

**TOWARDS A NEW SYSTEM OF
RELATIONS BASED ON PARTNERSHIP**



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GIANNI PITTELLA

President of the S&D
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OUR COMMITMENT

Introduction by GIANNI PITTELLA

**FOR TOO LONG HYPOCRISY HAS PARALYSED
ALL INITIATIVES TO TACKLE THE HUGE PROBLEMS
OF THIS COMPLICATED CONTINENT.**

Once, we could look out, beyond the horizon and see the African continent – just beyond our shores. A **continent of promise and of fortune that surprised and fascinated**, but also a continent whose history has a darkness, from which we recoiled distressed and ashamed. Through the haze of distance and obscurity, some turned away indifferent. Today, the Africa that many had tried to forget – having plundered and insulted it over the centuries – is calling the world to account. To confront its history and to reckon with it. There is no denying its call.

For too long hypocrisy has paralysed all initiatives to tackle the huge problems of this complicated continent that is both rich and poor. I speak of the hypocrisy of hearing the **cry for help – a cry born out of the indescribable and ancient suffering of the African people** – and responding to it with charity; a charity which also acts as absolution from the more fortunate northern hemisphere's responsibility for this suffering.

Too many mistakes have been made, natural materials and riches consumed and political crimes committed, to pretend that this charity is enough when at the same time political and financial interests continue the same **systemic robbery and repression**.

In the 21st century, many things have changed. Globalisation has uncovered many truths and laid bare both the **faults and responsibilities of the global development process**. It has brought the 'African question', alongside other neglected areas of the world, to the forefront of the debate as an **unquestionable priority**. No longer do protectionism or barriers offer sanctuary from the need to respond to Africa's call. **New strategic choices must be made.**

We strongly believe that there is only one successful approach: **no longer just a commitment for Africa but a partnership with Africa**. A change of pace is needed to start a new concept of aid.

THIS BOOK IS A TESTAMENT TO THE REAL COMMITMENT OF THE GROUP OF THE PROGRESSIVE ALLIANCE OF SOCIALISTS AND DEMOCRATS IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT. CONTAINED IN THESE PAGES ARE THE TESTIMONIES OF MY COLLEAGUES WHO WORK ON THE WIDE SPECTRUM OF ISSUES AFFECTING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE EU AND THE AFRICAN CONTINENT.

It is necessary to look at Africa not only as reflecting the world's knotty problems, but also as a place of opportunity. Of course, we are well aware that the **phenomenon of migration** has given the international community a challenge of major proportions. It is hard to imagine how Africa's dramatic contradictions would not have caused consequences for other regions of the world. Our delay in understanding the likely course of history has been responsible for the **complex mass of problems we see today**.

Therefore, it is time to **enter into a dialogue with Africa**, its states, political and social organisations, and with the citizens of this important part of our planet. **Europe must seize this opportunity** to encourage a new system of relations with Africa based on the concept of partnership. The financial flows from the European Union's development programmes, the funds and bilateral agreements; these are all initiatives based on **ending the dominance of European interests**. They will turn a new page in our mutual history and, step by step, they will open up Africa's future at the same time as providing Europe with more security and greater co-operation in the economic, social and cultural fields.

This book, dedicated to Africa, is a testament to the real commitment of the Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament. Contained in these pages are the

testimonies of my colleagues who work on the wide spectrum of issues affecting the relationship between the EU and the African continent. Here you can find timely insights that highlight our political choices and the efforts our Group is making to urge the Commission and the Council to be more determined in **reversing the past trend**, and to **give impetus to an era of new relationships** between the two continents.

The battle against the exploitation of **illegal minerals** in some areas of Africa is one of the examples that reveals the strength of our commitment. We achieved a very important win after convincing the Council and the Commission to agree on the rules excluding so-called '**conflict minerals**' or '**blood minerals**' from the EU market. It has been a long, complicated and often solitary fight because the Council, the Commission and conservative factions in the European Parliament were pushing for a voluntary system. However, after tough negotiations, we have successfully ensured that the vast majority of minerals imported into the EU will now be covered by the regulation. This is a **victory for the millions of exploited men, women and children in Africa** who have waited a long time for this humane and fair step. Such success confirms that we can change things for the better if we are motivated by a real political will and determination.

The most pressing issues that concern us and Africa are: the large-scale migration of people to

THE MOST PRESSING ISSUES THAT CONCERN US AND AFRICA ARE: THE LARGE-SCALE MIGRATION OF PEOPLE TO EUROPE; POVERTY AND HUNGER; TERRORISM; STRENGTHENING THE RULE OF LAW AND DEMOCRACY; HUMAN RIGHTS; THE RIGHTS OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN; CLIMATE CHANGE; EDUCATION; AND HEALTH.

Europe; poverty and hunger; terrorism; strengthening the rule of law and democracy; human rights; the rights of women and children; climate change; education and health. The first of these problems, namely that of migration, has acted as a catalyst for a completely different approach to European policy towards Africa. Facing this phenomenon – which is not an emergency but a **symptom of inequality** and the **current world order exacerbated by globalisation** – the European Union is largely responsible for its own destiny. Anyone who has visited any of the many suffering and neglected African countries knows that the problems Africans face affect our own way of life. They will also understand that no wall, inside or outside Europe, will ever stop the **endless river of human need**. For this reason, the EU has begun to think about plans for **investment in third countries, reversing the policies of the past**.

We cannot hide the difficulties and resistance that exist within the Union. The **xenophobic impulses, nationalist and populist appeals** are all aimed at **destroying the principle of solidarity** that has always kept us together. But a new policy on Africa is the tool we need to intervene.

Europe must go back to **looking to the horizon**. Faced with the sheer magnitude of these problems, it must have a **strategic long-term plan**. The old policies for dealing with emergencies and redistributing

the burden have been unsuccessful and have led to a waste of resources. We must hold on to the **European founding principles** of **solidarity** and **justice**, and at the same time work to tackle the root causes of terrorism, poverty, youth unemployment, and an unacceptable lack of access to education and culture. **We must invest significant resources**, but these can bring benefits, including for the security and prosperity of Europe.

As the Socialists and Democrats, we are already playing our part in Parliament and acting on our principles. At the end of this book is a **'position paper' setting out our vision for a renewed Africa-EU partnership**. Africa is a key partner for us. This approach will inspire us in our actions and in our behaviour within the European institutions, and it will serve as a guide to working with Africa ■



MARTIN SCHULZ

President of the European
Parliament

A STRONGER AFRICA, A MORE PROSPEROUS EUROPE

An interview with Martin SCHULZ

Mr Schulz, you declared at the EU-Africa summit in Malta in November 2015: “We want to open ways of reaching Europe other than embarking on a dangerous journey, on a rickety vessel and entrusting one’s life to cynical traffickers.” We live in difficult times. The migration crisis is worsening and European public opinion is being swept by worrying waves of xenophobia. Are you still convinced that the EU can become a safe haven for large masses of desperate people?

The migration crisis is not an issue that we can leave at our borders. It will require both short- and long-term solutions that will only be successful with a **co-ordinated** and **comprehensive European response**.

Firstly, despite the depictions of some political parties, **Europe as a continent is not overflowing with refugees**. In 2015, the number of asylum applications in the EU – a record number and a huge challenge – accounted for **less than 0.2%** of the total European population. The greatest refugee crisis by far is in surrounding countries such as Lebanon, where some estimates indicate that refugees account for over 20% of the population.

Despite great resistance from many member states, the EU is gradually putting in place a sustainable framework to deal with the situation. This means an EU border force and coastguard to manage our single external border. It also means **closer co-operation with all our key neighbours**, including Turkey, without compromising on matters such as fundamental rights or legal criteria. And, above all, it means not thinking the EU can return to the Dublin system we had in the past; real solidarity in Europe means adapting this framework in an ambitious way to confront the new reality and pressures we face.

Furthermore, we need a long-term plan to address the **root causes of migration**. The key to this aspect

of our policymaking is to strengthen regions like Africa from within, so that people do not feel the need to migrate in the first place. The EU is the world’s largest donor of international aid, with over **€56.2 billion** spent in 2013 alone. Much of this aid is directed at supporting development programmes throughout the African continent. Though we have seen much progress result from this aid, we cannot allow our relationship with Africa to end here. We must continue making efforts to strengthen economic and trade partnerships between the EU and Africa for both continents to achieve their full potential.

Africa has become a very desirable target for some major economic powers such as the USA, China and Brazil. Is Europe able to face these competitors?

We do not wish to compete with other major economic powers over Africa; we wish to **work in conjunction with them** to help Africans develop the continent for themselves. Only by supporting African-led solutions to African problems will we be able to see sustainable solutions emerge, **resulting in a viable and prosperous African continent**.

Through our ACP-EU Partnership Agreement, we have established a set of priorities to drive our engagement in Africa. These priorities focus on development and political and economic co-operation. Our most recent engagement includes measures such as investing in infrastructure, promoting political stability and good governance, and encouraging security and stability throughout the region. Africa, the EU and all other partners involved will benefit from promoting these priorities, which **embody the co-operative spirit that the EU seeks to promote**. With the Cotonou Agreement expiring in 2020, the Parliament will work with the other institutions to redefine relations between the EU and Africa. As Federica Mogherini has said: **“investing in Africa is also investing in the EU”**.

How do you view technology and sustainable development for the 'African Planet'?

I was very pleased to see world leaders **adopt the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** at the United Nations Summit in September 2015. These new policies, which the EU strongly supports, include a set of **17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** to **end poverty, fight inequality and injustice, and tackle climate change by 2030**. The EU also has its own 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, aiming to **eradicate poverty** while also taking into account economic, social and environmental factors, giving the EU a **multi-faceted approach** to its engagement abroad.

With the renewed support for sustainable development, we must look at how we can support a technology boom from within Africa, rather than importing it from abroad. But we must also make certain the groundwork is properly laid before doing so, to ensure the resources and raw materials used in this development are sourced sustainably. In particular, the lack of reliable infrastructure and access to electricity should be addressed before the technology sector can grow. This is why the **EU supports a multi-tiered approach to its engagement in Africa**, combining infrastructure development with growth in other areas.

Furthermore, even the best technology and tools must have reliable manpower behind them. This **necessitates a quality education system**. There is no doubt that Africa's best resource is its people, so we must continue to develop people's skills to help them manage and use new technologies.

The Schengen Agreement is one of the most important and significant EU achievements. The agreement is constantly called into question on security grounds due to the threat of terrorism and at the same time attacked by anti-European movements. What should be done to preserve one of the EU's fundamental principles?

The Schengen Agreement is not the problem but the solution to a **safer European Union**. This topic has been much debated in Parliament over the last few months and since then, we have been working intensively on several fronts. First of all, we have completely redesigned

the mandate of Europol to ensure it is more effective and focused on counter-terrorism. Secondly, we are working to ensure systematic exit and entry controls at the Schengen external border, for everyone, including EU citizens. Thirdly, we are using Schengen border evaluations to pinpoint where the weaknesses are, to determine how best we can support member states such as Greece, who are faced with systemic and persistent difficulties. What we need is to **increase security from within the Union** by promoting better information-sharing and co-ordination between member states, not by building walls. Those who call for the end of Schengen have never explained to the citizens how much this would cost them in economic terms.

Respect for human rights remains a huge problem in Africa. In a number of countries, civil war and various forms of violence are having a devastating effect on millions of people. How can the EU help to improve the situation?

Human rights are one of the EU's biggest priorities in Africa. This pillar is vital for future progress to be made. Without it, there can be no security or economic prosperity.

One major initiative we have taken to improve human rights and security in the region was to create the **Sahel Regional Action Plan for 2015-2020**. The aims of this plan include preventing and countering radicalisation, creating appropriate conditions for young people, strengthening migration and mobility efforts, enhancing border management and supporting the fight against illicit trafficking and transnational organised crime. But more can be done.

The EU will continue to **improve the human-rights** situation in Africa by using its position to support human-rights defenders and civil-society organisers on the ground, because they **give a voice to the silenced**. For this to work, we must also have the co-operation of African governments. It is these governments who must ensure that basic rights, such as a **free press** and **freedom of speech**, are protected. As always, we will continue to direct our support to African governments that take steps to improve human rights from within.

THE EUROPEAN UNION SEEKS TO BE A PARTNER WITH AFRICA. A STRONGER AFRICAN CONTINENT CONTRIBUTES TO A MORE PROSPEROUS EUROPEAN UNION AND A MORE STABLE WORLD IN GENERAL. WE ARE IN A NEW CHAPTER OF RELATIONS WITH AFRICA, A CHAPTER THAT ENCOURAGES MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL RELATIONSHIPS BUILT UP THROUGH CONTINUOUS DIALOGUE AND CO-OPERATION IN KEY SECTORS SUCH AS INDUSTRY, TRADE AND ENERGY.

Some of the key concerns and priorities in Africa are sustainable development, poverty, corruption, education, democracy, human rights and trade, to name but a few. With so many historical ties binding Europe with Africa, how and why should Europe respond?

As I said before, the European Union seeks to be a partner with Africa. A stronger African continent contributes to a more prosperous European Union and a more stable world in general. We are in a new chapter of relations with Africa, a chapter that encourages mutually beneficial relationships built up through continuous dialogue and co-operation in key sectors such as industry, trade and energy.

One example of our efforts to improve trade relations in Africa is the 'Action Plan for the Horn of Africa'. The goal of this framework is to boost local economies through trade by investing in development and enhancing good governance from within. With strong internal economies, people will no longer feel it is necessary to make the dangerous journey to Europe.

This is why I commend the S&D Group's efforts in bringing Africa back to the table. Though there are many other conflicts in the world that require our attention, Africa must remain a priority.

How can the Parliament influence the Council's decisions on foreign and security policy? The lack of a common policy in this field often prevents the Union from playing a role on the international scene. Could the Parliament help in creating a new Union as we approach the forthcoming 60th anniversary of the Treaties of Rome?

The European Parliament is pushing for better co-operation between the institutions for more coherent and co-ordinated foreign and security policies. To do this, we need sustained and frequent dialogue between the leaders of the institutions. This is something that President Juncker, President Tusk and I have been working tirelessly to improve.

When I came into office, I promised to open the doors and windows of the Parliament to European citizens, to make our decision-making processes more transparent. Though much progress has been made on this front, there is still work to be done. As the 60th anniversary of the Treaties of Rome approaches, we must continue to work towards a more transparent and democratic Union, while also endeavouring to bring it closer to the hearts of the European people ■



FEDERICA MOGHERINI

The EU's high representative for foreign affairs and security policy, and vice-president of the European Commission

NOT CHARITY **BUT** INVESTMENT **IN THE** FUTURE

An interview with Federica MOGHERINI

Ms Mogherini, in your first speech to the African Union in October 2015, you posed the rhetorical question: "Is the rest of the world ready to listen to Africa?" You were pessimistic. Do you still feel this way?

I remember that day in Addis very well, as well as all my trips to Africa since I began my mandate. And each time, I see a **continent full of energy** and meet so many young people who want to **do something good with their lives**. They want to study, find a good job and give their families a better future. In Addis I said: **"There is good news coming from Africa"**. So my question was whether the rest of the world was ready to listen to the good news. And let me tell you: Europe has started to listen. I see a growing interest in Africa from our continent and from several other parts of the world. The point is how to turn such interest into real opportunities for the people of Africa and for all of us.

Since that day, the situation in this great part of the world has become complicated. The issue of migrants – the movement of large masses of people fleeing from war, terrorism and poverty – has put a strain on the European project itself. Is there a limit to the tasks that the EU has set itself, beyond which we can no longer go?

The only threat to the European project comes from **inside our continent**. The flow of migrants and refugees is not a threat to Europe – but indeed it is

a test. We are a union of almost half a billion people. Despite the crisis, we are in the G3 of global economic powers. We definitely **have the resources to deal with the current flow of migrants**. But we need to recognise that this is not just an issue for Greece or Italy – or even Germany. None of us can address this crisis effectively on our own. But if we all do our part, in solidarity, we truly have nothing to fear. We cannot behave like **part-time Europeans**: we cannot call for solidarity when we need it for ourselves and turn a blind eye when it is our neighbour asking for help. If we do, we are the ones who are putting **Europe's future at risk**.

The continent has evolved, certainly economically; is it not time to question past and present co-operation policies in the light of a number of global changes? Should the EU continue to provide billions of euros in financial assistance, or is it now time to review our policies?

Let us be very clear on this: **our aid to Africa is not simply charity work**. It is an investment in the continent's growth, in its young generations, in its future. That is, an investment in our own future. We need to keep this in mind, especially in times of stronger financial constraints. **Disengaging from Africa is simply not an option**. And our political family has a special responsibility for safeguarding and even raising the level of our engagement. At the same

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**BUILDING WALLS IS NOT JUST USELESS,
BUT COUNTERPRODUCTIVE. IT IS A WASTE OF OUR
RESOURCES, IT GIVES STRENGTH TO CRIMINAL
NETWORKS AND HUMAN SMUGGLERS, AND IT FOSTERS
FEAR INSIDE OUR SOCIETIES.**

time, our political family must also recognise that aid is not enough. Europe is the biggest investor in Africa and private investments can make a huge difference to the continent's economy. It is true that we need a shift in our approach, beyond the old donor-recipient mentality. European governments cannot fix Africa's problems on their own. Africa has to be in the lead. We need partners – among Africa's government, in the private sector and in African civil society.

