

TOWARDS A RESET OF MINDS ABOUT AFRICA AND EUROPE



The Gall-Peters projection.



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The emergence of a mutually beneficial transformative partnership between Europe and Africa requires that the past be acknowledged and made peace with, them in order to free the present and enable the future to emerge for the benefit of generations yet to be born.

Both are critical to the successful emergence of a new human civilisation where global equity for a healthy planet would be realised. This book is a must-read for both European and African citizens to get to know how we have come to where we are and to be able to dream of a liberated future where equity and well-being for all would be core values.

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Dr Mamphela Ramphele, former Managing Director of the World Bank,
Chairwoman of the High Level Group on Africa-Europe Partnership,
Co-President of the Club of Rome.

FOREWORD

During discussions in the independent and tripartite High-Level Group (HLG) on an African-European Partnership, it became often apparent that there are cognitive gaps which hinder people from having a meaningful exchange, one which goes deeper than statistics and figures. One which is able to touch the hearts and minds of people here and there. Erroneous perceptions linger on which lead to distorted views about the past in both continents and to destructive attitudes towards the future.

While knowledge in Africa about Europe is now mostly dated, the main problem results from one-sided historical narratives about the period when European countries invaded African ones and subjugated them to their interests. Comparable to what this other colonial power, Russia, has done in its neighbourhood, and is attempting again today in Ukraine, Europeans did in Africa: erasing African countries' history, denigrating cultural identities, and grabbing its resources. Europe's rich civilisation has a dark side that they like to ignore. Recipients do not.

Unlike the Franco-German reconciliation process in Europe launched after the second world war, no similar attempt was made to reset hearts and minds of African countries after their independence was restored, after long and painful struggles in most cases. The colonial misdeeds are therefore difficult to put behind. This is particularly difficult when current European policies continue to hinder Africa's autonomous path to future well-being for its people.

The members of the HLG thought that an effort should be made to correct the many continuing misconceptions in order to contribute to the development of a basis for a fair and equitable partnership.

Two forward-thinking foundations supported the preparatory research work: the Sawiris Foundation from Egypt, the country which like no other infused ancient Greece and from there Europe's own early civilisational development; and the

King Baudouin Foundation from Belgium, which has taken to heart a new relational approach.

The project resulted in a double outcome: this short brochure, easy to read on the long-haul flights between the two continents, and hopefully eliminating some misconceptions on arrival, facilitating thus mutual respect and understanding, and negotiations; and a book, deepening and widening the analysis of this brochure, published by Palgrave Springer under the title 'Reimagining Africa: lifting the veil of ignorance'.

Our sincere gratitude goes to the two foundations for their support and to African and European intellectuals helping our effort. All opinions and all shortcomings remain as usual the responsibility of the authors.

Brussels, June 2023

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Introduction: A double-sided legacy

In the past two centuries, Africa has not always been given the recognition and respect accorded to most other parts of the world and which it enjoyed before. Out of Africa always comes something new, wrote the Roman historian Plinius. Current negative perceptions have been heavily influenced by those in the so-called Western World and remain especially prevalent there. This is not surprising given that European colonialism of Africa, mainly during the 19th and 20th centuries, sought justification through them.

The narrative of European domination in Africa lingers on, often unconsciously, in too many minds and hinders fair and equitable relationships. This is perhaps especially evident, although often not admitted, in the current relationship between Europe and Africa. The European Union (EU) is the primary driver steering the bi-continental relationship. In the course of history, Europe's role as an economic and trading partner has remained of special significance for Africa with major impact evident to date. This historical relationship has changed in form and shape over the centuries.

The African-European bi-continental relationship is one of inequality in which the two sides are locked-in. This hinders optimising the many opportunities available in this relationship if they could free themselves from the negative aspects of the past couple of centuries and their ongoing impacts. The results of such an enhanced new relationship will have only positive results for both sides and perhaps especially for Europe, in the current geopolitical and economic context.

Nowhere are the current negative aspects of the relationship clearer than in the idea that Europe needs to “develop” Africa, which is often nothing else than the colonial concept of “civilizing” it, cloaked in a new version, with a touch of guilt. This prevents a fresh, objective, European perception and relationship with Africa that can also positively influence the views of others regarding Africa. European needs to cultivate an ability to appreciate and interact with all non-European societies without a superiority complex. On the African side, there is a need to

change perceptions, including a re-evaluation of, and appreciation for, the richness that Africa offers the global community. Africa also needs to enhance its own capacities to remake the relationship into one that is more meaningful for Africa. However, this is hindered by the current rigid framework of the relationship as dictated by Europe.

In the past, both the Africans and Europeans were more cosmopolitan in their worldviews and dealt with one another in a more- or- less equal manner. Africans moved into European society not just as servants, but also as traders and diplomats and more than one prominent European also had African ancestry, such as the first Medici prince or the Russian poet Pushkin. This changed when the early industrialisation in Western Europe and the development of agriculture in the Americas led to the insatiable search for material and human resources and for new markets, both of which they found plentiful in Africa. Developments in the world have never been synchronic and just as Europe benefited from a temporary cycle of stagnation in Asia, so they benefited from expanding their ties with Africa and taking advantage of it, at a time when the continent suffered from a simultaneous period of political and economic weakness.

Emulating their conquest of the Americas and the massive transfer of wealth which its exploitation had brought, European imperialism next focussed on Africa. This was somewhat intellectually based on the dominant European nationalist ideologies and interests of the times, leaving no space for alternative opinions. The ruthless destruction of the resistance by African kingdoms would have wide-ranging consequences until today, but they are still not fully acknowledged. Acknowledgement is needed and should be part of the building of more solid foundations of a more sustainable relationship where mutual respect can be built on understanding and reconciliation. In this process shared memories, with a respectful understanding of the different perceptions involved, can play a key role and a change of mindsets. This is imperative.

In moving towards a better-balanced relationship, it is necessary to expand knowledge of the pre-colonial African past when Europeans and Africans dealt

with each other on equal footing, as well as some key aspects of the socio-economic-political spheres of African societies. This is particularly important for sub-Saharan African societies which are especially different from European cultures, yet they are by no means lacking in sophistication or complexity, contrary to some of the criticisms made by Westerners which only show their ignorance. Although different from European counterparts, pre-colonial African regions had well-developed and prospering political, economic and social systems, as was recognised in many documents written by travellers and traders at the time, only to be brushed aside later.

I. Centuries of trade and politics

In the period before the 15th century when European “voyages of discovery” began down the west coast of the continent Africa, in search of new trade routes with India, it had already been home to a vast number of civilizations for many centuries, and it had experienced extensive interaction with both Europe and Asia. Until the late 15th century this interaction with Europe mainly involved North Africa and to a certain extent North-East Africa but then began involving the entire continent.

Egypt, one of the world’s cradles of civilization, was probably the initial main channel for Africa’s interaction with the outside world through an interconnected web of international trade routes established millennia BC. It was Egypt which influenced the growth of the ancient Minoan civilization and other subsequent ancient civilizations of the European Mediterranean. Ancient trade routes developed between Thebes and the Red Sea ports, with onward connections between northern Africa to Asia, Arabia and East Africa. Trade spanned the north-eastern corner of the Sahara, connecting Egypt to ancient Nubia, the Libyan Desert, the cultures of the eastern Mediterranean and West Africa as well as deeper into the continent especially running along the Nile Valley.

