

NIGERIA-EU JOINT WAY FORWARD

INTRODUCTION

The political dialogue between Nigeria and the EU followed the 2004 initiative of the Irish Presidency of the EU. Since then, the successive EU Presidencies, through the Heads of Mission, have continued to conduct high level contacts and discussions with the Nigerian Authorities. Under the administration of President Obasanjo and now President Yar'Adua, the parties have continued to exchange information on issues of common interest and for mutual benefit in national and international terms, taking into account the roles of Nigeria and the EU in Africa in general and in the West Africa subregion in particular.

The political dimension of the relations between Nigeria and the EU is articulated in Articles 8 to 13 - of the revised Cotonou Partnership Agreement. Article 8 in particular spells out the objectives and the key topics of the political dialogue.

A number of other political, declaratory documents form the foundation of the political dialogue and cooperation of Nigeria and the EU, namely the Paris Declaration on aid effectiveness endorsed on 2nd March 2005, the Africa-EU strategic Partnership agreed at the Summit of Heads of State and Government from EU and Africa held in Lisbon on 8th and 9th December 2007 and Nigeria's development and strategy papers, in particular the first National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS I) issued in 2004, the second one (NEEDS II) about to be issued, 7-point agenda and Vision 2020, an economic business plan intended to make Nigeria a fully developed economy by the year 2020 about to be issued.

At the Ministerial Troika meeting held in Ljubljana on 20th May 2008, Nigeria and the EU decided to take their relationships to a new level through intensified dialogue and enhanced cooperation. In the Joint Communiqué issued in Ljubljana the parties drew the main lines for a way forward to intensify their relations.

Nigeria and the EU reaffirm their commitment to these agreements and to the vision of their relations presented in the Ljubljana Joint Communiqué and have now decided to develop a political framework, the "*Nigeria-EU Joint way Forward*", to spell out the terms and the modalities to intensify their political dialogue and cooperation.

1. PRINCIPLES AND VISIONS

The purpose of the Joint Way Forward is to take the Nigeria-EU political dialogue and cooperation to a new level.

The Nigeria-EU Joint Way Forward will be guided by the fundamental principles of ownership and joint responsibility, respect for human rights, good governance,

democratic principles and the rule of law. Both parties are committed to advancing these values globally.

Nigeria and the EU consider each other as natural and strong partners. Nigeria and the EU share common values and ideals, both believing in peace and security, equality, democracy and tolerance as ways of developing prosperous and generous societies.

It is important to strengthen economic cooperation between the parties and stimulate the development of bonds between private industrial, commercial and financial actors. A strong private sector economy acting in partnership with a sound public administration is essential to achieve sustainable development.

The Parties during this process will take into due account their common concern for the environment and in particular, climate change as phenomena with an overall impact on security and development issues. Energy security is linked to these concerns. The impact of climate change in Europe and Africa and the role of technology innovation to reduce the adverse effects are of highest importance to Nigeria and the EU.

The Parties, in line with their common values, recognise the importance of promoting democracy and rule of law and of developing a human rights dimension in their dialogue touching upon a number of issues of mutual concern.

A key element of the Joint Way Forward is the common commitment to regional cooperation and integration. The EU fully supports Nigeria's commitment to working with ECOWAS and the AU. Both Parties agree that the Joint Way Forward shall be supportive of the Joint Africa-EU Strategy by including several of the strategic priority areas and developing over time the remaining areas after common agreement.

The framework for pursuing this dialogue, oriented by the experiences gained since 2004 and taking into account the present political developments in the Nigerian, regional, European and international context, is proposed in the present paper.

Both Parties agree to the necessity of enhancing the existing agreements, policies and instruments. The Joint Way Forward is an evolutionary process that will develop at all levels, both public and private.

The purpose of this paper is to provide tentative guidelines on objectives, components and priorities for the "*Nigeria-EU Joint Way Forward*".

2. NIGERIA-EU JOINT WAY FORWARD

The Joint Way Forward includes three elements:

- A) Modalities for the Joint Way Forward
- B) Guidelines for an intensified political dialogue
- C) Priorities for an enhanced cooperation

A. MODALITIES FOR THE JOINT WAY FORWARD

The Parties agreed in May 2008 to adopt some general guidelines identifying the main issues of mutual interest and concern. The guidelines follow the principles and objectives enunciated in the revised "Cotonou Partnership Agreement" and recalled in the Lisbon "Joint Africa-EU Strategy".