Can you share with us what you have witnessed through the eyes of the men and women you saw in the world's most troubled nations? What did the African leadership have to say?

I have seen **so much hope** – which is sometimes incredible for a European to comprehend. There is so **much potential among the people of Africa**, but this potential is too often held back. It is held back by instability and terrorism, by corruption, by extreme inequality, by climate change. Many African leaders agree that their countries need good schools and hospitals, good vocational training and good jobs – especially for young people – good governance to counter corruption and to attract more investment – good tribunals with the guarantee of no impunity, and justice for all. I see a number of young leaders who **truly care for their countries** – and we are ready to work with them, as partners.

Millions of people flee from Africa, not only because of war but also because of misery, hunger, despair. People are looking for peace and a decent life. Should Europe be a fortress?

Of course not. Building walls is not just useless, but counterproductive. It is a waste of our resources, it gives strength to criminal networks and human smugglers, and it fosters fear in our societies.

On the contrary, as we fight human smugglers and work on **readmission agreements**, we must also **strengthen the legal channels** through which people can come to Europe. It is a moral duty, but it is also in the economic interests of an aging continent. Far from being a threat, **migration can be a big opportunity for both Africa and Europe if properly managed.**

You worked on a 'Global Strategy' for foreign and security policy. According to the Treaty, your task is to build a common policy in this field, if possible, avoiding the image of Europe as a political dwarf among great powers. A European defence policy has to deal with the threat of terrorism, which has now reached global proportions. However, the EU often proves unable to give a common answer. Compared to the past, do you think the EU has a greater chance of speaking with a single voice?

Our European Union has the potential to be a global power: we are the **main trading partner and foreign investor for most countries in the world**, we have an unparalleled diplomatic network and we are a global security provider – acting from Colombia to Myanmar. And on foreign policy, Europe is much more united than the mainstream narrative suggests. Yes, we do have different diplomatic traditions and different geographies. But, in most cases, we realise that we share the same long-term interests. On Syria, on our relationship with Africa and on climate change – Europe already behaves as a true union. I always say, we don't really need to speak with a single voice, but **we all need to sing from the same hymn sheet.** This is one of the reasons why we have worked on the **Global Strategy**. We identified our priorities and our guiding principles together, and now we are working on the tools we need to reach our shared goals. Work has already begun to strengthen the Europe of defence

and a European Security Union is bringing about concrete results. This is what our citizens need, rather than narratives of conflicting national interests.

The recent EU-Turkey deal on immigration is crucial. It is a test for Europe. But, as you well know, Europe cannot avoid a relationship with the south as a whole. Should the EU change its priorities for the budget and identify new policies?

Over the last decade, the European budget has invested roughly **€20 billion per year to support Africa's development**. Europe is Africa's main donor and investor. And we are stepping up our engagement to an unprecedented level. The new **Trust Fund for Africa** is bringing clean water to over 150,000 people around Lake Chad and helping those who fled Boko Haram to go back to their homes in the north of Nigeria. But we have also realised that public funding alone will never be enough to help Africa realise its full potential. This is why we have launched an innovative **European External Investment Plan**; the idea is to support private investors and international institutions to move into fragile parts of the continent, by providing them with a financial guarantee, but also with technical and political assistance. This plan can mobilise some **€44 billion in new investment**. This is massive, no other global power has ever invested so much in Africa's present and future. Let me add that there is no other way to address the issue of migration – beyond scaremongering and propaganda.

The European project needs to be reconciled in a global context, characterised by the financial crisis and security threats. How can this be achieved?

This is the great paradox of our times: the European project is facing increasing questions, precisely when we need a unified Europe the most. To regain our economic sovereignty on the global stage, we need to **share sovereignty inside the European Union**. We need to be the **rule-setters of the global economy**

and **negotiate from a position of strength**. And we can only do so as a true union. On security threats, together we can be a **diplomatic superpower** and a **global security provider**. As we implement the Global Strategy, we have the opportunity to use all the tools already provided by the treaties – for instance, resorting to the 'battlegroups' and to forms of permanent, structured co-operation. But if we look just a little further, we need to be imaginative and **find creative ways towards a 'more perfect' union**.

As the EU's high representative for foreign affairs and security policy, you, of course, believe in the future of the Union. And you have the tools at your disposal to assess if, in the face of serious internal divisions, there is a realistic threat to the 60-year-old Treaty of Rome (1957-2017). Please share your thoughts on this.

Indeed the European Union faces an existential threat. For the first time in our history, we risk moving backwards instead of forwards. **Our Union is at risk when we build walls instead of tearing them down**. It is at risk when we behave like part-time Europeans. If we discriminate against people based on the colour of their skin, or the language they speak, or the way they pray, then our Union is at risk, because our identity is based on diversity. At the same time, and despite all difficulties, **we are still the only successful model of regional integration in the world**. Our partners all around the globe are truly puzzled: they see us as a rich, strong and free continent, and do not understand the reasons for our difficulties. We must preserve what we have achieved and we must regain sovereignty on the global stage. This will **only be possible if we stand united and if we believe in our potential**. My friend John Kerry, the US Secretary of State, recently said: "Europe must believe in itself as much as we believe in you". This is the battle we now face and it is our duty as policymakers: **invest in our unity to achieve our potential** ■

IF WE DISCRIMINATE AGAINST PEOPLE BASED ON THE COLOUR OF THEIR SKIN, OR THE LANGUAGE THEY SPEAK, OR THE WAY THEY PRAY, THEN OUR UNION IS AT RISK, BECAUSE OUR IDENTITY IS BASED ON DIVERSITY



'Women working at fish market' – Mozambique (© DAN).





'Women at work harvesting seaweed' – Tanzania (© DAN).





'Coffee service' – Ethiopia (© DAN).

A COMMON THREAT

by Juan Fernando LÓPEZ AGUILAR

Of all the innumerable challenges the European Union is facing at the moment, **terrorism is, without doubt, the main and most serious challenge**, since it aims to **spread terror, fear and anguish** in our lives and societies. The brutal attacks on *Charlie Hebdo* and at the Bataclan in Paris in 2015, but also the attacks in Brussels, London, Madrid and other cities around Europe, were **an attack on our fundamental rights**. They targeted not only innocent people, but also the core values of the European way of life, and have consequently placed the **fight against terrorism at the top of the European Union's agenda** ■ ■ ■



**JUAN FERNANDO
LÓPEZ AGUILAR**

Vice-chair of the
Delegation to the ACP-
EU Joint Parliamentary
Assembly

The **threat of terrorism seems to be rising**, not only in Europe but also in its vicinity and further afield: in the southern and south-eastern borders of the EU. An arc of crises and disputes has been drawn, ranging from Iraq and Syria to Lebanon and Libya, but also to the Sahel and North and sub-Saharan Africa, where the number of terrorist attacks has increased considerably in the past few years, particularly in Kenya, Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Nigeria, Somalia and Sudan.

The scope of the threat is broad and thus requires a **strong, united and coherent European response** from the entire union, in close co-operation with our partners around the world – a response that engages national governments, international organisations and non-state actors through co-operation and political dialogue with the countries in question. This begins with sharing information and intelligence, overcoming fears as well as national and state barriers, jointly identifying and dismantling terrorist financing at the source, and sharing experiences in preventing attacks.

THE SCOPE OF THE THREAT IS BROAD AND THIS REQUIRES A STRONG, UNITED AND COHERENT EUROPEAN RESPONSE FROM THE ENTIRE UNION, IN CLOSE CO-OPERATION WITH OUR PARTNERS AROUND THE WORLD.

In this particular regard, it should be mentioned that the EU already co-operates with countries in the Sahel, North Africa and the Horn of Africa on counter-terrorism, through **high-level political dialogue** that focuses on law enforcement co-operation, information exchange, extending criminal law tools and anti-radicalisation efforts. But it would be useful to transfer our experience to these other regions with regard to the creation of instruments such as the **European Arrest Warrant, Eurojust and Europol**.

HIT THE FUNDING

Furthermore, the **EU must redouble its efforts** aimed at solving these challenges by focusing more strongly on prevention. The only way forward is to prevent these actions from happening to ensure our citizens and democracies are secure. To achieve this, firstly we

need to know how to **stop European citizens being recruited by terrorist organisations**. In this regard, police co-operation is essential to share information on the thousands of Europeans who have returned after being trained for terrorism abroad. But it is also essential to denounce the fact that austerity and the abandonment of education, inclusion and integration policies, particularly in vulnerable and marginalised neighbourhoods, have led many young European citizens, born as Europeans, to embark on this senseless spiral of destructive and self-destructive violence, and to **stand ready not only to kill, but to die killing**. It is also a fact that the internet is a potential platform for grooming people for violent extremism and it is one of the primary channels for publishing and proliferating illegal content. We therefore need clear rules on how to intervene when content instigates radicalisation.

We also need to **stop the socialisation of terror in prisons**, to learn how to prevent arms trafficking and to block the financing that supports indoctrination

into terrorism. Currently the major area in which the EU should exert itself more is the financing of terrorism; we need to **deprive terrorists of their financial resources**. To this end, international flows of capital from criminal activities, which are often laundered in European financial markets, should be controlled more effectively at the European and global level.

Governments should ensure **collaboration with NGOs** and with the **industrial and private sectors**, which are able to invest resources essential to fighting terror more effectively at all stages. This co-operation is needed among the various regional groups and international organisations – the EU, the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) – to **produce global synergies**.

The threats we face are common. This is not specific to any single religion, nationality or civilisation; it is an international phenomenon. Our approach to the threats needs to be common, too. **Our strength is our unity and resilience.** But this joint response to terrorism and radicalisation will only be effective if it is carried out in full accordance with the principles of international law, with full respect for human rights and within the framework of the democratic values on which international society is based. This most challenging battle should **strike a fair balance between freedom and security**, and under no circumstances can it be fought at the price of

Finally, it is crucial **not to equate refugees with terrorists.** We cannot mix up the fight against terrorism with the debate on migration or refugees. We have to be very clear on this point: refugees, who are crossing our borders because they need our help and who are entitled to international protection, are not terrorists. We cannot and we must not make the mistake of thinking that foreigners, immigrants and refugees are a security threat. They are not. We must not lose sight of the threat. Let us not forget that the vast majority of migrants are **fleeing situations of conflict** and even **fleeing terrorism themselves.** We must never allow fear to prevail.

IT IS CRUCIAL NOT TO EQUATE REFUGEES WITH TERRORISTS. WE CANNOT MIX UP THE FIGHT AGAINST TERRORISM WITH THE DEBATE ON MIGRATION OR REFUGEES. WE HAVE TO BE VERY CLEAR ON THIS POINT: REFUGEES, WHO ARE CROSSING OUR BORDERS BECAUSE THEY NEED OUR HELP AND WHO ARE ENTITLED TO INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION, ARE NOT TERRORISTS

the EU's core principles: respect for fundamental rights and, essentially, for the privacy of European citizens.

REFUGEES, NOT TERRORISTS

This battle must also include the fight for our values and against social exclusion and marginalisation, which breeds **psychotic fanaticism.** We will fail if we do not involve the Islamic communities living among us in detecting, preventing and, if necessary, arresting and bankrupting those who want to kill us in the name of *an* Islam which does **not represent them.** It is therefore essential to engage in dialogue with the communities particularly affected by recession and austerity, which have taken inequality in Europe to new extremes and led many Europeans, born and residing in Europe, to commit terrorist attacks in Europe.

2015 and 2016 were rocked by **major terrorist activities** in Europe – terror claimed the **lives of 150 innocent people** in 2015. Let us make 2017 a turning point for Europe to **tackle terrorism decisively** in all its facets.

This is a challenge for the **social fabric of diversity**, on which Europe is based. This is a challenge we have to resolve. It is simply **make or break** for the future of the EU ■



CONFLICT MINERALS

S&D PUT ETHICS ABOVE CORPORATE PROFITS

by Maria ARENA

MARIA ARENA

Member of the Delegation
to the ACP-EU Joint
Parliamentary Assembly

The trade in natural resources plays a vital part in financing some of the most vicious conflicts in the world today and according to the United Nations it has been linked to at least **40% of internal conflicts worldwide over the last 60 years**. These conflicts are responsible for massive displacements of people and grave human-rights abuses, which means that the **exploitation of 'conflict minerals' has fuelled some of the worst humanitarian crises of the past decades** ■ ■ ■

These minerals are present in nearly all the appliances used by European citizens every day, including mobile phones, computers, domestic electrical goods and cars. Mandatory regulations to address the so-called '**blood minerals**' problem are already in place in the Great Lakes region of Africa and in import countries such as the United States. The EU, which consumes **25% of these minerals**, must therefore also play its role. Otherwise, European companies and consumers may end up helping to finance the conflicts which Europe's aid and development policies seek to resolve.

rather than imposing requirements on how or where companies should do business. Due diligence is a concept that is already widely recognised for companies, covering areas including labour laws, food safety, anti-money laundering and responsible timber sourcing.

Under this due-diligence system, companies throughout the supply chain are asked to set up processes which allow them to **identify, mitigate and report on risks in their supply chain** relating to trade in 3TG minerals. Thus, companies are requested

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION HAS THEREFORE PROPOSED A REGULATION ON CONFLICT MINERALS WITH A DOUBLE OBJECTIVE: TO BREAK THE LINK BETWEEN THE TRADE AND EXTRACTION OF MINERALS AND THE FINANCING OF ARMED CONFLICTS AND TO CREATE A EUROPEAN MARKET FOR RESPONSIBLY TRADED MINERALS SOURCED FROM CONFLICT REGIONS.

The European Commission has therefore proposed a regulation on conflict minerals with a double objective: to break the link between the trade and extraction of minerals and the financing of armed conflicts and to create a European market for **responsibly traded minerals** sourced from conflict regions. The proposal covers tin, tungsten, tantalum and gold (known collectively as '3TGs'), which feature in many everyday items, and would introduce a due-diligence system based on best-in-class guidance from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The Socialists and Democrats, together with other progressive groups and in co-operation with civil society, have been integral in ensuring that the proposal develops into a **meaningful and effective regulation**.

Due diligence (the responsibility for companies to check and improve the practices of all partners and suppliers to ensure they meet the standards required) **in line with OECD guidance** is a **flexible, progressive system** based on establishing responsible processes,

to put measures in place to **ensure minerals** are **responsibly sourced**, rather than disengaging from already vulnerable economies, which is not a responsible or sustainable long-term solution.

Yet, the Commission proposal focused only on upstream companies (i.e. smelters, refiners) and some downstream companies (manufacturers and metal traders). Furthermore the Commission proposed a purely voluntary regulation, which would have seriously undermined its effectiveness. However an amendment secured by MEPs from the S&D Group and other groups made **due diligence mandatory** for both upstream and downstream companies. Making these requirements mandatory is essential in order to achieve meaningful compliance. A voluntary scheme may result in low uptake by companies, thus reducing the effectiveness of the regulation. Under existing voluntary guidelines in place for the last five years, **80% of companies have not published information on their due-diligence processes**. The

mandatory scheme would therefore make a massive difference in improving the responsible sourcing of minerals without placing extra burdens on specific links in the supply chain.

Furthermore, the Commission's proposal would only have applied to direct imports of 3TG ores and metals, excluding the minerals found in manufactured or component products. The Parliament's position extended the regulation's scope by **requiring due diligence for downstream companies** too, which put 3TGs on the European market in the first place. This greatly expands the regulation's scope, without creating an additional regulatory burden by limiting due-diligence requirements to companies that are the first to place these minerals on the EU market.

Likewise, spreading the scope along the supply chain allows the **responsibility for risk mitigation** to be spread among all players in the supply chain, rather than placing the burden on one single link in the chain. It also ensures that non-EU companies are covered, avoiding putting EU companies at a competitive disadvantage.

In line with the OECD guidance, the Parliament's position also allows flexibility by ensuring that the due-diligence requirements are appropriate to a company's size and place in the supply chain, based on improvement over time. Specific measures are included to **support SMEs to comply with due-diligence obligations**, including financial and technical assistance from the Commission. Industry due-diligence schemes, which help to achieve the regulation's aims, may be recognised in the EU scheme, although participation in an industry scheme does not negate the obligation to comply with the EU legislation.

