



General Conclusions of the 5th Meeting of Senior Officials of the AU-EU High-Level Policy Dialogue on Science, Technology and Innovation

Addis Ababa, 7- 8 November 2019

We, the Senior Officials,

- **Recognise** the essential role of the AU-EU High-Level Policy Dialogue (HLPD) on Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) as an important platform for regular exchanges on our shared research and innovation policy and identification of long-term priorities that strengthen Africa-Europe cooperation on STI;
- **Take note** of the AU Agenda 2063 that is driven by STISA 2024, the new Africa-Europe Alliance for Sustainable Investment and Jobs, Horizon Europe, the new Research Framework Programme for the period 2021-2027 and the political guidelines for the incoming European Commission 2019-2024 that open up new opportunities in our cooperation;
- **Recall** the importance of adequate investment in R&I and the need to advocate the advancement of science, technology and innovation as enablers for promoting knowledge creation, growth, jobs, improvement of our economic competitiveness and addressing pressing common societal challenges within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);
- **Are inspired** by the passion, conviction and energy of the millions of young people making their voices heard on the streets, requiring policy makers globally to take action against climate change, to mitigate climate change effects, and eliminate unsustainable economic activities. Collaborative research and innovation activities of the EU and the AU should therefore strive to fully integrate research and innovation on climate change, biodiversity and ecosystems, and circular economy into current and future cooperation initiatives between the two continents, in order to stand up to our duty to deliver for the generations to come;
- **Acknowledge** that there is a high number of research and innovation areas where cooperation already takes place and will continue to take place between Europe and Africa at institutional, bilateral and multilateral relationships, premised on our shared values, common interests and policy imperatives;
- **Highlight** the importance of women in science within the gender dimension of the Africa-EU cooperation;
- **Recall** that AU and EU Heads of State and Government endorsed two long-term, jointly co-owned and funded Research and Innovation (R&I) Partnerships on (i) Food and Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture (FNSSA) and (ii) Climate Change and Sustainable Energy (CCSE).

We Hereby:

1. On the Stakeholders' Report:

- **Acknowledge** the important role of the stakeholders in the implementation of our common priorities and specifically the R&I Roadmaps and welcome the recommendations contained therein;
- **Call** for more efforts by all stakeholders in the funding and implementation of our commonly agreed priorities and commit to more frequent and structured information exchange to advance common priorities and explore available funding opportunities.

2. On Food and Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture (FNSSA):

- **Welcome** the progress being made through the FNSSA Working Group, launched in March 2017 and the substantial investments already put in the implementation of this R&I Partnership and call on all involved funding institutions and project management authorities to deliver on agreed funding and ensure an impact oriented management of the programme;
- **Underline** the need for coordination and alignment with other similar initiatives on FNSSA (commitments by DGs JRC and DEVCO) and invite them to closely collaborate with the FNSSA working group by promoting clustering of projects towards more relevant investment and stronger impact.

3. On Climate Change and Sustainable Energy (CCSE):

- **Commend** the efforts towards the implementation of the partnership and invite the HLPD Bureau to set up a working group for CCSE and invite the Member States to nominate experts;
- **Recognise** the importance of mobilising additional funding for the long-term implementation of the R&I Partnership on CCSE, and ensure alignment with other similar initiatives, and focus it on the strategic priorities. In this context, the HLPD took note of the priorities highlighted by the European Commission President-elect on the European Green Deal and on Africa.

4. On the cross-cutting potential of Innovation:

- **Underline** the importance of innovation within our broader partnership, its cross-cutting nature, and its potential for the creation of sustainable growth, development, jobs and thus stimulating entrepreneurship;
- **Welcome** the 'Africa-EU Innovation Partnership' as a critical framework to foster collaborative alliances and relationships between our continents;
- **Agree** to a third partnership under the HLPD on STI, aiming to strengthen cross-cutting innovation cooperation between the EU and the AU and to set up a working group to support this partnership and task the HLPD Bureau to define the Terms of Reference of this cross-cutting working group.

5. On Human Development, including Research and Innovation, Staff Training and Mobility:

- **Take note** of the substantial level of cooperation already achieved through the Erasmus+ and Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) programmes and invite both Commissions, EU and AU Member States to increase efforts for further exploiting opportunities offered by these programmes, notably by mobilizing African stakeholders and supporting applicants accordingly.

The importance of measures such as grants to encourage the return to their countries of origin of beneficiaries in these programmes in order to reinforce national capacity was highlighted;

- **Call upon** the HLPD Bureau to further discuss the above mentioned issues.

6. On the African Scientific Research and Innovation Council (ASRIC):

- **Take note** of the establishment of the African Scientific Research and Innovation Council (ASRIC), its role in shaping the discourse of a continental research and policy nexus, STI programming, and implementation, and the importance of following its work.

7. On Health:

- **Acknowledge** the work done so far by the European and Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership (EDCTP) and take note of the broad exchange of views on the future of this important initiative including a possible broadening of the scope of activities;
- **Call** on all European and African Union Member States to consider the questions for reflection on the future orientation of the EDCTP and look forward to the consultation event to be hosted by the African Secretariat of the EDCTP;
- **Acknowledge** the importance to contribute to the development of the planned AU-EU Global Health Partnership under Horizon Europe.

8. On Digital Economy:

- **Welcome** the Digital Economy Taskforce Report of the Africa-Europe Alliance and call for the HLPD to pay special attention and propose actions beneficial to the cooperation with for example the 'Africa-EU Innovation Partnership' and explore further opportunities for new and emerging technologies.

Therefore:

- **Thank** the African Union and European Commissions for their work in support of the partnership and call on the HLPD Bureau to timeously provide all relevant information on the activities discussed by the SOM in order to encourage an enhanced participation;
- **Request** the HLPD Bureau to report progress on the implementation of the HLPD priorities and encourage Member States to proactively support the strategic working groups established under this partnership;
- **Invite** our leaders at the next AU-EU Summit to acknowledge the prominent role of research and innovation in our overall relations and emphasise the concrete deliverables of our cooperation by reiterating their commitment to continue supporting the AU-EU R&I Partnerships.