allocated for health and particularly sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) in light of developments in the international political scene.
- Ensure there is tracking to check how much SRHR contributes to the 20% target of human development and the 85% target on gender equality.
- Involve local stakeholders in terms of social protection and use them in advocacy actions to ensure the promotion of social protection.

Within the democratic governance, peace and security, migration and forced displacement group:

- Further emphasise the issue of displacement and the risks faced by the migrants in the Sahel and North Africa.
- Increase protection schemes in light of the funding gaps as observed by CSO partners.
- Support countries on a national level in implementing peace resolutions and mechanisms, and not only work on the regional level.
- Support the human rights dimension in affected areas and the implementation of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights resolutions.
- Work with the African Union Continental Operations Centre for combatting irregular migration, trafficking in Person and smuggling of migrants.
- Include minors and unaccompanied migrants/displaced children in the different programmes.
- Clarify the prioritisation methods applied to select the countries to be supported.

Overlapping recommendations included to:

- Involve CSOs in dialogue, policy, advocacy, and implementation.
- Ensure that cross cutting and transboundary issues are addressed.
- Recognise concerns regarding the funding allocated for health and SRHR in light of developments in the international political scene.
- Ensure a bottom-up approach.
- Reinforce the link between climate change and forced displacement and migration, with recommendations to follow a nexus-based approach that links peace, climate, and migration issues.
- Support national schemes in parallel with regional schemes.

- Factor in the issue of unaccompanied and separated migrant children with regard to security and education.

Findings were reported during a closing plenary session, and participants were invited to submit their recommendations in writing by 29 November 2024. **Daniela Rofi** thanked everyone for their participation, and stressed the importance of such exchanges that allow for discussion and follow up on key issues. Her concluding remarks stressed the EU observation of human rights and responsible business conduct when engaging with partner countries, and the involvement of the local actors in implementation of actions. Regarding the adoption of AAP 2025, the NDICI committee will meet in April/May 2025, and then the final adoption by the Commission is envisaged before the summer break.

Presentations

State of play of Multi-Annual Indicative Programme for Sub-Saharan Africa and its Mid Term Review (MTR)

Daniela Rofi briefed the floor on the mid-term review process, which has ended, with a revised SSA regional MIP (budget EUR 12 billion) now in place and preparation of the annual action plan for 2025 underway. The revised MIP maintains and confirms the six priority areas and will not be altered. However, there will be stronger alignment with the Global Gateway Strategy, with a new envelope called “Support to Investments”, that will pool funds that were split into different priority areas. Funds under EFSD+ will continue. New areas that were not explicitly mentioned in the previous MIP are now reflected in the revised MIP, including integrating social protection within the human development area, and stronger emphasis on supporting regional value chains in SSA, partnerships on critical raw materials, and a stronger response on migration management, with additional resources of EUR 100 million. A new priority is one related to “countries in complex settings”, which covers Burkina Faso, Niger, Mali, and Sudan, which are facing political transitions, and as such the EU is not able to sign national indicative programmes. EUR 238 million was set aside to support these countries as per the political guidance of the Council.

Jorge Pereiro Piñon, Team leader in unit A2, Regional and Multi-Country Programs for Africa, INTPA, provided an overview of **the state of play of the implementation of SSA MIP 2021-2024**, with the proposed AAP 2025 package 148 actions will be adopted by the Commission for an amount of EUR 8.55 billion distributed across the six sectors and priorities, all of which have been subjected to consultations with CSOs and LAs. Regarding the regional Team Europe Initiatives (TEIs), 17 TEIs have been approved and are ongoing. He noted that TEIs provide frameworks for coordination between EU institutions and member states in a given area, whereby 53 of the approved actions are contributing to 17 TEIs with a budget of EUR 2.4 billion. Four health TEIs were launched in March 2024 at the EU-AU partnership on Global Health Partnership², as was a TEI on Opportunity-driven Skills and Vocational Education and Training in April 2024 at the Global Gateway High-level Event on Education.

