



solidar

Setting the Right Priorities
for a Sustainable EU Africa Partnership
JOINT DECLARATION



Hosted by SOLIDAR members FIC and SOLIDARITÉ Laïque, acting as SOLIDAR sub-regional coordinators in Western, Eastern and Southern Africa, the SOLIDAR Africa Regional Exchange took place from October 30th to November 16th 2020: **57 participants representing trade unions and NGOs from 22 African and European countries** met online to discuss about the main challenges to the realisation of economic and social rights in Africa¹, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as to identify existing good practises in this regards and to develop ideas for joint advocacy and campaign actions at country, regional and global levels.

With an estimated two million people infected by COVID-19 and about 50.000 deaths, the pandemic has not only affected people's life and health: over the last months, participants have witnessed how the pandemic has been used - both in Africa and in Europe - to reduce the space for independent NGOs and Trade Unions to act, and to put into question labour rights. At the same time, participants have also raised concerns about the risk of a new push for austerity policies that will affect the most vulnerable groups of the population such as migrant people and women and that will further destabilise countries. At the same time, COVID-19 pandemic has shown that we cannot face crises without solidarity to deal with the economic, social, ecological and climate crisis we will be confronted with in the next years.

In this context, and with the EU Africa Summit expected to define the partnership priorities between the European Union and the African countries, the ongoing programming for the 2021-2027 period, **participants have identified the following areas for future cooperation and political dialogue with both European and African countries: Decent Work and Social Protection for All; Human Right to Quality Health and Education; Enabling Environment for NGOs and Trade Unions; Peace Promotion through dialogue and cross-borders cooperation; Legal Pathways to Migration.**

JOINT FRAMEWORK

The participants were brought together by a shared understanding of the need to build alliances across different actors, trade unions and NGOs for the full realisation of Economic and Social Rights, the respect of Human Rights obligations including ILO Standards, and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.



Author: jacquedoughlas, Pixabay.com

¹ For further information, SOLIDAR members developed Economic and Social Rights Monitoring Reports in [Senegal](#), [Niger](#) and [Mozambique](#).

1. DECENT WORK AND SOCIAL PROTECTION FOR ALL

During the last year, the African labour market has seen a reinforced trend to jobs' precarisation, subcontracting and outsourcing jobs without any decency in working criteria. In this context,

1. Governments, in consultation with social partners and the civil society, should **mobilise resources in order to boost the economy and target projects that create decent jobs in an economically, environmentally and socially sustainable way.**

2. A renewed partnership between Europe and Africa must find itself solidly on Decent Work. Creating more and better jobs, even more than before in light of the very harsh consequences of the pandemic is of utmost importance. Attention should be given to improving working conditions through social dialogue and sustainable cooperation among social partners, and ensure that the local labour legislation increasingly promote decent work to **contrast emerging employment trends such as casualization, outsourcing, labour agencies' involvement.**

3. The European Union is engaging in putting forward a legally binding instrument aimed at increasing statutory **minimum wages and collective bargaining systems.** This should become a shared objective of the EU – AU cooperation. Salaries below the poverty line should be banned. We shall move towards the conception of a living wage that is agreed by representative and autonomous social partners through strong collective bargaining systems dealing with wages as well as rights for workers, especially the most vulnerable ones.

4. Government and social partners should **prioritize interventions aimed at the people worst hit by the crises of the last 2 decades:** the young, women, migrants and ethnic minorities, people with disabilities and lgbtqi+ should be at the core of specific actions for entering the labour market.

5. Social protection for all is fundamental to make sure that nobody is left behind: **EU and African Governments should support the set up of a Global Fund for Social Protection.**

6. Gender disparities and the gender pay gap should be dealt with and dismantled at all levels. Better and more participation of women in the labour market is not only an issue of equality, but of democracy.