The Parliament's approach aimed to **encourage the responsible sourcing of minerals**, without cutting off the trade in 3TGs. Contrary to some corporate arguments, it will **not produce an embargo effect**. It will ensure that minerals imported into Europe come from **responsible supply chains**, while exerting pressure to improve the situation at source. This would **make due diligence the norm**, rather than the exception, and set a clear, progressive standard worldwide. As the scope extends to non-European players, the concept of due diligence would gain broader uptake worldwide, strengthening the EU's position as a **promoter of good governance** in development policy and ultimately contributing to

cutting off the funding sources for the brutal conflicts which cause vast human suffering.

Yet, a majority of member states preferred a voluntary regulation. Corporate lobbying against a mandatory regulation was very intense ahead of the Parliament's vote and even more so during the negotiations between the Parliament and EU member states to find a final agreement approach. For the Socialists and Democrats **an agreement could only be acceptable if it properly reflected the Parliament's voice**.

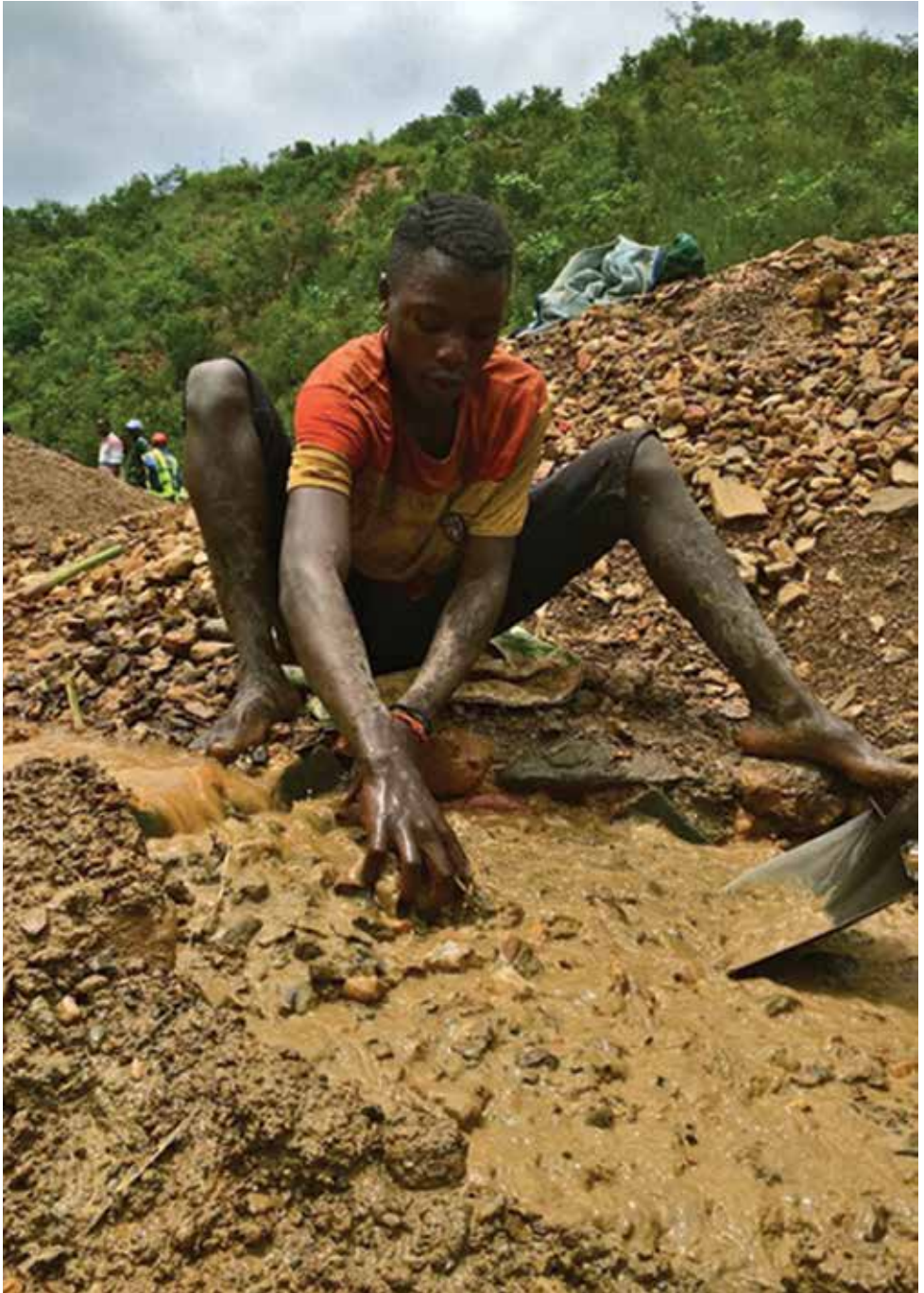
Thanks to the steadfast pressure from the **progressive forces led by the S&D Group**, we reached a final deal that paves the way for due diligence throughout the supply chain of 3TGs. In the regulation that will now enter into force, due diligence will be **mandatory for EU importers of 3TG minerals and metals**. After strong pressure from member states, companies importing very low volumes have been exempted to start with, although the aim is to cover all of them in the longer term. In parallel, the Commission has committed to putting in place voluntary measures for downstream companies to begin with, and to consider further legislative measures for these players should they make insufficient progress under the voluntary regime.

In our globalised world where value chains are more and more complex, **traceability of products and responsibility of companies must be the way to do business**. Due diligence is a flexible and business-friendly tool to contribute to achieving this. This new conflict minerals regulation represents an important first step towards a more responsible trade policy that is coherent with human rights.

S&D MEPs will continue to monitor the implementation of this regulation and ensure that it contributes effectively to the **objective of breaking the link between human-rights violations and the trade in natural resources** ■



'Digger's light' – Nyabibwe mine in the Kivu region, Democratic Republic of Congo (© DAN).



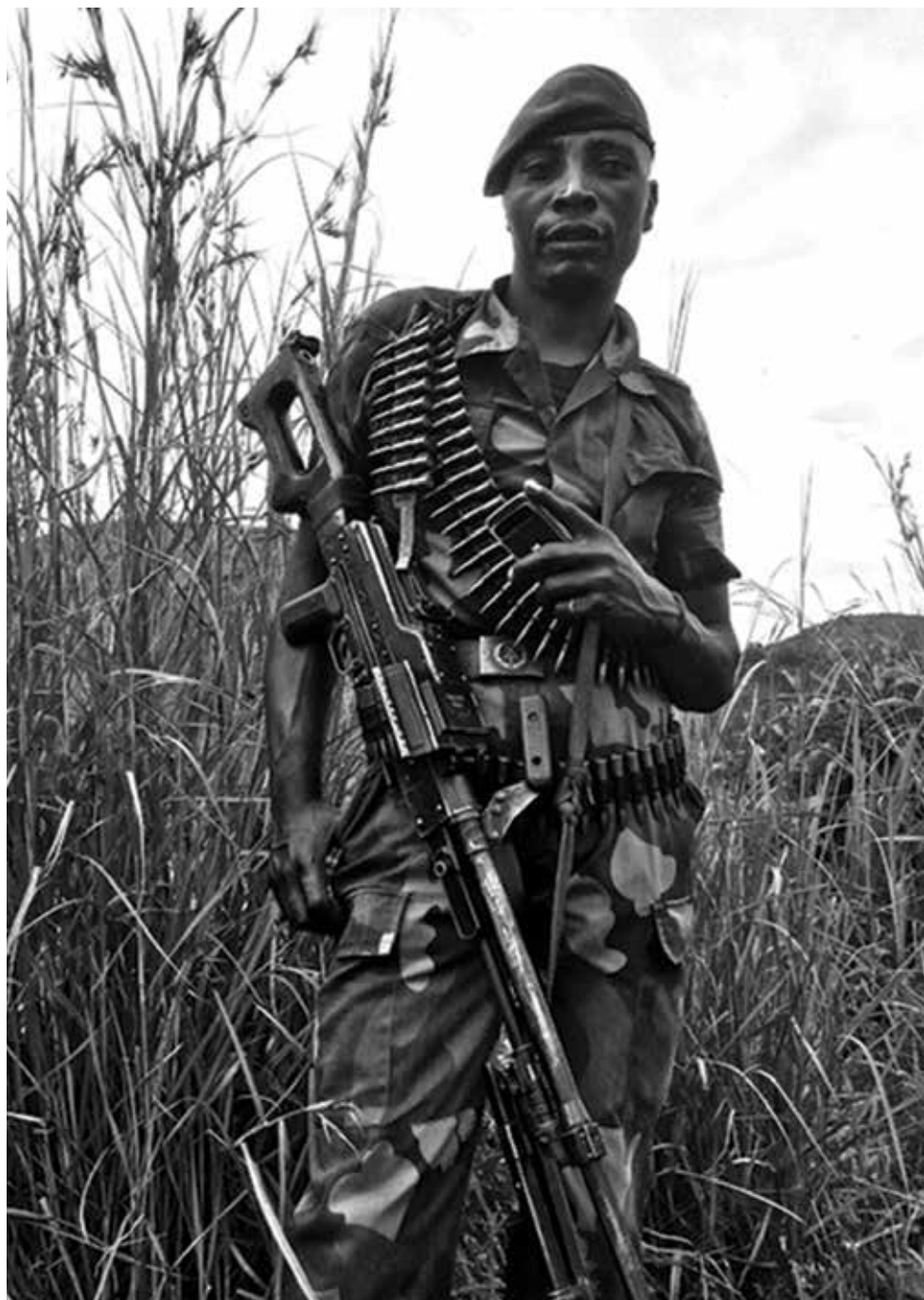
'Digging with bare hands' – Nyabibwe mine in the Kivu region, Democratic Republic of Congo (© DAN).



'Worker digging' – Nyabibwe mine in the Kivu region, Democratic Republic of Congo (© DAN).



'Watching' – Nyabibwe mine in the Kivu region, Democratic Republic of Congo (© DAN).



'Soldier' – Nyabibwe mine in the Kivu region, Democratic Republic of Congo (© DAN).



'Searching with bare hands' – Nyabibwe mine in the Kivu region, Democratic Republic of Congo (© DAN).





'Women trek to water' – Nyabibwe mine in the Kivu region, Democratic Republic of Congo (© DAN).

STRUGGLING WITH TERRORISM

by Victor BOȘȚINARU

The terrorist threat we are confronted with today is a **global and interlinked phenomenon**. Its intrinsic religious character makes it a truly global threat, not linked to any well-defined territory. For this reason, it is difficult to describe the situation and the response required with regard to one specific region – in this case the African continent – as this would mean discussing only a **fraction** of a **wider and more complex problem**. The analysis therefore needs to be broad ranging, in much the same way as the efforts to fight terrorism need to be not just co-ordinated, but also directed to the root of the problem and all its underlying reasons ■ ■ ■



VICTOR BOȘȚINARU

Vice-president of the
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Member of the Committee
on Regional Development

The S&D Group attaches the highest importance to countering terrorism in Africa. In light of the ever-increasing threat, with repeated attacks targeting Africa – notably Tunisia, Libya, Nigeria, Mali, Egypt and Somalia – it is now committed more than ever. Let us not forget that these attacks give rise to instability and fear, causing a considerable number of people to flee from their countries, thus feeding the flow of refugees which now confronts Europe.

But where does this spiral of violence come from? It derives from the use, or rather, **misuse of religion to attain power.** As we know, Islam does not have a supreme religious authority performing a role such as the Pope has in the Catholic Church. Islamic terrorist organisations attempt to interpret religious texts in a radical and unrealistic way, recruiting as many followers as possible and thereby simultaneously increasing the plausibility and weight of their interpretation and their influence in the Islamic community. The only difference between terrorist organisations such as Daesh,

In November 2015 the S&D Group organised a workshop with the ambassadors from Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia. The aim was to discuss the **challenges common to the EU and North Africa. Terrorism and how to counter it were among the most debated topics.** The most important message that emerged from the exchange of views was the need for multilateral co-operation in addressing the root causes of radicalisation.

CUT THE ROOTS

Allowing terrorist organisations to settle and put down roots must be avoided at all costs, as this boosts their legitimacy and starts a cycle which is increasingly difficult to stop. In addition to the Syrian example, this is becoming particularly dangerous in Libya, where, after the fall of Muammar Gaddafi in 2011, the country has not managed to follow the example of neighbouring Tunisia. In fact, it has been mired in internal conflicts between different factions and militias, with two rival parliaments and governments, and no legitimate

JUST AS IN POLITICS, THERE ARE ALLIANCES AND AFFILIATIONS. EXAMPLES IN AFRICA INCLUDE THE CASE OF THE NIGERIAN BOKO HARAM, WHICH PLEDGED ALLIANCE TO DAESH AND SENT FIGHTERS TO SUPPORT ITS CAUSE IN SIRTE, LIBYA, AND AL-SHABAAB WHICH IS AL-QAEDA'S AFFILIATE IN SOMALIA.

al-Qaeda, Boko Haram, al-Shabaab and the Sinai Province group is therefore the **level of radicalisation in their Islamic thought.** Their objectives are the same: a struggle for **increased power and territorial control.** Whoever achieves more followers and more influence in the religious field will also have a predominant position of power. Just as in politics, there are alliances and affiliations. Examples in Africa include the case of the Nigerian Boko Haram, which pledged alliance to Daesh and sent fighters to support its cause in Sirte, Libya, and al-Shabaab which is al-Qaeda's affiliate in Somalia.

governing body or military to control the country. This is the **perfect environment for an organisation such as Daesh** to find fertile ground and seize the opportunity to obtain control of the oil resources that can provide the financial means it needs. It is no surprise that, according to recent reports, it might be in the process of establishing its capital in Sirte.

But prevention should have a manifold approach. We must not forget that the very first victim of radical Islamist terrorist organisations is Islam itself. A manipulation of its religious precepts leads to their

aberration, and (moderate) Islamic thought pays the price for what is done by a minority of its so-called believers. On this subject, there was full consensus and agreement in the workshop on the need to take action to **avoid radicalisation at its source**. Obviously this means at the level of religious leaders, and therefore imams. It is the message they convey to their community that makes people moderate or inclined to a radical view. Inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogue is crucial for the prevention of radicalisation and governments need to have an **open and comprehensive dialogue with imams**. A strong emphasis needs to be placed on their training. This is amply illustrated by the positive example of Morocco, which has been following a path for some time with very encouraging results, when compared with other countries.

INTER-CULTURAL AND INTER-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE IS CRUCIAL FOR THE PREVENTION OF RADICALISATION AND GOVERNMENTS NEED TO HAVE AN OPEN AND COMPREHENSIVE DIALOGUE WITH IMAMS

At the same time, as the imams have the best understanding of their community, it is also very important to insist on their **active co-operation** with public authorities.

No organisation, including terrorist organisations, can survive without financial resources. This is part of the appeal of Syria and Iraq to these organisations, and why Libya – apart from the fragmented political context – is such an **important target for Daesh**. However, just as is the case in the Middle East, so it is in Africa; the financial means do not necessarily come solely from the activities of the terrorist organisations themselves. They are part of a much more complex geo-political game, where influence and financing often come from other countries, fulfilling their own agenda. Unfortunately, Libya is a clear example of such external interference, which has proved to be one of the main

obstacles to finding a lasting agreement between the different parties

SHARING INFORMATION

Another fundamental aspect of prevention is the **role of the intelligence services**. This element often lacks resources and effectiveness in Africa. However, this is not always the case, as some countries not only have well-functioning intelligence services, but have also occasionally been very helpful by sharing information on threats to Europe. Building exactly this type of **network of co-operation, co-ordination, and sharing of information** and best practice among different intelligence agencies is one of the keys to success. This is not easy, with trust being the main obstacle. Nevertheless, **without co-operation**

and **information sharing, terrorist organisations will have success**. This is highlighted by the fact that foreign fighters have managed to return to their countries of origin after receiving training in Syria, Iraq and on the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Tunisia has been particularly affected by such cases.

Finally, emphasis should be placed not just on co-operation between the various intelligence agencies, but more generally on co-operation between the different countries involved. A good example is the co-operation between Cameroon, Chad, Niger, Benin and Nigeria on countering Boko Haram. Efforts should not be confined regionally and organisations such as the African Union and the Arab League should play a dynamic role. Once it is fully operational, the African Standby Force established by the African Union should also be deployed against the terrorist threat ■



WAR INSTEAD OF SCHOOL BENCHES

by Silvia COSTA

SILVIA COSTA

Chair of the Committee
on Culture and Education

The Millennium Development Goals on education were meant to ensure that by 2015 children everywhere, boys and girls alike, would be able to complete a full course of primary schooling. Many efforts have been made to ensure African children enrol. Since the end of colonisation, enrolment to primary schools has recorded real progress – northern African countries have gone from 62% of children enrolled to 94%, while sub-Saharan countries have gone from 45% to 74% – overall, **nearly 90% of children in Africa are now enrolled in primary schools** ■ ■ ■

However, the major problem is that far fewer children complete the entire cycle. Indeed, a low level of completion and the need to repeat academic years remain a challenge. **One in three pupils enrolled in primary school is expected to drop out.** Problems are generally related to endemic poverty, the low quality of education, late entry and a lack of campaigns – and therefore awareness – about the importance of attending school regularly.