² One health, Social Protection, Public Health Institutes in Africa and Digital Health

AAP 2025 overview

Jorge Pereiro Piñon also provided an **overview of the [AAP 2025](#)**, noting that INTPA is still in the consultation phase with the relevant units to ensure the quality of the proposed actions, consulting with the Member States, the African Union Commission, CSOs and LAs, as well as with UN agencies and international organisations. The formal phase of inter-service consultation with other DGs will commence in January 2025, as well as with EU Member States, with the aim of adoption in May 2025. The AAP 2025 has a total of 20 actions for a total amount of EUR 627.5 million with three top ups, two on migration and one for investments for a total amount EUR 770 million, and support measures of EUR 57.8 million. The planned actions under AAP 2025 are based on the six thematic priority areas of Human Development; Governance, Peace and Security, Culture; Green Transition; Digital, Science, Technology and Innovation; Sustainable Growth and Decent Jobs; and Migration and Forced Displacement. The participants were invited to send written contributions on AAP 2025 by the end of November 2024. The next steps are an expected adoption in May 2025, followed by implementing the adopted actions, continued work on implementing TEIs, and the organisation of the next consultation on AAP 2026 during the second half of 2025.

Feedback from the recommendations

Deirdre Lennan, Head of Human Development Sector, INTPA, briefed the floor on the **feedback received from the CSOs and LAs on the SSA regional MIP throughout 2024**, which were very useful in the formulation of the actions. On human development and health, recommendations included underlining the importance of social protection and linking the different actions in order to follow a comprehensive approach in the area of sexuality education, noting that an integrated comprehensive sexuality education is being formulated in programmes under AAP 2024 AD for “Fighting harmful practices, improving access to and deepening accountability for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) services in Africa” Other recommendations included: maximising systematic synergies to address the impact of climate change; ensuring gender responsive approaches to digital tools, including in health; strengthening supply chains of contraceptive commodities; ensuring synergies of Health TEIs with EDCTP & EU-Africa Innovation Agenda; and leveraging engagement with stakeholders to support the development of more inclusive and gender-responsive practices in education, which is being followed up on under the African-Europe Platform on Education (PEERS).

Jorge Pereiro Piñon shared the recommendations received under the priority of Governance, Peace and Security Migration and Forced Displacement and how they were taken into account. They included the importance of broadened participation beyond Team Europe and international organisations and calls to assess the possibility of broadening calls for proposals (CfPs), which will be taken on board, with CfPs organised for borderlands, CSOs as part of the upcoming Support to African Governance, Peace and Security (GPS) programme, and a CfP foreseen for AAP 2025 REMPARTS-West Africa cluster. Other recommendations called for (1) peacebuilding and conflict prevention efforts to take note of climate change, migration and displacement, which will be reflected in peace and security support programmes; (2) enhanced capacity of local actors to respond to conflict and provide

assistance to populations, which will be continued in the upcoming programmes, particularly with regard to urban settings, LAs, and borderlands programme; (3) integration of resilience building activities into actions related to the Central African Republic (CAR) refugee crisis; and ensuring the protection needs of affected populations are adequately addressed in actions.

Gianpietro De Cao, INTPA, shared recommendations received concerning green transition. The first was increased support for local food systems and the promotion of nutrition-sensitive value chains, including the promotion of nutritious indigenous food and food plants, adding that the FO4A action aims to strengthen the ability of central and local governments to improve access to better nutrition. Furthermore, the “Fit for market for Africa 2030” action is focused on strengthening the fruits and vegetables value chain. Another concern raised was the emphasis placed on the High-seas treaty vs local needs, and the need to consider the interests of coastal communities in the ocean related programmes, noting that the support to coastal communities is offered by all ocean regional programmes. The implementation of both the Global Biodiversity Framework and the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ)/High Seas Treaty is also in full support of coastal communities.

Fabio di Stefano, INTPA, also gave an overview of the recommendations received in the area of Sustainable Growth and Decent Jobs, Digital, STI, where three main recommendations were received: involve CSOs in projects via implementing partners and ensure more direct participation of CSOs, which has been taken into account in three programmes (2024 Action “Africa-Europe Digital Innovation Bridge” AEDIB, 2024 Action “Africa Continental Free Trade Area” AfCFTA, and the 2025 Action “Trade Enablers” that promotes policy dialogue among African stakeholders). The second recommendation was to address informal trade, noting that there is a focus on informal trade with attention on women traders. **Vivien Rigler**, INTPA, noted the third recommendation on how to target youth, adding that one of the main objectives of the programmes under the TEI of Investment in Young Businesses in Africa is the support to youth and women-led businesses, and aims to enhance their financial inclusion and strengthen the capacity of investment vehicles targeting young businesses.

