



SEVENTH NIGERIA-EU MINISTERIAL DIALOGUE

18 NOVEMBER 2020

JOINT COMMUNIQUE

The Ministerial Meeting between the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the European Union (EU), opened by H.E. the President of Nigeria, President Muhammadu Buhari, represented by Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs, H.E. Geoffrey Onyeama, took place on 18 November 2020 in virtual format in Brussels and Abuja, under the co-chairs of H.E. Mr Geoffrey Onyeama, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and H.E. Mr Josep Borrell, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the European Commission. The meeting was also attended on the EU side by Ms Mariya Gabriel, Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth, Ms Ylva Johansson, Commissioner for Home Affairs, Mr Janez Lenarčič, Commissioner for Crisis Management, Ms Jutta Urpilainen, Commissioner for International Partnerships and Ms Kadri Simon, Commissioner for Energy.

On the Nigerian side the meeting was also attended by: H.E. Bashir Salih Magashi, Minister of Defence; H.E. Sadiya Umar Farouq, Minister of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development; H.E. Abubakar Malami, The Honourable Attorney General of the Federation and Minister of Justice; H.E. Richard Adeniyi Adebayo, Minister of Industry, Trade and Investment; H. E. Mohammed Sabo Nanono, Minister of Agriculture, H. E. Ali Isa Pantami, Minister of Communication and Digital Economy; H. E. Chris Ngige, Minister of Labour and Employment; H. E. Rauf Aregbesola, Minister of Interior; H. E. Muhammad Mahmood, Minister of Environment; and H. E. Zainab Ahmed, Minister of Finance, Budget and National Planning.

A STRATEGIC AND COMPREHENSIVE EU-NIGERIA PARTNERSHIP

1. Both Sides discussed a reinvigoration of a strategic and mature political partnership between the EU and Nigeria that should be comprehensive, balanced and mutually beneficial. Both Sides intend to hold Ministerial and high-level

dialogues over the coming years in a number of areas: including agriculture, climate change and the environment, renewable energy, blue economy, research and innovation, trade and investment, sustainable finance, capacity building in governance, rule of law and security, social development, health systems resilience, humanitarian assistance, and migration and mobility. The EU reiterated the importance of this partnership in the context of a new comprehensive EU strategy with Africa.

2. Both Sides reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening the rules-based international order, respect for human rights, implementation and adherence to International Humanitarian Law, universal values and effective multilateralism.
3. Both Sides acknowledged that the COVID-19 pandemic severely hit the Member States of the European Union and Nigeria. Both Sides discussed global health challenges and COVID-19 sustainable recovery options as well as longer-term priorities, including Nigeria's Economic Sustainability Plan, and the importance of a green recovery. They underlined the importance of global solidarity and multilateral cooperation in relation to COVID-19 response as demonstrated by the "Team Europe" support package, and global efforts to strengthen the preparedness and response capacity to future pandemics
4. Both Sides underlined the importance of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) as the regional organisation promoting peace and security, policy harmonisation and good governance, infrastructure development in the region, as well as economic integration and free movement of people and goods as a means to greater prosperity. The role of President Buhari as ECOWAS Champion in the fight against COVID-19 is an important contribution to strengthening the regional pandemic preparedness and response.
5. Both Sides underlined the importance of a strong EU-AU partnership. They acknowledge the necessity of continuous strong engagement at bilateral, regional and continental level to work towards enhancing this partnership, with a view to the next AU-EU Summit, both in response to the impact of the pandemic and the global challenges faced by both continents. Nigeria is an instrumental and key partner in the implementation of this partnership.
6. Both Sides took note of the ongoing negotiations of a comprehensive new post Cotonou agreement expected to conclude soon.
7. Both Sides reaffirmed their commitment to the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and to attain the targets of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the principle of Leaving No One Behind. The EU noted its readiness to assist Nigeria in mapping funding and exploring alternative streams to increase the resources available for SDG-financing, including through domestic resource mobilisation.

8. The EU noted that it was entering a new programming cycle for its external action. Consultations with the Federal Government of Nigeria and other stakeholders on the priority areas of EU's bilateral relationship with Nigeria for the period 2021-2027 will take place in the months to come.