Nearly 30% of pupils with at least six years of schooling still find it difficult to read a sentence. Besides all these practical and global problems, there is a huge problem that makes access to school – irrespective of the child's age, sex or status – impossible: **war**.

According to UNICEF (January 2016), **nearly 24 million children living in crisis zones are out of school** across 22 countries affected by conflict. The

and writing skills, they are at risk of losing their futures and missing out on the opportunity to contribute to their economies and societies when they reach adulthood.”

GROWING UP WITHOUT FUTURE

UNICEF is very worried that unless the provision of education in emergencies is prioritised, a generation of children living in conflict will grow up without the skills they need to contribute to their countries and economies. This factor will make the overall condition of the countries where they live even worse than they are currently, dramatically reducing their development, the growth of the economy and quality of life, and making poverty and despair ever greater.

In March 2016, UNICEF launched a new dramatic appeal. According to its most recent studies, **more than 86.7 million children under the age of seven have spent their entire lives in conflict zones**, putting their

UNICEF IS VERY WORRIED THAT UNLESS THE PROVISION OF EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES IS PRIORITISED, A GENERATION OF CHILDREN LIVING IN CONFLICT WILL GROW UP WITHOUT THE SKILLS THEY NEED TO CONTRIBUTE TO THEIR COUNTRIES AND ECONOMIES.

analysis highlights that nearly one in four of the 109.2 million children of primary and lower secondary school age – aged between 6 and 15 years – living in conflict areas are missing out on their education. **The continent where this phenomenon is worst is Africa.** South Sudan has the highest proportion of out-of-school children with over half (51%) of primary and lower secondary school-aged children not in education. Niger comes a close second with 47% of children unable to attend school, followed by Sudan (41%). After Afghanistan (40%), the fourth-worst country, come other African countries. Besides, in countries affected by conflict, **collecting data on children is extremely difficult – so these figures may well have been rounded down.** Jo Bourne, UNICEF Chief of Education, said: “Children living in countries affected by conflict have lost their homes, family members, friends, safety and routine. Now, unable to learn even the basic reading

brain development at risk. As a child's brain reaches the climax of its development in the first seven years of life, this damage can have catastrophic permanent results with significant life-long consequences to their cognitive, social and physical development.

Incredibly enough, **education continues to be one of the least-funded sectors** in humanitarian appeals. Jo Bourne continues: “School equips children with the knowledge and skills they need to rebuild their communities once the conflict is over and in the short-term it provides them with the **stability and structure required to cope with the trauma** they have experienced. Schools can also protect children from the trauma and physical dangers around them. When children are not in school, they are at an increased danger of abuse, exploitation and recruitment into armed groups.” While schools are decisive always and

everywhere, during times of war, instability and violence, schools should be considered even more important. They provide the **safe areas that children need to inhabit** so as to preserve their childhood and adolescent potential and to let them – and their countries – grow as well as they can. In such environments, schools become **more than a place of learning.**

GIRLS AND SCHOOLING, A BIG ISSUE

Another big issue when talking about education in Africa, is unequal opportunities. **Girls are more likely to drop out than boys.** In total, 121 million children and adolescents have never started school or have dropped out, despite the international community's promise to achieve universal primary education by 2015. If current trends continue, 25 million children – 15 million girls and 10 million boys – are likely to never set foot inside a classroom (UNESCO). In Africa **only three girls out of ten are able to complete the two school cycles** that lead to a secondary school certificate.

IN TOTAL, 121 MILLION CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS HAVE NEVER STARTED SCHOOL OR HAVE DROPPED OUT, DESPITE THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY'S PROMISE TO ACHIEVE UNIVERSAL PRIMARY EDUCATION BY 2015.

Violence from the terrorist group Boko Haram alone has interrupted the education of over a million children in Nigeria and the surrounding region, affecting girls to a much higher extent.

The proposed over-arching education goal is to “ensure equitable and inclusive quality education and lifelong learning for all by 2030.” This goal is being translated into seven global education targets regarding:

- Early childhood care and education
- Basic education
- Youth and adult literacy
- Skills for work
- Skills for citizenship and sustainable development
- Teachers' qualifications
- Financing of education

On financing of education, all countries aim to allocate at least 4-6% of their gross domestic product (GDP) or

at least 15-20% of their public expenditure to education by 2030 – prioritising the groups most in need – and to strengthen financial co-operation for education, especially for the countries most in need.

These targets are the basis of a framework for action that UNESCO, in collaboration with all Education for All (EFA) partners, is trying to implement.

It is in this context that the **S&D Group** in the European Parliament – with my direct commitment as Chair of the Culture and Education Committee and that of Linda McAvan as Chair of the Development Committee – has championed the right of access to educational services and school for children in emergency situations, with a resolution adopted by the Parliament in November 2015. Through Commissioner Stylianides we have already obtained €52 million more for this, **doubling the current 2% share dedicated to education out of the total €32 billion dedicated to humanitarian aid.**

We have also proposed educational corridors for refugee university students, asking the EU's High Representative for Foreign Affairs, Federica Mogherini, Commissioner Navracsics and the 28 European ministers of higher education to **establish projects to enrol refugee students** in their universities, in co-operation with UNIMED (the Mediterranean Universities Union).

The Commission's education department recently called for €13 million for Erasmus+ to go into **promoting the social inclusion and integration of migrants and refugees**, through volunteering and projects of transnational co-operation and co-operation between national Erasmus agencies.

It is fundamentally clear that education and cultural policies must play a more central role in European foreign policy and co-operation on humanitarian aid ■

GAY RIGHTS, HUMAN RIGHTS

by Seb DANCE

At the end of 2015 there were still ten jurisdictions around the world where you could **face the death penalty for loving someone of the same sex**. In total 78 countries worldwide enact laws that criminalise homosexuality, and of these, **34 are in Africa**, which represents over **60% of the total 54 independent African states**. These statistics sit in contrast with my personal experience of Africa as a place where people are warm, welcoming, diverse and tolerant. So, I find myself asking how and why this contrast arises. At the root of these laws lies a legacy of colonialism. In many cases, however, these prejudices and laws have taken on a life of their own, fuelled by misguided political posturing, religious bigotry and extremism, as well as the presence of high-profile western evangelical organisations ■■■

SEB DANCE

Member of the Delegation
to the ACP-EU Joint
Parliamentary Assembly



Outside of these recent developments, history gives lie to the oft-touted phrase that **'homosexuality is not African'**. Indeed it is this type of prejudice that is not African. There are no records of any African laws against homosexuality prior to western colonisation. Before the colonial period and the influx of such notions, homosexual and non-cisgendered individuals (people who have a gender identity which does not match the sex they were assigned at birth) were as numerous and present as the myriad of societies they formed around the continent. Both ancient and more recent African history gives us evidence of LGBTI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex) individuals playing leading parts in their communities, from the 2000-year-old tomb of a same-sex couple in Saqqara in Ancient Egypt, to the Buganda Kingdom – part of modern-day Uganda – where King Mwanga II is said to have been openly gay.

At the turn of the last century, the Kikuyu people of Kenya would refer to *mugawe*, while the Hutu and

the ideas these groups espouse can be easily shared and spread to the southern hemisphere.

There is also a perturbing link between extreme conservative religious ideas and spending on aid. Catholic and Islamic organisations alike have been accused of linking aid projects with promoting an anti-LGBTI agenda. This agenda often appears in tandem with **restricting access to condoms and contraceptives**, which in turn **increases the spread of sexually transmitted infections** in all walks of society. More worrying still are the apparent links between US conservative chapters and financial support for electoral candidates with anti-LGBT views in African countries, as uncovered by Rev. Dr Kaoma's 2009-2012 investigation, documented in his research *Colonizing African Values*.

SOMETHING IS MOVING

Despite these disheartening trends, there are reasons to be hopeful. While globalisation has made it easier

WHILE THE UNDERLYING CAUSES OF HOMOPHOBIA AND TRANSPHOBIA IN AFRICA ARE NUMEROUS, CONSERVATIVE POLITICS AND IDEOLOGY MUST SHARE A PORTION OF THE BLAME

Tutsi people would talk of *ikihindu*, when referring to male members of their communities who chose to live as women, take a husband and perform the traditional female roles in the community. All around Africa, LGBTI people have made rich contributions to the history of the continent. However, much more recently a **deep strain of conservatism has taken root**, and with it, a **tide of negative public opinion** that has alienated LGBTI people from their communities. While the underlying causes of homophobia and transphobia in Africa are numerous, conservative politics and ideology must share a portion of the blame. Conservative evangelicals are on the back foot in the US, but through outlandish claims that link homosexuality, paedophilia, bestiality and disease, their ideas have found fertile ground in Africa. While the US moves away from condemning LGBTI people, globalisation means that

to spread notions of intolerance, access to opinion and social media around the world has also highlighted for many ordinary people in Africa that **these ideas are increasingly narrow-minded** and run contrary to the nature of progress. Both public opinion and the tide of public policy are beginning to reverse. Grassroots organisations have sprung up around Africa. The Kenyan advocacy group, the National Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission (NGLHRC), **won a major victory for LGBTI rights** when the High Court of Kenya **ruled that LGBTI people can formally register organisations and welfare or advocacy groups**. This decision was recently mirrored by a similar ruling in Botswana. The NGLHRC have now turned their attention to challenging Kenya's laws that allow degrading, and ultimately futile, forced examinations to establish a person's sexuality.

Cross-border organisations, such as the African Commission on Human Rights and Peoples' Rights (ACHRPR) are also gaining ground. They gather together advocates from countries all over Africa, including those states that outlaw homosexual acts, such as Kenya, Tunisia, and, most notably, Uganda. In 2014 the ACHRPR issued a **bold resolution calling for the protection of the human rights of LGBTI people**. It called for an end to acts of violence and abuse, while expressing shock that "human rights violations continue to be committed on individuals in many parts of Africa because of their actual or imputed sexual orientation or gender identity."

Elsewhere, Mozambique decriminalised homosexuality through legislative reform last year, while Cape Verde has processed laws against discrimination. South Africa, whose constitution embeds the rights of LGBTI people, has recently added to its suite of protective and inclusive laws. Rwanda, a country within which I travelled extensively during my previous position with the NGO

are able to engage in dialogue with the group of nations represented by the ACP in a way that we would not at member-state level.

Coming from the family of Socialists and Democrats, we actively pursue human rights. It has been heartening to see the conversation switch from one about aid sanctions to one of effective aid spending, that assists and helps to grow organisations with good human-rights track records. Our partners in the ACP countries have also been very active on human-rights matters. There has been a sea change recognising that an **inclusive attitude to human rights is likely to open the door to further trade with the EU**.

Ultimately, African nations must arrive at the conclusion that their **overwhelmingly open nature is a selling point for international trade and tourism**, at odds with the ultra-conservative politics of hate. I am very much looking forward to working with colleagues from across the continent to move towards

COMING FROM THE FAMILY OF SOCIALISTS & DEMOCRATS, WE ACTIVELY PURSUE HUMAN RIGHTS. IT HAS BEEN HEARTENING TO SEE THE CONVERSATION SWITCH FROM ONE ABOUT AID SANCTIONS TO ONE OF EFFECTIVE AID SPENDING, THAT ASSISTS AND HELPS TO GROW ORGANISATIONS WITH GOOD HUMAN-RIGHTS TRACK RECORDS

ActionAid, has recently affirmed that **the state should not interfere with people's sexuality** and has resisted pressure to bring in laws relating to homosexuality.

As an MEP, my work allows me to see these developments from a number of different angles. I sit on the Delegation to the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries and the European Parliament's Development Committee. **Within the space of a year it has been remarkable to see how the conversation about LGBTI rights has progressed**. As a bloc of 28 member states, albeit one where countries have a varying degree of respect towards LGBTI people, we

more progressive politics. Meanwhile, I will continue to work alongside my colleagues from Labour's group in Europe, with local stakeholders and activists to **combat human-rights abuses and intolerance**, wherever we may find them ■



HEAVY PLUNDERING

by Ana GOMES

ANA GOMES

Member of the Delegation
to the Parliamentary
Assembly of the Union
for the Mediterranean

Member of the Committee
on Civil Liberties, Justice
and Home Affairs

According to the *High-Level Panel on Illicit Financial Flows from Africa* report, released in early 2015 and presented by former South African president Thabo Mbeki on behalf of the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), **nearly \$60 billion evaporates from Africa annually**. This represents a significant threat to governance and economic development, and is caused by illicit financial flows that amount to twice as much as the African continent receives in development aid. Illicit financial flows can be defined as the cross-border movement of capital gained, transferred or used unlawfully. According to a study by Global Financial Integrity, as much as **\$1 trillion may be leaving the developing world** in the form of money-laundering, tax evasion and corruption by individuals and multinational corporations, trade mis-invoicing, etc. All of this happens with the active involvement of the European banking and financial systems, and EU governments ■ ■ ■

The plundering of African resources – which are vital to tackle poverty, inequality, insecurity and injustice – has been **treated with unbearable hypocrisy by developed countries**, most of which have largely reaped the benefits of an unjust and opaque global financial system. Decades of deregulatory pressure by the prevailing neo-liberal ideology, which has contaminated even socialist and social-democratic parties in Europe, coupled with a rapid technological evolution in banking, has led to facilitating money-laundering, other types of financial criminality and corruption. This has, in turn, **enabled all manner of organised crime to develop, including terrorism**. The political will to develop reforms and solutions only surfaced when, amidst several scandals and the backdrop of the 2008 financial crisis, it became clear to European citizens that national budgets, welfare systems, jobs and the real economies of their own countries were being badly affected by such a rotten system.

SEEKING FINANCIAL TRANSPARENCY

The EU has the purpose and the potential to overcome such fragmentation, to regulate it in Europe and thereby help regulate around the world. But, instead, **we are stuck in a race to the bottom, as aggressive tax competition among our member states** creates a tax jungle. On the other hand, it has become common for multinational corporations and wealthy individuals to use companies and other legal but opaque entities, such as trusts registered in tax havens, as vehicles for their financial transactions. Tax havens, or secrecy jurisdictions, owe their success to two key elements: low or no effective tax rates for many types of income earned abroad and a high degree of financial and corporate anonymity. They offer kleptocrats, tax dodgers, corrupt politicians and officials, drug traffickers, warlords, people smugglers and terrorists a haven of impunity and safe-houses for illicit profit in which even well-resourced tax authorities and judicial prosecutors cannot intervene.

THE SOCIALISTS AND DEMOCRATS HAVE BEEN ADVOCATING SEVERAL REGULATORY REFORMS IN THE EU TO FOSTER A MORE TRANSPARENT FINANCIAL SYSTEM, TO PROMOTE TAX JUSTICE AND TO CURB ILLICIT FINANCIAL FLOWS FROM AFRICAN COUNTRIES AND OTHER REGIONS

How did we end up here? We live in a globalised world, where international transactions abound and materialise at the touch of a button, and where free trade and foreign investment have become key in fostering development. But in this world there are no globalised structures of regulation and law enforcement, and even the United Nations Security Council has never been allowed to prevent war and violent conflict. In this world both tax authorities and law enforcement agencies are still framed by fragmented national structures, resulting in archaic international tax rules and a web of bilateral tax treaties with loopholes that multinationals and criminal networks use and **abuse to avoid taxation**.

Evidently, the authorities in developing countries have neither the resources, nor the political or economic strength to track down the stolen wealth. As it is the politicians and officials, the very targets for corruption by criminals, who must summon the will to tackle it, the solution to the problem lies in reforms **imposing greater financial transparency at the European and global level**. The Socialists and Democrats have been advocating several regulatory reforms in the EU to foster a more transparent financial system, to promote tax justice and to curb illicit financial flows from African countries and other regions. Ukraine, for instance, is a glaring case where money stolen by oligarchs is laundered through banks and property in EU member states and tax havens. Still, progress has been slow and often unsatisfying.

For example, we called for **fully public registers** of beneficiary owners of companies and trusts within the EU to tackle the problem of corporate anonymity within our borders and set an international standard, which the United States' Congress seems now willing to follow. With the adoption of the 4th Anti-money-laundering Directive, EU governments failed to agree that registers should be public and easily accessible by everyone online. This leaves it to each member state to decide whether to subject the data on companies to public scrutiny or restrict access to just those who claim a legitimate interest. This outcome, while a positive development, does **not set a desirable level playing field** among member states and will not offer the desired boon to civil-society campaigners in African countries in their efforts to track down illicitly transferred funds hidden in shell companies in the EU.