Question and Answer Session

A question was raised regarding whether there was a separate action plan for the four countries with a complex political setting, to which **INTPA** explained that rather than an Action Plan, the aim is to have individual measures for these four countries. These actions are still at the initial stages and are not part of the AAP 2025 but rather are part of the SSA MIP and can be committed anytime between 2025 and 2027.

Another question asked how the horizontal envelope of investments will be programmed and aligned with the six SSA MIP priorities and/or the Global Gateway priorities. **INTPA** explained that funds under the support investment line are not earmarked per a thematic priority, but rather respond to what is judged as a best investment opportunity. The focus will be along the Global Gateway priorities. In

terms of the budget distribution, 40% of the overall RMIP funds will go to west Africa, 39% to east and central Africa, and 21% to southern Africa when implementation is finalised. However, in terms of areas of investments, there is flexibility of allocation, as some areas of investment might best suit a certain region more than the other, and therefore, the money will be distributed depending on the opportunities and effectiveness of the investment. The Global Gateway sectors will be the most prominent sectors, noting that creating one single envelope will allow for flexibility. Regarding the overall MIP funding modalities, grants are the preferred modality, while blending and guarantees will continue to be used to mobilise investments. However, there are countries where a 100% grant scheme will be used if blending is not possible.

With the alignment with Global Gateway, a question was asked about whether there would be an increase in the reliance on the private sector to achieve the MIP's objectives. Participants also asked whether there were any measures in place to guarantee that the private sector implementing the actions is in line with labour rights, human rights, and ESGs. Regarding decent jobs, there was no mention of consultation with trade unions and a participant asked whether this is planned. **INTPA** explained that there will indeed be an alignment with the Global Gateway, and the private sector will also be involved, noting that the Commission will be observing ESG standards and adherence by the private sector. No consultations with trade unions per se took place, but in concrete actions and countries, consultations with CSOs would include all relevant stakeholders, noting that trade unions are considered part of CSOs.

Another participant asked how investments will be allocated to priority areas and how the EU is tracking its spending targets in climate change and in funding spent on ODA. They asked about the role of the inequality marker in the future and if there are any plans to develop an inequality marker target. **INTPA** clarified that the aim is flexibility, noting that there is no earmarked amount for any of the priorities in the investment envelope. It will depend on where investments would be more effective. Climate change and inequality markers are tracked in each individual action, aggregated, and reported on. This is also done concerning ODA eligibility

Another question touched on the support to nutritive value chains and nutritive sensitive agriculture, with plans to support local and central governments in that regard. However, it was unclear how the farmers organisations would be supported and linked up. The Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Program (CAADP) was mentioned, and it was noted that this initiative should be aligned with CAADP. On sustainable growth, decent jobs and hire, a participant asked how the EC will support the advocacy side of the initiative, particularly with regard to agroecology. **INTPA** explained that support to local governments will be done through the regional and continental farmer organisations, confirming that local farmer organisations are at the core of the support. Regarding decent jobs in the agrifood system landscape, there are several actions in that area, mainly the pastoralism and livestock action with a EUR 40 million dedicated programme for the Horn of Africa, and EUR 60 million for western Africa, with the objective of making this sector attractive for youth. Regarding agroecology,

this is part of a research programme, whose aim is to bring together farmer organisations and research centres to promote the agroecology agenda.

A question was raised as to how countries would know if they could participate in actions when countries are not identified in the general actions. **INTPA** explained that there are continental programmes that support AU actions without specific impact on specific states, and in this case, the actions are not allocated to specific countries. Others are continental but develop specific activities for certain countries because they will include pilot activities. It is at the contracting stage and when the programme is developed that the countries would be identified.

Appreciating the focus on the fragile context, a question was raised about the link with the rapid response pillar. **INTPA** explained that the rapid response pillar actions are formulated and implemented by the geographical units and FPI, adding that the SSA MIP complements the country-level MIPs. When actions are designed, internal discussions between units take place with the relevant geographic units, what is the most appropriate pillar to address a certain issue. INTPA checks what the relevant units are planning in a certain setting, noting the EU Delegations also play an important role in that regard, as they are on the receiving end and they are the ones working directly with partners.

One participant observed that the preferred modality of implementation continues to be indirect management, and funding opportunities, as well as the degree of participation in shaping of actions by CSOs, remain unclear. Furthermore, there are 17 TEIs, but they noted that they found difficulties in finding comprehensive information on the TEI tracker (please see [the list of Regional TEIs contact points](#)). **INTPA** explained that in terms of indirect management, there is no overall guidance on how the action will be consulted with CSOs. It will depend on the action itself. In terms of implementation, the action would be entrusted to an organisation concerned, which will consult as per the internal regulations, noting that in many cases, this goes through Team Europe member organisations which act as umbrella organisations that will delegate to CSOs. On TEI trackers, INTPA took note of this.

