



European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC)
Confédération européenne des syndicats (CES)

**Joint European Union – Africa Strategy
First Europe-Africa Trade Union Meeting
Lisbon, 26 and 27 October 2007
Trade Union Declaration to the EU –Africa Summit**

Putting Decent Work at the Heart of the Joint EU-Africa Strategy

1. The unions affiliated to the ITUC and the ETUC welcome the fact that the Heads of State and Government of both continents have agreed to the principle of a Joint EU-Africa Strategy reflecting the needs and aspirations of the peoples of Europe and Africa. We welcome the determination of the European Union to move from the former relationship of donors and beneficiaries to a genuine partnership between equal partners. Despite its failings the Euromed partnership is a first example. We also support the central position to be given to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) within the Joint Strategy and are convinced that this partnership should be able to help the African countries achieve those objectives.
2. The trade unions of Europe and Africa insist that decent work is placed at the heart of the Joint Strategy and thereby becomes the cornerstone of just, democratic and participatory societies in Africa and Europe. These two continents are today faced with an increasingly precarious work caused by a deregulation of the labour markets. Only the creation of decent jobs would enable to overcome poverty in a sustainable way. Most African women, men and young people are in informal, precarious, unproductive and poorly paid employment that is neither recognised nor protected by law. They are not able to enjoy their workers' rights and generally have no access to social protection. The ILO's decent work agenda, which in fact goes much further than the fundamental labour standards, provides a firm basis for sustainable and balanced economic and social development, enabling each and everyone to live in dignity with a freely chosen, productive job, and to enjoy the benefits of well-established social protection and autonomous and institutionalised social dialogue, with full respect of gender issues at all levels.

3. The trade unions of Africa and Europe welcome the fact that promotion of democratic governance is a central element of the Europe-Africa dialogue and partnership. Democratic governance needs to be viewed in its broadest sense and to include respecting of human and workers' rights and the state of law, strengthening of institutions, the participation of social partners, and fighting corruption. European and African trade unions insist that social dialogue be at the heart of the Joint Strategy. Indeed, the full involvement of the social partners in the economic and social life of a country is not just a requirement of participatory democracies but also a source of social development, social peace and economic competitiveness. Social dialogue is key to securing the socio-economic consensus that enable development and for this reason, the role of the social partners is distinct from that of other civil society organisations. The recognition of this specific role must appear clearly in the actions of the EU-Africa Partnership. Thus, the trade unions ask that they be systematically included in the drawing up of national and regional indicative programmes (NIP and RIP) and be taken as full actors in development with access to public development aid.
4. The trade unions of Africa and Europe maintain that the Joint Strategy should affirm and recognise that the ratification and respecting of fundamental labour standards are a prerequisite for the sustainable development of African and European countries. The Joint Strategy needs to provide instruments, programmes and actions enabling the effective application of the fundamental labour rights and principles contained in the ILO's 1998 Declaration. Those standards are, indeed, still flouted too frequently on the African continent where forced labour, the worst forms of child labour and serious forms of discrimination on the labour market persist. The seriousness of the trade union violations is a source of great concern, as illustrated by the violence of the anti-union repression in Zimbabwe. Whilst in certain African countries freedom of association does not exist, in others independent trade unions are regarded as opponents to the government and trade union leaders and activists are victims of death threats, police violence or murders. All governments must take action to end those violations. Women trade unionists are not spared either, since they are also repressed, especially in the export sectors and in the export processing zones, where they are trying to organise themselves in order to improve their working conditions.
5. As part of the Joint Strategy, European and African trade unions ask that the EU insists that European companies investing in Africa respect the international standards of social and environmental responsibility, such as those contained in the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises and the ILO's Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy. A lot of European capital is being invested in Africa, particularly in the mining and petroleum industries, and it is precisely in those sectors that very serious violations of national and

international labour law are occurring and that, with armed conflicts and civil war as background.

6. Migratory flows are an important aspect of Europe-Africa relations. The departure countries have a severe shortage of jobs, which is leading to the migration. In receiving countries, African migrant workers are often enduring inhuman living and working conditions. Feminisation of migration is increasing. Women, who represent half of the migrants, are running greater risks. We ask that the Joint Strategy puts in place a framework for negotiations based on human rights between departure and host countries. This framework must promote decent work for migrant on the basis of ILO Conventions 97 and 143 and of the UN Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of their Families. The trade union rights of migrant workers need to be recognised and supported. The brain drain and the flight of well-qualified personnel are raising real problems for African countries' development, and fair solutions need to be found through negotiations between the European and African states and social partners. It is also important that migratory flows are managed whilst fully respecting the industrial relations systems in the respective countries. Last but not least, the social partners need to be fully involved in decision-making on migration, mobility and employment.
7. The trade unions of Africa and Europe demand that regional integration includes a real social dimension, which represents a challenge in both Europe and Africa. Trade between the two continents must serve development in African countries. Trade unions call on the European Commission not to impose demands that go beyond those foreseen in the WTO context. At the same time, the unions maintain that trade integration in Africa, which is still in its initial phase, is a precondition for the completion of bi-regional trade agreements. Accordingly, the unions are convinced that the deadline of 31 December 2007 for the signing of the Economic Partnership Agreement should be revised in order to enable the African states to strengthen their regional integration. All economic policies imposed without trade union involvement have led to unemployment and poverty, factors of migration.
8. The trade unions of Europe and Africa stress, once again, the urgent need for development funds, enabling the Millennium Development Goals to be achieved. Although the countries of the European Union are providing over half of worldwide development aid, so far only Sweden, Norway¹, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Denmark have reached the global target of providing 0.7% of their GDP. Though the transitional target set for the Europe of 15² of 0.39% of GDP by 2006 was officially reached, it is

¹ Norway is a member of the European Economic Area.

² Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom.

important to stress that debt relief artificially swells those figures. Indeed, if the debt relief for Iraq and Nigeria are subtracted, it is clear that European countries' progress on state development aid has been extremely slow. Moreover, the unions call on the European governments as a matter of great urgency to cancel in full the bilateral debt of the African countries, and in particular that of the most vulnerable ones that respect human rights. Similarly, the European countries need to coordinate their stance within the IFIs to ensure that all the multilateral debts of those countries are also cancelled without imposing conditions damaging to the interests of their peoples.

9. The trade unions of Africa and Europe support the decision to include climate change in the priority themes of the Joint Strategy. Whilst the whole planet is suffering the effects of the degradation of our environment, we would stress that the developing countries are the worst hit. Climate change raises real dangers in terms of food security and the African people's right to water. Cooperation in this area needs to combine the linked concerns of preservation of the environment, economic growth and the creation of decent jobs. The unions also maintain that the EU and all the industrialised countries (whether or not they are signatories) should adopt the measures proposed on in the Kyoto Protocol.
10. Ensuring peace and security in Africa must be a priority. The EU-Africa Joint Strategy should enable the African Union not just to manage conflicts but also to prevent them, in particular by improving the living standards of African people via the implementation of the ILO's decent work agenda.