TACKLING TAX HAVENS

The Socialists and Democrats Group has also campaigned **strongly for mandatory legislation in the EU** to force multinational companies to file reports on a country-by-country basis (CBC). Namely, they would register their revenues, profits, taxes paid and number of employees for each country where they operate, and these would be made public. This would be a strategic tool to **fight widespread corruption and tax evasion**, since it would allow prosecutors,

for the 4th Directive on Administrative Co-operation, which requires CBC reporting for multinationals in all sectors. But the political agreement contains self-defeating loopholes: it requires that the information be shared only with tax authorities in the EU and not made publically available, and it is subject to a revenue threshold of €250 million – a standard which only covers 10-15% of all multinationals. However, in April the European Commission proposed new legislation for public corporate reporting.

The **#NoTaxHaven campaign** shed light on the need to have a shared EU list of tax havens, underpinned by objective and specific criteria, with sanctions for those who deal with them. In 2015 the Commission came up with a list of 30 blacklisted jurisdictions, though a revision of the list is necessary based on specific criteria and sanctions are needed. EU trade sanctions should be applied and taxes withheld when jurisdictions do not gather or provide information on beneficial ownership of accounts and corporate structures. These jurisdictions legally allow tax rates to be negotiable with individual entities and apply zero or no tax rates for non-residents or companies with no economic activity in the jurisdiction.

In order to foster greater international tax fairness, the EU must respond to calls for greater participation

LAST YEAR THE COMMISSION CAME UP WITH A LIST OF 30 BLACKLISTED JURISDICTIONS, THOUGH A REVISION OF THE LIST IS NECESSARY BASED ON SPECIFIC CRITERIA AND SANCTIONS ARE NEEDED

tax authorities, non-governmental organisations and citizens – in the EU and worldwide – to scrutinise the tax-dodging activities of multinationals and their payments in countries where they operate. The EU already forces its banks and extractive industries to adopt this standard. Yet, the extension of CBC to all multinationals operating within the EU has met great resistance from governments, many of whom continue to be **complicit in the plundering of public resources – at home and elsewhere**. Recently, the Council of Member States agreed on the draft

from developing countries in setting **global standards for taxation**. The normative power of the OECD (the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) – a club of rich countries – demonstrates the reluctance to undertake genuine reforms which would work for all. **The EU and the USA should push the United Nations** to create an agency able to work across all countries and set a global regulatory standard that would put an end to illicit financial flows. It should also mandate the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank to make this purpose a priority ■

HOW WOMEN EDUCATE SOCIETY

by Zita GURMAI

I would like to start with a proverb from Ghana: **“When you educate a man, you educate one person, when you educate a woman, you educate a nation”**. This proverb underlines not only the importance of educating women and girls, but also the impact of women’s empowerment in benefitting the whole of society and the **potential that women have and offer to society** ■ ■ ■



ZITA GURMAI

President of PES Women (the Party of European Socialists) and former S&D MEP in the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly

This is certainly what I have discovered when working with women from Africa as part of the ACP-EU (Africa, Caribbean, Pacific) Joint Parliamentary Assembly delegation. As a member of the European Parliament, I joined the ACP delegation in 2007 and made **women's rights and gender equality my priority** within the work of the delegation.

I built upon the work that was started by my predecessor, former MEP and honorary member of PES Women, Karin Junker (SPD). Back in 1993 Karin Junker proposed and created a Women's Forum within the ACP delegation in order to give women from different regions and continents the possibility to discuss common challenges and exchange best practice. While one can consider that this was just another platform for debate, it actually proved to be an **extremely useful tool, especially for women from the different ACP countries to connect, meet, create alliances across countries**, and to identify the common challenges and solutions on gender equality and women's rights issues.

WE WERE OFTEN TOLD THAT THERE WAS NO TIME OR SPACE FOR OUR WOMEN'S FORUM MEETINGS, BUT THE EARLY TWO-HOUR TIME SLOT – THE ONLY ONE THAT WAS POSSIBLE – ALWAYS ATTRACTED LOTS OF PEOPLE, FILLING MEETING ROOMS COMPLETELY

As president of the ACP Women's Forum between 2009 and 2014, I witnessed how female members of parliament from the ACP countries cherished and used this opportunity to set out the political priorities of the ACP meetings, but also of their respective regions. We were often told that there was no time or space for our Women's Forum meetings, but the early two-hour time slot – the only one that was possible – always attracted lots of people, filling meeting rooms completely. It is thanks to the **S&D Group's persistent and strong fight**, and especially the engagement of **Miguel Ángel Martínez**, former vice-president of the European Parliament and ACP co-ordinator, and **Norbert Neuser**, S&D member of the European Parliament, that we maintained the existence of the Women's Forum and ongoing work with civil-society organisations.

Through the Women's Forum the S&D group was also able to **promote discussion of gender equality and women's rights outside our women's network**. We did this by concentrating on two approaches. On the one hand, by inviting the ACP secretary general to our meetings and, on the other hand, by opening our meetings to male ACP members and civil-society organisations. We also reached out to ministers and both UN and UN Women high-level representatives.

These achievements are to be applauded and maintained, but I believe that the next step is to **formalise the existence of the Forum**. This would give the women members and their work visibility and recognition, regardless of the ACP leadership or EU presidency priorities. Hence, I am delighted that with S&D co-ordinator for women's rights **Maria Arena's** membership of the ACP delegation, the Women's Forum is in good hands and will receive its deserved status.

While the topics of our meetings were in line with the EU presidency priorities, they were also tailored to

the needs and demands of the women of the hosting countries. For the S&Ds, it was clear that **progressive issues** were always at the forefront of our agenda. Sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) is one of these issues. If there is one topic that progressives across the globe have to fight for to make sure it does not regress, even today, it is the question of **sexual and reproductive rights**.

In Africa, SRHR is not just an issue of sexual rights and access to abortion, but it also encompasses health issues, such as access to all forms of contraception, combating HIV/AIDS and maternal death, fighting sexual violence, female genital mutilation and harmful traditional practices. As well as safeguarding their sexual rights and health issues, assuring women's SRHR

contributes towards women's economic, social and political independence and empowerment. According to UN Women, HIV/AIDS is still the leading cause of death among women of reproductive age. The answer and solutions to combating HIV/AIDS not only have to be stepped up, but also need to have a clear gender dimension. Research by the International AIDS Vaccine Initiative (IAVI) suggests that **women represent 60% of people infected with HIV in Africa**. This is why I have always been a strong supporter of the IAVI. A vaccine combating HIV/AIDS would allow women (and girls) to independently protect and empower themselves and thus, as a result, allow them to take control of their lives in the economic, social and political spheres.

Empowering women is achieved through access to services, tools and rights and, without doubt, through access to education. Education of and for women has also been at the centre of the S&D Group's priorities when working with the ACP delegations and members. According to UNESCO's figures presented at the UN Commission on the Status of Women, there are **57**

to education. Just like sexual and reproductive rights, **access to education from an early age** will allow women to become economically, socially and politically independent and empowered.

However, empowering women also means that they take part in decision-making, peace-building and negotiations in times of conflict, as well as post-conflict and democratisation processes. I am therefore happy to see an **increasing number of women engaging in politics and as members of the ACP delegation**. While increasing women's political participation is a matter of fair representation, endorsed by political will and national legislation, it is also a matter of defending and giving a voice to the largest part of the population. Women have also been encouraged to engage politically at the international level. We have just celebrated the 15th anniversary of **UN resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security**. Sadly, we have seen multiple crises and conflicts hitting different regions of the world. While rape and violence against women have often been used as weapons of war, **women should**

A VACCINE COMBATING HIV/AIDS WOULD ALLOW WOMEN AND GIRLS TO INDEPENDENTLY PROTECT AND EMPOWER THEMSELVES AND THUS, AS A RESULT, ALLOW THEM TO TAKE CONTROL OF THEIR LIVES IN THE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND POLITICAL SPHERES.

million primary school-aged children out of school around the world, of which 31 million are girls. Furthermore, UN Women's figures show that **75% of the 493 million illiterate adults worldwide are women**. This inequality, which pushes women and girls to the margins of society from an early age, is unacceptable.

Today, the S&D Group has its EDUCA initiative, and the PES its campaign on the Child Guarantee; I hope both initiatives will become part of the work of the ACP-EU Assembly so that we can put forward concrete proposals and targets for ensuring access

more often be considered as agents for change. Rwanda is an example of how women left behind after the atrocities of the war took up political, social and economic responsibilities; today they represent 50% of their parliament. This is an inspiring example, not only for the ACP members but also for the EU delegation.

The inspiring stories from all regions, with women as instigators of change, exchanging best practices and supporting each other in common fights is what keeps the Women's Forum alive and, as the opening proverb says, they will educate our societies towards progressive ways of living ■



GREAT LAKES: LOOKING FOR DEMOCRACY

by Cécile Kashetu KYENGE

**CÉCILE KASHETU
KYENGE**

Vice-chair of the
Delegation to the ACP-
EU Joint Parliamentary
Assembly

The Great Lakes region is **one of Africa's richest areas of natural resources** and, at the same time, one of its most unstable. Despite the progress made, democratic institutions remain fragile, particularly in countries such as Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), where **stability is a precondition for wealth and development**. Conflict remains a pervasive problem in the Great Lakes region. The complexity of finding a remedy to these conflicts is due to a myriad of issues, including land ownership, ethnic reconciliation after genocide, extreme poverty and proper exploitation of minerals and other natural resources. The region is experiencing a dichotomy between the emerging economic development of several countries in the Great Lakes region, with GDP growth between 5 and 6.3%, and bloody conflicts in other areas, including clashes in the east of the DRC and in Burundi in the aftermath of a controversial election ■■■

PRESIDENTS AND DICTATORS

In 2016 the election of **President Yoweri Museveni** was confirmed, extending his 30-year rule in Uganda for a fifth term. In Burundi, **President Pierre Nkurunziza** won a third term – **violating the constitutional two-term limit** – following elections marred by violence which raised concerns over the peace process that began with the Arusha Agreements. Uganda and Burundi's situations highlight the **fragility of democratic institutions in this area**. Rwanda has just approved a constitutional revision that will allow **President Paul Kagame** to seek a new term, preventing any political alternation in the country.

The presidential elections in the DRC (originally due in November 2016) continue to be a deeply divisive issue, given the absence of an agreed electoral calendar or a budget for the elections. Many are concerned

The S&D Group in the European Parliament has engaged extensively to encourage a more strategic approach to achieving peace and security in the region, underlining a wider relationship between development and security in the Great Lakes. Conflicts in Burundi and the DRC are closely connected with the exploitation of natural resources, with minerals fuelling a flourishing war economy. **Peace will not pay any dividends until the international community is able to starve the war economy**. For this reason, the US Dodd-Frank Act and the mandatory certification for EU importers of tin, tantalum, tungsten and gold, introduced by an S&D amendment to EU legislation, have achieved an important goal for the stability of the Great Lakes region.

Most of the government systems in the region are **'presidentialist'**, characterised by a **concentration of power** in the executive branch, going against the

PRESIDENTIALISM IN THESE COUNTRIES HAS DEGENERATED INTO A PERVERSIVE AND PERSONAL FORM OF RULE: WITH THE PRESIDENT DOMINATING PARLIAMENT AND THE JUDICIARY.

that **President Joseph Kabila intends to stay in power beyond the constitutionally mandated two terms** and the postponement of the presidential elections is a worrying development that seems to confirm this strategy. The way these events unfold could be a key factor in the stability of the whole area and the African continent. Rebel groups in the DRC continue to spread violence; notably, there has been a significant deterioration of security in the eastern DRC, particularly in North Kivu, according to UN reports. This has resulted in civilians being killed, displaced, forcibly abducted or harassed, often on the basis of ethnicity and perceived collaboration with opposing groups.

The EU has underlined the necessity of an inclusive political dialogue in the DRC and urged all Congolese political players to spare no efforts, within the framework of the country's constitution, to **ensure successful elections**.

principle of separation of powers. Presidentialism in these countries has degenerated into a pervasive and personal form of rule: with the president dominating parliament and the judiciary. Most serving presidents in the region are also **former military officials** who began their mandate at the head of a coup d'état. Presidential systems and personality-dominated rule have led to a **political disconnection between citizens and the administration**, marked by a lack of services, preventing the development of strong ties between civil society and the political system. Electoral services are one of the public services that are least developed and yet most politically important. Electoral registration is a precondition to **enjoying the right to vote and ensuring access to fundamental political rights**.

In the decade after 1994, the most important regimes in the region were replaced by democracies. The **fall of dictators** such as **Mobutu Sese Seko**

in the DRC, **Pierre Buyoya** in Burundi and **Juvénal Habyarimana** in Rwanda marked the end of an era where interests linked to the Cold War in a bipolar world were prominent. Today, the growth of an influential middle class and civil-society organisations make political change possible.

MONITORING THE ELECTIONS

The **end of the Cold War** allowed the international community to include more political elements in its international development programmes. The growing use of conditions to development aid helps **promote and protect human rights**, democracy and aspects of good governance. This also includes the **rights of political participation and competition through regular, fair and free elections**, which serve to legitimise governmental authority. Thus, there is a growing need to observe elections – in particular, in situations where impartiality is questionable. Where there is internal conflict and tension, local populations tend to question the impartiality of the electoral authorities and the international community has a responsibility to assist in overseeing the proper conduct of elections according to international standards.

There is a **strong relationship between peace and democracy**. Democratic elections are increasingly regarded as an effective device for resolving and preventing armed conflict. Furthermore, in terms of cost-effectiveness, electoral assistance is preferable to humanitarian and military operations in re-establishing and maintaining peace. However, observing elections can only legitimise an electoral process, it cannot address the causes of the conflict. The political dimension, including democracy, human rights and good governance, has moved higher up the development co-operation agenda, from the **Lomé Convention** to the **Cotonou partnership**. The recent wave of democratisation has led to greater efforts to observe the conduct of elections. The Treaty of the European Union (TEU) states that one of the objectives of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) is **“to develop and consolidate democracy and the rule of law, and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms”**. This goal is reiterated in the area of development co-operation. The EU has implemented several election observation missions as one method of achieving these

aims. EU electoral commitment in the region can foster trust in an inclusive political dialogue. The S&D Group has also promoted the involvement of regional and sub-regional organisations, starting from the Cotonou Agreement framework. The international community should work together with the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP), the African Union regional entities and with all of its member states to ensure that, where democracy is being suppressed and human rights are being violated, they stand in unison against the perpetrators.

The **empowerment and inclusion of women** in the political process should be implemented not only through quotas but through the acceptance of their authority in patriarchal societies. Promoting peaceful, inclusive and transparent elections in the Great Lakes region is a priority for our Group. If the EU fails in its efforts to support the DRC in managing its electoral processes peacefully, democratically and constitutionally, **the situation may regress to a new civil conflict**.

Displacement is another key issue. We must **promote durable solutions for refugees and internally displaced persons** in order to **create a solution for the thousands of people who are exposed to violence**. Regional integration could consolidate peace and facilitate socio-economic development.

Finally, it is necessary to support regional and international initiatives to fight corruption, improve accountability and advance regional judicial co-operation, therefore strengthening the rule of law ■



'Soldiers on patrol' – City of Goma, Democratic Republic of Congo (© DAN).



'Shelter' – Mugunga Camp in North Kivu, Democratic Republic of Congo (© DAN).





CLIMATE CHANGE AND INEQUALITIES

by Jo LEINEN

JO LEINEN

Chair of the European
Parliament's Delegation
for relations with the
People's Republic of China

The year 2015 will go down in history for yielding a comprehensive and ambitious set of Sustainable Development Goals for 2030 as well as a universal treaty on climate action, known as the **Paris Agreement**. The sustainability agenda and the binding climate treaty are the United Nations' responses to some of the most **urgent global problems** ■ ■ ■

Previous growth and consumption patterns have been accompanied by a massive exploitation of resources and will lead to **global warming of almost 4°C above pre-industrial levels if no further action is taken**. The humanitarian dimension of climate change and the exhaustion of resources might be even more alarming. We see poor and socially disadvantaged groups in our society suffering the most from consequences such as extreme weather conditions, nature loss and changing climatic conditions. Health issues caused by air pollution, relocation and even displacement due to unbearable living conditions have become growing problems, especially in developing countries.

THE MISERABLE SITUATION OF A VAST NUMBER OF PEOPLE IS LIKELY TO BE AGGRAVATED WHEN SCARCE NATURAL RESOURCES, SUCH AS DRINKING WATER, BECOME EVEN MORE LIMITED AND GROWING CROPS OR REARING LIVESTOCK WILL BECOME MORE DIFFICULT IN EITHER EXTREMELY DRY OR WET SURROUNDINGS.

While rich states and their economic growth are predominantly responsible for anthropogenic climate change, developing countries suffer most from the consequences. Within the past 50 years, **one quarter of all fertile soil and one third of tropical rainforest have been lost**. These and other risks resulting from climate change aggravate the poverty and misery of the poorest countries. This demands a radical and prompt change of thinking by rich countries to create global equity. International climate action is, therefore, a social, economic, ethical and humanitarian challenge.

