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BS/SB/TJ/CD/sw

Mr Andris PIEBALGS  
Commissioner for Development  
European Commission  
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## Re: Africa-EU Strategy

Dear Commissioner

On March 8th and 9th, a joint Africa-EU taskforce meeting will be held in Brussels. In the lead to this important meeting, we would like to draw your attention on a few demands that trade unions from the EU and Africa have raised persistently over the last years and about which we would urge the EU to show more decisive commitment.

Since the launch of the joint experts' groups, trade unions have been following the meetings as CSO focal points in partnership 7 (Migration, Mobility and Employment). The follow-up has been accompanied by continuous coordination with the CSOs organised in the EU CSO steering group. In general terms, European trade unions, as well as CSOs, have been concerned at the lack of concrete results in the strategy.

We would draw attention in particular to the lack of progress around the decent work agenda. Despite two important trade union declarations agreed upon at joint Africa-EU trade union summits and the many efforts developed by trade unions in both regions, we regret that decent work is not one of the main pillars of the Strategy. Besides, in Partnership 7, where it has been confined, it remains almost completely absent, while migration has been the main topic under discussion.

Today's global crisis is posing major threats to peace and stability. Its social impact in the EU and the major development problems that persist in Africa lead us to insist once more on the need to provide the decent work agenda with a strong impetus. Our proposals would turn around the following priority areas.

- Firstly, policy coherence is needed. The EU has endorsed the decent work agenda as one of its priorities in the recent Communication *Agenda for Change*, which is supposed to outline the strategic approach of the EU to development policies. Here decent work, social protection, social protection floors and social partners support are expressly mentioned as among the most relevant pillars of the renewed EU Agenda. Yet, these issues are almost absent from the Africa-EU Strategy. The latter should therefore reflect such priorities also in Partnership 7.
- Secondly, as trade unions and CSOs have insisted repeatedly, some synergies are necessary between the existing partnerships, particularly in line with decent work-related issues. Green jobs should certainly be encapsulated in a better coordination

between P. 7 and the one covering climate change. Synergies between P. 7 and the one covering human rights would also be essential. The Millennium Development Goals will also only be attained if the decent work agenda is duly promoted. A synergy between P7 and P8 would also be most necessary for discussion around issues like vocational training (viz new technologies and scientific progress).

- Thirdly, a genuine consideration for CSO focal points inputs and a better coordination in the JEGs is urgently needed, particularly in Partnership 7. Today coordination is strictly limited to the space of the JEG meetings, for which invitations often reach us at a late notice.
- Fourthly, on issues related to migration, a genuine focus on development, combined with a rights-based approach, needs to be introduced, by focusing on: poverty reduction in partner countries by the creation of local employment opportunities in countries of origin; safeguarding the rights of potential migrant workers; boosting institutional collaboration and harmonisation of governmental migration policies in origin and destination countries, through partnerships between social partners (i.e. international trade union cooperation networks for migrant workers), CSOs and public institutions at national and local level. This vision has been shared in discussions with many CSO organisations.
- Finally, funding requires some further reflection - including the sustainability of the initiatives endorsed until now - and the definition of clear and tangible results which would orient more effectively the assessment of the results of the Strategy and its different partnerships. Trade unions insist in particular that the decent work agenda be considered as a pillar of the EU –Africa Strategy and a cross-cutting issue, including in the Pan African programme. As the “proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a financing instrument for development cooperation-DCI” points out in its annex VI (thematic programme), initiatives at the global arena are most welcome and we would insist to have a particular (and urgent) focus around decent work.

In advance, we thank you for your attention and for the consideration that will be provided to this message in the forthcoming meeting of the Joint Africa-EU taskforce and beyond.

Yours sincerely,



Sharan Burrow  
General Secretary



Bernadette Ségol  
General Secretary