7. The impact of trade agreements on labour has been proved to be dramatic: **all trade agreements should be founded on a solid social chapter, including the obligation for all companies to respect labour rights and provide decent wages.**

8. Tax avoidance and evasion, illegal financial flaws, corruption and other unlawful practices strongly harm workers and their families: **a renewed partnership should establish actions to fight against these phenomena at all levels.**



2. HUMAN RIGHT TO QUALITY HEALTH AND EDUCATION

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



4 QUALITY EDUCATION



The COVID 19 crisis has highlighted more than ever the structural problems facing many African countries, especially those related to access for all to quality basic services such as education and health. The challenges in these 2 sectors are enormous when we observe everywhere in Africa: the poor quality of infrastructures, the lack of funding or corruption, inadequate and not very inclusive policies. The socio-economic realities specific to Africa make it necessary to take into consideration the youth of its population and the importance of the informal sector which characterizes its economy. **The current policies of promotion of the private sector and of the public-private partnership encouraged by the European Union have a negative impact on the universal right to education and to health.** The current context reminds us of the crucial role that public institutions must play in providing quality health care and education. We therefore propose that:

1. The European Union, EU Member States and African countries must **promote a comprehensive and human rights-based approach to education and health.** This should induce, among other things, the promotion of universal access to health care and quality education; measures based on the needs of communities; inclusive processes; capacity building of the informal sector; appropriate training and recruitment of personnel in the health and education sector; educational content adapted to country needs and the promotion of lifelong education and training as well as technical and vocational training; etc.

2. The European Union, EU Member States and African countries must **involve all stakeholders in decision-making and governance related to education and health.** This means including local and civil society actors, communities, unions and local authorities. Given the socio-economic and demographic realities, representatives of youth and the informal sector must also take part in these processes. This involves **encouraging and creating spaces for dialogue** with these actors at regional, national and local levels in order to promote and popularize existing initiatives and to find innovative solutions to challenges, including current technological challenges.



3. The European Union, EU Member States, African governments and all relevant institutions must **build an alternative option to public-private partnership** and take into consideration the negative impact that privatization or commodification may have on respect for the right to education and health. Public services must be personalized and must be based on the culture, history and experience of these countries.

4. Efforts should be made to build **alliances with trade unions and human rights organizations to promote the right to access to quality health care and education.**

5. All governments must regard **peace as a crucial element in respecting and promoting the right to quality education and health care.** EU leaders and African governments should address peace alongside the right to education and health in Africa and West Africa in particular. Due to wars, conflicts or terrorism, schools are forced to close. Without peace, education cannot be provided or guaranteed and access to health care remains weak.

6. African governments must recommit to providing quality, affordable and accessible health care and education. At the same time, the EU-Africa partnership should focus on **rebuilding state institutions, ensuring democracy and fighting corruption.**



3. PROMOTING PEACE

Peace consolidation will only be achieved through fairer economic relations between Europe and Africa and, in particular, a transformation of the development model based on the exploitation of African natural resources. Currently, the main source of conflict is directly linked to the control of natural resources, to illicit financial flows and corruption, favoring accumulation of power and wealth in the hands of an elite. This leads to an economic situation marked by inequality, violence and radicalisation. The COVID pandemic has deteriorated access to health and education, which in isolated areas can help building peace by supporting the most discriminated groups of the population such as women and children which are the main victims of conflict, facing sexual violence, forced marriage and female genital mutilations (FGM).

Access to formal jobs, as well as to social protection, is a precondition to ensuring the wellbeing of people. However, in a context of conflict and war, there is no possibility of promoting decent work: **there are no decent jobs in a war country**. Civil society and trade unions play a key role for the promotion of peace, for example through trade unions cross borders cooperation aiming at protecting human rights to promote peace.

With this in mind:

- 1. The EU-Africa partnership must promote a fairer relationship with Africa**, challenging the current paradigm of cooperation based on the exploitation of the African natural resources. This also includes European companies' business model, which should be based on equity, decent work and the respect of environmental rights.
- 2. The EU-Africa partnership should support the capacity of local and national trade unions and NGOs** as one of the key actors for the promotion and protection of human rights. In addition, the partnership should include the close monitoring of the **implementation of the ILO 2017 Recommendation on Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience²**.
- 3. The EU and Africa governments should elaborate a joint action plan to promote Human Rights in the region.** This should include specific measures for the most discriminated population such as women, children, migrants, LGBTI community or persons with disabilities.
- 4. The EU and Africa governments should invest in the promotion of peace education and culture**, eradicating hate speech and supporting community leaders that defend Human Rights.