Breakout Sessions

Four breakout group discussions took place in parallel to discuss the AAP 2025 proposed actions.

Group 1: Human development (including health, gender, culture, youth, and skills)

INTPA provided an overview on the actions³ under this thematic group and opened the floor for discussion and feedback.

Declining funding in health and SRHR

IPPF European Network referred to the lack of prominence of health in AAP 2025, noting that with the election of US President Donald Trump, there will be a funding gap in the health area in general,

³ Action 1: Regional programme for “Social Protection Systems Strengthening”; Action 2: Regional programme for “Study in Africa”; and Action 8: Regional Program for “PALOP-TL regional PROCULTURA II”

and in sexual and reproductive rights, and called for continued focus on health initiatives. They enquired about the link between social protection and SRHR. **Safer World** also made a comment about the health funding, adding that the AAP 2025 allocated only 6% to the health dimension, which falls behind the 20% target, and asked whether the SSA regional MIP is achieving the gender target. **INTPA** explained that it was a coincidence that the AAP 2025 has fewer health actions and is due to the fact that many of the health actions have been concluded in the previous actions plans. **INTPA** also underlined that a high-level policy meeting was held in March 2024 where all Health TEIs were launched. One of the requests was to focus on social protection, and this is what it was proposed now, and health will be addressed in 2026 and 2027 AAPs. There was a budget of EUR 400 million as overall funding for health for the entire MFF period; 75% has been spent so far. The target is calculated on the national and regional funding, and not just the regional budget for SSA, which was also on target for human development overall. EUR 60 million has been allocated to SRHR.

Local actors' engagement

Institut Kôrè des Arts et Métiers (IKAM) asked about how local actors will be identified and engaged with under Action 1 on strengthening social protection systems. **INTPA** explained that it would be relevant to take into account the perspective of local organisations and partners, noting that international partners are linked with CSOs in their regions. There are plans to have a country component, which will facilitate the identification of local partners when countries are chosen. CSOs' role is crucial as policy advocacy actors on social protection initiatives, and as service providers on the local levels in terms of social protection provision. The action will be extended to informal workers and those who work in remote areas, and here is where local CSOs' role will be very important.

Social protection initiatives to prevent family separation

Hope and Homes for Children applauded the inclusion of the social protection measures, and recommended considering the inclusion of social protection initiatives to prevent family separation which affects nearly 650, 000 children in SSA, and increases the vulnerability of these children. They encouraged support initiatives to address the root cause of family separation, including poverty, lack of employment and access to education. They recommended collaboration with the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, which are working on the "general covenant on the rights of children deprived of family care" that will be published in 2025.

Harmonisation, inclusion, and minors

EDUCO pointed to the importance of harmonisation and synergies, noting an increased number of displaced children in border areas, who face difficulties in continued learning because of differences in education systems between countries. A suggestion was also raised to ensure disability inclusion, where **INTPA** stressed that the needs of people with disability will be integrated and reflected in the action documents. **INTPA** is aware of the ILO-UNICEF work and is consulting with ILO on their approach on inclusive social protection systems and is willing to harmonise with existing initiatives. The African Disability Forum is also being consulted as a potential partner.

Raising universities' awareness

IKAM enquired about when the action will be implemented, and universities could be informed about the support they can retrieve from the programme. They also asked whether the four countries (Burkina Faso, Niger, Mali, and Sudan) with a complex political setting were included in this action. **INTPA** explained that the initiative is undertaken under the "Youth Mobility for Africa" flagship, which includes Erasmus, and the Intra-Africa Academic Mobility programme. Erasmus is open to all accredited higher education institutes across Africa, including the four countries, and as such, collaboration with European and African universities remains open. There is an Erasmus group of national focal points who are informing the interested parties on this action, which is envisaged to be kicked off in September 2025. Information will be shared with universities to understand how to access this initiative.

Focus on primary and secondary education

Home Inclusion raised concerns about overlooking primary and secondary education. **INTPA** confirmed that primary and secondary education remain an area of focus, noting that investments in primary and secondary education is done through bilateral programmes at country level, while the regional programme complements what is done on the national level and addresses higher education. The platform for the exchange of education reforms covered under AAP 2024 brings together European education areas with the actors engaged in the African continental strategy for education.

