

Consultation on the Pan-African Programme

PLATFORMA contribution

PLATFORMA is the network representing European local and regional governments (LRGs), and their associations, active in the field of development cooperation. PLATFORMA has 24 members: national, European and international associations, as well individual local and regional governments (more information on www.platforma-dev.eu).

PLATFORMA has represented local and regional governments throughout the Structured dialogue process and has two seats in the Policy Forum, as the European platform representing LRGs in development policy.

Since its launch, in 2008, at the European Development Days in Strasbourg, PLATFORMA has actively engaged with the European institutions to inform and constructively participate in shaping the EU development policy with two main objectives; i. strengthening EU support to local governance in partner countries and, ii. strengthening EU support to decentralised cooperation as an implementation means of development cooperation.

I. The relevance of associating local and regional governments to the Pan-African Programme

We welcome the creation of this new instrument and the consultation organised by the European Commission;

We note that the programme will focus on activities of trans-regional, continental and global nature, conducted in Africa and with Africa and will support Africa-EU joint initiatives;

We encourage a coherent articulation of this programme with the geographical programs covering African countries and with other programs under the rules of the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI), including thematic programs;

However, we regret that the programme as it is currently thought does not take into account the role of local and regional governments (LRG);

The programme covers many areas in which local and regional governments are competent, starting of course with democratic governance;

Indeed, many African states have undertaken decentralisation reforms that give LRGs greater competence in local governance and basic services delivery. Moreover, most of the countries on the continent are defined by significant diversities that need to be delicately managed through participatory, inclusive and fair political and economic processes. Decentralisation can thus become particularly relevant in the case of Africa;¹

¹ [Article: "Decentralization and Development Post-2015: A Strategic Imetative for Africa?" by Fritz Nganje](#)

These reforms, when they are completed and they give rise to a real decentralisation of power and resources, place local and regional governments at the heart of project ownership of their territory;

They are an opportunity for economic, social and cultural development of territories, closer to the citizens

In Africa many initiatives attest the vitality of the debate on decentralisation and local governance:

- ▶ The All Africa Ministerial Conference on Decentralisation and Local Development, a specialised technical committee of the African Union (AU), which comprises the Ministers of the Member States responsible for the sector, promotes decentralisation and local governance;
- ▶ The creation of a High Council of Local Authorities of the African Union and the adoption of the African Charter on the values and principles of decentralisation, local governance and local development are currently being undertaken;
- ▶ Since 2012 the AU celebrates the African day of decentralisation and local development;
- ▶ The Africities Summit gathers every three years hundreds of local and regional elected representatives from across the continent, as well as their peers in other parts of the world and many representatives of national governments;
- ▶ Local and regional governments, through the association that represents them at continental level, United Cities and Local Governments of Africa, and through the global associations that have a strong membership in Africa, CLGF and AIMF, make their voices heard within the African Union and in the international forums where future commitments on development are discussed;
- ▶ Local and regional governments also undertake discussions with regional economic groups, whose regulations may have a significant impact in economic terms;

In addition, this omission appears all the more surprising in light of recent developments in the European development policy, including support for local and regional governments in partner countries;

- ▶ The Agenda for Change recognises the increasing role of local and regional authorities in development and recommends closer cooperation with them²;
- ▶ The Communication “Empowering Local³ Authorities in partner countries for enhanced governance and more effective development outcomes” and the Council conclusions on the Communication emphasise the essential role of local and regional governments for development and more specifically in relation to democratic governance and citizen participation in decision-making for inclusive development;
- ▶ The Commission recalls that local and regional governments, as a catalyst for change, have the responsibility to provide “solutions to urgent challenges faced by local communities. Such challenges include social exclusion, migration, food security, limited infrastructures, rapid urbanisation, depletion of resources, public safety and violence, environmental and social impact of extractive activities, climate adaptation and mitigation, rule of law and access to justice⁴”;

² [Increasing the impact of EU Development Policy: an Agenda for Change](#)

³ We reproduce here and in all extracts from documents by the European institutions the terminology used by the institutions for clarity but we recommend the systematic use of the terminology “local **and regional** authorities” or “**local and regional governments**”

⁴ [Empowering Local Authorities in partner countries for enhanced governance and more effective development outcomes](#)

- ▶ The Council adds that "working through local authorities and supporting decentralisation processes of power, decision making and resources [...] helps bring about sustainable development and pro-poor results".

In addition, the financial regulations of the DCI states that the Union promotes "inclusive and participatory approaches to development and a broad involvement of all segments of society in the development process and in national and regional dialogue, including political dialogue. Particular attention shall be given to the respective roles of parliaments, local authorities and civil society [...]"⁵.

Moreover, the EU-Africa Strategic Partnership states that "[...] Africa and the EU will need to jointly address a number of key political challenges that are essential for the success of the [...] partnership, including [...] to bear in mind that we can only achieve our objectives if this strategic partnership is owned by all stakeholders, including civil society actors and local authorities, and if they are actively contributing to its implementation"⁶.

