International Conference

On the eve of the EU-Africa-Summit – Creating a true and equal partnership?
From 8th to 9th December 2007 heads of states and governments of African countries and of the European Union will meet in Lisbon for the second time ever to conclude a common vision and joint strategy for future relations. The first EU Africa summit – held in Cairo in 2000 – ended with the adoption of the “Cairo Declaration”. In recent years and with achievements like the EU Africa strategy of 2005, the foundation of the African Union (AU) and the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD), but also the negotiations for new regional free trade agreements, the so-called Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs), the relationship between the EU and Africa has evolved substantially.

The EU wants mutual relations to move towards a new strategic partnership that is guided by the political vision of a joint EU-Africa strategy. The joint strategy is an attempt to concentrate fragmented EU sector policies dealing with African countries into a coherent strategy that serves the promotion of peace and security, sustainable development and democratic governance.

But in political reality, are these objectives what the ambitious joint strategy is to accomplish? Are the institutional preconditions met in both Europe and in Africa to implement the joint strategy? What is the meaning of a true and equal partnership if it is to evolve beyond – politically correct – rhetoric and past experiences? Will Europe be able to free itself from the paternalism of the past? How does the EU’s economic self-interest relate to Africa’s economic development? Will the expanding EU security interests – from supporting peace operations to meeting its energy supplies – dominate other external policies such as development or humanitarian aid? Judging by the outcomes of the recent G8 summit in Germany a long way is still to go.

These are some of the political challenges on the eve of the EU Africa summit. Focussing on the latest developments in governance, security, energy, trade and economic development between the EU and African countries the conference aims to shed light on existing obstacles and political challenges a new vision for EU-Africa-relations faces as they appear from a development perspective.
Where are we, and how did we get there?
Sven Grimm, German Development Institute, Bonn

Panel 1
Current EU Africa relations from a governance, security, energy and economic development perspective:
Progress, problems and policy recommendations
Fr. George Ehusani, Catholic Bishops’ Conference, Nigeria
Sven Grimm, German Development Institute, Bonn
Stefan Mair, German Institute for International and Security Affairs, Berlin
Siegmar Schmidt, University Koblenz-Landau

Panel 2
Beyond the EU-Africa-Summit:
Moving from strategy to political reality
Aldo Ajello, Former EU Special Representative for the Great Lakes Region, Rome
Herta Däubler-Gmelin MP, Deutscher Bundestag, Berlin
John Mahama MP, Parliament of Ghana, Accra
Matthias Mülmenstädt, Federal Foreign Office, Berlin
EU-Africa relations are nothing new, indeed they have already existed for a total of exactly 50 years, as Sven Grimm of the German Development Institute (DIE) underlined in his introductory presentation to the conference, adding that EU-Africa relations are thus the “oldest external relations the EU entertains.” But they have also developed and changed – and done so with considerable speed in recent years.

The first two decades of these relations, Grimm noted, were focused primarily on aid and financial compensation. That was to change with the Lomé Agreements. The first of them was signed in 1975, and it accorded to the former colonies of the EU countries a special role in the Union’s external relations. In essence, the accord granted the then 71 developing countries in Africa, the Caribbean, and the Pacific region (ACP states) preferential market access for their goods, i.e. trade preferences. But for France and the UK in particular these agreements were, at an early point of time, linked with the goal of fostering special relations with their former colonies – not only in economic but also in political and cultural terms. And without losing sight of their special postcolonial interests.

Grimm makes out a “growing politicization” of European-African relations, quite generally, in the years between 1975 and 2000. Far less than in earlier times, the main concern now was not only trade preferences and financial compensation. What now came to play a growingly important role, Grimm noted, was the idea of an “engineering” of development – of targeted efforts to manage and “design” development, including democratic and rule-of-law principles.

