

# EVENT REPORT

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V.

MULTINATIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT POLICY  
DIALOGUE

DR. SUSANNE CONRAD  
MARC PRATT-YULE

April 2017

## Ahead of the Africa-EU Summit: Setting the Course for a Sustainable Partnership

The Multinational Development Policy Dialogue of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung had the pleasure to organize the expert conference: "Ahead of the Africa-EU Summit. Setting the Course for a Sustainable Partnership" on April 11<sup>th</sup> 2017 in Brussels. The event aimed at exploring new avenues for cooperation and partnership in the extraordinary context of the upcoming G20 Summit and the Africa-EU Summit this year.



To encourage a diversified discussion on the priorities of the future partnership, the conference's speakers included leading representatives and experts from a wide range of African and European institutions, think tanks, civil society and the business community. The event was kicked off by a keynote of **Mr. Guenter Nooke**, the German Chancellor's Personal Representative for Africa at the Federal Ministry for Cooperation and Economic Development (BMZ).



**"We do everything we can to create jobs and investments in Africa."**

**Guenter Nooke**

In light of the German G20 presidency and the EU-Africa Summit later this year, Mr. Nooke stated, that there is a historic opportunity to foster sustainable development within Africa. In this context, the so called "German Marshall Plan with Africa"<sup>1</sup> aims at two overall goals: firstly, prioritizing jobs and opportunities for young people, and secondly, investment in entrepreneurship in the African continent. The recent migration crisis has brought Africa and especially the MENA region back in the centre of the European agenda. In contrast to this crisis, Mr. Nooke pointed out that the

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<sup>1</sup> Africa and Europe. A new partnership for development, peace and a better future. Cornerstones of a Marshall Plan with Africa, published by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), January 2017.

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continent withholds an immense political, economic and social potential. In this context, he criticized the limited impact of the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPA's) on the creation of jobs which thus leads to the necessity of a new overall EU-Africa approach. This is of joint interest to both Africa and Europe; therefore, both actors need a comprehensive and united approach to tackle the migratory. Given the huge challenges the AU-EU relationship faces, Mr. Nooke underlined that all actors should strive towards a more ambitious and serious cooperation with Africa.



Opening the first panel "Africa and the EU at Crossroads", **H.E. Ajay Bramdeo** pointed out, that the crisis in regard to the political, social and economic situation is no longer only on Africa. In fact, the plethora of crisis is on global scale. The African-European partnership is taking place in a tremendously changing global context. In addition, H.E. Bramdeo depicted the relationship as an unequal partnership in an unequal world. In this context, he referred to the German Marshall Plan with Africa, questioning the involvement of African representatives during the drafting phase of the plan.

Pointing out the various aspects of EU engagement in Africa, **Dr. Birgitte Nygaard-Markussen** underlined that "youth", next to the creation of resilience in societies and better jobs, are key topics on the agenda of the upcoming Africa-EU Summit. Furthermore, new issues, such as climate change, migration and education have become further priorities on the joint agenda.

**Mr. Michael Gahler MEP**, expressed his delight, that the African Union is now including all countries of the continent. Despite the AU's structural unity, the national policies of the member countries are often working in opposite directions. The opposing strategies therefore need to be overcome by a comprehensive and intertwined approach in order to create a successful African-European partnership. By achieving financial independence, a self-funded AU would swiftly become an equal partner to the European Union. Moreover, additional jobs can be created through proceeds of a customs union, which in turn allow for increased competition regarding investments in Africa. This will in turn lead to the creation of more jobs in Africa and therefore reduce the migratory pressure on Europe.



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**Mr. Geert Laporte**, underlined that the EU should move away from its centralized system and rather apply a locally based approach. Referring to the donor-recipient relationship between the EU and the AU, Mr. Laporte expressed his support for financially independent African institutions. The aid dependencies of the African countries have led to vested interests between values and interests of the EU. Therefore the relationship must undergo significant change towards an equal partnership beyond aid, so Laporte.



The second panel “Fostering Sustainable Growth and Prosperity” focused on the topic of the younger African generation and its missing future perspectives. **Mr. Frank Heinrich, MP**, referred in this context to the mobile revolution in Africa and the goals of the German Marshall Plan, aiming at improving education, economic opportunities and energy access. In order to achieve these ambitious goals, efforts should be made to encourage German companies to invest in Africa and expand their network of advising companies. With regard to the German Marshall Plan with Africa, Mr. Heinrich argued that the plan is not a finished document, but a process, wherein there is still room to intertwine African and European interests.



**Mr. Désiré Vencatachellum** described the perception of Africans by asking the EU: “**What do you think when you see a young African on the street?**” Due to the current refugee crisis, the narrative on Africans is pivoting the wrong way. In fact, there exist several well-functioning economies and governments within the African continent. Depicting a possible solution for tackling the root causes of the refugee crisis, Mr. Vencatachellum referred to pin-pointed support by the EU towards African SME’s. This becomes even more relevant, as many of the currently existing SME’s get caught in a poverty trap, either lacking investments or development possibilities. This leads to a lack of economic opportunities for the African youth.

**Mr. Klaus Rudischhauser** pointed at the divergence of the existing perceptions of Africa. He stressed that we have to acknowledge the realities in order to shape a more honest EU-African relationship. He welcomed the German Marshall Plan with Africa and agreed, that the document offers many references to draw on. First and foremost the increase of the low level of direct foreign investments in Africa (currently 2%) and the reduction of tax evasion are indispensable for the economic development. He added, that the

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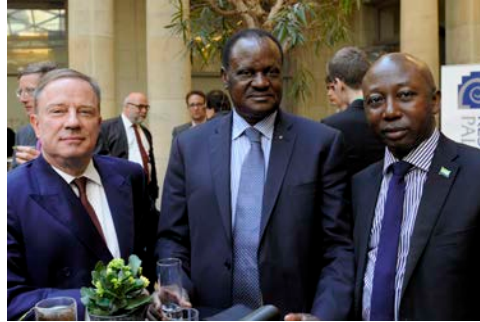
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EU is one of the few who particularly supports capacity building in this respect.

Taking on the investment situation, **Mr. Diederick Zambon** defined the necessary steps towards sustainable growth. With projects



in water and sanitation, education, health care and job creation, the local governments and societies could be strengthened. As a surplus, the migration crisis would be solved. Thus a win-win deal is at hand but must be communicated as such in both continents, so Zambon.



Last but not least, **Mr. Dirk Willem te Velde**, pointed out that there is a broad range of mutual interests in development cooperation. As the continent currently undergoes an economic transformation, Mr. te Velde mentioned the idea of a coordinated plan of economic actions. He underlined that the African continent holds tremendous potential which can and must be

unlocked. In this context, all speakers agreed that this goal can only be reached through a coordinated and consistent effort by all actors.