Of particular importance to Egypt was the Kingdom of Kush located immediately to its south in present-day Sudan, where a civilization older than that of Egypt built pyramids pre-dating those of Egypt. Kush again had its own extensive network of trade routes which were particularly developed with the ancient Kingdom of Punt in modern-day Eritrea. From the Horn of Africa, sea-borne trade had developed down the Indian Ocean littoral of Africa with connecting linkages inland to such locations as the mediaeval trading hub of Great Zimbabwe. There was also extensive trans-Indian Ocean trade linking the African coastline and China via Arabia and the Indian subcontinent. On the northern coast of Africa, the kingdom of Carthage, established by Phoenicians from the Levant, developed into one of the most notable powers of the ancient world. At its height, it was one of the largest, richest and most influential in the world, dominating the Mediterranean,

conquering parts of Europe and at one time threatening Rome itself in an era of its early grandeur.

An initial advance into Africa by the Europeans was the conquest of Egypt by the Greeks in 322 BC, a few centuries later North Africa had become the bread basket of the Roman Empire. A network of major Roman cities along this coastline was inter alia important to Rome as trading and military outposts vis-a-vis the West African nations on the other side of the Sahara. After the 7th century AD and the Muslim conquest of North Africa with the introduction of the camel as a means of transport in desert conditions, trans-Saharan travel and trade expanded dramatically, a great logistical success story. Trade routes gradually developed across the western Sahara between the civilizations of the North African littoral and West Africa.

West Africa was the location for a large number of kingdoms and empires, often of great sophistication. These included the Sahelian kingdoms and empires of Ghana, Mali, Songhai, Kanem-Borno and the Sokoto Caliphate as well as such forest kingdoms closer to the coast, as Benin, Ife, Oyo, Ashanti and Dahomey. The Mali Empire, founded around 1235 AD, was perhaps the most remarkable and became one of wealthiest empires in history. Its founder, King Sundaita Keita created one of the very first charters of human rights – the Manden Charter (or the Kouroukan Fouga). It enjoyed a golden age under the rule of King Mansa Musa, possibly the wealthiest person in history, who turned Mali into a sophisticated centre of learning in the Islamic world with the city of Timbuktu as its primary hub.

In many ways, Central Africa was of special relevance for the transition from initial contacts between well-established African political entities and European states to later colonial control by the Europeans. The Portuguese initiated extensive European interaction with such notable political entities in the region such as the highly developed Kingdom of Kongo, or the Kongo Empire, (located in present-day Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) as well as northern Angola). Of considerable importance on the southern verge of the Central African region were the Luba Empire (located largely in southern-central, present-day DRC) and the Lunda

Confederation (located in the southern part of today's DRC, across north-eastern Angola and north-west Zambia).

The Kingdom of Kongo had a strong economy at the centre of an extensive trading network, being a great producer of many natural resources as well as manufacturing and trading a variety of goods. From the early days of contact with Europe in the late 15th century there were many visits by diplomats from Kongo and other officials to Europe. By the end of the 16th century, the Kongo King Alvaro worked especially hard to emulate Europe, introducing Christianity as a means for cultural and economic change.

The inter-meshing of European and African affairs expanded into the 19th century. Its riches attracted not just traders, but conquering armies too. But the first Portuguese-Kongo War in 1622 ended with a Portuguese defeat, one of several European defeats to follow. But there were military alliances too. The Kongo King Pedro II wrote to the Dutch proposing a joint military attack on Angola and its new Portuguese settlement, with a Kongo army and a Dutch fleet, funded by Kongo in gold, silver and ivory. Hostilities continued and in 1641 the Dutch captured Luanda. This was subsequently followed in 1648 by Portuguese reinforcements from Brazil forcing the Dutch to surrender Luanda and withdraw from Angola, allowing the new Portuguese governor to make peace with Kongo. At the Conference of Berlin in 1884-1885 when European powers divided up most of Central Africa. Portugal claimed and obtained a large share of what remained of independent Kongo. It was nevertheless Belgium which eventually obtained the rest of the Kongo kingdom.

To the south of the Kongo Kingdom, the Ndonga Kingdom in present-day Angola was historically a prominent state with its own network of trading as well as political relationships with a variety of neighbouring peoples. However, it was with Portugal that Ndongo was destined to have the longest-lasting relationship, with it becoming a cornerstone of the Portuguese colony of Angola. This early development of the interaction between the Portuguese and both the Ndonga

and Kongo Empires became a very important aspect of European involvement in Africa.

Southern Africa has a history of indigenous community settlements which can be traced from the evolution of homo sapiens. Many of the indigenous peoples were traditionally nomads, but in many cases more established social entities developed, including kingdoms which in some cases impacted vast areas. Originally the Portuguese led the way to an entrenched European presence in Southern Africa, including the establishment of the Portuguese colonies of Mozambique and Angola, but in the 17th century, the Dutch established a support station in the Cape which unleashed a chain of events that had the longest lasting European influence on the region. The resulting extensive European involvement included the legacy of at least two identifiable groups of South Africans, primarily of European origin who although not indigenous Africans, developed an African identity with no other cultural affiliation.

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They largely descended from the original Dutch Burgher society, and soon became generally known as the Boers and later as Afrikaners, increasingly having a unique language and identity. As they moved into the interior during the 19th century, they often participated in wars with or against indigenous peoples on terms reminiscent of historical times when Europeans and Africans were perceived as equals and also often formed alliances to fight others for gain. As such a European diaspora in Africa grew in parallel with an African diaspora in Europe, whose origins date also back to the early centuries of trade and diplomatic interaction, though repressed during the times of colonialism.

One of the most noteworthy empires in Southern Africa is that of the Zulu nation which was created in 1816 by King Shaka ka Senzagakhona. In the mid-19th century, the Zulu Empire depopulated vast areas of central southern Africa with raids known as the Mfecane (“scattering” or “crushing”) as well as carrying out other raids far to the north, establishing new settlements far afield in such regions as modern-day Mozambique and Malawi. Soon afterwards the Zulu nation began to intensify contact with both the Dutch settlers/Boers who moved into the then

depopulated interior of what is now modern-day South Africa, and with the British who began to occupy locations of the country of the Zulu in the mid/late 1800s. This confluence of empires and peoples inter alia led to the first Anglo-Zulu War in 1879 with the British suffering a defeat at the Battle of Isandlwana, but later victory allowed them to prepare for the two wars which soon took place against the two Boer republics. The second of these wars led to especially extensive collateral suffering (i.a. by the introduction of concentration camps) for the indigenous peoples who fought alongside the Boers together with volunteers from many continental European countries, while the British were supplemented by forces from all over the British Empire.