NORTH-SOUTH CONFLICT

So far there has been conflict rather than solidarity between developed nations on one side and emerging economies and developing countries on the other. This is known as the **north-south conflict**. It is based on the decisive question: **how much greenhouse gas can a country emit or reduce in the future?** On the one hand, the industrialised northern hemisphere has a two-fold responsibility: to decrease its CO₂ emissions drastically, as well as to deliver

a massive financial and technological transfer to poorer countries. On the other hand, the south is facing a two-fold injustice. Developing countries have emitted the least CO₂ emissions but are affected the most by the consequences of climate change. Additionally, they will be asked to emit as little CO₂ as possible in the future to contain climate change. Taking into account the historic emissions of northern countries, the low-carbon growth of developing countries can only take place with support from the north. Aside from this, for the development of the south, following the energy- and emissions-intensive economic model of the north is no solution, as it would have severe and unpredictable consequences for humankind and nature.

The responses to this challenge will not just lie in new, innovative, climate-friendly technologies, but also in a **shift of awareness and attitude towards resources and the environment**. The Paris agreement of December 2015 might have laid the foundation for this transformation. However, national, European and global policies need to add the substance.

A HUMANITARIAN CHALLENGE

Fragile nations face a risk of further destabilisation due to environmentally extreme conditions, resource scarcity and political disturbances or riots that might result from these changes. A growing number of people fear for their existence due to changing climatic surroundings, water levels and extreme weather conditions.

The **UN refugee agency, UNHCR**, consistently warns of the impact of climate change on displacement and migration. The miserable situation of a vast number of people is likely to be aggravated when scarce natural resources, such as drinking water, become even more

limited and growing crops or rearing livestock will become more difficult in either extremely dry or wet surroundings. Scientists estimate up to **250 million people in Africa will suffer from water and food insecurity in the 21st century**. Building resilience and adapting to changing climatic conditions is an essential strategy for these nations. Nonetheless, more and more people will be forced to move to other places in search of better living conditions.

On the African continent, Nigeria represents a disturbing example. Water withdrawals from the Niger Basin have increased dramatically and the Niger River faces diminishing flows, leading to increasing desertification. This poses a huge challenge to the country regarding farming and fishing activities. Besides threatening the food security of Nigeria's population, it poses a risk to their economic existence, since almost **70% of Nigerian people rely on agriculture for their livelihood**. A third challenge is caused by the country's high fertility rate. A growing population on the one hand and diminishing fertile soil and habitable land on the other add up to a rising number of refugees and pressure to move elsewhere.

The Sustainable Development Agenda adopted in 2015 formulates the ambitious and important goal of **ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all**. Enabling everyone, especially the socially disadvantaged, to afford clean energy will be a key task for European social democracy. The protection of people's health and living environments, by improving air quality and reducing the consequences of climate change, will be another such task. This gives climate action and environmental protection a new social dimension, in a world that faces a growing population with emerging economies that crave energy and natural resources as well as high living standards. **Worldwide equity and the necessary willingness to co-operate are two main conditions for global climate action**. In Paris we saw how the question of differentiated responsibilities and the promise of substantial financial and technological support stood out as the two Gordian knots to cut for the success of a universal climate agreement.

The Paris treaty therefore lays the foundation for a development strategy that urgently needs to be underpinned by political action, concrete measures and

THE AFRICAN CONTINENT ALSO HAS OPPORTUNITIES. EVERY YEAR, A QUANTITY OF SOLAR ENERGY REACHES THE EARTH'S SURFACE THAT IS 8,000 TIMES HIGHER THAN THE WORLD'S PRIMARY ENERGY DEMAND. THE ENERGY ARRIVING WITHIN LITTLE MORE THAN ONE HOUR WOULD BE ENOUGH TO MEET OUR ENERGY DEMAND FOR ONE YEAR.

TWO GORDIAN KNOTS IN PARIS

Despite these threats, the African continent also has opportunities. Every year, a quantity of solar energy reaches the Earth's surface that is 8,000 times higher than the world's primary energy demand. The energy arriving within little more than one hour would be enough to meet our energy demand for one year. This vision might not be feasible at the moment due to a lack of technology and infrastructure, but it helps to visualise the **potential of renewable energies**, especially for countries in the south.

changing behaviour, to **keep up momentum towards restricting maximum global warming to 1.5°C** above pre-industrial levels. This goal is not political rhetoric but a bare necessity if global welfare is to be ensured and displacement and migration limited. In this respect, **Europe will remain a credible and reliable partner for vulnerable countries**, especially in its co-operation with African states ■

A MARSHALL PLAN

by David MARTIN

The EU spends over €4 billion every year on development programmes in Africa, complemented by the individual programmes of its member states. Although many concrete achievements can be cited, the situation in Africa still requires attention. Well-intentioned aid can often act as a sticking plaster without addressing the underlying causes of the economic and political illness. Much like the Marshall Plan (otherwise known as the European Recovery Program or ERP) over sixty years ago, the **EU should redirect its funding into a much larger short-term plan, targeted at fixing the underlying weaknesses in the African economy by making use of African entrepreneurs, as well as trade unions and civil society.** Only a much bigger and better co-ordinated plan will deliver the desired results. Only a plan which harnesses Africa's creative and productive power will be sustainable for future generations ■■■



DAVID MARTIN

S&D spokesman on trade and S&D co-ordinator for the Committee on International Trade

THE S&DS AND AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT

The S&D Group strongly believes that a sustainable strategy for Africa should be at the heart of our global agenda. Neighbours across the Mediterranean, we are directly affected by what happens over there. Demographic changes in Africa mean 18 million jobs per year will need to be created going forward. Care must also be taken to ensure the wealth is distributed fairly and that governments are properly held to account. In an increasingly globalised world, political tensions and poorly performing economies are not only destabilising for Africa, but for Europe too. These same problems are the very reasons why so many people are willing to risk their lives to reach our shores.

IN AN INCREASINGLY GLOBALISED WORLD, POLITICAL TENSIONS AND POORLY PERFORMING ECONOMIES ARE NOT ONLY DESTABILISING FOR AFRICA, BUT FOR EUROPE TOO.

On the other hand, the continent of Africa represents a huge opportunity for Europe. This is a vast continent of over 1 billion people right on our doorstep. By 2050, we are told, the population will have risen to 2.5 billion. As the continent develops, this will provide more and more opportunities for EU businesses. **If it develops sustainably, Africa could itself become an even greater hub of creativity and economic dynamism, with positive knock-on effects for the rest of the world.** Furthermore, Africa also contains 65% of the arable land left on Earth, although this may decrease in coming decades as a result of climate change. Therefore, enhancing our trade links and stimulating investment in Africa could be part of the solution to feeding a **world population that is soon to hit 9 billion.**

WHAT IS THE EU ALREADY DOING?

There are already numerous EU development schemes and initiatives active on the continent: the **Africa-EU Millennium Development Goals initiative**; the **EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa**; the **Africa Investment Facility**; the **EU-Africa Infrastructure Trust Fund**, as well as other, smaller ones. There are also a number of smaller financial instruments which vie for EU funding to support specific areas of African society. Most funding for these schemes comes from the

European Development Fund (EDF), of which just **over €30 billion has been earmarked for development.** The EDF is managed by the joint EU-ACP Council of Ministers – a successful example of joint partnership.

This complements the existing EU policies aimed at African economic development, such as: **Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs)**; **EU Aid for Trade**; the **Generalised System of Preferences (GSP)**; ensuring responsible supply chains (such as our recent work on conflict minerals); and the continuation of a multilateral agenda at the World Trade Organization. The S&Ds' global fight against corruption and illicit financial flows are also important pieces of this complex puzzle.

Aside from these initiatives, most member states have their own aid programmes outside the EU's umbrella. Overall, the picture painted is one of an unco-ordinated and fragmented approach, which can have a negative impact on the efficiency with which the funds are distributed and absorbed.

A NEW MARSHALL PLAN – THE ECONOMIC, POLITICAL AND INTEGRATION DIMENSIONS

The Marshall Plan, which ran for four years from 1948 to 1952, was the **most successful redevelopment programme in history.** Under Secretary of State George Marshall, the USA invested \$12 billion (equivalent to \$120 billion today) in European economies, in order to rebuild infrastructure, modernise industry and boost trade by removing both economic and political barriers between nations. It is often credited as being **one of the most crucial factors behind Europe's extraordinary post-war growth.**

The Marshall Plan's lasting effect – in Germany, some of the money is still being recycled today – was chiefly down to its success at **mobilising the core drivers of the economy**, giving them the money and cheap loans they needed to rebuild Europe's shattered industrial base. At the same time, money was invested into rebuilding the

transport infrastructure needed for a modern economy to work. In sharp contrast to most aid money, these funds were used in long-term economic projects led by local businesses. As the old saying goes: **if you give a man a fish, he will eat for a day. If you teach him to fish then he will eat for the rest of his life.**

Of course, Africa now is a very different place to post-war Europe. In Europe's case much of the technology and know-how was already there, albeit destroyed and set back many years. In Africa the challenges will be different. Levels of literacy are lower and it lags behind in terms of technological advances. Much of the knowledge needed to implement this plan

IN AFRICA THE CHALLENGES WILL BE DIFFERENT. LEVELS OF LITERACY ARE LOWER AND IT LAGS BEHIND IN TERMS OF TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCES. MUCH OF THE KNOWLEDGE NEEDED TO IMPLEMENT THIS PLAN WILL ALSO NEED TO BE LEARNED FOR THE FIRST TIME.

will also need to be learned for the first time. However, we should not underestimate the current dynamism of the African economy, despite its disadvantages. Just look at the huge solar fields developing in Rwanda – making the best use of abundant natural resources. Elsewhere, in Nigeria, Kenya and Tanzania, **tech startups are already doing impressive work.** Imagine what they could achieve with more support.

We should also be aware that the whole world has changed a great deal since the 1940s and 1950s. What worked then might not necessarily work now. Business and infrastructure investment needs to be targeted into digital technologies and other emerging industries.

THE ECONOMIC DIMENSION

The core investment of the Marshall Plan was implemented as loans to businesses, which were then repaid to local governments, who, in turn, used them to rebuild transport and other infrastructure. This recycling of money was what made it most effective and long-lasting. It energised a depleted private sector and provided alternative sources of funding, other than the exhausted governments and banks. This method emphasises the role that Africans have to play in their own future. With

this money local businesses across the continent would have the **opportunity to get cheap loans and expand, growing and hiring more workers.**

From the S&D perspective, it is important to put the emphasis on investment in social infrastructure.

Investment in bridges, roads and airports is all well and good, but in order to thrive in the long term, an economy also needs strong trade unions and a vibrant civil society.

THE POLITICAL DIMENSION

The Marshall Plan also had a clear political thrust. Even if it was not explicitly stated, the threat of Communism loomed large and the US wanted to ensure that

Western European states were not pulled into the Soviet sphere of influence.

Today, **almost 400 million sub-Saharan Africans live in a democracy**, as opposed to 2.5 million half a century ago. Nevertheless, across Africa we continue to see vastly different levels of democracy, including dictatorships, authoritarian regimes, political repression, violence and political instability. Economic development and a growing class of small business owners can help create and maintain stable political systems. By engaging with civil society leaders and trade unions on the ground, we can also ensure that these reforms are sustainable.

As far as Europe is concerned, it is clear that the long-term solution to the migrant crisis lies in sustainable development. **We need to remove the economic incentive for people to want to move in the first place.** Poverty and hunger also create conditions where extremism can develop, providing fertile ground for the terrorists of the future. Every politician talks about attacking the root causes of the problem, rather than the symptoms. This requires concrete action and this plan would be a huge leap in the right direction.

Of course, there will be some detractors who will criticise using our economic tools in this way. The Marshall Plan itself was branded ‘**economic imperialism**’ and the USA was accused of trying to take over the European economy by stealth. However, the amounts involved in the original ERP were still small compared to overall levels of GNP in Europe. This would be the same for Africa, although the amounts would probably have to be increased in the short term. Furthermore, the limited timeframe ensures that the objective is about getting Africa into a position where it can then continue to develop without outside help as quickly as possible. In this way, a Marshall Plan for Africa would also have an advantage over traditional aid programmes, which, as we have explained, tend to be open-ended as they focus more on the symptoms and not the root causes.

THE INTEGRATION DIMENSION

One of the least known aspects of the Marshall Plan was its role as a catalyst and enabler of European integration. In 1948 sixteen European countries met at the Committee of European Economic Co-operation (CEEC) to determine priorities and assist in the administration of the Marshall Plan, to be run by the Economic Co-operation Administration (ECA). It created the Organisation of European Economic Co-operation (OEEC), the precursor to today’s OECD. In Africa many of these institutions are already in place and the majority of funding is administered by the joint EU-ACP Council of Ministers. An African Marshall Plan should make use of these existing structures, but also be aware that with its business-focus, it would be very wise to have business leaders involved – the original head of the ERP funds was Paul Hoffman, CEO of Studebaker car makers.

This was one of the first attempts to **pool sovereignty on economic matters** and laid the foundation for the original members of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), which, as we know, was the precursor to the modern European Union. However, it was not just the institutions which helped launch European integration, but also the political conditionality that was attached to the funds. In order to access the investment, European governments had to agree to open up their economies, an essential precursor to the Single Market, breaking down trade barriers and removing strangling restrictions on transacting business. If states did not accept this (as the Soviet-

influenced states did not), then they could not access the money. A modern Marshall Plan for Africa should aim to do just that, whilst also insisting on **respect for good governance, the rule of law, human rights, workers’ rights and respect for the environment**. The S&D Group is already a strong advocate for building political conditionality into our economic and trade agreements. **A Marshall Plan for Africa would be a continuation of this commitment.**

CONCLUSION

Africa needs a Marshall Plan. A large-scale yet short-term investment that reinvigorates the private sector and provides much-needed funds for expanding infrastructure, both physical and social. A well-co-ordinated approach that engages African leaders, business representatives, trade unions and civil society in the allocation of its funding. A plan which explicitly advocates breaking down barriers between nations and reinforcing common institutions. A plan which aims to be both short-term and sustainable, laying the groundwork for future African leaders to take control.

Of course, aid in its current form still has a big role to play in Africa’s development. The Marshall Plan was aimed at long-term economic development and political stability. Any African equivalent cannot provide for the immediate needs of African people, such as access to clean drinking water, affordable medicines and disaster relief, just to name a few of the most pressing concerns. However, what is clear is that, over time, if the African Marshall Plan is successful, these aid programmes will cease to be necessary as **African governments take more and more responsibility for themselves**. This should, of course, be the overall goal of any development initiative.

Nevertheless, in light of the financial implications for all member states, agreeing on an EU Marshall Plan for Africa will be controversial and perhaps difficult to achieve. In the context of the current migration crisis, the Italian government has proposed a Migration Compact, which proposes investment projects in Africa aimed at a high social and infrastructural impact. It also advocates the creation of a related EU fund for investment in third countries, in addition to EU-Africa bonds, to facilitate African countries getting access to capital markets. Again, progress on the Migration Compact in the Council appears to be very slow, but it could perhaps be the first step **towards a fully-fledged EU Marshall Plan for Africa in the future** ■

THE EBOLA SURVIVORS

by Norbert NEUSER

Meliandou is a rainforest village in southern Guinea, not far from the borders of Liberia and Sierra Leone. Children play among trees populated with various species of bat. In early December 2013, when two-year-old Emile developed fever, black stools and started vomiting, his mother was deeply worried. She might have thought of cholera or malaria, as both diseases show similar symptoms. She must have sensed that she might lose him because this is a reality in Guinea: **10% of children die before their fifth birthday**. Malaria is killer number one, responsible for 28% of deaths in young children, followed by respiratory infections, perinatal conditions and diarrhoea. But older brothers and sisters, parents, aunts and uncles also have a high risk of dying too early: **in 2012 around 14,800 adults died from lower respiratory infections, 11,800 from malaria and 7,300 from diarrhoeal diseases** ■ ■ ■



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Emile died a few days after he fell ill. His sister, mother and grandmother soon followed and after the funeral of this well-respected elderly woman, the disease also spread outside the village.

This was almost a month before doctors **diagnosed the first case of Ebola.** In February, the regional World Health Organisation (WHO) office took note of the disease. On 21 March 2014, four months after Emile fell ill, the Guinean government confirmed an Ebola outbreak. At that time the country already had **103 official cases of Ebola**, of whom **66 were deceased**, and the disease had arrived in neighbouring Liberia and Sierra Leone. The thousands of people who had come into contact with these patients remained unidentified and the numbers of cases of transmission remained unknown. Unwillingly and unknowingly, these people carried Ebola from district to district and the number of patients grew exponentially.

informed and monitored? **With working national health systems** in place providing basic healthcare, the **number of preventable premature deaths would decrease rapidly.** An outbreak could be contained at the start, when the number of cases was still small. Countries like Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone would not stand still and then descend into chaos.