- Nigeria and the EU agree to continue their regular political dialogue by meeting once a year in troika Format at ministerial level. The meetings may take place alternately in Nigeria and the EU.
- Senior officials meetings will be organised once or twice a year to exchange views on issues discussed at ministerial level and/or bring issues of interest to the attention of the other party. The meetings may take place alternately in Nigeria and the EU and will be open to observers from all interested EU Members States.
- Meetings at the level of Heads of Mission will be held at least once during each EU Presidency with representatives of the Nigerian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other line Ministries to maintain and strengthen regular dialogue.
- The Parties consider that it is necessary to intensify the dialogue at all levels for an enhanced relationship. Therefore ad hoc meetings on issues of common interest, e.g. regional, continental and global issues can take place when agreed between the Parties.
- The Parties will associate, on an "ad-hoc" basis whenever appropriate, with private sector, professional associations, parliamentarians, the judiciary, organised civil society and other non-State actors as defined in the Cotonou Partnership Agreement (as revised in 2005) in Article 6.
- The Federal Government of Nigeria and the EU affirm the importance, as well as their resolve, to enhance their dialogue and cooperation with other tiers of the Nigerian Government (State and Local Governments) in accordance with the competences attributed to them under the Constitution and to seek participation, whenever relevant and appropriate, from civil society, private sector and other non-State actors as defined in the Cotonou Partnership Agreement (as revised in 2005) in Article 6.
- The Federal Government and the EU agree to develop the modalities and a suitable calendar for a dialogue open to the other tiers of the Nigerian Government.

B. GUIDELINES FOR AN INTENSIFIED POLITICAL DIALOGUE

Topics in the agenda of the Nigeria-EU dialogue include the agreed areas of priority actions: peace and security, good governance and human rights, trade and regional integration and key development issues including but not limited to energy, environmental sustainability and climate change. In addition, in the Ljubljana meeting it was decided to address issues such as migration, combating crime, knowledge-based society issues such as ICT; science, technology and innovation; HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis and other pandemics; reform of the United Nations and of other key international institutions; terrorism; proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons; drugs, human trafficking; cultural cooperation and exchanges. It is agreed to focus the political dialogue on the following issues.

- peace and security

Nigeria and the EU agree to discuss about peace and security issues at global, continental, regional and local levels as part of their political dialogue. The issues will include global security threats, the security situation in neighbouring countries and the maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea which is linked, *inter alia*, to the Niger Delta. In connection to maritime security, it is appropriate to take into account relevant IMO recommendations. Cooperation between Nigeria and the EU and support to ECOWAS to combat organised crime, including drugs and human trafficking, in the region will also be discussed.

- good governance and human rights

Nigeria and the EU consider the promotion of good governance, human rights and fundamental freedoms at global and regional levels a common concern. The parties will work together to address some vital areas of governance and human rights agenda at all levels of the Nigerian government among which are the strengthening of rule of law, the fight against corruption and human rights. The human rights issues would include death penalty, children's rights, gender equality and ethnic, religious and civil discrimination.

The Parties also agree to promote the implementation of ratified human rights conventions at Federal and State levels.

- economic development including trade and regional integration

These issues cover a number of items such as sustainable economic development including industrialisation, impact of the global economic and financial crisis, economy and export diversification, achievement of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), regional and continental integration in Africa, in particular via ECOWAS, trade development and EPAs, food security, migration, etc. Nigeria plays a leading role in the economic development of the region and therefore the EU and Nigeria consider these issues a priority for their dialogue.

The Parties agree to identify specific economic sectors for which their dialogue can contribute to improve the cooperation between Nigerian and EU public and private actors and the transfer of know how as well as maximise the positive impact of the economic agreements signed with the region.

- energy

Both Parties consider energy to be a vital issue. The political dialogue will identify the main issues and key players in this field. Among other issues, the insufficient energy infrastructure, reform of the Nigerian energy sector, policy and planning issues in general and sharing of best practices, will be addressed. The energy issue as a major component of regional integration in ECOWAS and the role of Nigeria as energy supplier to the EU will also be discussed.

- environmental sustainability and climate change

The Parties agree that these questions are essential also in connection to the development of the energy sector. Issues of mutual concern include: sustainable utilisation of traditional energy sources; development of alternative, affordable and renewable energy sources; deforestation (including illegal logging) and desertification; gas flaring; indoor and outdoor air pollution; etc. The political dialogue will identify the ways in which the parties will cooperate. However, the exchange of knowledge between Nigerian and EU scientific institutions on the symptoms and effects of climate change as well as on the methodologies to address the problems will be a key feature of their cooperation in this field. The cooperation may be extended to governmental and non governmental organisations and include regional and international aspects of the issues. In this respect, a stronger EU-Nigeria cooperation in view of the forthcoming UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change taking place in Copenhagen in December 2009) negotiations would be very relevant.

Besides the above-mentioned areas the Parties agree to include in the dialogue the following horizontal issues.

In national terms:

- The Parties recognise that in some areas implementation of laws and regulations is insufficient at State level compared to the legal requirements at the Federal level. Nigeria and the EU have decided to address this challenge.