More ancient civilisations in Southern Africa included Mapungubwe located in northern present-day South Africa which is of key importance. Dating back to around 900 AD, Mapungubwe is the first, strictly class-based, social system in Southern Africa. Mapungubwe elites traded with other states on the coast who, in turn, traded with merchants travelling from India and Arabia. The sophisticated civilisation of Great Zimbabwe to the north of Mapungubwe may have initially been a client state of Mapungubwe.

Great Zimbabwe's vast trade routes stretched from the East African coast to India and China with its capital city being probably constructed in the 11th century AD. It continued to expand until the 15th century but by 1550 AD it was absorbed into the Mutapa Kingdom to its north. Mutapa became a great empire stretching to the Indian Ocean, using the industry and trade that had made the preceding kingdom of Zimbabwe formidable. The Portuguese established permanent markets up the Zambezi River in an attempt to gain control of Mutapa and were partly successful. The new trade routes they established along the Zambezi Valley from the coast of the Indian Ocean were built on those used for the Mutapa era and still in earlier times.

The broader East African region consists of the Horn of Africa which, together with its hinterland, is closely linked to the Red Sea, Egypt and the Indian Ocean, all of which have facilitated its long history of international contacts. The adjoining

remainder of East Africa has strong geo-political links to Central and Southern Africa. Among the most noteworthy ancient states located in the Horn were Punt, D'mt and the Aksumite Empire. The latter was considered one of the then ancient world's four great powers of the 3rd century AD by the Persian philosopher Mani. By 960 AD it was ruled by the Solomonic dynasty of Ethiopian emperors who, according to Ethiopian tradition, were descended from Menilek I, the son of the Israelite King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. The Ethiopian Empire expanded rapidly while retaining a weakened form of the vibrant international contacts of the Aksumite Empire.

By 1859 with the opening of the Suez Canal, the economy of the entire region of the Horn of Africa was further internationalised. The strengthened strategic value of the region led to an increased European presence along with that of the Ottoman Empire which had become an important player in Africa since its conquest of Egypt in 1517. In the 19th century, Egypt had secured great autonomy from its nominal Ottoman rulers, despite being under British occupation for much of the post-Napoleonic era and interacted with Constantinople as well as Europe and down the Nile Valley into East Africa as a leading African state rather than on behalf of the Ottoman Empire.

For many centuries, indigenous communities along the East African coast grew increasingly sophisticated and traded with Greece, Rome, Assyria, Sumer, Phoenicia, Arabia, Persia and Egypt. This in turn led to Arab settlements along the same coast and the subsequent growth of an Arab-African ethnic and cultural Swahili people who became a key component in a trade network alongside the establishment of what became to be called the Swahili coast. The arrival of the Portuguese on the East African coast brought a long era of foreign rule and disrupted previous economic relationships similar to elsewhere in Africa, but in 1698 the Portuguese were expelled, and to some extent replaced, by Oman with Zanzibar becoming the main Omani settlement on the coast. The Omani presence later disappeared once a subsequent German and British colonial presence in this part of East Africa was established. The Swahili coast is closely linked geopolitically

to the East African hinterland where important indigenous kingdoms in pre-colonial times were mostly in modern-day Uganda and included the kingdom of Buganda and others.

II. Pillars of Africa's ancient economies

Africa had a plethora of sophisticated political entities and international relationships in the pre-colonial period. The advent of European colonialism was driven by economic interests, the search for agricultural land and mineral resources. The leading industrialising countries were also the leading colonisers, shifting from trade to extraction and occupation. It also gives cause for reflecting on how European intervention contributed towards retarding growth and modernisation of indigenous economies for colonial benefits leading to subsequent 'underdevelopment' in Africa and excuses for European governments to give 'development aid' for economies they contributed towards destroying in the first place.

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Pre-colonial African economies had GDPs arguably comparable to Europe, the Middle East and Asia at the same time. The control over the continent's rich resources gave African rulers leverage over international traders while enabling them to negotiate and establish trade alliances and partnerships with international traders. Once Europeans invaded and occupied African countries, they severely damaged the political, economic and social fabric of African societies. Increasingly unequal terms of trade, cheap imports from the Far East and inflation had already disrupted African economies through an overdependence on international trade to the detriment of local industry and institutions.

While parts of Africa operated consensual systems of government in much of Africa traditional strong centralisation of leadership influenced entrepreneurial economic activity and trade. Access to land for agricultural activities, for example,

was based on land allocations by community leaders, since all the land belonged to the community, similar to practices in European countries in the Middle Ages.

Agriculture was a major sector and in pre-colonial Africa the abundance of land compared to the population density allowed pastoralists to rove in search of grazing land without any conflicts. At that time, commercial agriculture meant family farms that did not employ paid labour but produced enough to be self-sufficient (subsistence production) and permit bartering. Africa also gained access to skills, techniques and new crop varieties through globalisation as is illustrated by the introduction and spread of maize and cassava from the Americas both of which became stable African agricultural products.

Livestock was an important part of African agriculture, and until today it is often seen as a sign of wealth and status. Fishing was mainly limited to the coastal regions and to the great lakes and rivers. The Atlantic and Indian Ocean with their abundance of fishing opportunities were exploited since times before the last century BC, but consumption was not limited to the catch area, there is evidence of trade in dried fish towards inland kingdoms.

Agricultural products featured prominently in African trade with Europe and the trans-Atlantic trade. Hides were among early items sold or bartered with European traders for example. Rice-growing communities across what are the modern-day countries of Senegal and Guinea-Bissau produced a substantial surplus which was bought by slave-trading ships.

International traders were attracted to Africa for much more than agricultural products or, later, slaves. Many Africans manufactured and traded large volumes of products including fine cloth, craftwork, household wares and weapons which were touted as more durable than those from Europe. Cloth, for example, produced in the ancient kingdoms of Western and Central Africa was so widely exported throughout Europe and South America that it was considered as currency and used in exchange for other goods and services. African artwork was very desirable with this ranging from the sculptures that later inspired European art to the lost art for the wax casting of bronze. The continent was rife with smiths,

carpenters, cobblers, tailors, masons and weavers whose craft not only attracted foreign interest but also impacted urban development, such as the 13th century potshard pavements in Ilé-Ife. Together with agricultural implements, domestic tools and other metal goods, local smiths also specialised in manufacturing weapons which included bows, arrows, harpoons, assegais, breastplates and swords.

Mining was a traditional key African economic sector and minerals, especially gold, were a major factor in the European interest in Africa since ancient times leading to the 19th century “scramble for Africa”. Gold mining was not only a major occupation that was crucial to the economy, wealth and military expansions of many regions on the African continent, but it was also one of the oldest and most important industries on the continent. Africans also specialised in the mining of copper, iron, tin and salt, among others. Both and their associated metallurgy in Africa date back around 12,000 years. Mining was done through a variety of methods including scavenging, alluvial/open mining and underground mining. Smelting was done to extract metal from the gangue in the ore by applying heat in an atmosphere-controlled vessel (furnace or crucible). It has been argued that the lack of technological innovations and investments placed the continent at a growing disadvantage in agriculture and manufacturing, though Africans were aware of new technologies. Political systems were not supportive of the innovation of age-old methods of production.

