



AFRIQUE - EUROPE CITIZEN FORUM

ABIDJAN, 26 to 28 November 2017

DECLARATION

On the margins of the 5th European Union African Union Summit to be held from 29 to 30 November 2017 in Abidjan, civil society organizations, labour and social movements from 16 African countries and 7 European countries met in Abidjan from 26 to 28 November 2017, to analyse relations between the states of Africa and Europe and to propose a model of partnership respectful of the intrinsic values of the two peoples taking into account the deep aspirations of the populations.

At present, relations between Europe and Africa are marked by economic and political dependence, defined unilaterally by European policies dominated by an exacerbated capitalism characterized by geostrategic interests and the unbridled search for profit to the detriment of the aspirations of African Communities' for peace, democracy and development. They result in a wild debt aggravated by monetary dependence, compromising any sovereign investment for future generations.

The proposed Economic Partnership Agreements will not change things in the sense of interests of the African peoples. The public-private partnership model, on which the European Union's External Investment Plan (EIP) is based, has already shown its limits in other similar programs under way and has promoted grabbing of natural resources including land, water, seeds, fishing ... instead of a shared prosperity, we should rather expect a weakening of family farms and more precariousness of local communities in general.

Under the pretext of a policy of managing migratory flows and the fight against terrorism, European governments are ignoring the repressions that some African regimes exert on their own peoples who only aspire to a democratic alternation and more respect for human rights. Due to inadequate education systems, which are not corresponding to the development needs of African societies and their economies and because of the exogenous policies imposed on African states, youth in Africa today suffers from endemic unemployment and lack of orientation. This situation pushes the continent and its youth to try extreme adventures including migration, terrorism with their disastrous consequences.

Faced with this situation of total despair, we are witnessing movements of young people everywhere in Africa claiming for a development with a human face, more democracy and a better management of public affairs. Instead of adequate responses to these just and legitimate demands, governments in most cases oppose and react with oppression. It's the case of violent repressions recently recorded in Togo, Chad, and the Democratic Republic of Congo and in Burundi.

Here in Abidjan itself, the youth was denied the right to demonstrate to express their distress on the trafficking of migrants in Libya.

During the three (3) days of work, in a spirit of conviviality and sharing, the actors of the civil society, the labour union world, youth movements, women, peasants, traders, transporters, etc., debated perspectives on different themes addressed through three major axes (political, economic and socio-cultural) including each of the sub-themes. These are: Democratic alternation, social protection, Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs), monetary dependence, indebtedness, climate change, agriculture, food sovereignty, natural resource governance, land grabbing and migration. In view of all the above, the Africa - Europe Citizens Forum makes the following recommendations:

1- On governance and democratic alternation

To governments:

- Strengthen the independence of the judiciary in African states;
- Adapt the African constitutions of the States according to the socio-cultural and spiritual realities of Africa;
- Guarantee the complete independence of national and regional institutions in terms of their modes of appointment, operation and financial autonomy;
- Strengthen the republican vocation of our defence and security forces;

To civil society organizations:

- Strengthen alliances between European and African Civil Societies to influence decision-making between Europe and Africa;
- Promote involvement and citizen participation in democratic governance processes in all African States

2- On social protection

To governments:

- To reflect on the development of Africa differently by taking inspiration from our socio-cultural values;

To civil society organizations:

- To meet the African parliamentarians for a better budgetary management of the social protection by the States for the benefit of the whole population;
- To raise awareness among populations of African States to contribute to the improvement of social protection by paying their taxes;

3- Economic Partnership Agreements

- Inform and raise public awareness in Africa and at the international level on the harmful effects of the EPAs on trade, regional integration, industrialization, human and trade union rights;

- Carry out impact studies of EPAs at the level of regional economic communities with the effective and adequate involvement of civil society integrating trade unions and social movements.

4- On Food Sovereignty, Land Grabbing and Governance of Natural Resources

To the European Union:

- Effective participation of civil society and local grassroots communities in the process of negotiating, designing and executing investment plans;
- Taking into account lessons learned on previous public-private initiatives (AGRA - Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa, New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition, etc.), in particular their impact on national legal frameworks with the liberalization of agricultural resources (land, water and seeds) and on local food system;
- Integrate concrete indicators on food sovereignty and nutrition;
- Set up a joint system for monitoring commitments;
- Develop a strategy that can lead people to consume local products.

To governments:

- Create domestic wealth by consuming local products,
- Promote rapprochements between the peoples of the South and the North;
- Take into account customary rights and women's access to land in the adoption of land laws,
- Define a vision and clear policies on agriculture, the land that best protects the rights of small farmers (access to land, water and farmer's seeds and fish resources),
- Include farmers' organizations in decision-making bodies on policy orientations and measures,
- Set clear objectives for Public-Private-Partnerships in terms of job creation and other benefits for local economies, conduct thorough impact assessments and cost-benefit analysis on all incentives provided to private investors concerning taxes, tariffs and customs.
- Promote peasant agro ecology as a model of sustainable agriculture.

To civil society organizations:

- Strengthen advocacy for the participation of social movements in the struggles for the democratization of Africa;
- Do not enter enslaving credit-schemes.

5- On monetary dependence and tax evasion

- Combat illicit financial flows and mobilize internal resources.
- Develop and have the courage to leave the imposed system.
- Create an African common currency

6- On climate change

- Ensure sustainable financing of climate change adaptation and mitigation measures for the benefit of populations affected by drought, sea-level rise and natural disasters;
- Facilitate the transfer of clean technologies to Africa without creating new debt for African countries;
- Impose on companies operating in Africa, particularly in the exploitation of natural resources, standards of environmental protection and social responsibility towards the communities living near the exploitation zones;
- Render justice to African communities victims of degradation of their environment following the exploitation of natural resources in their environment;

7- On migration

- Put an end to the short-term visa system that prevents the mobility of African citizens to Europe and causes human tragedies in the deserts and the seas.
- Adopt the protocol of free movement of Africans on their continent and abolish borders inherited from colonization;
- Fight immigration agents causing harassment upon harassment at the borders of citizens and especially cross-border traders;
- Redirect development funds used to strengthen border controls to real social projects that benefit the well-being of people.

Abidjan, November 28, 2017

Signatories:

- Global Convergence for Land, water and Seed Struggles – West Africa (CGLTE OA)
- The Ivoirien Civil Society Convention (CSCI) – Convention de la Société Civile Ivoirienne CSCI
- Citizen Summit (Ivorian CSO Platform)
- No Vox Africa