These efforts, though, initially met with no more than modest success. More favorable conditions, Grimm went on, emerged only with the end of the Cold War and passing of the political camp mentality typical of the period. One expression of this may be seen in the Cotonou Agreement that was concluded in 2000 between the EU and the ACP countries and replaced the previous Lomé Agreements. Unlike the latter, the 2000 agreement casts mutual relations far more in the light of partnership than in terms of trade relations involving unilateral preferences. Furthermore, the agreement now expressly addresses issues like human rights and (good) governance.

This has corresponded with marked changes in Africa: The number of democratically ruled countries shows clear signs of increasing; the African reform initiative NEPAD has been successfully launched; the Organization of African Unity (OAU) has been replaced by the African Union (AU) – which has been equipped with an enlarged political mandate and (as of 2004) and an African Security Council – and efforts are underway to develop an African intervention, a fact that means nothing less than a departure, albeit a hesitant one, from a taboo in force for decades: the principle of nonintervention in the national affairs of other African countries in cases of conflict or poor governance. At the same time, Africa’s economy is growing at a rapid pace, posting average growth rates of five percent p.a.

On the other hand, Grimm noted, the European Union is also changing. The Union’s enlargement to include a good number of new member countries that have until now been with any explicit Africa policy of their own has created a situation that calls for more internal European coordination and fewer individual national policies (“fragmentation”) in Europe’s dealings with Africa. The fact that China has now also
entered the field on Europe’s neighboring continent as a powerful new player, as (in Grimm’s words) “a new elephant in the room,” is an additional factor serving to alter the structure of European-African relations. This new situation has given Africa new and larger scopes in choosing its partners and in dealing with them. Grimm: Far more than we have until now, the Europeans – if they want to stay in the game – are going to have to talk with Africa – on equal terms – and no longer about Africa, or indeed down to Africa.

This is also the reason for the emphasis recently placed by the EU side on the idea of equal partnership, which was discernible at the Lisbon EU Africa summit – not least in the “Joint Strategy” set to launched in that context. But, Grimm noted, at present the strategy is little more than an assembly of many different sorts of set pieces borrowed from existing cooperation strategies and instruments in use in the cooperation between the EU and Africa. On the other hand, the Africa expert noted by way of summary, and with a view to the organizations representing the 27 European countries and the 53 African nations, there are unmistakable signs of “change in the culture of the relations between Europe and Africa.”

**Joint Strategy**

Toward the end of 2005 the European Council adopted its EU Africa Strategy, which is intended to lay the groundwork for a comprehensive partnership with Africa. The paper names as priorities peace and security, human rights and governance, development assistance, sustainable economic development, regional integration and trade, and what it refers to as “investing in people.” The strategy may be seen as a response of the EU to the founding of the African Union (AU) and the African reform initiative known as Nepad (New Partnership for Africa’s Development).

The year 2006 saw the drafting of a joint implementation paper based on the EU Africa Strategy and coordinated with the AU; since then the paper has been further developed on a continuous basis. In May 2007 an outline paper was adopted that lists a broad range of important goals, including political partnership, efforts to reach the UN Millennium Development Goals, human rights, and global challenges like HIV/AIDS, climate change, and energy security.

The preliminary talks are now set to take the form of a concrete joint strategy. The EU Africa Summit in Lisbon, under the Portuguese EU presidency, was dedicated to this goal. All relevant projects are to be coordinated with the African countries. The strategy provides for mutual recognition, and respect for, the institutions of the partner countries as well as for efforts to build and strengthen mutual political and economic relations.

**Sven Grimm**

Dr. Sven Grimm holds a PhD in political science from Hamburg University (2002). He joined the London based Overseas Development Institute in 2003, and in 2005 he started his work as a research fellow at the German Development Institute (DIE) in Bonn. His research interests focus on the European Union, EU foreign and development policy, Sub-Sahara Africa, governance, and regional integration. He is the author of a series of articles and monographs.