A variety of currencies were used in Africa and the first economic exchanges between sub-Saharan Africa and the rest of the world were not through barter as long thought but were monetized. At the time, currencies accepted included a variety of materials, including iron bars, cloth, cowries, copper and gold as well as manillas produced from melted-down copper, bronze or brass imported from Europe. Coinage was especially used in North Africa and the Horn of Africa where between 270 AD and 630 AD the rulers of Aksum produced their own, round coinage to facilitate trade with the Roman and Byzantine Empires.

Africa's traditional international trading practices which were well established before the beginning of the post-15th century trade with the Europeans, are a direct reflection of the extent of trading activities and alliances that already existed between African kingdoms and regions. The variety of African economic needs had long stimulated an intra-continental trading network. Africa's entrepreneurialism and intellectual openness were similarly part of a holistic worldview that facilitated the integration of new ideas into their own.

While bonded labour was common in the ancient world, including the trade of European slaves (mainly to the Ottoman empire), it was the expanding demand for slaves in the trans-Atlantic trade that increasingly led to negative impacts on African economies inter alia due to increasing shortages of labour in the local economies for other activities, distorted economic structures, destabilised social structures as well as an increasing inability of African economies to build accrued wealth surplus value.

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While Europeans played a key role in destabilising Africa's economy, in the long run, the continent's inability to consolidate its currency surplus, its attachment to traditional technologies and the disparities between the personal interests of the rulers across its many regions placed it at a disadvantage that would eventually result in its economic decline and facilitate successful European military conquest.

III. Sophisticated societies

The sophistication of African societies is well illustrated by some key facets of its basic socio-systems, values and the political systems they contain. As with all societies, there are inherent differences as well as similarities to European societies where individualism has progressed earlier and further.

In Africa today, the communitarian spirit is still strongly affirmed, and it is accepted that a person does not exist in isolation but as a part of a community, hence the notion of Ubuntu – 'I am because we are'. In many African communities,

family is not limited to space and time, thus, it cuts across generations, relatives living near and far, the living and those who have joined the ancestors, as well as the ancestors themselves who continue to play a role in the lives of the living. This in turn is based on the main principle of the African worldview which is the interconnectedness of all things. It is noteworthy that many African societies inherently accept the concept of an underlying unity amongst the myriad possible aspects of reality, yet ultimately all are part of a single entity.

The family serves as the foundation for and represents the values and codes of conduct of ubuntu and communitarianism in social interaction. African humanism is also founded on the common notion of “virtuous personhood” which sees human needs and interests as fundamental hence placing a great deal of emphasis on human welfare. This doctrine is held together within a strong sense of community also called communitarianism.

The coexistence and welfare of others have always been considered vital to the sustenance of African societies. This forms fundamental values that bound together pre-colonial indigenous African society such as the ethical values of compassion, solidarity, reciprocity, cooperation, interdependence, hospitality, primacy of the person, respect for life, sense of the sacred, family hood etc. These are counted among the principles of the communalistic life of an African person that primarily impose duties on the individual with respect to the community and its members. But in order to participate, people had to ‘belong’. Some belonged to the community by virtue of birth or kinship and family, others belonged to it having been recent immigrants, or destitute or orphans, or persons acquired by purchase or capture (slaves).

As African communities evolved into bigger towns and cities a more sophisticated system of hierarchy slowly began to take shape. These were societies that organised themselves around social classes and hierarchies – leaders, merchants, religious leaders, labourers, free citizens and bonded labourers (like serfs in Europe). Kingdoms and empires also evolved from the settlement of communities, especially those that indulged primarily in trade and business to amass wealth.

The leaders of these entities were those with whom international traders had the most contact. It was also very common for monarchs to place family relations in charge of key/strategic aspects of the kingdom and only the family (most often first sons) inherited the title, properties and responsibilities of the king. At the very top of the hierarchical society was the royal class typically comprised of ruling families which usually were communitarian themselves to preserve the ruling power of the family.

From the time of early Africa-Europe interaction, one of the aspects noted by the Europeans was the more egalitarian nature of African society. This often created the European impression that African societies were undeveloped and simplistic; yet the reality was that of a deep, structural complexity in African political and social systems, simply not understood or appreciated by those coming from different societal systems with different sets of values.

The political administration of pre-colonial, social formations in Africa generally fell into two main categories: small societies without formally specialised or institutionalised political roles or structures for administering executive, legislative or judicial functions, a political order today commonly referred to as stateless societies; and territorial states with formally centralised government administrations and hierarchical organisation. The norms and rules of behaviour and actions towards others were maintained largely by consensus. The further expansion of these societies through consolidation and the subsequent conquest or voluntary incorporation by a strong chiefdom of multiple subordinate chiefdoms required further evolution of the accompanying political institutions and practices.

The hierarchical formation of these structures and the ways in which roles were allocated to each function was also a reflection of the social dynamics of kinship and communitarianism that is integral to African societies. Various African formats of governance existed often with much complexity. Among the key role players there were often priests who were usually the head of the original family lineage which founded their village. The social dynamics of kinship and communitarianism

also ensured that no matter the size of the kingdom, political governance reached all citizens, including those at the lowest levels of society. Women played major roles in the political framework of pre-colonial African kingdoms.

The colonisation of African regions influenced the existing social structures on the continent. While core elements of communitarianism remained, the structures of status, roles, interactions and relationships were already evolving as groups expanded and migrated. This evolution continued as Africans interacted with colonial masters who, as expected, also attempted to impose new forms of social structure through governance, religion and economic activities, albeit with limited success. African societies evolved, adapting their social structures to the demands of both the colonial and post-colonial eras, which in turn led to the emergence of new social contexts.

New social structures emerged that represent the transformations of traditional, pre-colonial, indigenous institutions. These operate within the new social context with many new meanings and symbols of colonialism and do so in a widened new sociocultural system and framework. While colonialism influenced the retardation of some social structures, it also offered others an unprecedented growth opportunity as new social structures needed to be created for better conformity and synchronisation with European/Western structures of governance. In other cases, even if the demand was not there, the new social context allowed new structures and practices. The transformation of political systems had especially important implications for stable, responsible, good governance especially as many traditional formats were transmuted into new, often untested, systems.

Another post-colonial, social formation consisted of migrated social structures which in many cases appeared to have been transported from metropolitan centres of the imperialist West into Asia and Africa and grafted onto the new colonial situation. Examples of such constructs include those of democracy and the rule of law with its peculiar, Western connotations. Institutions such as universities and national statehood; establishments such as bureaucracy and elected parliaments and many more were imported into the colonial situation to

become core elements of the resultant new social structures with which traditional elements had to merge. In many cases, this resulted in clashes with indigenous, African, social structures and resultant social instability.

The confluence of the pre-colonial and the colonial in post-colonial African societies usually results in varying hybrid versions of culture which have important impacts on all aspects of society and implications for African value systems. The role of the extended family as the basic unit of society and crux of social interaction and the values and codes of conduct of ubuntu and communitarianism, nevertheless, still remains at the heart of African social structures and interaction. Africa has two nominal contexts – the modern and traditional. The modern context is typically associated with Western civilisation and values concentrated in the urban areas of most countries.