Working with Erasmus+

ESS France asked if such projects are eligible to the programme and if they can work with Erasmus +, and **INTPA** clarified that they can work with Erasmus +.

Group 2: Democracy, Governance, Peace, Migration and forced displacement (including CSO, local government, Illicit financial flows, and maritime security)

INTPA provided an overview of the actions⁴ under this thematic group and opened the floor for discussion.

Supporting the implementation of resolutions at the national level

The Network of the Independent Commission for Human Rights in Northern Africa called for strengthening the regional mechanism of human rights within the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) to support the human rights situation in Sudan and the Sahel. It is important

⁴ Action 3: Continental Program for "Support to the African Governance, Peace and Security Architectures"; Top-up of the Migrant Protection, Return and Reintegration Programme; Action 4: Regional Program for "Ending Violence Against Women and Girls in Africa"; Action 5: Regional Program for "La réintégration des ex-combattants et l'autonomisation des femmes: remparts communautaires à l'extrémisme violent en Afrique" (REMPARTS); Action 6: Regional Program for "Countering illicit trade and Transnational Organized Crime in Africa: A targeted approach to Trafficking Corridors, Falsified Medical Products and Cybercrime («HaltOC »); Action 7: Regional Program for "Zones frontalières pacifiques et résilientes IV"; Action 19: Regional Program for "EU Support to the fight against human trafficking and migrant smuggling in the Horn of Africa Region; Action 20: Regional Program for "Protection, Assistance and Solutions for Forcibly Displaced Populations in Sub-Saharan Africa"; and Top-up of the Flexible Mechanism for Migration and Forced Displacement Programme.

to observe the International Convention on the Protection of Migrants and support the relevant actors in implementing the resolutions of ACHPR. A suggestion by another participant was also made to support the implementation of regional resolutions on a national level, rather than focusing solely on regional level policies. **INTPA** clarified that the Commission is one of the organs of the AGA platform, which has been supported in recent years, and one of the organs which will be included in the future support which will focus on synergies between the Africa Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) and the African Governance Architecture (AGA). Furthermore, there are tools which are available, such as the Gender Scorecards, which should be implemented not only at continental level, but also at the RECs level to encourage member states to implement the legislative commitments.

Climate change as assessment factors of vulnerability

International Land Coalition asked about fragility, and whether this was viewed from the perspective of conflicts and volatile situations, or integrated aspects of climate induced migration and displacement. **INTPA** explained that peace and security were factored in, with a focus on the borderland's areas, taking into account the vulnerability in relation to the impact of conflict towards populations in border areas. However, climate change was also considered, as in AAP 2024, a programme was designed to specifically target the issue of climate change, environmental degradation and forced displacement in geographical areas identified as being particularly vulnerable.

Gaps in funding in Central Sahel

Norwegian Refugee Council raised a question on the Central Sahel envelope under action 20, which seems small compared to the needs and ongoing dynamics. They noted a huge gap in terms of structural needs, which are being rendered humanitarian needs due to the suspension of aid and asked if there was ongoing discussion to increase such funding for these countries. They also asked whether there was an intention to implement through a multi-country call for proposal to support multi-country operations, or whether the approach will be country based. **INTPA** clarified that indeed, the funds do not cover all needs, but there are other envelopes/actions that can provide support to these regions. The focus is on responding to displacement in urban areas, supporting populations living in cities which are experiencing fast and rapid urbanisation as well as protracted displacement, as well as lack of services, lack of opportunities, environmental degradation. Within this action, the aim is to tackle those issues with delegations and discuss on how to best go about the implementation setup.

Cooperation with the African Union Continental Operations Centre for combatting irregular migration

A recommendation was made to engage with the AU Continental Operation Centre for Combating Irregular Migration, Trafficking Person and Smuggling of Migrants, as well as to better include the issue of unaccompanied and separated migrant children.

Group 3: Green transition (including climate change, agri-food, pastoralism, and ocean protection)

Following INTPA's overview of the actions⁵ under this group, the floor exchanged views and suggestions.