At the global level, there is a growing recognition of the role of local and regional governments in the process leading to the definition of the post-2015 development agenda. The Report of the High Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda stresses that "local authorities form a vital bridge between national governments, communities and citizens and will have a critical role in a new global partnership".⁷ And the Secretary General's report on the MDGs and the agenda post-2015 states that the transformative actions required should be supported by multi-stakeholder partnerships that should include not only governments but also [...] local authorities. Such partnerships can channel commitments and actions from a wider set of actors.⁸

Therefore, in the same way that the programme will support civil society initiatives, we ask that the programme makes it possible to support the initiatives of local and regional governments and their associations.

Further in the document we have therefore identified, in relation to the objectives of the programme priorities, the entry points for local and regional governments, in order to demonstrate the need to actively involve them in the search for solutions, the debates on ideas and the implementation of the policies defined at continental level.

II. Entry point for local and regional governments in the Pan-African Programme

Peace, security, democratic governance and human rights

We believe that the objectives relating to peace and security cannot be achieved without strengthening democratic governance, but we insist on the importance of democratic governance at all levels.

We recall that the local and regional governments, as the level of government closest to citizens, contribute in an essential way to the democratic life of a country in linking citizens with government, and in ensuring broad-based and democratic ownership of countries.

They are the first political space in which citizens can get involved and have a real influence on public policy.

⁵ [Draft European Parliament legislative resolution on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a financing instrument for development cooperation](#), article 3, paragraph 8 b

⁶ [The Africa-EU strategic partnership, a joint Africa-EU strategy](#)

⁷ ["Report High Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda"](#). In that report, local authorities denote all levels of government below national government, so local and regional governments.

⁸ Report of the UN Secretary General on MDGs and Post-2015 agenda: ["A life of dignity for all: accelerating progress towards the MDGs and advancing the UN development agenda beyond 2015"](#)- August 2013

For this reason we recommend that the EU supports the work of the Department of Political Affairs of the African Union, which implements the architecture of African governance, on issues of decentralisation and local governance.

In addition, sub-national elections are part of the electoral cycle in any democratic country, and as such the EU should go beyond the sole support to national elections, and also support the local elections.

Based on this we propose to add a fifth objective of the programme under this area, which would read as follows:

- **support the establishment of sub-national committees (regions, provinces, etc.) within the African Union, allowing participation of sub-national institutions in decision-making in areas affecting their immediate environment.**

We also propose to modify the results as follows:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the improved implementation of the mandates of Africa's continental institutions and the effective respect of African legal instruments in the area of democracy and human rights by individual states; - the reinforced technical and management capacities of the AU to observe elections in Africa, according to a credible and effective observation methodology; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the improved implementation of the mandates of Africa's continental institutions and the effective respect of African legal instruments in the area of democracy, decentralisation and local governance, and human rights by individual states; - the reinforced technical and management capacities of the AU to observe elections at all levels of governments in Africa, according to a credible and effective observation methodology;
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Migration, mobility

When conflicts and crises force people to migrate, local and regional governments are in the first line to manage the reception of migrants. Whatever the extent of the phenomenon, the arrival of migrants impacts services and infrastructure (housing, health, education) as well as local economy and social cohesion.

Moreover, local and regional governments play a role in the mobilisation and promotion of diasporas. Cooperation ties that bind municipalities and regions across borders are often guided by social-cultural ties between the two territories. Migrant populations thus play a positive and important role in the definition of the cooperation policy in their communities and in its implementation. Their connections with and knowledge of the territories of origin represent an expertise that allows increasing the efficiency of partnerships.

In this respect, local and regional governments and their associations should be involved in the dialogues and capacity building activities on migration.

We also propose to modify the results as follows:

<p>an effective dialogue in place between Europe and Africa and within Africa to build a joint understanding and comprehensive approaches in</p>	<p>an effective dialogue in place between Europe and Africa at all institutional levels and within Africa to build a joint understanding and</p>
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addressing irregular migration flows, international protection, smuggling and trafficking at cross-regional level, and to address obstacles to intercontinental and regional mobility of persons; African administrations better equipped to understand the needs of their labour markets and facilitate access to better jobs for their own nationals and migrants;	comprehensive approaches in addressing irregular migration flows, international protection, smuggling and trafficking at cross-regional level, and to address obstacles to intercontinental and regional mobility of persons; African administrations better equipped to understand the needs of their labour markets and facilitate access to better jobs for their own nationals and migrants;
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Climate change and environment, natural resources

"In natural resource-rich countries, Local Authorities could give their advice on the ways extractive industries operate and on how revenues from the extractive sector are shared between local communities, central government and private operators⁹."