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In an introductory comment, moderator Renate Wilke-Launer termed the project of a European-African joint strategy “an ambitious undertaking.” And both Stefan Mair (Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik) and Siegmar Schmidt (University of Koblenz-Landau) noted that not much more could be realistically expected from the Lisbon EU/Africa summit than a political declaration, a “lowest common denominator.” Which is not at all to say there are any reasons to belittle the efforts at reaching a genuine partnership. Sven Grimm summed up the present state of affairs in the ongoing reorientation of European-African relations in the words, “Is the glass now half full or half empty?”

For one thing is clear: The agenda of the Joint Strategy regards these relations as far less “asymmetrical” (Mair) than they were in the past. Far from continuing to focus one-sidedly on development cooperation and trade, the strategy’s agenda now includes issues like security and peace or global climate change, forging them into a projected new partnership. Siegmar Schmidt sees the African side as overstrained, noting that we need think here only of the Africa Peace Facility, i.e. of the actual capabilities of the AU standby force. Und Stefan Mair pointed out that it will take time not only to build military capabilities but also, and precisely, to develop the institutions needed for a functioning representative democracy as well as for good governance.

On the other hand, though: When, if not now, would be the best time to embark on a partnership of this kind, particularly in view of the fact that many African countries have now themselves set out on just this path? And pointing out that there continue to be plenty of negative counterexamples – one need think here only of Sudan and the Darfur conflict or Robert Mugabe’s dictatorial regime in Zimbabwe – does little to change this picture.

One case that was discussed at length by the participants was whether or not Mugabe should be permitted to attend the Lisbon summit, and, Mair noted, according too much space to the issue would basically be counterproductive. Not to attend the summit (as UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown intended to do), it was argued, would, in the end, not be conducive to reaching agreement with those African countries that, intent on reform, were making good progress on the road to democracy. And George Ehusani (Conference of Catholic Bishops (Nigeria) noted, “Mugabe represents his country, but not many African countries continue to support his policies” – even if that is not always openly stated. Not even a markedly reform-friendly model country like South Africa is prepared to come out openly against the Mugabe regime, e.g. by demanding hard sanctions.

The old principle of strict nonintervention in the internal affairs of another state still constitutes a stumbling block to the declared intention of most
African countries to seek democratic self-renewal and regional integration. Sven Grimm also sees a “positive sign” in the fact that so far nowhere close to all African countries have submitted to what is known as the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). The demands involved are high. The APRM is a voluntary procedure designed to assess good, or bad, governance in African countries with a view to identifying weaknesses and development deficits. One of the ideas of the APRM is to get as many societal forces as possible involved. Having been subjected to the APRM is regarded as a hallmark of democratic maturity and good governance quality – provided, that is, that the country under review in fact makes the grade. And this means, among other things, that the results of the review are published and that first steps are taken to implement a national action plan on good governance. Grimm here speak of a practice of naming and shaming that may have salutary effects for those involved.

However, thus far no more than five African countries have submitted to the peer-review process – of a total of 26 states that have committed themselves to do so: Ghana, Rwanda, Kenya, South Africa, and Algeria. Und George Ehusani, whose country, Nigeria, is one of these 26 aspiring states, has also another objection: The APRM is still far too much a matter of small elites – even for the case that it should lead to progress. Much too little, the bishop noted, has been done to involve civil society – a deficit that Ehusani not only sees for the APRM process (which, if passed successfully, may bring more development aid from donors) but has observed generally for the overall process involved in the redefinition of European-African relations. “Is it participation when only 0.5% of people participate in the development of an equal partnership?” Ehusani asked. There is, as moderator Renate Wilke-Launer remarked, little consolation to be found in the fact that this important issue complex is not perceived very differently in Europe either.

In any case: “Africa’s democratic orientation is making progress,” Siegmar Schmidt noted. And it is possible to foster and support it: by providing economic assistance, for example. Or budget aid. That is, development assistance provided by international donors, including the EU, to governments that are willing and able to deal responsibly with the funds.