Following an intersectoral approach and creating synergies

A suggestion was raised to have a programme centred on the intersection of energy, climate, change and natural resources governance with a focus on transboundary landscape. **WWF** also asked about the plans to ensure that the cross-cutting issues and transboundary issues are addressed. They added that there is a very clear nexus between climate change, energy and natural resource management and governance. They also suggested considering value chain optimization where it is possible to integrate a comprehensive value chain approach addressing all stages of fuel production to end user adoption. They also suggested expanding the programmes to include synergies with agriculture, forestry, and waste management to improve our energy use, climate change mitigation adaptation, and environmental conservation. **INTPA** commented that there are strategic corridors that cover energy with specific attention to climate change and natural resources.

Food security concerns in Sub Saharan Africa, and excessive focus on the EU

Oxfam questioned the seemingly excessive focus on the EU as a market in the Continental Program for "Fit for Market for Africa 2030", asking about the relevance of this approach under this action, specifically in addressing food security concerns in Sub Saharan Africa. They also enquired about how strengthening local food security would be achieved, whilst taking into account such over-emphasis on EU's role as a market for African countries. **INTPA** clarified that the ability to export is one of the objectives, but the main beneficiaries are the Africans themselves, because over 90% of business and exchanges happen among regions in Africa; what is exported to Europe is very limited. The aim is to help countries and the different stakeholders increase businesses, standards, and capacity to export.

Highlighting climate considerations and human rights on food security

A comment was raised on the Continental Program for "Fit for Market for Africa 2030" and its contribution of up to 40% to the climate target; however, there is no mention of climate change in the action. Similarly, it is unclear how the action is contributing to fight against inequality and supporting human rights, even though these two aspects are also highlighted in the markers section. **INTPA** took note of the suggestion regarding climate change and noted that inequalities and human rights are cross cutting issues in actions.

⁵ Action 9: Regional Program for "Supporting Clean Cooking Solutions in Southern Africa"; Action 10: Regional Program for "Supporting Clean Cooking Solutions in Central and East Africa"; Action 11: Continental Program for "Fit for Market for Africa 2030"; Action 12: Regional Program for "Lake Chad Basin Transboundary Water Resources Management"; Action 13: Regional Program for "Transboundary Water Management in Southern Africa"; Action 14: Regional Program for "Projet de Gestion intégrée des Ressources en Eau de Surface et Souterraines dans les bassins du fleuve Sénégal et de l'aquifère Sénégal-Mauritanien ('PROGRESS')"

Focus on sanitation

In response to a suggestion to focus more on sanitation, **INTPA** confirmed that the programmes being developed are mostly for water management, which do not per se include water and sanitation, but there are actions in water and sanitation, mostly through blending.

Involvement of CSOs

Alliance of Food Sovereignty in Africa noted that the biggest challenge has been the top-down approach which leaves out a number of actors (local CSOs) and the inability to see the impact now on the issue of clean energy. It is important to ensure that funding reaches grassroots small scale food producers, who sometimes rely on firewood and charcoal. Separately, a suggestion was made to create groups to involve CSOs in the identification and formulation missions around the different actions, when the EU is consulting with the different levels, such as through a mailing list. **INTPA** clarified that one of the main objectives of the FO4A is to strengthen farmers organisations to (a) advocating for smallholders rights / improve access to services and (b) be present at the negotiation table with the decision makers. The bottom-up approach is a pillar of this programme.

Efficient water use in the horticulture sector

WWF noted that in Africa, much of the horticultural production is taking place in protected areas, endangering land meant for conservation. They recommended that initiatives not overlook issues of efficient water use in the horticulture sector, reduce dangerous agrochemicals in these areas, and ensure that farms setting up close to the conservation areas have practices that conserve biodiversity. **INTPA** referred to the NaturAfrica programme, whose objective is to work on conservation and on livelihoods for the population that lives around the conservation areas, which are frequently and mainly based on agriculture.

Indigenous crops

World Vision recommended explicitly mentioning the focus on indigenous crops, especially since they are climate resilient, noting however that they have little space in the market. They called for supporting agricultural value chains with indigenous crops. **INTPA** referred to the Desira+ programme, that is focused on promoting the agroecological approach. Indigenous crops are included in this action.

Climate change adaptation and pests

Entropic Innovation raised concerns regarding climate change adaptation with respect to crops, adding that they have serious issues with pests. They enquired about policies to empower local research institutions to identify alternative measures in responding to pest population, including biological controllers and alternative measures. **INTPA** clarified that there are several actions being funded that contribute to the issue. For instance, there is an action (Desira +) focused on promoting the agroecological transformation and reduce external inputs.