² https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:R205

4. ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR TRADE UNIONS AND NGOS

The pandemic has had a substantial impact on **the work of civil society organisations, which have seen their ability to operate and carry out advocacy hampered by restrictions on freedom of assembly imposed by governments to limit the spread of the virus.**

The pandemic has also increased the pressure on Human Rights Defenders, who normally do not count on specific legislation to protect their advocacy actions and who have been more exposed to violence and criminalisation during the COVID crisis. In this context,

1. The EU should reinforce its collaboration with civil society in partner countries through its Delegations, improving the dissemination of information as well as increasing the consultation opportunities on EU processes and programmes. This includes the elaboration, implementation and monitoring of relevant processes.

2. The EU and African governments should invest in enabling space for civil society, ensuring proper allocation of fundings to civil society. Funding mechanisms should be easier to access for local organisations with limited capacities.

3. The EU and African governments should provide training and building the capacities of local organisations, in particular those advocating for the rights of the most vulnerable population such as women, children, migrants, LGBTI community or persons with disabilities. These trainings should focus on advocacy and budget and administrative procedures.

4. The EU-Africa partnership must include open and accessible mechanisms to consult civil society. In this sense, Civil Society Organisations must be considered as a key stakeholder for EU - Africa relations.



5. LEGAL PATHWAYS TO MIGRATION



Irregular migration brings migrants in precarious and dangerous situations. They not only encounter many difficulties and harsh realities during the time of migration, but also when arriving in the country of destination, as there they experience a high risk of being exploited. To tackle irregular migration, ever since 2015 the EU has emphasized the importance of establishing legal pathways for migration in its migration policies. Nevertheless, many migrants still lack access to such pathways.³

In light of this, we ask the EU and African governments to act swiftly to guarantee protection to migrants and refugees. More particularly,

1. African governments should put the issue of migration at the heart of their talks with their European counterparts, to define migration policies on an equal level. Migration should become a major priority area for their cooperation.

2. The EU should invest in a true partnership with Africa, based on country-specific migration policies, where policy processes are transparent and more stakeholders - especially civil society and trade unions - are involved, and the actual needs of Africans are listened to.

3. The EU should adequately respond to migration, acting accordingly with humane principles and respect for human rights. Migration is about the lives of people and mobility is a human right. In particular, the EU should ensure that Member States ratify the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (1990).

4. The European and African governments should promote and support transnational and transcontinental cooperation among social partners and civil society actors in order to establish productive cooperation aimed at the improvement of living and working conditions of migrants.



Author: Cáceres Spain, Pixabay.com

5. The return and reintegration programs must be addressed only to migrants who are genuinely unwilling or unable to remain in host or transit countries. The EU must ensure the transparency, oversight and accountability of returns, facilitate independent monitoring and avoid the use of such programmes for other purposes.

6. The success stories of the humanitarian corridors in different countries in Europe demonstrate that establishing legal pathways for migration is realistic and possible. The EU should encourage and incentivise the reproduction of these kinds of pathways in more Schengen countries.

7. The EU should apply a gendered approach in its migration policy formulation and implementation. Specific attention should be paid to including safe and legal migration pathways for women, including offering specific scholarships.

³ For further information, SOLIDAR members developed the publication "[Legal pathways for migration: setting the right priorities for a sustainable EU-Africa partnership](#)".

6. CONCLUSIONS

In view of the EU-Africa Summit, the ongoing programming for the period 2021- 2027, the revision of the EU Trade policy, the **SOLIDAR Network in Africa will keep engaging in a dialogue with European and African governments, at global, regional and country level for a sustainable EU-Africa partnership, one that promotes the respect of human and environmental rights and valorises the role of trade unions and NGOs as necessary partners to achieve the SDGs.**