THE ECONOMY, GROWTH, AND GREEN PARTNERSHIP

9. Both Sides reaffirmed their support for the necessary modernization of the World Trade Organization in order to preserve and strengthen the multilateral rules-based order. Both Sides welcome Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala being the candidate recommended for the appointment as next Director-General of the World Trade Organization and Nigeria expressed its appreciation to the EU for its support. The EU hopes the appointment would follow in due course
10. The EU welcomed the signature by Nigeria of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Agreement. Both Sides also noted the importance of continental and regional economic integration and the EU reiterated its support for this transformative process for the African continent. The EU noted that its trade arrangements in Africa would pursue similar objectives at the regional level and contribute towards the continental project.
11. Under the aegis of the Africa-Europe Alliance for sustainable investment and jobs, and the External Investment Plan, both Sides expressed a mutual interest in promoting responsible and sustainable investment, boosting sustainable trade and creating jobs for all, especially youth and women. They intend to deepen the bilateral trade and sustainable investment relationship over the next years in order to accelerate economic diversification, sustainable and inclusive growth, peace and job creation in Nigeria. They acknowledged the importance of a rules-based and predictable investment climate, comprising transparent and non-discriminatory public procurement processes as well as an independent and effective justice system, in order to encourage investments and agreed on the importance of countering corruption in all forms. Both Sides intend to explore the possibility of deepening bilateral cooperation.
12. The European Investment Bank (EIB) has expressed its intention to increase its activities in Nigeria in addition to new investments and reiterated its availability to provide highly concessional loans to assist Nigeria in its fight against the COVID-19 pandemic and the mitigation of its socio-economic impact. Nigeria encourages the establishment of an Office in the Country. In that regard, there is need to bring to fore the identified industrial sectors where there is ample evidence that Nigeria possesses the comparative and competitive advantage, as articulated in the Nigeria Industrial Revolution Plan (NIRP) document and to introduce sustainable production methods such as organic farming or circular economy that contribute to Nigeria's resilience and sustainable growth. Support to oil and gas industry can be considered in the form of Technical Assistance to update Nigeria's regulatory framework and enhance its capacity to monitor, report and verify methane emissions, with regard to minimising their environmental footprint.

13. In line with the Joint Africa Rural Transformation Agenda discussed during the last AU-EU Agriculture Ministerial Conference, both Sides intend to launch an EU-Nigeria agri-food platform as a structured public-private dialogue between Nigerian and EU farming and agri-food sectors, agricultural and agro-industrial sectors to discuss the investment climate and governance framework necessary to promote trade and attract responsible investment, and to foster business linkages, particularly for SMEs.

Digitalisation

14. Both Sides acknowledged the importance of privacy and data protection as key to the development of the digital economy, to foster consumer trust and accelerate the uptake of new technologies. Both Sides also acknowledged that increasing convergence between their respective data protection systems would bring significant benefits to their economies. Both Sides intend to cooperate bilaterally and through regional projects such as the Team Europe Data Flagship Initiative between the EU and the AU. Both Sides agreed that freedom of expression is crucial to creating an inclusive and thriving digital environment.
15. Both Sides noted the importance of education for inclusive economic and social advancement, in particular for women and girls, with the EU noting that its AfricaConnect3 project could support the creation, development and use of advanced, reliable internet connectivity for teaching, learning and research communities in Nigeria.
16. Both Sides intend to further support the development of digital education through individual learning mobility and institutional capacity building schemes and welcomed Nigeria's participation in pilot initiatives to foster technical and vocational education and training, especially for the youth. Both Sides acknowledged the need to ensure a greater sustainability of such initiatives. Both Sides noted their support for the implementation of Nigeria's National Digital Economy Policy and Strategy and the recommendations of the AU Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa. Both Sides acknowledged the importance of broadband access to economic development and to work together on issues related to the Nigerian National Broadband Plan.

Energy access and renewable energy

17. Both Sides recognised the challenge of energy access in Nigeria and stressed the importance of improving access to sustainable electricity and the reliability of the electricity supply to support sustainable post-COVID 19 economic growth. Both Sides called for conducive regulatory and business conditions for renewable power generation investments that could bring both access to electricity, quality employment, clean cooking solutions and energy efficiency. The EU welcomed Nigeria's aspiration to connect five million households to mini-grids under the Nigeria Economic Sustainability Plan and encouraged Nigeria to continue the implementation of the Power Sector Recovery Programme.

