

The future of the Cotonou agreement

The future of Development Cooperation and Global Challenges

The recent adoption of a series of important international frameworks (such as the UN Conventions, the Agenda 2030 and its Sustainable development Goals, the Paris Agreement on Climate change, the Addis Ababa Agenda for action, the Sendai framework and the UN urban agenda) have the potential of putting us on a path of truly inclusive and sustainable development for the benefit of people, especially the poorest and most at risk, and the planet. The future ACP-EU agreement should be based on such international frameworks and commitments, and contribute to their implementation at all levels. So far, the development cooperation pillar of the Cotonou agreement, supported by the largest EU funding instrument (the European Development Fund), has achieved important results in lifting countries out of poverty. However, the universal and transformational nature of Agenda 2030 - which goes beyond addressing poverty reduction will require a shift away from the north-south nature of the current development cooperation and provision of aid towards integrated, inclusive and long-term sustainable solutions to address today's interlinked challenges.

Looking forward, the future Cotonou agreement must be guided by the will to effectively implement and fully achieve the SDGs to eradicate poverty and reduce all kind of inequalities (economic, politic, gender etc). In particular, the key principles that underpin Agenda 2030 implementation, such as leave no-one behind, respect for planetary boundaries, the recognition of interlinkages and indivisibility of goals and the need to integrate all three dimensions of sustainable development plus good governance in all priorities and sectors should be reinforced and taken as guiding principles of EU's relations with partner ACP countries. Special attention should be given to address EU's own responsibility and commitment in implementing SDGs internationally and internally, looking at those areas (such as trade, agriculture, energy and EU consumption) that can have potential negative impact on the ACP partners efforts towards sustainable development.

Furthermore, the next ACP-EU framework should focus particularly on human rights, including equal and attainable access to social rights and in particular to health and education, but should also be democratically based on the rule of law and transparency, integrating accountable governance. The agreement has to make clear references to the rights and the protection of groups in vulnerable situations such as children, women, persons with disabilities, migrants, older people, and indigenous peoples. To ensure that the leave no one behind principle is implemented, it is important that the monitoring framework includes mechanisms to identify the most at risk and remote populations and to support them. Given the inextricable links between data, advocacy, and strategic action, the new ACP-EU Framework must ensure that we are collecting and monitoring reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, race, age, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts. Issues such as youth, gender equality and disability have to be included as cross cutting issues.

There are many specific areas that need to be improved in regard to development cooperation and global challenges. Some of which are elaborated briefly below such as climate change, food security, health and migration.

Climate change and environmental protection should be identified as main priorities to address in the context of a future partnership with ACP partners, both as challenges to address with targeted action, as well as issues to effectively integrate and mainstream throughout future framework, specifically within the regional pillars. The protection of biodiversity and ecosystems and the sustainable management of natural resources, while mitigating and adapting to the effects of climate change, are instrumental in promoting human well-being, addressing inequalities, achieving sustainable and inclusive development and building resilient and peaceful societies and should underpin all focal areas of cooperation in the future. Specifically on Climate change, the revision of the Cotonou agreement should be used as an opportunity to translate the Paris commitments into practice. The current focus of the EU's communication on addressing climate change mitigation should be balanced by further support to climate adaptation efforts, loss and damage and reiterate climate finance commitments, as many of the ACP countries, in particular Small Islands Developing States and Least Developed Countries are the ones most exposed to the impacts of climate change while having contributed the least in terms of greenhouse gas emissions.

With the demographic tendency in ACP countries and climate change impacts in certain regions, nutrition and food security will be important issues. If the EU is to meet its commitment of reducing stunting by at least 7 million children by 2025, the next framework needs to include robust political and financial support for food and nutrition security interventions. In particular, the framework should underline the importance of ensuring a nutrition-sensitive programming approach across different development sectors (e.g. health, agriculture, education) to ensure positive nutrition outcomes from different and multi-sectorial interventions. Investing in long term nutrition interventions is not only the answer to the global health crisis of undernutrition, but it also represents a smart and cost-effective investment. According to a report from UNICEF¹, every 1\$ invested in nutrition generates a return of at least 16\$. The next EU-ACP framework should reflect this important priority. More support is also needed to defend the right to food, the rights of small farmers. Support for small farmers and family farming needs to be strengthened and they should be included in the research and policy debates in order to support a sustainable agriculture in ACP countries at social, economic and environmental level. In this context agroecology presents a lot of potential.

In the next EU-ACP agreement the EU should prioritize human development and policies that are conducive to Universal Health Coverage (UHC) or to existing regional commitments, such as the Abuja declaration as part of its commitment to implement Agenda 2030. In that framework, the EU should provide specific financial and technical support for the progressive realisation of UHC, in particular for initiatives focused on eliminating impoverishing and obstructive out-of-pocket payment as well as on reaching and expanding

¹ UNICEF, *Nutrition – the case for support*. (2015).

www.unicef.org/publicpartnerships/files/NutritionTheCaseForSupport.pdf

coverage of the poorest and most vulnerable portions of the population. And, whilst the focus of EU assistance on LDCs and fragile states is important, specific financial and political support should also be allocated for sustainable transitions in MICs, in order to ensure that the sustainability of basic social services is preserved.

The next EU-ACP agreement should reflect the EU's commitment to spend 20% of its development and cooperation budget on human development and social inclusion, including health, as reaffirmed in the new European Consensus on Development. EU development aid should be used as catalyzer of domestic resources for health, to support partners in their endeavours to strengthen national policies for the sustainable provision of essential services.

The EU should also ensure that no programme whose original intention is to invest in human development is diverted to other sectors and that new instruments involving the private sector do not undermine the provision of basic social services.

Migration is a hot topic for the EU. It is crucial that the new partnership safeguards a positive narrative on migration and any mention of migration and asylum seekers included in the new agreement makes reference to their human rights first and foremost. The fight against human trafficking should be highlighted and women and unaccompanied minors must be given particular attention. The agreement has to recognize and promote international protection. More options for regular channels for migration should be provided. A common approach on migration should be pursued which does not entail the imposition of solely EU interests. Human Rights, dignity and the development objectives need to be at the core of any agreement on migration, rather than migration management and border control objectives.

Finally, We need to make sure that Policy Coherence for sustainable Development (PCsD) becomes a reality and a key element of the future EU-ACP relationship. The commitment to PCsD should be strengthened in practice with appropriate actions and monitoring frameworks to make sure that all EU internal and external policies reinforce sustainable development globally and are not contradicting each others or undermining ACP countries' efforts towards inclusive fairer societies. Policy areas for which a PCsD approach is particularly crucial in the context of future EU-ACP relations include, but are not limited to, trade, energy, agriculture and fisheries, and security and migration. The new framework should be drawn up in alignment with existing EU policies and legislation, and should include detail on how the implementation of PCsD is to be monitored.



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