Bridging the traditional-modernity gaps poses two traps. Firstly, individuals can assume that the modern context is an ‘upgraded’ version of an “outdated” traditional system and tend to ignore the traditional. Secondly is the potential challenge of completely embracing the values of the traditional approach in rebellion against colonialism and its modern ideologies. Neither is optimal as both ignore realities of the modern and post-modern economic conditions. Also, the complexities of African societies remain inherent in the heterogeneity of the peoples of the continent and the results of the mingling of traditional and modern also vary tremendously.

IV. The struggle for restoration of independence

Whereas in 1930 only Liberia and Ethiopia, or Abyssinia as it was then known, were independent African countries, apart from South Africa was ruled by its white minority without the indigenous peoples having equal rights, by the end of the 20th century every single nation in Africa had gained its freedom after a long and arduous, often bloody struggle for political independence. The colonial

inheritance was considerable and included the very geo-political contours of almost all of the new states.

The period of European colonisation in Africa had initially crept rather slowly into the mixture of relationships in the Africa-Europe interface from the late 15th century onwards. Yet in piecemeal fashion, it slowly gained pace until by the late 19th century there was what is often called “the scramble for Africa”. In 1884 this culminated with European powers dividing up most of Africa between themselves at the Berlin Conference of that year. Resistance though was strong nearly everywhere, and brutally suppressed.

The desire to regain independence gradually began to assert itself in almost every African country by the beginning of the 20th century. In a relatively short time, movements for independence intensified in many, to be met by varying levels of resistance by colonial authorities in what became known as the “struggle” for independence. For the most part, this struggle for Africa’s independence was a convergence of ideological, sociological, psychological and economic factors that influenced Africans’ peaceful or violent agitation for self-rule well into the 1900s.

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African resistance was strengthened by a growth in new forms of African nationalism based on colonial state creation, but the achievement of self-rule needed several catalytic factors to come together, including the experience of colonial oppression itself, the influence of missionaries and missionary education, the psychological and economic effects of the First and Second World Wars, the investment opportunities brought about by Europe’s post-war economic boom, the platform for reform offered by the League of Nations/United Nations and the ideology of Pan Africanism. All these factors interacted and provided an avenue for understanding not just the motivation, but also the process of Africa’s struggle for restoration of independence.

The colonial period was a negative one for the Africa-Europe interface in many ways. But among the worst results was the manner in which it helped entrench a new biased, patronising regard for Africans by the Europeans and embedded colonial economies which were purposefully slanted in the favour of the colonial

powers. In the socio-ecosystems of the colonial period, there were certainly positive factors for Africa such as European education and health care systems, yet the negative offsets remained substantial.

Africans correctly believed that colonial authorities were more likely to deal with a Western-educated African spokesperson who was also fluent in a relevant European language. Pioneer African leaders, including Jomo Kenyatta (Kenya), Léopold Sédar Senghor (Senegal), Julius Nyerere (Tanzania), Kenneth Kaunda (Zambia), Nnamdi Azikiwe (Nigeria), Hastings Kamuzu Banda (Malawi), were all such leaders and all were the products of missionary education in their countries.

In the years following the Second World War Europe's successful economic recovery and exponential growth could have positioned Europe as economically capable of running its colonies better but it rather chose to direct its efforts to more urgent and more productive economic interests in Europe itself. The post-1945 withdrawal of Europe from Africa also took place in a new era largely influenced by a new global aversion to anything perceived as racist imperialism and the reality of a permanent European withdrawal from Asia in the wake of having been initially forced out of many Asian possessions by Japan.

The Preamble of the Charter of the newly established United Nations was written by the South African war-time leader General Jan Smuts, who was a profound believer in a holistic philosophy so much a part of African belief systems, yet was deeply racist towards indigenous Africans. The Charter presented an unequivocal moral and political statement that colonialism was unacceptable and that all European colonies in Africa and Asia had the fundamental right to govern themselves. For differing reasons both the new Soviet Bloc and the USA opposed European colonialism in Africa, thereby especially helping to hasten a European political and military withdrawal from Africa.

In this context, Pan-Africanism grew into a worldwide movement to encourage and strengthen bonds of solidarity between all people of African descent. Initially strongly promoted by prominent activists of African ancestry from the Western Hemisphere it soon attracted new and more militant leaders in Africa like Patrice

Lumumba of Congo (now DRC) and Tom Mboya of Kenya. In 1963, President Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia and Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt were instrumental in founding the Organization of African Unity (OAU), a forum for all newly independent African nation-states.

Winning political freedom from European colonial powers was but the beginning of a new African-European relationship. Thriving as a non-subservient continent presents a very different challenge. The imbalanced relationship between the two continents continues, with economically stronger Europe holding all the cards. This imbalanced relationship is serviced by a combination of factors that appear to keep the continent dependent on the West, in a relationship which, like in colonial times, remains especially beneficial to the West and Europe in particular.

The Rome Treaty which established the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1957 would lead to a formalised relationship between an integrating Europe, without the involvement of any Africans, promised each other equal access to trading and investment opportunities in what is today the territory of 21 African countries. This was taken further with the 1963 Yaoundé Convention signed between the EEC and 18 former French and Belgian colonies. Under the agreement, the Europeans allowed free access to their domestic markets to products from the African members, while the latter were, at least initially, permitted to impose restrictions on the entry of European goods into their territories in order to protect their own infant industries. But it did not change the fundamentally unequal economic relationship.

In the interwar years, the concept of Eurafrica evolved on many fronts in Europe, notably in parallel with the evolution of the Pan-European movement, which had the vision of a bi-continental relationship which seemed to clearly favour Europe as the dominant partner and for many the post-independence 'development aid' agreements was largely built on the Eurafrica concept.

The Yaounde Convention was replaced by the Lomé Convention of 1976 which established a framework of cooperation between the EEC and previous European colonies in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific i.e. the ACP countries. This

became a primary framework for cooperation for the EEC, and later EU, with these countries which excluded those in North Africa. It gave privileged trade access into the EEC/EU and provided European funding for aid and investment in ACP countries.

The Lomé Convention was replaced by the Cotonou Agreement in 2000 which extended the basic format of the relationship and in April 2020 the ACP Group of States became an international organisation: the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS). It is this organisation which is currently responsible for finalising all aspects of the new agreement with the EU which was agreed and initialled in April 2021 (replacing the Cotonou Agreement formally expired on 29 February 2020), but by the time of writing had still not come into force because one of the EU member states (Hungary) was refusing to sign. In late 2022 the OACPS has been quoted in media as complaining that the Europeans are inexplicably delaying the next steps in the formal launch of the new relationship again tends to imply an unequal relationship in which Europe takes African goodwill for granted. The fact that in parallel the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) between the EU and some ACP States or regional economic communities which were launched in 2006 largely remain unfinished, add to the unsatisfactory state of affairs. Many believe that the EPAs have the collateral effect of in fact undermining Africa's own pathways to regional market integration especially as on 1st January 2021 the African Common Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) was formally launched to achieve a continental free trade area. Within the context of the institutionalised EU-African relationship, the question of whether Africa's position is truly free or independent remains therefore debatable for many.