18. Both Sides noted the urgent need for planning for diversifying away from fossil fuels as part of a long-term commitment to achieve the objectives of the Paris Agreement. The EU encourages Nigeria to reach out to its African partners on this matter.

Green Partnership

19. Both Sides reaffirmed their commitment to full implementation of the Paris Agreement and appreciated the ambitious commitment of Nigeria to reduce greenhouse gas emissions up to 45% conditionally by 2030. Both Sides committed to limiting their greenhouse gas emissions and to adapting to climate change, through updates to their Nationally Determined Contributions and submissions of Long-term Low Greenhouse Gas Emission Development Strategies (LT-LEDS) under the Paris Agreement, as well as through adaptation strategies and other relevant policies.
20. Both Sides welcomed President Buhari's endorsement of the "Leaders' pledge for Nature" and the commitment to international cooperation and multilateralism taken at the United Nation Summit on Biodiversity in September 2020 for reversing biodiversity loss by 2030. The EU and Nigeria expressed their intention to jointly work in the multilateral arena towards sealing an ambitious and measurable agreement on the post-2020 global biodiversity framework for adoption at the 15th Conference of Parties of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP 15). The importance of sustainable forest and water management and the Great Green Wall initiative for the fight against desertification were also underlined.
21. Both Sides confirmed their intention to further cooperate on Circular Economy, at national and continental level, notably through the African Circular Economy Alliance co-chaired by Nigeria and in the context of an EU Circular Economy Mission to Nigeria to be held once the global health situation allows.

Research and Innovation

22. In view of strengthening bilateral research and innovation relations, both Sides intend to explore ways for further enhancing cooperation, including the possibility of exploring a bilateral agreement on research and innovation, including the enhancement of relations between Nigerian research and academic organisations with their EU counterparts.

PEACE, GOVERNANCE, AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Strengthening cooperation on peace, security and stability

23. Following the recent #EndSARS protests, both Sides reiterated the importance of respecting human rights, including the right to peaceful demonstrations and freedom of expression within the context of law and constitution. The EU expressed its concern and condolences for the casualties and stressed the

importance of bringing perpetrators of violence to justice. Both Sides acknowledged the importance of delivering on genuine reforms, including of the police, through a process characterised by engagement of all stakeholders, local ownership, transparency and accountability. Both Sides acknowledged the concrete efforts and response of the Nigerian Government in addressing the #EndSARS movement demands, including the setting up of independent bodies to investigate complaints of police brutality or related extra-judicial killings, with a view to delivering justice for all victims of the dissolved SARS and other police units. This also includes civilian brutality to policemen and damages done to private and public properties and investments.

24. Both Sides stressed the joint commitment to continue supporting efforts to address Nigeria's peace and security challenges, and to respond to the humanitarian needs, in particular in the North East, but also in the North West, Middle Belt, Niger Delta, and the Gulf of Guinea. They noted that a strong Humanitarian-Development-Peace nexus approach, should be at the heart of this cooperation.
25. Both Sides reiterated the importance of security and defence forces to respect human rights and to work closely with local authorities and humanitarian actors to protect civilian populations and facilitate access to humanitarian assistance.
26. Both Sides reaffirmed their commitment to the promotion, protection and fulfilment of all human rights and to the full and effective implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and the outcomes of their review conferences and remain committed to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), in this context.
27. Both Sides condemned the horrific abuses committed by non-state armed groups and acknowledged the efforts to reduce the threat. Both Sides reaffirmed the importance to prevent a general destabilisation of the region and noted the importance to strengthen resilience of communities, especially the most vulnerable, as well as refugees and internally displaced people. Both Sides acknowledge that in order to respond to the complex challenges in the Lake Chad Basin region a truly integrated approach is needed, linking political, security, environmental and development efforts and ensuring provision of humanitarian assistance in a principled manner. Both Sides expressed their support for the implementation of the AU's Lake Chad Regional Stabilisation Strategy in close coordination with all key actors, including the AU and the United Nations. The EU expressed willingness to continue working closely together through the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) as part of an integrated response to the crisis, and in line with relevant Security Council resolutions. The EU called for better cooperation between MNJTF member states and increased operational activity. The EU acknowledged the significance of Nigerian leadership within the MNJTF and encourages the Nigerian government to take initiative in order to enhance the MNJTF's efficiency. Both Sides recognised that higher military pressure on armed terrorist groups, in compliance with humanitarian law, was required for the return of peace in the Lake Chad region.