Engaging youth

Entropic Innovation also raised concerns about engaging youth, especially in the research line. **INTPA** clarified that to attract youth, agriculture must be attractive, and the revenue must be decent. Creating welfare and connection to technology are also necessary. This is also something that is going to be pushed forward in the Fit for Market action.

Group 4: Sustainable growth and decent jobs, Digital, STI (including trade, responsible business conduct and product safety)

Following INTPA's overview of the actions⁶ under this group, the floor exchanged views and suggestions.

Continental versus regional focus

Deutsche Welthungerhilfe asked a question regarding the merits of intercontinental versus regional approaches **INTPA** explained that the approach of the African Union and countries is one that supports continental integration, and therefore, the Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA) should be done based on the building blocks of the regional economic communities. Furthermore, different trade agreements will coexist, and in that case, even if the CFTA completely materialises and an agreement is applicable in any case, there will still be regional agreements happening at the same time.

A comment was raised on whether there was a contradiction between the alignment with the Global Gateway and the approach of the Global Gateway, which is very much country focused and not continent focused, and the need to develop Africa as a continent, and therefore to achieve the CFTA. They added that there is an imbalance and a disparity between what an EU country can offer and what a lesser developed country from Africa could. **INTPA** clarified that Global Gateway has a strong focus on investment. In terms of economic integration, the global gateway approach is followed, noting that investments have the aim of integrating countries in some sectors, like energy, transport and digital, but even in the water sector. This approach to focus on investments and infrastructure projects will have a regional impact. It is true that in this phase the Global Gateway has put a certain attention to the most developed countries in Africa, but the aim is to have economic integration via the trickle-down development cooperation concept, where one country's progress positively impacts other countries in the region.

Competitiveness of the African farmer in light of free trade and EU standards

A comment was raised on how to secure sustainable trade, protect farmers, and accompany SMEs in Africa to cope with the environmentally friendly policies that are pushing African producers away from using chemicals. Owing to free trade, African farmers who have not produced their products with

⁶ Action 15: Regional Program for "Africa-EU Space partnership programme"; Action 16: Regional Program for "Africa Research Initiative for Scientific Excellence ARISE 2.0"; Action 17: Regional Program "Enablers to Sustainable Trade and Investment in Africa"; Action 18: Regional Programme for "Responsible Business Conduct Africa"

chemicals are faced with cheaper products from other parts of the world which have been produced using chemicals. **INTPA** explained that they are aware of this situation in Africa, which is different from country to country, from sector to sector. The action presented supports SMEs to access international markets, notably European markets. The sectors selected are already well developed, and as such, SMEs have the technical capacity to reach the market.

Trade union involvement

As for national level trade union involvement, **INTPA** explained that this would depend on the reality on the ground. For example, in a country like Zambia, which is quite advanced on this topic, the involvement of the trade unions will be even bigger than in a country like DRC.

Expanding the group with additional stakeholders

A proposal was made to expand the group and invite additional stakeholders in this part of the meeting to make it more effective.

Capacity building on Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CS3D)

ITUC noted that they believe that the CS3D will be relevant across the globe and encouraged the involvement of all stakeholders, inquiring whether there will be any capacity building activities around this area. A question was also raised regarding how peer to peer learning across Africa is facilitated. **INTPA** confirmed that the action under “Responsible Business Conduct (RBC) Africa” will have a capacity building component, and that peer-to-peer learning will be facilitated, especially in light of the good exchanges on the design of the programme. However, it was noted that the implementation of RBC will be a pilot phase, and it is yet to be seen how CS3D will impact businesses, highlighting the importance of lessons learned in that regard.

Conclusions and closing remarks

Following the breakout sessions, the participants shared the main conclusions, recommendations, views, and concerns of their respective group discussions. **Daniela Rofi** thanked everyone for their participation, and stressed the importance of such exchanges, which allow follow up on key issues. **Three general points were highlighted:** the EU observes **human rights and responsible business conduct** when engaging with partner countries and supports the local private sector to become more aligned with international standards, and with the relevant EU human rights and green legislation. As such, actions aim to improve the human rights and responsible business profile of the African private sector. The second point was on the top-down and bottom-up approaches of regional projects, noting that actions are steered by EU delegations, who **involve local actors in implementation**. Third, regarding the **adoption of AAP 2025**, the NDICI committee will meet in April/May 2025, and then the final adoption by the Commission is envisaged before the summer break - June/July 2025.