Many experts and neutral observers perceive the ACP-European relationship being a continuation of an imbalanced relationship where the Europeans remain the dominant partner with an economically dependent Africa/ACP. Besides the debatable European intentions in this and on various other fronts, including the hold France retained on many Francophonic African states through the monetary pillar of the franc de la Communauté Financière Africaine (CFA), many colonial and

post-colonial actions of Europeans laid a foundation that appears to keep Africa psychologically and subconsciously dependent on Europe. The argument persists that in the EU-Africa interface, African countries are simply being colonised differently, through destabilization and manipulation to the profit of their former European colonisers. The gap between words and deeds is large in Europe, but also in Africa, where new vested interests profit handsomely from it, to the detriment of structural reforms and people's welfare.

V. Facing uncomfortable truths

The need for an objective re-assessment of the European-African relationship seems imperative as it is currently not what it could be despite many declarations to the contrary mainly from the Europeans. This seems clearly illustrated by a variety of events and issues. It seems to have become an interdependence stuck in the past.

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The emergence of a new fair and equitable relationship, which has both sides on a more equal footing, seems particularly hindered by too many remnants of the past colonial systems of relationship in the structure of the new relationship and perhaps especially in that of the ACP-EU which remains of special relevance. European perceptions of African 'inferiority' vis-à-vis themselves seem to be a large contributing factor and these, a remnant of the colonial past, which is the principal cause of it, need serious correction. The EU, being the main player on the European side, has sought to deal with Africa on a two-track course, North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa, in addition to the pan-continental one that is slowly growing. They all follow colonial pathways, dressed up in new speak, barely hiding haughty Eurocentrism.

In the post-colonial years, close cooperation has remained between Africa and Europe across many sectors making Europe (EU, with related countries) the largest foreign investor in Africa. Europe also remains the largest source of development aid for Africa, but this is not a blessing (except for its humanitarian

aid in cases of emergency). For many years, the EU was the largest non-African trading partner with Africa, but China reportedly overtook the EU in 2021 with bilateral trade between China and Africa rising 35% in that year alone to US\$254 billion. Such diversification increases African countries' strategic autonomy yet acts to weaken the African-European relationship which in its current state is unable to seize mutually advantageous opportunities.

While the EU-North African relationship has tended to be built on various platforms the relationship between Europe and Sub-Saharan Africa has been more focused and remains of special pivotal relevance to the broader Africa-Europe interface. In this, the EU relationship with the ACP countries remains of central relevance, but it is a relationship that is part of the problem and that needs fundamental adjustment to the current times. The entire set-up between the ACP states and the EU is still more rooted in the colonial past than in a strategic view of the future, not least because some EU member states prefer it that way. Such perception is further heightened by the fact that in the ACP-European relationship, the Europeans, not yet cured of condescendence, are seen to be holding a position of economic as well as political power over the African countries.

On the African side, the policy-making roles of the African Union (AU), regional economic organisations and individual states are less clear, though the AU seems to emerge as the main political partner for the EU. They all fail to capture the new realities in Europe, to hold it to account for continuing economic extraction and social destruction, but they themselves often fail to make necessary systemic adjustments. Asymmetric weaknesses plague the relationship and hinder fair and equal relations to the detriment of people on both continents. There are people of goodwill, here and there, but systemic weaknesses on the African side especially, prevent significant results.

Despite the launch of the AfCFTA in 2021 the same African leaders who launched it continue to support the basic format of the original ACP Agreement with the EU, duplicating efforts, undermining a coherent strategy and maintaining an in-

essence neo-colonial framework, but which apparently suits and benefits those in power. On the European side weaknesses also persist in hindering progress on many fronts in the relationship. As has been mentioned above, although the Europeans and the ACP Group in 2021 initialled a renewed Cotonou Agreement at the time of writing its implementation is still blocked by one EU member state (Hungary), which the others could circumvent if they really wanted.

Over the years a number of policy frameworks and instruments were heaped upon Africa by the EU, such as the Joint Africa-Europe Strategy, the European Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) and more, often well-intentioned, but all adding to policy incoherence, asymmetries and political and bureaucratic competition inside the European Commission and between it and the newer EEAS (European External Action Service). A European Development Fund (EDF) channelled billions of Euros in aid, but experts estimate that its contributions to African structural economic adjustments are minimal.

In September 2018, the then EU Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker stressed that the new EU-African relationship should move beyond a donor-recipient approach to an "alliance of equals". In March 2020, the new President of the EU Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, and the new High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Josep Borrell Fontelles, proposed a basis for a "Towards a Comprehensive Strategy with Africa" which proposed intensified cooperation in five key areas, namely green transition, digital transformation, sustainable growth and jobs, peace and governance and migration and mobility. These were accompanied by ten related "actions" which were largely economic and included facilitating investment in Africa and its business climate.

The reality of the Europeans habitually confronting the Africans with pre-written programs that often especially suit EU priorities, without real prior consultations, continues to be a problem. European policies can have major extra-territorial effects, but African governments are hardly consulted, their diplomatic missions in Brussels are short of capacities, and their private and academic sectors are sidelined. Grand statements for the media and home electorates are misleading, in

practice European funding is primarily available for projects which respond to European priorities.

The 6th AU-EU Summit, postponed due to the coronavirus pandemic, was finally being held in February 2022 in Brussels. It closed with a joint declaration “A Joint Vision for 2030” and an EU pledge for 150 billion euros for the period 2021-2027 which was delivered through the “Global Gateway” scheme of “Team Europe” (EU and Member States), a new effort at better coordination and coherence between EU and member states activities in Africa. If implemented in a true partnership spirit, then it could be a more significant improvement than anything before. The joint declaration of the “renewed Partnership” states that the partnership addresses immediate and long-term opportunities as well as challenges, such as joint action to promote peace and security, address migration and mobility issues, support Africa’s green energy transition to climate neutrality, and to promote multilateralism in addressing a range of issues including those relating to health and global public goods. The key problem remains delivery.

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Whatever economic progress Africa made was primarily thanks to new technologies (ICT in particular), the global price rise of minerals, some IMF-induced reforms (after its ill-considered earlier interventions), local market increases due to rapid population growth, to name but a few, and not forgetting Chinese investments. There were private sector investments from Europe and equally a few African multinationals invested in Europe. Many member states of the AU, with few exceptions (such as Egypt), for the most part, experienced what would later be true of South Africa after the end of apartheid: political freedom without economic empowerment.

It is impossible to really innovate the African-European relationship to mutual benefit given their multidimensional interdependence, without going back to the roots of the distortions, that is to the beginning of the 18th century as industrialisation in Europe and colonialism go hand in hand. Neo-colonial attitudes in Europe today are rooted not only in a hidden continuation of colonial thinking and in vested interests, but they have become mixed up with Eurocentrism, a lot

of Occidentalism, a world view about Western supremacy, born during this period of philosophical Enlightenment, economic industrialisation and political and military expansion. Occidentalism ignores the major contributions of other world regions to humankind development. It is important to realize the role of this subconscious mental framework which distorts even good intentions. As a consequence, Europe still lacks strategic empathy, which facilitates hidden survival of colonial views. The French political analyst Dominique Moisi has shown in a remarkable book in 2009 the importance of emotion in geopolitics, with this playing an important role in the African-European relationship that has emerged.