Author: egfriday, Pixabay.com

ANNEX 1 - LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

FULL NAME	ORGANISATION	COUNTRY OF WORK
Adele Cornaglia	ARCS Culture Solidali	Cameroon
Albert Njeru	Kenya Union of Domestic, Hotels, Education Institutions and Hospital Workers	Kenya
Anne van der Meer	Foundation Max van der Stoel	Netherlands
Assane Ndiaye	CSA	Senegal
Barbora Majdisova	FIC	Denmark
Beat von Däniken	Solidar Suisse	Mozambique
Bennegouch Nedjma	SOS Faim Luxembourg	Luxembourg
Bonface Mugoya	Kenya Shipping, Clearing, Freight Logistics & Warehouses Workers Union	Kenya
Clarisse Hager	Nutrition & Education for Children	Ivory Coast
Connie Huma	FOS Southern Africa	South Africa
David Momanyi	Horn of Africa Youth Network	Kenya
Dawu Sibanda	FOS	Zimbabwe and South Africa
Debora Eliud Kibona	Tanzania Mines and Construction Workers Union (TAMICO)	Tanzania
Dennis Mungo	Youth Alive!	Kenya
Ditcharé Elisée	LABIS - Laboratoire d'innovations sociales	Benin
Dominic Ndunguru	Open Mind Tanzania	Tanzania
Erustus Ouko	FIC	Kenya
Eva Delgado Diaz	MPDL	Spain
Fadima Maiga	MPDL	Mali
Fredrik Lindahl	Olof Palme International Center	Sweden
Gara Rodríguez	ACPP	Senegal
Ibrahima Cisse	ISCOS	Senegal
Irene Paul Mitema	UWAVIUTE	Tanzania
Issoufou Soumana	ONG DIKO	Niger
Jean-Victor Ayité	Programme d'Appui aux Stratégies Sociales (Pass)	Ivory Coast
Jeppe Albrechtsen	FIC	Denmark

Joachim Merz	Solidar Suisse	Switzerland / Mozambique
Jorge Lampiao	Solidar Suisse	Mozambique
Joria Sudi	Forum for International Cooperation	Kenya
Katusime Kafanabo	Tanzania Plantation and Agricultural Workers Union (TPAWU)	Tanzania
Kpatchavi Komlan Dela	Togo vert et vivant (TREGOR)	Togo
Levi Juma	Youth Alive!	Kenya
Louka Daou	MPDL	Mali
Mame Ousmane DIENE	CEMEA	Senegal
Marian Seck	MPDL	Mali
Maurice Omondi	FIC	Kenya
Munoz Nieto Pablo	MPDL	Niger
Ndidi Tumpe Witock	Open Mind Tanzania	Tanzania
Nelson Nyaga Nthiga	Kenya Union of Domestic Hotels, Education Institutions & Hospital Workers	Kenya
Ngom Mam	CRSFPC/USOFORAL	Senegal
Noaga Pierre Sawadogo	Solidarité Laique	Burkina Faso
Norman Mbaisi	Youth Alive!	Kenya
Ouedraogo Guy Roland	Programme d'Appui aux Stratégies Sociales (Pass)	Ivory Coast
Ragounandea Guéodiba	MPDL	Niger
Sabina Breveglieri	Nexus Emilia Romagna	Italy
Sabine Christensen	FIC	Denmark
Sahra Ryklief	IFWEA	South Africa
Salvatore Marra	CGIL	Italy
Sambou Aminata	CARISM/ CSA	Senegal
Saraka Kouame Kouakou Frederic	Women' Hope	Ivory Coast
Senele Bhala	Olof Palme International Center	Zimbabwe and Swatini
Serafina Häfeli	Solidar Suisse	Switzerland
Sergio Cozar	Solidar Suisse	Mozambique
Sy Malick	Confédération Nationale des Travailleurs du Sénégal (CNTS)	Senegal
Thibaud Dezyn	FOS	Belgium
Wanda Dimitri	ISCOS	Senegal
Yusuph Bwango	Tanzania Youth Vision Association	Tanzania



ORGANISING
INTERNATIONAL
SOLIDARITY

solidar

Rue de Pascale 4-6
B-1040 Brussels – Belgium
www.solidar.org

Responsible Editor: SOLIDAR aisbl
Copy-editor: Violeta Meotto, SOLIDAR
Graphic Design: Dagmar Bleyova
Cover photo: Jackson David, Pixabay.com

SOLIDAR is a European network of 60 NGOs working to advance social justice in Europe and worldwide. SOLIDAR voices the concerns of its member organisations to the EU and international institutions across the policy sectors social affairs, international cooperation and lifelong learning.

For more info www.solidar.org
© SOLIDAR November 2020



This activity is being realized with the financial assistance of the European Union as part of the Specific Agreement No. CSO-LA/2018/402-422. The contents of this activity are the sole responsibility of SOLIDAR and can under no circumstances be taken as reflecting the position of the European Union.