This type of assistance is linked to at least one condition, namely that the funds involved be used in the country to effectively fight poverty – on the basis of poverty-reduction programs developed by the recipient countries themselves. But the keyword ‘aid conditionality’ places the focus on something else that many African countries are no longer simply willing to accept – no longer, that is, since China has been active on the continent, allocating its kind of “development aid” without asking about governance, good or bad – namely on the fact that the Western donors have traditionally defined conditionalities for their...
aid that have benefited them far more than the recipients themselves, and under these conditions there is little point in speaking of equal partnership.

In this connection George Ehusani commented that “fear of China is the beginning of wisdom.” He was referring here above all to Western agricultural subsidies, demands for unrestricted market opening, the practice of flooding African markets with agricultural products at dumping prices, the overfishing of the waters off the African coasts - and, not least, a to “double standard” that pillories deficits like undemocratic regimes and corruption in Africa, while at the same time closing its eyes to the consequences of its own actions.

Ehusani also claimed: “The fundamentalism of (WTO) neoliberalism is just as dangerous as Islamism.” This he said in reference to the ongoing negotiations on so-called economic partnership agreements (EPAs) between the EU and the ACP countries – the reason being that the WTO ruled the Cotonou Agreements incompatible with its own rules and set, originally, a deadline for the end of 2007 for the conclusion of new agreements. By then there will be – at best – some partial agreements, for there is substantial resistance on the part of the ACP countries to any overly liberal final agreements, in which they see more a threat of being duped by the powerful industrialized countries than positive development chances for themselves.

At the same time, the final shape given to the EPS will also influence the character of the future EU-Africa partnership. Klaus Schilder from WEED, a nongovernmental organization that co-organized the conference, summed the matter up as follows: the more development-friendly the final shape of the EPAs is, the more acceptable they will be to the African, Caribbean, and Pacific countries. And: The sooner this happens, it was noted in the discussion, the sooner a “joint strategy” will have real chances of being implemented.
Speakers

PANEL I

Fr. George Ehusani
Father George Ehusani is the immediate past Secretary General of the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria. He holds a Doctor of Ministry degree from Howard University, Washington D.C. A theologian, poet, human rights activist and social commentator, Father Ehusani has published numerous books and articles covering a wide-range of issues, from social anthropology to Christian humanism. He is presently spending his sabbatical year with Misereor in Aachen. Contact: ehusani@yahoo.com

Stefan Mair
Dr. Stefan Mair is the Director of Studies of the German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP), Berlin. He holds a PhD in political economy from the University of Munich (1993). He is a member of the Advisory Board of the Federal President’s initiative Partnership with Africa, member of the Academic Council of the German Institute for Global and Area Studies, Hamburg, and a lecturer at Berlin’s Humboldt University. His research interests are focused on democratisation, international crisis management, stabilisation of weak and failing states, European and German Africa policy, development policy. He published a series of books, studies and articles on the aforementioned issues. Contact: stefan.mair@swp-berlin.org

Siegmar Schmidt
Prof. Siegmar Schmidt holds a PhD in political science from the University of Munich (1987). Subsequently he became a professor at the University of Trier, the University of Mainz and eventually at the University of Koblenz-Landau. From 2003 to 2004 he held the Willy-Brandt-Chair at the University of Western Cape. His research is focused on European and German Foreign Policy, Development and Democracy in Africa as well as Development Policy. He is the author and editor of a series of books, research works, and scientific articles. Contact: schmidts@uni-landau.de
Peace and security, economic cooperation, human rights protection, poverty reduction, and ecologically compatible development – these are central elements of the EU Africa Strategy, and the task is now to translate them, together with the AU countries, into a concrete concept for action. But how, on the occasion of the Lisbon Summit, are these issue being dealt with? What are the prospects of arriving at a course of practical political action?

Peace and security: **Aldo Ajello**, the former EU special representative for the Great Lakes region in Africa and a profound connoisseur of African conflicts, noted that there has recently been quite a bit of movement between EU and AU. He pointed in this connection to the EU’s Africa Peace Facility, noting that since 2004 the EU has used the facility to fund African peace missions and the development of an AU security architecture.