The competences of local and regional governments relevant to the priorities set in this area are:

- ▶ Develop public transport networks;
- ▶ Increase energy efficiency of public buildings;
- ▶ Promote behavioural change and climate-respectful behaviour;
- ▶ Manage and protect natural resources such as forests, when infra-national governments acquire this competence through decentralisation;
- ▶ Develop emergency action plans in response to natural disasters;
- ▶ Increase the resilience of communities and their adaptability to bad weather through the promotion of a diverse economy and the adjustment of public infrastructures.

Agriculture

The second pillar of the Comprehensive Programme for the Development of African agriculture, market access, includes strengthening local rural infrastructure to enable African farmers to be better linked to markets. The areas covered by the second pillar include transport, storage systems or retail facilities.

Local and regional governments have many competences necessary to promote sustainable and quality agriculture at local level, helping to improve food security of the territories:

- ▶ Responsibility to equip the territory with basic infrastructure necessary for the agricultural chain, from production to distribution: local markets, storage silos, roads;
- ▶ Responsibility in terms of access to water and maintenance of sanitation infrastructures;
- ▶ Cadastral responsibility register, particularly important in the settlement of land disputes;
- ▶ Coordination and federation of various local stakeholders (cooperatives, umbrella organizations), and promotion of short circuits across the territory;
- ▶ Help and monitoring of compliance with health regulations, promotion of quality rules (labels);
- ▶ Strengthening of the food chain.

We propose the following amendment to the text:

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⁹ [Empowering Local Authorities in partner countries for enhanced governance and more effective development outcomes](#)

the two Commissions agreed in 2013 to strive to achieve inclusive and sustainable growth and food and nutrition security, raise farm incomes and enhance agricultural productivity, transformation, trade and rural development. Agricultural cooperation initiatives shall be aligned with the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) and include Sanitary and Phyto-Sanitary issues, standards and quality certification, processing industries and trade initiatives, facilitating access to local, regional and international markets. In addition, food and nutrition security and sustainable agriculture has been chosen as a first priority for research cooperation by the EU-Africa High Level Policy Dialogue on Science, Technology and Innovation.

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We also propose to modify the results as follows:

improved economic, environmental and social governance of the sector; improved negotiating capacity of African central governments for example through the African Legal Support Facility managed by the African Development Bank; increased synergies between European industry and African mineral sector; improved geological knowledge and skills in Africa mining sector;

improved economic, environmental and social governance of the sector; improved negotiating capacity of African central governments **and local/regional authorities** for example through the African Legal Support Facility managed by the African Development Bank; increased synergies between European industry and African mineral sector; improved geological knowledge and skills in Africa mining sector;

Cross-cutting issues

Local and regional governments promote the territorial approach to development which can be defined as a model of multi-level governance integrating all sectorial policies and involving all stakeholders that act on a specific territory. This approach is consistent with the principles of subsidiarity.

The principle of subsidiarity has accompanied the construction of the European Union, which has given a role to local and regional authorities in the definition and implementation of Community policies.

This approach, as well as the principles contained in the European Charter of Local Self-Government of the Council of Europe, is worth promoting and sharing in the EU's partnerships.

We propose the following amendment to the text:

The Africa-EU partnership is fundamentally a people-centred partnership. For this reason, the Pan-African Programme will also support initiatives from civil society actors to enable them to be fully involved in the partnership and to

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III. Decentralised cooperation and territorial approach to development

We recall that the European local and regional governments have many cooperation relationships with their counterparts in partner countries. They mobilise their skills and experience for projects determined jointly with local and regional authorities in the South.

Decentralised cooperation between municipalities, regions and associations of cities and regions allow capacity building of local and regional governments in partner countries in the field of democratic governance and the delivery of basic services.

Moreover, such cooperation mobilises many stakeholders in partner territories, including civil society. It is based on relationships established over the long term and forms a full-fledged public policy.

European local and regional governments are willing to provide their expertise and to support the European Union on the one hand and local and regional authorities on the other hand in the implementation of this programme, for actions where their level of intervention would be considered relevant.

IV. Cross-border cooperation

Widespread cross-border cooperation across the continent under the auspices of the African Union and Regional and Economic Communities (RECs) allows creating a climate of confidence, peace, security and stability which is essential to increasing trade, free movement of people and goods.

Supporting cross-border cooperation, especially in the border areas, which are potential areas of integration, but also unstable and at risk, is an added value to the process of continental and sub-continental integration, maximizing potential and minimizing risk. However, due to the diversity of actors and organisations, coordination mechanisms must be found to avoid dispersion of efforts and resources.

The European experience, without being a model to reproduce, may be a source of inspiration to boost cross-border cooperation in Africa. We recommend that the EU supports a reflection on the implementation of cross-border cooperation in Africa under the umbrella of the African Union. The EU could provide financial support for the implementation of pilot projects for cross-border cooperation in Africa.