



EUROPEAN UNION
DELEGATION TO THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Africa-Europe Dialogue Symposium on Innovation for Sustainable Development

Speaking points by EU Ambassador Marcus Cornaro
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- I am not sure if anyone in the audience follows a blog by our European Commissioner for Environment...At the beginning of 2017 there was a new-year's-resolution post titled **'Getting Lean in 2017'** with the focus on leaner economy through better resource efficiency and waste management which all require innovation.
- I do feel that we have been getting leaner. The workout plan has been set by the recent international commitments, primarily the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- At the EU level, sustainable development is in fact our overarching objective set by the Lisbon Treaty. Sustainability is enshrined in the Europe 2020 strategy. Horizon 2020, the EU's Framework Programme for Research and Innovation is set to contribute at least 60% of its budget to sustainable development. We have been driving the implementation of the EU Circular Economy Package and greening our strategic partnerships and development cooperation with the third countries.
- South Africa is one of the EU's ten Strategic Partners globally and I am proud to report that our bilateral activities in the area of sustainable development have been advancing quite rapidly.
- The new SADC/EU EPA, in force since 10 October 2016, includes an entire chapter on "Trade and sustainable development". It covers social and environmental matters, such as fishing practices, biological diversity, forestry management.
- This year, we conducted a successful formal dialogue on environment and sustainable development; a dedicated high-level conference on Circular Economy in May; the EU Circular Economy Business mission to South Africa; a Climate Diplomacy Week in June; and an expert-led dialogue on monitoring sustainability transition.
- This week we are having this event, while next week, at the 3rd meeting of the UN Environmental Assembly, the European Commission is organising a Ministerial side-

event on the role of circular economy in reducing pollution. Minister Molewa has been invited to address the event.

- Discussions have been complemented by concrete actions. South African stakeholders are benefiting from the EU Switch Africa Programme, the Partnership Action for Green Economy, and EU support to the Green Economy Coalition.
- On the side of innovation, a few days ago the Department of Science and Technology was approved to receive EU funding for its 'Green Economy for Development Programme'. The programme will focus on SMEs development in the water and waste sectors through appropriate technologies.
- Environment has also been one of the most active areas of EU-SA research cooperation under Horizon 2020 and its predecessor 7th Framework Programme.
- Today's event is taking place within the framework of Green.eu project funded under Horizon 2020. And I hope it will create further links and partnerships for even more active cooperation under Horizon 2020. Opportunities that are available under the Work Programme 2018-2020 have to be seized to the best possible extent.
- There are two specific calls that directly address sustainable development. One is aimed at '**Building a low-carbon, climate resilient future**' and has a total budget of €3.3bn. The other is titled '**Connecting economic and environmental gains - the Circular Economy**' with a total envelop of almost €1bn.
- The last Work Programme (2018-2020) also specifically addresses international cooperation with South Africa in the areas of marine research and space, which also play an important role in sustainable development.
- There are also topics supporting the implementation of our R&I Partnerships with the African Union, namely on (i) Food and Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture as well as on (ii) Climate Change and Sustainable Energy ... and more topics might emerge following the EU-AU Summit in Abidjan this week.
- I stress that the EU is putting plans and actions into place to reinforce its environmental and climate diplomacies meaning that even more opportunities for getting leaner together will emerge.
- Those who exercise together know that it is much more fun, more motivating and more effective. I therefore hope that this Symposium will enhance the sense of togetherness and we will all succeed in making our global economy leaner.