Ajello is convinced that peace and security can be created on a more sustainable basis, and be better maintained, the more the AU is willing to become involved militarily. In Darfur (Sudan) African soldiers are engaged together with UN soldiers. And the fact is that the UN has again and again failed when it has tried its hand at going it alone in pace missions in Africa. **Ajello** pointed in this connection to the cases of Somalia, Rwanda, and Angola, noting that it has yet to be seen how sustainable a EU short mission like the recent one in the Democratic Republic of the Congo will turn out to be. While the mission did work out well, there is still no peace in the east of the country. And the UN forces there are unable to bring about peace. While, as Ajello noted, a political peace has been reached, a military peace remains elusive.

Ajello sees stepped-up cooperation between EU and AU on peace and security issues as just as desirable as it is possible. But in an equal partnership? There he had his doubts, preferring to speak of a “good spirit of cooperation” based on common interests: “I don’t believe in philanthropy. We have the money, the African Union has the people.”

Economic Cooperation: At the beginning of the second round of discussions, **Petra Pinzler** (“Die Zeit”) posed the question – with a view to the final form to be given to a European-African “joint strategy” – What is predominant: the commonalities or the differences? And **John Mahama**, member of the Parliament of Ghana and the Pan-African Parliament, went straight to the middle of things, noting that all agreements concluded thus far have had little to do with the lives of people. He also prophesies that the new Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) “will not make the sun rise, either.” Far more than at present, he continued, an EU cooperation with Africa should therefore aim to improve people’s immediate living conditions and promote a development that is at once socially compatible and ecologically sustainable. For instance, by improving health care, by supporting young people, by making more use of regenerative energies.
The Ghanaian politician made a strong case for getting people more involved in the design of the “joint strategy” – of “picking them up where they are,” as he put it. While, unlike in earlier times, the days are gone when everything was negotiated only between governments, and even in a country like Ghana, which is regarded as a best performer in good governance, both parliament and civil society are still insufficiently involved in political and economic decision-making – and that goes in particular for the question of what shape the new economic partnership agreements are to be given.

John Mahama called for nothing less than “new development models.” “Repeating the industrial revolution cannot be the way,” he noted. And to him it is perfectly clear that the future of partnership-based European-African trade relations cannot be seen – as it has all too often in the past – in exports of highly subsidized European chicken scraps to Africa – meat that no one is willing to eat here, and that is sold in Africa at prices that ruin both markets and local production.

Human rights protection: Despite the criticism voiced by John Mahama and others, there is a growing basic tendency in Europe to regard Africa as a partner. But how can this attitude best be translated into concrete policy? Particularly when the concern is an issue like human rights? For Herta Däubler-Gmelin, former German Justice Minister and present Chairperson of the Human Rights Committee of the German Bundestag, the human rights section of the EU Africa Strategy Paper seems comparatively “feeble.” “It’s for the most part good will, and it’s not very concrete,” she noted – even though, in essence, the basis positions of the relevant EU and AU documents are not all that far apart on the issue. For instance, the AU Charter even provides for a right to intervene in a member state in cases of war crimes, genocide, and crimes against humanity. And the Nepad framework document states that “development is impossible in the absence of true democracy, respect for human rights, peace and good governance.”

To be sure, Herta Däubler-Gmelin also sees deficits in the practice of government action. And she meant here not only a case like Zimbabwe, where the AU has yet to put a dictator like Mugabe in his place, despite serious human rights violations in the country. Däubler-Gmelin pleads above all for efforts to support national African parliaments in their work as watchdogs of government activities.

But how is this to be done? Däubler-Gmelin recommends that the EU drop the gesture of the “intimidating raised forefinger” and get down to helping the African countries to develop and expand their democratic and rule-of-law institutions.

Environment and energy: “Resource wealth, energy scarcity, and lack of infrastructure” – Matthias Mülmenstädt, Africa Representative of the German Foreign Office, used this triad of terms to describe Africa’s present situation as regards environmental and energy issues. A European-African partnership, he noted im-
explicitly, should place emphasis above all on a reasonable linkage between all three of the above givens – and it should do so in such a way as to ensure that environmental protection is not deprived of its right.