FIGHTING A SILENT BATTLE

In November 2015, I, together with a small delegation of colleagues from the European Parliament's Development Committee, went on a fact-finding mission to Sierra Leone. In the inland city of Makeni, located 120km from the capital Freetown, I met **people who had survived Ebola.** They were **highly traumatised; the horror of the disease still visible in their faces.** They had all lost loved ones, some their entire family. I visited an isolation ward – a place of despair for those who were taken there, as the **diagnosis of Ebola is tantamount**

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By the autumn of 2015 more than **3,800 people had contracted Ebola in Guinea**, of whom more than **2,500 died.** The disease affected people of all ages, from babies to grandparents. All three countries together counted more than **28,000 cases and 11,000 deaths.**

The figures tell a story of **unimaginable individual suffering.** However, they also tell us what is missing. How deaths, often caused by simple infections, but also the spread of **an epidemic like Ebola, could be prevented.** What if mothers could see a doctor or a nurse when their child gets fever, black stools and vomiting? What if healthcare workers could decide with a simple test whether a patient is suffering from malaria, cholera, Ebola or another infection? What if medication were available? What if the first patient infected with Ebola or another highly contagious disease could be isolated and those they had come into contact with

to a death sentence. Yet, at the same time, it is a place of hope, humanity and of care given by selfless and brave volunteers from Doctors Without Borders (MSF), Emergency and Diakonien Katastrophenhilfe, to name but a few organisations that I met there. The isolation ward also represented **hope to the community** that the virus would not spread further and that families would not be left to undertake the **potentially fatal task of caring for the patient alone.**

The Ebola survivors I met continue to fight a silent battle. I refer not only to the fears of others that stigmatise them, but also to the after-effects of the infection. **The virus may never completely leave the body.** It stays in the brain, eyes, joints and gonads. After surviving the initial exposure, people feel physically and mentally exhausted. They usually have chronic pain in their joints. Months later, they **can develop**

THE EBOLA SURVIVORS I MET CONTINUE TO FIGHT A SILENT BATTLE. I REFER NOT ONLY TO THE FEARS OF OTHERS THAT STIGMATISE THEM, BUT ALSO TO THE AFTER-EFFECTS OF THE INFECTION. THE VIRUS MAY NEVER COMPLETELY LEAVE THE BODY. IT STAYS IN THE BRAIN, EYES, JOINTS AND GONADS. AFTER SURVIVING THE INITIAL EXPOSURE, PEOPLE FEEL PHYSICALLY AND MENTALLY EXHAUSTED.

meningitis or become blind and they can still infect others through unprotected sex. What survivors need is a doctor or well-trained nurse who they can see when they need medical care.

But the reality right now is far from this: **the country has between 100 and 200 doctors and some 1,000 nurses for 6 million inhabitants.** Although this problem was identified long before the Ebola epidemic, not much has been done since – rather the contrary is true. In 2004, Sierra Leone seemed to have slightly more doctors and approximately the same number of nurses and midwives as it does today. A WHO article from 2008 lists

WHO in *The World Health Report 2006*. For a country with **6 million inhabitants** like Sierra Leone, **this would be a paltry 13,700 trained healthcare workers**, who would nevertheless need to be paid regularly and be provided with medication and diagnosis facilities.

It is for African governments to **take responsibility for their people and to make this happen.** We, in Europe, are best placed to support heads of state in their endeavours, with a sound Programme for Action and with health as a focal sector for countries in need within the framework of the European Development Fund ■

IT IS FOR AFRICAN GOVERNMENTS TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEIR PEOPLE AND TO MAKE THIS HAPPEN. WE, IN EUROPE, ARE BEST PLACED TO SUPPORT HEADS OF STATE IN THEIR ENDEAVOURS, WITH A SOUND PROGRAMME FOR ACTION...

“past investment shortfalls in pre-service training, international migration, career changes among health workers, premature retirement and morbidity and premature mortality” as reasons for health-worker shortages in sub-Saharan Africa. The same article states that **2.28 healthcare professionals per 1,000 population is the minimum number required to make health systems work** – a figure that was first presented by the



NORTH AFRICA AT A CRUCIAL POINT

by Antonio PANZERI

ANTONIO PANZERI

Chair of the European Parliament's Conference of delegation chairs and chair of the Delegation for relations with Maghreb countries and the Arab Maghreb Union

Any discussion of North Africa should encompass not only stable countries such as Morocco, but also those where conflict and political insecurity have become the norm. However, it would be wrong to generalise or to believe that the situation cannot change swiftly. These **last few years have fundamentally reshaped North Africa**. Therefore, it may be reasonable to dare to think that the coming months could be **decisive for the destiny** of this region and its **population** ■ ■ ■

EGYPT: AN AUTHORITARIAN COUNTRY

In January 2011 it seemed that a **'spring' of rights, democracy and freedom** was about to dawn. Five years later, the tragic death of a young Italian **'lifted the veil'**, disclosing the deeply authoritarian nature of President al-Sisi's regime. Taking charge in 2015, General al-Sisi showed a tough and uncompromising approach towards the regime's opponents early on, having overthrown the first democratically elected president – the Muslim Brotherhood's Mohamed Morsi.

According to **Human Rights Watch**, Egypt had not experienced such a regression in human rights in its recent history; **mass arrests, show trials and arbitrary detentions have become the norm**. Claiming to be fighting terrorism, the Egyptian government has **strengthened its own powers**. The security forces are now able to investigate associations, NGOs and other networks such as unions and universities, obstructing their activities and often detaining their members.

advantage of a single member state prevail over the **necessity to propagate a strong and influential political message**.

LIBYA: TIME RUNNING OUT

Sadly, Libya has long been the **most unstable of the North African states**. It seems that Gaddafi's gloomy prophecy has become a reality: **"If you tear me down, you will open the door to jihadist terrorism"**. A new era of democracy and development has yet to begin for Libyan citizens. If anything, the opposite has happened: the country sank into a **spiral of violence** from which it has yet to recover. UN mediation work rekindled some hope of redemption. Unfortunately however, diplomatic progress has not run smoothly. There is huge concern that the various factions will not reach an agreement and that this would allow Daesh (the so-called Islamic State) to strengthen its position in the country.

THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT HAS SPOKEN OUT MORE THAN ONCE ABOUT THE SITUATION IN EGYPT, BACKING RESOLUTIONS CALLING ON EU MEMBER STATES TO ADOPT A COMMON POSITION AND TO ACT TO PROMOTE THE ORIGINAL OBJECTIVES OF THE CO-OPERATION BETWEEN EGYPT AND THE EU.

The European Parliament has spoken out more than once about the situation in Egypt, backing resolutions calling on EU member states to adopt a common position and to act to promote the original objectives of the co-operation between Egypt and the EU. These agreements **require Egypt to commit to democracy** and to consolidate the rule of law in return for European economic co-operation. Unfortunately, some European states, **suspicious of the Morsi regime, consider Sisi a reliable partner**. The situation highlights the excessive ambiguities of European foreign policy and stresses the need for clarity of purpose: namely that under no circumstances should the economic

According to the UN, there may be between 2,000 and 3,000 Daesh militants in Libya. The terrorist network is exploiting the dispute between Tobruk and Tripoli to maintain a high level of instability. This is precisely why the **UN special envoy, Martin Kobler**, said it is necessary to continue down the road of national unity governments, and called on all Libyans to **unite in the fight against terrorism**. There is no time to lose: **without political agreement**, the risk of military intervention by the USA or by other powers seems increasingly likely. Acting without a UNSC mandate and a reliable local interlocutor **could open a new chapter for Libya, which is unlikely to be a positive one**.

TUNISIA AND ALGERIA ON THE EDGE

2015 was a difficult year for both Tunisia and Algeria. The two countries, totally different in economic and political terms, share a need to define their future paths over the coming months. The Algerian economy, based on hydrocarbon resources, has been deeply damaged by the oil-price crisis. The Algerian **prime minister, Abdelmalek Sellal**, announced a **new plan for economic reforms** to end this difficult period for public finances. At the same time, Algeria is facing the **danger of terrorist infiltration** from neighbouring Libya and controlling the immense desert border is a complex challenge for the Algerian security forces. Moreover, the leadership of the old and tired President Bouteflika – re-elected in 2014 by an overwhelming majority – is struggling. It will not be easy to pull the country out of the quicksand of economic crisis and terrorist threat.

but are being seriously tested by **less-than-adequate political leadership** and **extremism** all at once.

MOROCCO: A BLESSED EXCEPTION

All things considered, Morocco can be considered a happy exception in the North African context. Although the path towards a substantial democracy has yet to be completed, **King Mohammed VI's wise political vision** has allowed the country to get through these tempestuous years unscathed. Moreover, despite both the political and the administrative elections that sealed the victory of the moderate Islamist party, PJD, the country does not seem to be at risk of radicalisation. The important question of the Western Sahara remains open. However, it must be recognised that the monarchy and the elites are able to act with a political vision favouring stability and the **progressive modernisation of the country**.

THE EU MUST MAKE SERIOUS EFFORTS TO SUPPORT THE DIFFERENT COUNTRIES IN CONSOLIDATING DEMOCRATIC TRANSITIONS AND ESTABLISHING A NEW PHASE OF BILATERAL RELATIONSHIPS, WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF A NEW NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY. THIS MUST BE CHARACTERISED BY A MORE EFFECTIVE CO-OPERATION AND DEFENCE POLICY AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IMPROVEMENTS.

Tunisia is also experiencing a difficult situation. In the 'cradle of the Arab Spring' the democratic transition seems to be more stable, but the threat of **extremism is greater than ever** and feeding on poor economic performance. Several years after the democratic transition began and despite considerable political progress, the reasons for anger and discontent are still the same. An estimated **15% of the population is unemployed**, though this figure is as high as **30% among young people** and there have been moments of political unrest. Europe cannot withhold its support from these two countries which have the potential for democratic transition and economic development,

Over the coming months **North Africa will be under intense pressure** owing to various factors: **economic and social crisis, youth unemployment and terrorism**, among other things. In order to avoid triggering further destabilising processes, the EU must make serious efforts to support the different countries in consolidating democratic transitions and establishing a new phase of bilateral relationships, within the framework of a new neighbourhood policy. This must be characterised by a more effective co-operation and defence policy and the implementation of human rights improvements ■

EDUCATION: A TOOL FOR SUCCESS

by Enrique GUERRERO SALOM

In September 2015 I visited the refugee camps of Lebanon and Jordan. Basic needs such as food, health services and shelter were being provided through the enormous efforts of national authorities and international organisations. However, the main concern of the staff and parents alike was the **need for education**: 53% of the refugees there are under the age of 18, meaning that more than 0.6 million refugees in Lebanon are of school age. In spite of donor support and government efforts, **only 1 in 4 Syrian children of school age can attend formal education**. The situation in Jordan is no better ■■■



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UNICEF estimates that there are over **250 million children living in countries affected by conflict worldwide**. According to the 2014 UNHCR Global Trends report, **nearly a billion refugees are children**. Furthermore, according to Save the Children, 175 million children are likely to be affected by disasters annually. Girls are almost two-and-a-half times more likely than boys to be out of school if they live in countries affected by crisis. We can keep putting numbers on paper, but the reality is that **children are among the most vulnerable in warzones**. Children are recruited by armed groups and they suffer sexual exploitation and trafficking, child labour and forced marriage. They also get separated from their families and they suffer malnutrition and die from curable diseases in conflict situations.

Although 99% of children in crisis situations see education as a priority, according to Save the Children, **an estimated 37 million children in conflict-affected areas are not in school**. Furthermore, the protracted nature of the current major crisis has forced children out of school for prolonged periods of time, with very little chance of returning.

A SAFE HAVEN IN A CRISIS

The critical question here is: with other life-saving emergency relief needs, **why give priority to education during a crisis?** Firstly, education offers dignity and sustains life by giving children a safe space. During emergencies, public services are disrupted and children and their families face uncertainty and rapid dramatic change. For example, in the Central African Republic 64% of schools have been severely damaged and 60% of children suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (data from Save the Children's 2014 report *Educating in Conflict Zones*). In such circumstances, schools become safe havens to respond to children's needs. **Schools and quality education offer children structure during an emergency, providing psychological support and giving them some sense of stability and protection from danger**. In the short term we can also argue that education saves lives; schools are a major component of child protection. According to Phillip Price of the University of Denver (in 'Education in emergencies: benefits, best practices and partnerships'), education provides children with life-saving information on self-protection from sexual

THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT CALLED FOR THE WORLD HUMANITARIAN SUMMIT (ISTANBUL 23-24 MAY 2016) TO AGREE A GLOBAL FUND FOR EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES THAT COULD ENSURE THAT UP TO 4% OF THE OVERALL HUMANITARIAN BUDGET IS DEDICATED TO EDUCATION IN PROTRACTED CRISES AND EMERGENCIES.

The European Commission estimates that humanitarian assistance specifically targeting children, such as child protection and education, is hugely underfunded at the global level. **Over the last decade, education was the least-funded humanitarian sector**, with almost two-thirds of needs unfunded and an allocation of less than 2% of overall humanitarian assistance. In this context, the European Parliament called for the World Humanitarian Summit (Istanbul 23-24 May 2016) to agree a global fund for education in emergencies that could ensure that up to 4% of the overall humanitarian budget is dedicated to education in protracted crises and emergencies.

exploitation, recruitment prevention and landmine and health awareness, and it gives children access to food as well as teaching them many skills necessary in their particular context.

Secondly, education is essential for children's development and for the future of their fragile countries. It is through **qualified teachers and quality education** that we will manage to **build peace and stability** in the future. Education in emergencies offers a return to familiar routines and **hope for the future, giving children the opportunity to achieve the best they possibly can for themselves**, in order to

provide their countries with the greatest possibility of peace and progress.

Education in emergencies promotes inclusion, tolerance, human-rights awareness and conflict-resolution skills, guiding every stage of the journey to a better life. It is an **essential tool to empower girls and young women** by ensuring their full participation in society and in the social and economic development of their countries.

**LET US NEVER UNDERMINE THE POWER OF EDUCATION.
IT BRINGS CHANGE AND EQUALITY, IT ENSURES
DEMOCRACY, REDUCES POVERTY AND PROMOTES
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, BUT MOST IMPORTANTLY,
IT HOLDS THE KEY TO RESILIENCE, PROSPERITY
AND TO REDUCING CONFLICT.**

Thirdly, and most importantly, education is a right. **Education for all is a right** embodied in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in legally binding treaties, including the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), as well as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Governments and societies must live up to this responsibility.

YES, IT'S A RIGHT

Unfortunately, education is a right that is overlooked, restricted or simply not provided in many countries and situations. As politicians we must ensure that all possible tools are put in place and developed to guarantee **every person's right to enjoy access to quality education, without discrimination or exclusion**. Let us never undermine the power of education. It brings change and equality, it ensures democracy, reduces poverty and promotes sustainable development, but most importantly, it holds **the key to resilience, prosperity** and to **reducing conflict**. Putting quality education at the centre of humanitarian responses has an enormous effect by **reducing children's vulnerabilities** and making humanitarian aid more effective. It is a challenge that must be fully supported financially and politically.

The average duration of displacement for refugees is now 20 years and half of refugees in the UNHCR's mandate are hosted by countries where gross domestic product (GDP) per capita is below \$5,000. It is therefore time to ensure every possible measure is taken. It is estimated that **\$5 billion per year – \$74 per child on average** – would be enough to **ensure educational continuity for the 37 million learners affected by crises worldwide**. The good news is that it is possible to begin to bridge this gap if we

make a better link with the development component. According to the Overseas Development Institute's 2015 *Education in emergencies and protracted crises* report, the amount of Official Development Assistance (ODA) apportioned to education globally would need to rise by just 38%. The EU's 28 member states have just signed a €6 billion deal with one country to help tackle the refugee crisis. **Imagine what could be done with the collective political will of 193 members of the United Nations if we made a greater political effort.**

We call for member states to step up to this challenge and to **provide refugee children with the opportunity to learn more, dream bigger and aim higher** ■



'Primary school' – Bukavu, Democratic Republic of Congo (© DAN).

Français lecture

Du savon, j'ai faim.
La graine, la famille.
Le Directeur.





'Carefree' – Democratic Republic of Congo (© DAN).





THROUGH THEIR EYES

by Elena VALENCIANO

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Africa is a far larger continent than Europe. **Forty-eight countries and more than 820 million people**, rich in contrasts and marked by profound inequalities. In their more recent history, these countries have been through better and worse times, combining errors with achievements and failure with successful experiences. Such episodes demonstrate that social change is as possible, as real and as problematic as in other countries ■ ■ ■

There are no curses on Africa. There is nothing that condemns Africans to eternal poverty. What we have are realities that need to be transformed. Corruption, cronyism and the patrimonialistic notions of the state that prevail among certain elites should not be used as an alibi for declaring that development in Africa is an impossible mission.