Europe's own history and diversity could better prepare it to understand Africa than any of its geopolitical competitors if it would dare to look colonialism straight in the eye and draw the inevitable consequences. If they were to follow its own precepts in practice, Europe (the EU) could become a preferred partner for other countries. But it has given itself over to governance by accountancy and statistics, side-lining historic, cultural or social understanding, ignoring the deeper currents which run through societies.

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In order to forge a constructive interdependent relationship, it is of course imperative that the asymmetries between both political systems (AU and EU) must be somehow managed, as they are a real hindrance, as much as the conceptual weaknesses and the undigested histories. Resulting from different historic origins and operating in different contextual conditions, the objectives, the division of powers, the administrative capacities, and the decision-making procedures between African and European institutions are far from synchronised.

Given the steering role of the Heads of Government in the AU, a recent development in the EU where there has been a power shift from the EU Commission to the European Council could be helpful. In the AU, strengthening the capabilities of the common institutions is an urgent task. The repeated EU proposal for an African Partnership could be a game changer if the method could be to define the Partnership as an overarching EU mission, as the Commission is

experimenting with in other areas, or as a comprehensive joint White Paper on the Relationship.

There is a need to return to the once mutually beneficial relationship between the two continents and to restore it is today's grand mission. The AfCFTA requires a great deal more work, but it has all the potential to repeat the virtuous cycles which the Paris and Rome Treaties set in motion in Europe. Nevertheless, many conditions need to be fulfilled for there to be partners which can effectively cooperate.

In the current global competitive geo-political context, the Europe model offers Africa a middle way of a socially corrected market economy with a democratic political system. They probably respond best to Africa's civilizational roots and are conceptually sufficiently open to be adapted by Africans to suit their views and needs. However, if only European governments would practice abroad the values which they preach, it would be more convincing.

VI. Finding a Way Forward

The only way for Europeans to make reparations for a distant past which they regret today, but for which they do not yet bear responsibility, is to face the structural consequences of this past and to work together with Africans to overcome these. To build an equitable relationship, attention needs to be given now to remedying socio-cultural identities and to upgrading economic resilience. It needs to touch the hearts and minds of people, as well as their living conditions.

The other big task lies in the economic domain with more attention especially given to issues which Africans have long requested cooperation on with these including: (i) structural transformation in agricultural and industrial sectors, (ii) stimulating a sustainable economy capable of producing the goods and services which Africa wants and the world needs, (iii) upgrading key economic inputs such as science and innovation, digitalisation, trade infrastructures (iv) helping create

the capacities and jobs for a rapidly growing population. Past policies, by African countries and self-centred Western donors, have failed to be transparent and to bring timely structural transformations in line with global economic development and new ecological urgencies. The Eurocentric frame of mind has also promoted only European models of modern governance and did not support efforts for modernising indigenous forms of democratic, that is consensual and people-centred government.

Among needed actions going forwards for an improved relationship, there needs to be increased empathy and understanding of African needs in EU decision-making circles and sensitivity to the fact that much in EU-Africa relations is still based on a post-colonial model, where Africa constitutes a commodities exporter, and current physical and other infrastructures fuel this role. Double standards continue to be applied. This is matched by a need to address the lack of understanding of new European realities on the African side.

Both AU and EU must design an overarching and coherent framework for businesses from both continents, with a multitude of public-private partnerships (PPPs) in various sectors and continue with the program patchwork of the past and traditional development aid. The potential of African businesses and SMEs is often insufficiently appreciated. The role of African academia and research community is not fully included in European policymaking either. Policies which directly impact Africa are elaborated without real consultation, for example in, but not limited to, the agricultural and forestry domains. The energy crisis in Europe and the transition to a climate neutral economy create incentives for a new grab of resources in Africa.

As illustrated by the February 2022 Summit there is an apparent lack of alignment, strategic vision and clear priorities, mainly caused by insufficient preparation, capacity shortages and institutional deficiencies, on both sides. This must be corrected for a more balanced relationship and improved operational clarity about the way forwards need to be implemented.

New policies and radical amendments of existing ones, in particular the ACP and Mediterranean policies, are needed to handle rapidly changing geopolitical, economic and ecological conditions. A system change is needed in the plethora of existing agreements as was recognised by the Compact with Africa. There is a need for implementing decisions and more space for creativity and serendipity.

Efforts must prioritise helping implement an African Common Market especially as it is essential to increase productive capacities in Africa for its growing markets for goods and services, which requires the creation of the proper framework conditions for investment and trade. Only fundamental redesign can make existing agreements fit for this purpose.

Political leaders must address the quadruple goal of trade facilitation - investment facilitation - structural transformation - productive capacity growth at the core of their joint efforts. Climate neutrality and circular economy can be achieved through sharing green technology and digitalisation and through strengthening mutual research capacities. The EU's push for green industrialisation could have an African pendant if African governments should insist on systematic industrialization locally and on trading finished or half-finished products with Europe. However, they need to put the framework conditions in place. Sustainable industrialization requires also envisaging compensatory mechanisms to deal with the collateral effects of trade liberation in Africa and with Europe, which are not all automatically positive for each country or each social group.

New needs require innovative policies, governance organisation and management methods with increased capacities in Africa and in Europe. The asymmetries between the AU and EU institutional capacities need to be addressed. New more effective inter- and supranational mechanisms to deal with collective economic and ecological challenges are needed. For all goals, a more pragmatic approach is needed by setting up coalitions of the willing on both continents to address specific issues jointly to separately. Africans need to upgrade their acts in dealing with Europe, and their knowledge of the current realities in Europe; if they remain

in a weak position there, they will also be weak in dealing with other economic powers and exploitation will continue.

Another practical option is to nominate in the Commission of AU and EU a member each specifically tasked with designing and implementing a coherent strategy, bringing together the various bits now distributed in different silos. Their offices should be well funded and staffed with strategic thinking experts, which in turn should connect to the real world of citizens' organisations and businesses in both groups of countries. They could be the initiators of the dedicated expert groups proposed. A variant would be the method of a special negotiator, which was used successfully by the EU in the secession process of Great Britain.

More innovation is needed to achieve challenges such as achieving improved synergy and policy cohesion. The new so-called 'Team Europe' approach by the EU may bring improvements provided it gets not stuck in old concepts and procedures. Europe can help to mobilise resources and create the framework conditions for building human resources within a coherent strategic framework, with proper attention to interdependencies and collateral effects, in all realms which are essential for Africans to achieve similar conditions of welfare for all, as Europeans achieved during their industrialisation.

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Rapidly growing populations in vast urban conglomerations, often as vulnerable as those in rural areas, demand a triple effort of building more quality housing, improving physical infrastructures, and preventing a worsening of harmful emissions. An upgrade of the digital infrastructure is needed for companies and for services to citizens. Together, these efforts can stimulate sustainable growth and massive job creation. A multiplier effect can come about only through a coherent strategy linking investments in infrastructure, housing, energy and food systems. Environmental sustainability and climate neutrality are an investment to avoid future problems resulting from further climate deterioration and its economic and public health costs.