For Mülmenstädt, achieving this is no mere vision. After all, there is already intensive cooperation between EU and AU; the EU’s new competitor on the continent, China, has reached a trade volume with Africa that accounts for no more than one fifth of the corresponding EU trade – in other words, there is no reason to be afraid of China. One goal of a European-African partnership should therefore be to advance investment in infrastructure and to establish an energy partnership that is geared, on the one hand, to a technology transfer keyed to developing regenerative energies and boosting energy efficiency. On the other hand, the concern should be not to follow China’s bad example and instead, when it comes to exploiting resources and raw materials, to seek orientation in the rules of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI). The aim of the EITI’s rules is to exploit resources in socially and ecologically compatible ways and to ensure that the profits serve the development of the overall country, and not only the interests of a small, corrupt elite.

Mülmenstädt, a foreign-policy expert, of course has no illusions on one point: There are also AU countries that are not even close to adhering to any stringent rules of this kind. One need think here only of Angola or Chad. And on the other hand, China is not the only country in which the rules are not necessarily given pride of place; countries like France or the US are themselves not far behind. Ghana and Nigeria have already accepted the status of EITI pilot countries and explicitly committed themselves to disclose the financial flows stemming from their resource transactions.

“There is a generation of new, interesting politicians, but they are not yet in power,” as Aldo Ajello noted in the final discussion – a final remark coined to describe the situation of Africa’s new young leaders – but one that is open to many different interpretations. For one thing that this conference did show is that, be it cheap chicken or arms exports: there is room for action and reform on the EU side as well.
Speakers

PANEL II

Aldo Ajello
Aldo Ajello holds a degree in law from the University of Palermo. From 1976–1979 he was Senator of the Republic of Italy, and Member of the European Parliament. From 1979–1983 he was Member of the Italian Parliament. In 1983 he joined the UN, became Assistant Secretary-General, and headed the UNDP office in Geneva, and subsequently the UN Bureau of External Relations in New York. From 1992–1994 he conducted the UN Peacekeeping Operation in Mozambique, and from 1996–2007 he was the EU Special Representative for the Great Lakes Region in Africa.
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John Mahama MP
John Mahama has been Member of Parliament of Ghana since 1996, and is currently the minority spokesman on Foreign Affairs. He is also a Member of the Pan-African Parliament, and the UNDP Advisory Committee. From 1998–2001 he was Minister of Communication of Ghana, and Chairman of the National Communications Authority (NCA). He holds a degree in history from the University of Ghana and in social psychology from the Institute of Social Sciences in Moscow. He also studied at Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore. Contact: mahama2000@yahoo.com

Herta Däubler-Gmelin MP
Prof. Dr. Herta Däubler-Gmelin is a jur. Lawyer, and a member of the Social Democratic Party (SPD). She is a member of the German Parliament since 1972 in various functions, and currently Chairperson of the Committee on Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs. She is also the Chairperson of the Africa Committee of SPD, and Member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. From 1998–2002 she was the Federal Minister of Justice, and from 1988–1998 Vice-President of SPD. She is Prof. (hon.) at the Free University of Berlin and the Tongji-University, Shanghai. She published a series of books, essays and articles on various issues (human rights, international politics, legal affairs, Africa affairs).
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Matthias Mülmenstädt
Matthias Mülmenstedt is the Director for African Affairs in the German Federal Foreign Office. From 2001–2007 he was the Director for International Development, African and Asian Affairs in the Federal Presidency. He served on different posts in German embassies and consulates, amongst others in Tel Aviv, Washington and Leningrad. He holds a degree in history and political science from the Johann Wolfgang Goethe University Frankfurt. Contact: 3-b-2@auswaertiges-amt.de
ON THE EVE OF THE EU-AFRICA-SUMMIT – CREATING A TRUE AND EQUAL PARTNERSHIP?

FRIEDRICH-EBERT-STIFTUNG