28. Both Sides intend to work together to prevent further violence in the North west and the Middle Belt, particularly through the implementation of the National Livestock Transformation Plan.
29. Both Sides recognised that maritime security challenges in the Gulf of Guinea require concerted efforts of all stakeholders, and noted that Nigeria demonstrated strong resolve to tackling the threats in its territorial waters and exclusive economic zone. Both Sides intend to intensify collaboration and coordination, also with neighbouring countries, and to continue the implementation of the Yaoundé Architecture to fight transnational organised crime in the maritime domain. Both Sides stressed the vital significance of the continued consolidation of democracy and the importance that electoral reforms are agreed upon and implemented ahead of the next general elections, and recognised the concerted efforts put in place by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) for achieving the electoral reform process, including the recommendations provided by the EU Observation Mission in 2019 stressing inter alia the importance of inclusivity for youth, women and people with disabilities.
30. Both Sides acknowledged on the importance of stepping up efforts in tackling the persistent challenges in curbing transnational organised crime, including cybercrime, trafficking in persons, drugs and arms as well as money laundering and other financial crimes. Both Sides intend to continue their cooperation in these areas including through capacity building and enhanced cross-border collaboration, including with the UN.
31. Both Sides stressed the need to continue and strengthen efforts in the implementation of Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, the fight against sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), and commended the extraordinary commitments that were made as a result of a spike in cases of violence against women and girls in Nigeria since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. These efforts must continue to ensure the full protection of women and girls against sexual and gender-based violence and promote their empowerment. The EU Action Plan on WPS, EU-UN Spotlight Initiative and the Action Plan to promote Gender Equality and Women Empowerment show the EU's commitment in these domains.

Social Development and Youth empowerment

32. Both Sides acknowledged that poverty and inequality remain major barriers to sustainable development and achieving the SDGs, and that Nigeria's success or failure in confronting extreme poverty will be pivotal for the rest of Africa. The EU welcomed President Buhari's commitment to lift 100 million Nigerians out of poverty in the coming 10 years and will prioritise poverty eradication in the EU's development cooperation with Nigeria. Both Sides acknowledge that the best way for Nigeria to reduce poverty, create opportunities and generate prosperity is to invest in its people, create decent jobs, and reduce inequalities.
33. Both Sides acknowledge on the importance of ensuring the meaningful inclusion and active participation of youth at all levels of society, the economy and politics.

Both Sides endeavour to further support youth empowerment in Nigeria through capacity building schemes for youth organisations and the Nigerian Youth Fellowship Programme while noting the importance of engagement with youth and youth participation and inclusion as key aspect in the SDG agenda. Both Sides agreed that the National Action Plan for the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 2250 “Youth, Peace and Security”, currently being drafted in Nigeria, provides an excellent opportunity for this meaningful inclusion.

34. Both Sides stressed the need for access to quality and affordable comprehensive reproductive sexual and reproductive health information and education (taking into consideration the UNESCO International technical guidance) as well as the need for the delivery of relevant health-care services. They also support the effective implementation of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa and of the Maputo Plan of Action 2016-2030.
35. Both Sides acknowledged that the solution to the prevailing high unemployment rate, in the context of the new world of work, lies in Skill Development and Nigeria proposed partnerships towards boosting existing facilities to world class standards to reduce unemployability among youths in the country. A mutual understanding towards the development and strengthening of the informal sector in Nigeria as tool for inclusive development and equitable distribution of wealth, through targeted capacity building, improved access to reproductive health services, information technology and financial services for larger segment of operators in the sector. Both Sides agreed that availability of real time data to guide decision-making and effective planning, through the establishment of a functional database on the labour sector in Nigeria would be important.

