

# ***Engaging with Africa on Climate Change***

**- Responding to new policy realities –**

**- Opportunities for climate cooperation with Africa -**

*Roundtable under the auspices of  
the European External Action Service  
the European Commission, DG CLIMA*

Brussels, 13-14 October 2011

## **Introduction**

Historically, the European Union has been at the forefront of action to combat climate change – both politically, in promoting global dialogue, and strategically, in introducing reforms to reduce its carbon footprint. It has assumed this responsibility for two reasons. It recognizes that honest, transparent dialogue, in which all parties accept a collective but differentiated responsibility, will help generate more effective and decisive action to confront the systemic challenges and threats posed by the global situation. Through its policy development, commitment and outreach, the EU has now become the most ambitious and vocal proponent of the global climate agenda. Its Energy and Climate Change Package (2007) positioned the EU as a frontrunner for measures addressing concretely GHG emission, including energy use and consumption, from transport and industrial sectors. However, the global political and economic order is in flux and its leadership, and by inference its ability to influence the debate and response, is becoming increasingly challenged.

The EU has a strong and broad consensual external position on climate change, which calls for global cooperation focused on environmental integrity, sustainable development and clean energy cooperation. Its position is underpinned by strong domestic legislation on emissions reduction and clean energy (notably renewable energy). External action on climate change is an ideal avenue for developing a more systematic response to cooperation with developing countries, involving the diplomatic community, technical, financial and scientific experts in both Africa and the EU. The EU has already developed a Green Diplomacy Network at EU-level and has an information system relying on its missions abroad.

The case for deeper dialogue and reflection has been continually emphasized at global level in successive UN Climate Conferences. The messages are clear: climate change cuts to the very heart of the core challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century – effective multilateralism, unprecedented emergence of the BASIC<sup>1</sup> countries as an international force, further fragmentation of the economic landscape, the need to tailor responses to individual countries and regions, demographic shifts, and unsustainable consumerism and growth, starting with energy. The science must give way to practical application, which considers the development priorities of individual countries. Development must not be the hostage of climate action but, conversely, climate action must not be the hostage of development.

---

<sup>1</sup> Brazil, South Africa, India and Africa

Many developing countries are constrained by resource limitations in their development, without the additional consideration of a response to climate action.

Considering the political weight of the EU's climate agenda, policymakers as well as practitioners in relevant fields have started elaborating in concrete terms how the political appetite to revise our approach can be translated into tangible action. Most recently, at the 2010 EU-Africa Summit in Tripoli it was agreed to streamline the EU-Africa dialogue and, in particular, to reinforce synergies and mechanisms of coordination between discussions on climate change and energy. The Cancun Climate summit, in December successfully moved the dialogue forward but there are still areas which remain unresolved, requiring continuing dialogue and compromise. It is nonetheless an important step forward, strengthening the international climate regime. It captures all elements of the Copenhagen Accord, but now in agreed UN decision language. It also further elaborates upon detailed elements of the accord, ensuring that its implementation can effectively start. Importantly, it shows that the multilateral process on climate change can deliver.

At the EU-Africa Summit, in 2010, the consensus was that the Strategic Partnership with Africa needed a truly political overarching framework to deepen the relations between the two continents. The Resolution emphasized the underlying principle of the Strategy being the fight against poverty. However, the innovative approach at the core of the Strategic Partnership, as it was adopted in Lisbon and confirmed in Tripoli, was that it needed to go beyond development to touch upon issues of mutual interest notably on the international stage.

The Joint Africa-EU Strategy, (JAS) defines eight thematic partnerships, one of which is Climate Action. It calls for effective follow-up in several areas central to the climate agenda, in particular:

- cooperation in international bodies
- An EU-AU partnership to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from deforestation and forest degradation
- -The EU commitment of €7.2bn for 2010-12 for Fast Start climate change projects and initiatives, a significant portion of which are available for Africa.
- Actions for adaption to climate change and low carbon growth to eradicate poverty in developing countries, particularly the poorest where the populations are hit first and hardest.
- Progress on the global climate deal to tackle poverty and to take advantage of the immense natural resources that African countries have.