A holistic approach, based on the innovative concept of regenerative agriculture, is needed to sustainably increase productivity in African agriculture, to secure

locally the food and medicines for more than 1 billion consumers, and to mitigate the effects of climate change. This will lift rural areas out of poverty and ensure the security of supply at affordable prices. Investments in rural areas must therefore be given a high priority. It will equally serve public health, provided the focus is on science-based and country-specific solutions. Research and innovation, farmers' capacity acceleration, and public-private partnerships are needed. This can be done in a national and regional context taking into account the vast ecological differences.

The jobs created through investments in industrialisation, housing and infrastructures will increase purchasing power for agricultural produce and improve the structural conditions for distribution and storage. Support for the African-specific sector strategies also requires remedying some distorting effects of the EU's policies old and new. Overall, the conclusions of the UN Global Food Summit should be fully taken into account. In fact, the concept of regenerative agriculture now promoted is close to African practices and should therefore be encouraged.

Sustainable African forest management is necessary to ensure the multifunctional roles of forests for economic development in rural areas, biodiversity and the development of biomaterials as well as carbon sequestration. The value of African forests for climate mitigation needs to be monetized, a demand which African governments should not hesitate to insist on. Rich country governments, with high climate-disturbing emissions, and corporations seeking to purchase carbon credit to offset continuing emissions, could pay for the conservation and management of forests. The system can ensure new employment for the people who are now forced to cooperate with deforestation. This requires also more attention to strengthening local research facilities and to facilitating access to new technologies to help with the sustainable use of land, reforestation and the multifunctional role of Africa's plantations.

The existing energy cooperation platform should strengthen mechanisms for technology sharing with the EU green-tech development to stimulate Africa's

transition to green energy, taking fully into account Africa's own, and different pathways to climate neutrality. Access everywhere to sustainable energy, an increase in production and distribution efficiency through digitalisation, can be achieved with the aid of integrating energy markets. Renewable energy (in particular solar) can become a major source of supply for Africa, as well as for Europe. The transitory inclusion of nuclear and gas in the green category of Europe's taxonomy system will also facilitate Africa's access to finance to develop a mix of energy sources.

In order to deal with current limited capacities in both AU and EU the untapped resources of business, academia and civic society organisations, must be utilized. They have the capacity to carry out the much-needed comprehensive impact assessment studies before policies are finally decided.

Foresight studies provide a solid launching platform for game-changing reform processes, in particular in complex settings with uncertainties such as in the African-European context. They facilitate the development of a common framework of thinking and ultimately of alignment of policy vision and strategy elaboration. In political talk nowadays, how to deliver grand promises is often conveniently forgotten.

Therefore, collaborative mechanisms involving all stakeholders which can both analyse the causes of persisting problems and creatively elaborate innovative proposals, should be considered and set up. The overarching objective is to permanently and comprehensively establish anticipatory thinking and reflective handling of uncertainty in government institutions. It helps to bring changes in the culture of an organisation and the processes of communication. Consultation and cooperation with stakeholders should be increasingly utilised. Collaborative governance needs formal organization, ensuring that all stakeholders take part on equal footing and that there is clear progress towards a concrete outcome, being the setting of policy objectives, the outline of a regulatory architecture, or simply solving the practicalities in the invariably diverse realities.

Priorities in improving trade facilitation measures could be financed primarily by private sector capital with European public guarantees and by funding from existing, or future, dedicated financial institutions. There must be improved access to finance for start-ups and for SMEs to make them fit for production and innovation, as well as for cooperation and integration in regional and global value chains. European support for domestic resource mobilisation in Africa should be strengthened, focussing on the use of digital technologies, effective taxation and eliminating European tax on remittances from Africans working in Europe.

Capacity must be accelerated in the public and private sectors in Europe and in Africa, by stimulating research, training and apprenticeships, engaging universities, business schools and think tanks and institutes of public administration and management, and strengthening Africa's own research facilities to support innovation in all economic sectors, and to the creation of regional food safety agencies, environmental protection agencies and others relevant for modern society. Start-ups and scale-ups should receive specific support to grow. There are different knowledge gaps in Africa and Europe to be remedied.

Governance capabilities to implement the Partnership strategy need to be upgraded and extended in both Africa and Europe in line with its objectives. The AU and EU must be re-made to be fit for the purpose in the emerging future global geopolitical, economic and ecological circumstances. Both the AU and EU are inter-state organisations which are in constant need of management modernisation and learning processes to deal with complex and relentless problems which were not foreseen at the time of their establishment.

Improved economic value creation can be explored from the needs of industry to find solutions to specific problems in their value chain (such as resource efficiency) or from continuously emerging and changing societal needs (such as quality of living). Innovation will also come often through the involvement of stakeholders (co-creation). African forests, or traditional African food products, and nearly all extractions from Africa's rich soil and waters offer great potential for multiple

value creation, but they are among the many opportunities hitherto neglected because of too European research perspective.

Education system reforms, including curriculum to embrace Africa's rich heritage and ancient wisdom, are critical to liberating young Africans from imprisonment in Eurocentric worldviews. Capacity upgrading and acceleration will help to bring more demand-driven value creation. But this requires also permanent strategic agility, scanning the global context, scouting for opportunities, and attention to continuities or discontinuities.

African governments need to reconnect their modern education systems from colonial times with their ancient wisdom and learning. There is a need for Europe to support the building of African news agencies in order to bring more balance and objectivity in reporting from Africa to the rest of the world.

New knowledge should be institutionalised and blended with local conditions and expertise, and thus have a more permanent impact. What is required are innovative, holistic learning systems blending theory with practice and focusing on leadership development at all stages. Capacity acceleration for product or service innovation in view of changes in the market is needed urgently for Africa's SMEs, which can be nurtured to make a gazelle jump to transform the economy. It should be coupled with an understanding of opportunities and risks for business within the new trade framework created by the AfCFTA. A transformative mindset within large corporations operating in Africa, whatever their origin, must be nurtured to facilitate their roles as locomotives of the promotion of well-being for all socio-economic development.

In addition, the EU should upgrade and extend existing two-way student and youth exchange programs (inspired by the successful EU Erasmus Exchange program and proportionally of the same size), research and think tanks cooperation, strengthening cooperation between civil society organisations, assistance in (re-)building Africa's cultural infrastructures, which requires more effort than just returning some artworks.

Conclusion

There are vast opportunities for mutual beneficiation. But the relationship of the future needs a return to a fair and equitable relationship. Old structures and top-down forms of bureaucratic cooperation need to be cleared away. The forces of civil society and of entrepreneurs in Africa and Europe need to become better connected. The focus must shift to structural transformation, away from neo-colonial aid and development. A comprehensive friendship agreement with concrete objectives and means attached is needed as a concrete follow-up of acts of forgiveness and reconciliation. Africa is rising, and Europe should stand on its side this time, in the mutual short and long-term interest, and be true to proclaimed humanitarian values.



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