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

36. Both Sides shared concern regarding the humanitarian crisis, including reports of deterioration of food security, in North East Nigeria and the spike of violence in North West Nigeria, which have triggered population displacement. The EU aims to support national and local efforts to ensure that civilians affected by conflict can access the humanitarian assistance and protection they need in a sustainable manner. Both Sides acknowledged the national humanitarian coordination committee (civil security cooperation-CiSEC) efforts to ensure unimpeded, safe, and secure humanitarian access to the most vulnerable people as a priority to ensure their right to protection and lifesaving assistance in a dignified way. The EU highlighted the importance of respect for and adherence to International Humanitarian Law, international standards on return and resettlement of IDPs, as laid down in the Kampala Convention and the humanitarian principles to assist the most vulnerable in North East Nigeria.
37. Both Sides reiterated that return and resettlement of IDPs should take place when effective security has been established and should be voluntary, well informed and sustainable.

38. Both Sides acknowledged the need for CiSEC as a stronger coordination approach between all stakeholders, including humanitarian and development partners and civilian and military authorities in Nigeria, as part of the wider effort to operationalize and implement the humanitarian-development-peace Nexus.

MIGRATION AND MOBILITY

39. Both Sides acknowledge their common interest to work closely together towards addressing mobility and all aspects of migration, building on the Common Agenda for Migration and Mobility (Camm). They noted the importance of a comprehensive approach to migration, which aims at ensuring mutual benefit for countries of origin and destination as well as the migrants alike, avoiding loss of life, protecting the human rights of migrants, and providing international protection to those who need it. The EU's proposed new Pact on Migration and Asylum aims at providing a reinforced basis to achieve this overarching objective, fostering mutually beneficial partnerships with countries of origin, transit and destination.
40. Both Sides intend to restart the dialogue on migration and mobility, as an integral part of a comprehensive, balanced and mutually beneficial partnership. They intend to actively cooperate in all aspects of migration management and in addressing the root causes of irregular migration and forced displacement, in line with the principles set out in the Joint Valetta Action Plan through fostering job creation, reforms, and investments; stem irregular migration through enhanced cooperation on integrated border management; increase collaborative efforts to fight migrants smuggling and trafficking in human beings; and use of legal migration pathways, as well as promote the facilitation of remittances; granting assistance to refugees and internally displaced people; strengthen cooperation to ensure effective return and readmission; and finalise negotiations on a readmission agreement, as soon as possible. Both Sides intend to continue cooperation in the context of the Rabat process.
41. Both Sides recognize that Nigeria, through the Ministry of Labour and Employment, has enjoyed a long-standing relationship with the EU on labour migration, particularly, Nigeria has greatly benefited from the EU-IOM initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration being implemented within the framework of the European Union Trust Fund Project for Africa which was launched in July, 2017. Recall that the world of work is changing and labour mobility is now part of an increasing dynamic in a globalized world, as more jobseekers are looking beyond national borders for employment and livelihood opportunities and as noted by ILO "Migration today is for work". Nigeria proposes more collaboration in the following areas: Establishment of additional Job Centre's and Migrant Resource Centres in all the 36 states of the federation and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), apart from the six existing in the Six Geo-political Zones of the Country. Same with the Migrant Resource Centres which currently exist only in Abuja, Lagos and Edo states and which provides the platform for job seekers and potential migrants as well as returnees. Nigeria also proposes that these be strengthened with both Technical Assistance, Logistics and capacity of government officials on data collection and analysis through

sustained financial support, leveraging on the activities of the International Labour Migration Desk (ILMD) and National Electronic Exchange in the Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment, for monitoring of the International Recruitment Agencies to promote regular migrations and decent jobs for Nigerians.

NEXT STEPS

- 42. Both Sides intend to continue holding a regular/annual Ministerial dialogue to take stock of agreed priorities and deliverables.
- 43. Both Sides reiterated their full commitment to maintaining their constructive dialogue and cooperation based on the principles of mutual respect, openness, and a commitment to promoting human rights, democracy, the rule of law and transparency, and with a view to tackling bilateral, regional and global challenges in the mutual interest of Nigeria and the EU.
- 44. Both Sides intend to hold the next Ministerial Dialogue before the end of 2021.

<p>For the European Union</p> <p>H.E. Mr Josep Borrell Vice President and High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy</p>	<p>For Nigeria</p> <p>H.E. Mr Geoffrey Onyeama Minister of Foreign Affairs Federal Republic of Nigeria</p>
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Done at Brussels and Abuja on 18 November 2020