The Parties also recognise that the issues of good governance, economic and social development, energy and environmental sustainability are also pertinent in a broader approach to discussing Nigeria-EU cooperation in the Niger Delta.

The established cooperation with certain States will be deepened while the specific needs of these and of other States will be identified and evaluated

consistently with the areas covered by the political dialogue. In this way the political dialogue will have both Federal and State level impact.

In regional terms:

- The regional synergies and connections, especially with neighbouring countries, member states of ECOWAS, and ECOWAS and AU institutions pertinent to the topics identified above to be jointly assessed in order to make the cooperation more efficient.

In international terms:

- The political dialogue can review and follow jointly the implications for Nigeria and the EU of the outcomes of high level meetings held abroad and/or of international Conventions, Summits and meetings, namely those of UN, G8, World Bank, WHO, ILO, etc. Through dialogue Nigeria and the EU will also seek to establish common positions in respect of responses to social, political and economic crisis in countries and regions of interest to both parties. An area of mutual interest will be to discuss how to profit from Nigeria's vast experience and expertise to contribute to inter-religious dialogue.

C. PRIORITIES FOR AN ENHANCED COOPERATION

The central objectives of the partnership remain those enunciated in the first and second paragraphs of Article 1, of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement: *„to promote and expedite the economic, cultural and social development of the ACP States, with a view to contributing to peace and security and to promoting a stable and democratic political environment [...] The partnership shall be centred on the objective of reducing and eventually eradicating poverty consistent with the objectives of sustainable development and the gradual integration of the ACP countries into the world economy“.*

Therefore, the Parties recognised in the Ljubljana Joint Communiqué that financial resources allocated to Nigeria under the 10th EDF and bilateral aid from EU Member States should be concentrated in addressing jointly priority areas mentioned below.

(a) Peace and security

In terms of conflict management and prevention, the EU will assist Nigeria – which remains the largest African contributor of peacekeepers – in playing an even more active and effective role in conflict mediation and in the peace keeping efforts at ECOWAS and AU levels. This could include building on the multidimensional (police, civilian, military) training at all levels of Nigerian troops for peace support operations in the

framework of the EU's wider support to the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA).

In the area of responsibility and traceability of SALW exports, the government of Nigeria agrees with the EU that support and logistics are needed to combat the illegal arms flow into Nigeria and in particular, the Niger Delta. This could take the form of law enforcement and institutional capacity building and judicial cooperation.

The EU will continue to work closely with the Nigerian authorities in addressing the problems of the Niger Delta and continue the ongoing projects as well as be ready to contribute to and support a peace process.

(b) Good governance and human rights

The EU will continue to support Nigeria's legislative and judicial institutions (both at the Federal and State levels) and the electoral reform process. The EU will also act as an independent observer in future elections at the invitation of the Nigerian Government. The EU will also work with civil society to encourage reciprocal accountability and to improve dialogue with the Government.

Cooperation between the Parties needs to be strengthened in a number of human rights areas of concern. This can be done by joint projects to improve the judicial and prison systems. The EU will also be ready to support Nigeria's efforts to reform the police to strengthen the fight against criminality and impunity.

The fight against corruption is an area of common concern. The EU will provide support to improve the implementation of transparency mechanisms at State and local levels of the administration. The EU will also look into the possibility of continuing, as appropriate, its support to the Nigerian institutions responsible for combating corruption and promote exchanges/sharing of information between these institutions and EU national police services. The dialogue with Nigeria on the Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative will continue and will be deepened.

(c) Trade and regional integration

Sustainable economic development including industrialisation and regional economic integration are vital to Nigeria. The EU can share its rich experience in these areas. Cooperation, at national and regional levels, will focus on EPA related issues, facilitate and promote the diversification of the Nigerian economy, the reinforcement of the competitiveness of non oil sector, the exchanges between commercial actors in the areas of industry, energy, ICT, between professional organisations and control of quality, etc.

- (d) Key development issues, including energy, environmental sustainability and climate change.

The EU and its institutions are ready to support and advise the Government of Nigeria in the implementation of its reform programme in the energy sector according to terms and modalities to be identified and agreed in the course of this political dialogue.

3. REVIEW OF THE PROGRESS OF THE NIGERIA-EU JOINT WAY FORWARD

The performance of Nigeria-EU political dialogue will be subject to a joint review by the Parties during the Ministerial Troika meetings. Benchmarks could be introduced, thus contributing to the respective progress assessment.

The performance of the cooperation initiatives financed by the 10th EDF and by bilateral contributions from EU Member States will be discussed and revised based on the mechanisms foreseen under the respective cooperation agreements.

Following such assessments, the Nigeria-EU Joint Way Forward could be revised upon a request of either Party.