



Communiqué of the 8th meeting of the
Joint Africa-EU Task Force,
(17-18 March 2009, Brussels)



1. The **eighth meeting of the Joint Africa-EU Task Force** was held on 17-18 March 2009, in Brussels, Belgium. The opening plenary session was co-chaired by Mr. Stefano Manservigi, Director General for Development and Relations with the States of Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific in the European Commission and Amb. John K. Shinkaiyé, Chief of Staff in the Bureau of the AUC Chairperson, in the presence of representatives of the Czech and Libyan Presidencies, co-Chairs of the Joint Expert Groups (JEGs), the European and Pan-African Parliaments and members of civil society from both continents. The closing plenary session was co-chaired by Amb. Shinkaiyé and Director K. Rudischhauser. The deliberations were conducted in two plenary sessions, and in dedicated workshops on the institutional and administrative cooperation between the two Commissions and on the implementation of the Joint Strategy and its first Action Plan.
2. The meeting had the following **main objectives**: a) to enhance cooperation, coordination and synergies amongst the 'key actors' of the Joint Strategy and to effectively address cross-cutting issues; b) to enhance the institutional cooperation and capacity building between the European and AU Commissions; c) to prepare the forthcoming Ministerial Troika discussion on 28 April 2009 regarding the Joint Strategy, and d) to accelerate the delivery of concrete results in 2009, which will mark the mid-point of the Action Plan.
3. With regard to the broad field of **institutional and administrative cooperation between the two Commissions**, the meeting noted steadily growing achievements in areas such as training and staff exchanges, the efficient management of financial and human resources, auditing and budgeting, effective internal and external communication, information technology, conference management, and translation and documentation services. Both Commissions agreed to consolidate the **Action Plan** incorporating all aspects of administrative cooperation, and to put in place the necessary conditions to further enhance their partnership in these areas.

4. In considering **cross-cutting issues related to the Joint Strategy** and the first Action Plan, the meeting underlined the **need for speedy overall progress**, for tangible results in the 8 thematic partnerships, and for more efficient cooperation on concrete activities. The meeting viewed the Joint Strategy as an ambitious policy framework and a platform for enhanced political dialogue that needs to be better exploited by all stakeholders. In this context, the **inclusive nature** of the Joint Strategy and the **need for broader ownership** were emphasized. The meeting recognized the contributions of the two Commissions and co-Chairs of the JEGs as key actors of the Joint Strategy, and invited Regional Economic Communities (RECs), international partners, as well as the private sector and local authorities, to step up their involvement with a view to securing a broad geographical participation. The meeting recommended that JEG co-Chairs and other members actively reach out to those actors.
5. The meeting recalled the "people-centred" nature of the Africa-EU Strategic Partnership and welcomed the willingness of the **European Parliament (EP), the Pan-African Parliament (PAP) and civil society** to actively participate in the implementation of the Lisbon agenda. The meeting welcomed the recent joint EP-PAP proposal and recommended its endorsement by the next Ministerial Troika as a basis for further work. The meeting also welcomed progress made in the participation of African and European civil society in the eight thematic partnerships, and recommended their speedy involvement in the work of the JEGs in line with the institutional architecture agreed in Lisbon.
6. The meeting received reports that reflect the **substantial achievements**, challenges and the way forward in the 8 thematic partnerships of the first Action Plan. Detailed information is available in the report of the 8th Joint Task Force that will be published on the Partnership website (www.africa-eu-partnership.org).
7. In the area of **communication, outreach and visibility**, the meeting welcomed the launching of the **joint website** on the Africa-EU Partnership and the progress made in the development of the **intranet section**. The meeting stressed the need for the timely publication of relevant documents on the dedicated website to promote better information, as well as broader ownership and participation. The meeting also underlined the necessity for continuous work between physical JEG meetings, and invited all JEGs to make better use of the Intranet-Workspace foreseen to this end.
8. The **preparation of the Ministerial Troika** on 28 April 2009 was also discussed. In this regard, the meeting recalled the political requirement for the expeditious delivery of clear

and concise implementation roadmaps for the 8 thematic partnerships, identifying concrete results, timetables, and actors. These roadmaps will be drafted under the leadership of JEG Co-Chairs, and will be submitted as living documents for endorsement by the Ministerial Troika.

9. The meeting noted the AU request to hold an early **workshop on the financing aspects** of the Joint Strategy and Action Plan to which the EU side agreed in principle. The meeting underlined that further progress requires the sustained joint commitment to deliver the necessary policy and operational inputs and to secure the appropriate funding. In this context, the meeting stressed that the agreed roadmaps will facilitate an informed discussion on possible resource shortfalls, including finance. The meeting recommended that the forthcoming Ministerial Troika endorses the holding of this workshop in late May 2009, and agreed that the two Commissions should start the necessary preparations.
10. Issues discussed in a **bilateral meeting between DG Manservisi and Ambassador Shinkaiyé** included the implementation of the Joint Strategy, the workshop on the financing of the Joint Strategy, the need to increase the ownership of African and EU Member States and RECs in the implementation process, Universal Jurisdiction and the financing of the Habré trial, the up-coming midterm review of the €55M support programme to the AU institutions, and the up-coming G-20 meeting on 2 April 2009 in London.
11. In conclusion, the meeting welcomed the **new format of this Joint Africa-EU Task Force**, and underlined the need to establish the Joint Task Force as an effective coordination body for the Strategic Partnership, bringing together the key actors of the Action Plan with a view to deepening cooperation, identifying synergies, tackling new challenges and opportunities, and effectively addressing cross-cutting issues.