The inference in the JAES is that with the widening of the scope of the thematic Action Plan to include new items related to Climate Change (forest management and conservation - Reducing Emissions from deforestation and forest Degradation, REDD+)

and Biodiversity, this will contribute to a more integrated, global approach to the Climate Change challenges for Africa. However, for this to happen, the policy context must also be integrated and global.

There are clear signs of increased networking among African organisations and states. However, the 54 African countries have their differentiating political, economic, social and environmental features and this has an effect on their political priorities and approach to issues such as climate change – which are subject to resource limitation to differing degrees.

In Cancun, the EU confirmed its collective financial commitment towards developing countries through delivering on Fast Start Funding and leading on the Green Climate Fund, of which Africa will be a major beneficiary. With regard to climate financing, adaptation started to emerge as one of the priority areas, taking into account that Africa is particularly vulnerable to the negative effects of climate change. Disaster Risk Reduction gained further prominence and is progressively integrated into development policies, strategies and sectoral plans with greater policy coherence. However, funding on its own is not the answer. We need the institutions, networks, technology and research to foster low carbon development. This is one area where the EU-Africa partnership can play a decisive role.

#### **Climate change accentuates existing geopolitical imbalances**

The **EU has an edge on climate change and energy** in terms of expertise, know-how and resources in dealing with the challenges and opportunities. The EU wants to share its experiences with Africa. However, emerging economies, one of which is South Africa are very rapidly gaining ground in the area. These assets will become increasingly pertinent in the context of the foreign policy landscape of the future – in all alternate scenarios for future international relations and global governance.

It is evident that climate change affects countries and country groupings differently. The effects can create disequilibrium, new challenges and opportunities. Climate change strategies and policies will increasingly have a bearing on the whole external policy portfolio. Consequently, climate action must continue to be mainstreamed into existing instruments and strategies to ensure consistency and coherence of approach across policy areas.

The EU is still the world's biggest trading power, producer of clean technologies and the leading provider of Official Development Assistance. In addition the inevitable emergence of a **low carbon future clearly points to the strengths of the EU**: multilateralism, information and research based economies and the quest for increased energy independence. Its commitment in these areas is clearly demonstrated by its robust climate *acquis*, its support for economic growth based on sustainable green development (EU2020 and its energy security strategy (the Energy Action Plan). All these have a clear link with low carbon growth.

## **Key Themes and Structure of the Roundtable**

The aim of the roundtable is to examine Africa's position in the global debate, the relevance of EU relations towards Africa and its response to the issues in the African context. It aims to foster further integration of EU international climate policy and EU foreign policy towards Africa by furthering our common understanding of existing openings under related EU policies (such as industrial policy, research, trade, development co-operation). The roundtable will also contribute to increasing the readiness of EU diplomats to engage in relevant discussions with their African partners, nationally and internationally by discussing the broader dynamics of EU-Africa relationship. The deliberations during the day will also provide a useful opportunity to harness the knowledge of the EU diplomatic community effectively in advancing the climate agenda with Africa.

The roundtable will be organized in two sessions. The 1<sup>st</sup> half of the day will focus on the global issues which condition the EU-Africa relationship, in the context of: Global climate governance, multilateralism and Triangular dynamics (EU/Africa/China).

The second half of the day will be dedicated to looking at the EU and Africa agendas in the context of thematic issues which impact on the EU-Africa relationship and climate action and how these in turn are translated into a response. The thematic issues will include: Agriculture, Forestry and Land-use; Water; Disaster Preparedness; Security; Financing. Specific themes will attempt to emphasize "win-wins" in the context of the low carbon energy path through such topics as technology transfer, innovative carbon market mechanisms, innovative financing and barriers to trade.

Future financing modalities will be discussed in this context in relation to the next EU budget as well the opportunities presented by the European financing agencies, investment facilities and climate windows. The roundtable can also help improve our narrative to underline the weight of private financing, stressing how the EU private sector can contribute to adaptation to climate change and technology development through commercial mechanisms.

Debate on each theme will be set-off by short presentations by expert facilitators who will also lead the discussions on the theme.

The conclusions from this roundtable will be disseminated to the participants as well as shared and discussed with other political decision makers, in order to maximize the possibilities for their incorporation into policy work.