To spend time in Africa is to begin to understand it. If I venture to write about Africa it is because of my personal experience, the marks left on me by each and every one of the direct experiences I have had in Africa and with Africa, which have led me to pledge my commitment to this diverse and infinite continent.

Africa is as yet unfinished. It leaves us with the idea that each one of us can do much for it. It catches hold of us because it instils the special feeling that our intervention can be important. **Despite its countless difficulties and vast problems, it is still a place made to the measure of a person.**

In the age of globalisation, I believe that, rather than helping Africa, Europe should start to think more about 'helping itself' and complementing itself with Africa; about **establishing an alliance for the common future**, realising that Africa has many things that Europe is lacking.

Contact with Africans helps us to empathise with them, with the magnitude of their struggles and their challenges. Whole villages, entire organisations, specific individuals whose struggles appear huge to our European eyes. In my position as chair of the European Parliament's subcommittee on human rights, I have had the opportunity to acquire an in-depth and detailed knowledge of situations that dwarf any European problem. **Our refugee crisis is slight compared to the number of people who have been displaced in Africa by famine and war.** War spreads through Africa like a plague.

Amid all this danger, I have learned the stories of remarkable people who dedicate their lives to others. Seeing Africa through their eyes is how we succeed in gaining a real idea, both of the tremendous challenge facing them and of the supernatural strength they muster in an attempt to overcome it.

If I had to personify Africa in a single person, it would be the **Congolese gynaecologist Dr Denis Mukwege**, winner of the 2014 Sakharov Prize awarded by the European Parliament. His awe-inspiring story, his struggle and his cause led me to propose him as a candidate, which was accepted and championed by our group, the Socialists & Democrats.

Dr Mukwege, a gynaecologist from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), has spent almost 30 years working in the Kivu region of Africa, one of the most ravaged by violence. Since 1999 he has worked in the Panzi Hospital, which he founded in Bukavu and where he has specialised in **treating women victims of rape, often gang rape, at the hands of armed groups.**

During these years he and his team have **treated more than 40,000 women** – some on more than one occasion. He has become a worldwide reference in the internal reconstruction of women's sexual organs, a necessity given the extreme violence with which they have been raped.

He works 18-hour stints to perform up to 10 procedures a day. Every day he faces the worst crime that humans can perpetrate. Many of the victims he treats are left unable to have children. One in five is infected by her aggressor with the AIDS virus, often on purpose, to turn her into a weapon against her partner. Boys and girls who are raped often suffer rejection and marginalisation by their community, leaving them at risk of being recruited as child soldiers and forced to commit the same atrocities to which they themselves had fallen victim.

Sexual violence against women used as a weapon of war is a terrible phenomenon that appears to be leaving the international community unmoved. Far from having made advances in fighting it since the UN Security Council passed Resolution 1820 in 2008, the practice actually **appears to be on the increase.**

The dramatic reality is summed up by a former commander of the UN peacekeeping forces in Eastern Congo: **"In an armed conflict, today it is probably more dangerous to be a woman than a soldier."**

In the DRC, in Sudan, and now also in the territory controlled by the self-styled Islamic State, it is women and girls who bear the marks of violence and destruction on their own bodies. Damage, not only physical but also moral, social and economic, the consequences of which are suffered over an entire lifetime or even for generations. **Women are systematically targeted, because destroying them is the most powerful and durable route to destroying a community.**

Dr Mukwege has been confronting this for decades in the DRC, one of the worst countries in the world in which to be a woman. It is estimated that more than 1,000 women are raped every day. **Only 2% decide to pursue their aggressors.**

In the face of this horror, Dr Mukwege's work goes beyond providing medical treatment for the victims – for these women, girls, boys and even babies. He also **passes his knowledge on to other colleagues** and, above all, heads the crucial task of socially and morally reintegrating victims into their society, and **raising international awareness.**

He spoke out to combat the horror he witnesses daily, and it **almost cost him his life.** Dr Mukwege was attacked in his home for denouncing the impunity with which gang rape occurs in his country – in the face of the international community's indifference and that of the Congolese government. His daughters were kidnapped and the shots directed at him killed his guard. Dr Mukwege now spends his life virtually cloistered in his own hospital due to a lack of protection from the government.

There are many reasons why the world and our societies have to be made aware of Dr Mukwege's story, the story of a man devoted to helping women. He draws attention to a conflict in the Kivu region that drags on with no sign of ending, while a silent international community appears to favour other interests, unconfessed but known to all. He draws the eye to the **always-forgotten Africa** and to the multiple conflicts it endures across its territory.

Europe and Africa need to 'help each other' through intelligent co-operation. Rather than build the great barrier that some envisage, Europe needs to design walkways that join us and which could be the key to our survival as a civilisation. The 'invader' Europe of yesteryear, that gained inexhaustible wealth at low cost, should now realise that our association

with Africa is one of the few possible ways to ensure a **shared, sustainable and balanced future.**

Spain's socialist government developed intelligent co-operation between 2004 and 2011. I am very proud of having contributed to directing my party towards this priority. At the time, I greatly valued our alliance with African leaders who, like us, understand the vast possibilities that our co-operation opens up. This effort should be continued, and not only by national parties. It should also be driven forward and headed by the European platforms, our Socialists & Democrats Group and by the Party of European Socialists. **There are some excellent partners with whom to co-ordinate our vision of Africa, of Europe and of the world.**

The first goal of the progressives should be to **avoid the clichés on Africa.** The most frequent one is that Africa is a homogeneous continent with countries that have similar problems, whose causes are approximately similar and consequently also need relatively similar solutions.

Africa is in no way doomed to failure. It is a continent of opportunities. It has three major challenges to overcome in order to achieve development: consolidating human security, strengthening systems of governance and improving the attitude and transparency of public and private activities and accounts. It also **needs to control and regulate the industries that exploit the natural resources of sub-Saharan Africa.** These industries are at the **heart of many conflicts.** As they are essential for running today's world (for example coltan – the ore from which tantalum is extracted for use in many of today's essential appliances), they should be instruments for development, not for illicit enrichment or a source of danger for the population.

We, the European Socialists and Democrats, should **continue to help intensify the political dialogue with sub-Saharan countries,** gaining in trust and improving communications, establishing a common agenda to give a joint response to global challenges such as climate change, poverty, migratory flows, illicit traffic and terrorism. Only through the principles of profound solidarity and of shared responsibility can we, together, address its development and our future ■

THE SOCIALISTS AND DEMOCRATS GROUP HAS APPROVED A 'POSITION PAPER' ON A RENEWED AFRICA-EU PARTNERSHIP. WE HAVE INCLUDED THE TEXT HERE TO PROVIDE FURTHER DETAILS ON THIS CRUCIAL ISSUE AT THE HEART OF EUROPEAN POLICIES.

OUR PRIORITIES FOR AN AFRICA-EU PARTNERSHIP:

- strengthening the culture of democracy and good governance in Africa – beyond election day
- engaging with African progressive political parties, young democratic movements and like-minded civil-society representatives to transform words into reality through dialogue and joint action
- improving co-operation and co-ordination with Africa on migration to tackle its root causes – the lack of freedom and opportunities – but also to explore its development potential
- tackling hunger and malnutrition through joint Africa-EU action, including on achieving sustainable agriculture and fishing
- tackling the root causes of violence and terrorism through inclusive development as well as increased investment in conflict prevention, mediation and resolution
- supporting those fighting for human rights and fundamental freedoms – they should not endure fear, repression or intimidation and the freedom of civil society should be fully respected
- empowering African women, defending their rights and preventing violence and discrimination against them – women's rights are a question of human rights but also of successful societies
- empowering young people with co-ordinated action between African and European partners – young Africans can make the difference in tackling global, regional and local challenges
- working towards universal access to free high-quality education and to healthcare services in Africa, through serious investment in education and in health systems
- making trade a tool for creating genuine partnerships with Africa, fostering sustainable development
- ending the illegal exploitation of natural resources in Africa through transparency, tighter rules and monitoring along the entire supply chain of materials and products that reach Europe
- fighting the illicit financial outflows, ending the chronic tax avoidance and reducing the cost of remittances, which are of crucial importance for African economies and societies
- co-operating on combatting climate change and making Africa a world leader in the field of renewable and efficient energy

1 - POLITICAL PARTNERSHIP

1.1. THE POST-COTONOU PARTNERSHIP

Despite all the difficulties, the existing ACP-EU framework is a valuable achievement to be defended. However, in an increasingly multi-lateral world, the EU must redefine its relations with African, Caribbean and Pacific partners by distinguishing between the different regions, each of which faces specific challenges, and by taking into consideration different local realities. While keeping certain universal components in the common framework, the cornerstones of our partnership should be tailor-made regional agreements reflecting the specific needs of our partner regions.

The post-Cotonou framework will be the centrepiece of renewed Africa-EU relations. Therefore, it must be defined in close co-operation with African countries, as well as with civil society, both in the northern and southern hemispheres. Transparency must be at the heart of this process, including an enhanced parliamentary dimension. The post-Cotonou Africa-EU partnership must be based on a comprehensive EU strategy covering political, economic, social and cultural dimensions. This strategy should aim at achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in the UN's 2030 Agenda, promoting policy coherence for development, fighting against inequalities and for tax justice, implementing sustainable social policies that guarantee decent work, strengthening social justice through a fair allocation of resources, promoting sustainable urbanisation strategies in growing African cities and promoting a human rights-based approach in general.

1.2. DEMOCRACY AND GOOD GOVERNANCE

Supporting democratisation – the culture of democracy beyond elections – in Africa remains a priority for the S&D Group. There have been several examples of improved governance in Sub-Saharan Africa recently, such as the peaceful transitions in Nigeria and Burkina Faso. Today, almost 400 million Sub-Saharan Africans benefit from democratic reforms in their countries, compared to just 2.5 million people who lived in a democracy half-a-century ago. However, many African countries continue to suffer political instability, authoritarian regimes, violence and terrorism.

The S&D Group supports democratic stakeholders – political institutions, political parties and civil society – working for genuine democracy, the creation of open political spaces, the consolidation of the rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms right across Africa. Participation, electoral credibility and accountability through free and fair elections are key tools for stability in African countries where authoritarian regimes and corruption have led to years, sometime decades, of limited security and opportunities for jobs, and poor access to food, health and sanitation. Democracy and good governance also remain central to the African Union's agenda, based on a vision of "a democratically governed and conflict-free Africa." The S&Ds stand together with the African Union to achieve this goal.

1.3. HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS

The S&D Group strongly condemns and calls for an immediate end to the detention and harassment of human-rights defenders and opposition politicians by government forces in various African countries. We are equally concerned about harmful legislation, such as restrictions on foreign funding for non-governmental organisations (NGOs), which results in shrinking space for civil society. The S&Ds continue to remind governments, in Africa and all over the world, that they have the duty to promote and support media freedom, civil society activities and the work of human-rights defenders, allowing them to operate without fear, repression or intimidation. We will continue to use the European Parliament's resolutions on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law to address these issues. At the same time, the economic and environmental aspects of human rights must be addressed in Africa. The EU has an important role to play in ensuring that companies which are active or use local resources in the continent respect the due-diligence standards set by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the United Nations' guiding principles on business and human rights. The S&Ds fully support all efforts aimed at promoting and protecting children's rights in Africa and beyond, in particular access to water, sanitation, healthcare and education for children; the rehabilitation and reintegration of child soldiers; and the fight against child labour, child torture, child witchcraft, child trafficking, child slavery, child marriage and the sexual exploitation of children. The S&Ds strongly believe that providing access to education for children caught up in humanitarian emergencies – in particular in conflict zones and refugee camps – is key to providing a future for generations at risk of being lost as a result of natural or man-made disasters.

We also stress the importance of birth registration in the African continent, as 37% of the 230 million children under the age of five worldwide who do not have a birth certificate live in Sub-Saharan Africa. Children without a birth certificate are denied a legal status in society, which makes them invisible and vulnerable to crimes and exploitation, and undermines their right to education, self-determination and self-realisation. The S&Ds therefore call for birth registration for all children born in Africa, and in all other continents, as a crucial factor in enforcing children's rights.

The S&D Group continues to call for the Beijing Platform for Action objectives on access to education and health as basic human rights to be implemented effectively. Policies related to family planning, maternal health, access to contraception, sexual and reproductive health services and psychological support (which are crucial in saving women's lives and in helping rebuild the lives of women who are victims of rape or genital mutilation) must be at the core of the EU's partnership with Africa. We are also very concerned about the persistence of discriminatory laws and practices, and acts of violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity in Africa. The situation for LGBTI people and communities in African countries with anti-LGBTI legislation in place must also be closely monitored.

1.4. WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND EMPOWERMENT

Gender equality and women's empowerment have always been core S&D values. Of the 1.3 billion people living in poverty worldwide, 70% are women, many of them in Africa. They, together with their children, become the first victims of conflicts, forced displacements and diseases. The S&D Group believes that empowering women is not only a matter of justice and human rights, but also that societies where justice and equal opportunities for women prevail are more successful. For the S&Ds, the social, economic and political empowerment of women remains a priority in Africa-EU dialogue and co-operation. With successful efforts to create more gender-balanced parliaments in Cape Verde, South Africa and Tanzania, for example, there are now several models for African countries to follow.

It is our duty, as Africans and Europeans alike, to ensure that no girl or woman is subjected to any form of violence or discrimination. We must apply the EU's Gender Action Plan 2016-2020 to make sure that the rights of women and girls are respected, even – and especially – in the most extreme conditions. Victims of war rape and sexual violence must receive the medical care they need, including abortion, while impunity for perpetrators must come to an end. The S&Ds also reiterate the need for access to education for girls in refugee camps, conflict areas and regions affected by extreme poverty and environmental crisis zones, including in Africa.

The S&D Group considers that women's autonomy is one way of countering extremism. In some African countries, the inhuman practices of female genital mutilation are still present, while many young girls continue to be forced to marry before reaching adulthood. The countries concerned need to revise their legislation in order to eliminate violence against women, outlaw child marriage and implement gender equality mechanisms. There is still a gap between the commitments and investment in gender equality and women's rights in Africa. Therefore, the S&Ds want to see more investment dedicated to empowering women and to gender-responsive policies and regulations in the context of Africa-EU relations.

1.5. PEACE, SECURITY AND STABILITY

While exclusion and inequalities continue to be key factors fuelling violent unrest and terrorism in Africa, security-based approaches have failed to deliver the desired results, despite enormous investment in this field. The S&D Group continues to call for increased resources for inclusive development in Africa, as we remain convinced that peace and security, on the one hand, and inclusive development, on the other, are closely intertwined. Women, young people, minorities and other vulnerable groups should be fully involved in this process.

The S&D Group welcomes the African Union's efforts to achieve peace and security in Africa and calls for continued EU support for these operations, including through training and equipment. We call for increased investment in conflict prevention, mediation and resolution – especially to prevent genocide and mass atrocities – and for further strengthening of the role of the African Union in the whole continent. In the context of effective post-conflict management, the

S&Ds call for proper investigations into and accountability for all criminal acts, particularly sexual abuse, committed in the framework of AU- or UN-led military missions. We want to see the EU taking the lead in the UN to ensure the recently adopted UN Security Council resolution 2272 on combating sexual exploitation by UN peacekeepers is properly implemented, including in Africa. The S&D Group also calls for an end to arms exports to African countries in case of any lack of certainty that arms will only be used for legitimate security purposes by a democratic government.

The S&D Group welcomes UN Security Council resolution 2242 on women, peace and security, putting the spotlight on women in addressing violent extremism, security, migration and climate change. We call for genuine efforts to apply this agenda in all aspects of peacekeeping operations and recall the importance of women's leadership and involvement in conflict resolution in general, in line with UN Security Council resolution 1325. The S&Ds call for further efforts to ensure the meaningful participation of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts in Africa, including in peace negotiations and in peace-building processes at all levels with regard to national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms. In the same spirit, we also welcome the recent UN Security Council resolution (2250) on youth, peace and security, which gives particular attention to the role and potential of young people in the same context.

1.6. TERRORISM

Terrorism is a global threat. We have seen this recently in Europe, with the terrorist attacks in Paris and Brussels, and we have also seen it in Africa: in Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Mali, Nigeria and Somalia, especially in the regions most affected by poverty and lacking effective government. An increasingly dangerous world makes it imperative we address the root causes of terrorism and radicalisation, which are the same in both our continents. It is crucial that we focus on providing young people with real opportunities via education and employment, promoting social justice and inclusion, fighting corruption, strengthening the judiciary, implementing effective security reforms (including in the fields of intelligence and information exchange with and among African countries and through EU technical assistance) and building a comprehensive framework for implementing the African Union and international counter-terrorism instruments in Africa. As terrorism requires a co-ordinated global response, the S&D Group calls for increased efforts on a global scale. At the same time, the S&Ds remain fully convinced that the fight against terrorism can only be successful – in Africa and across the world – if measures comply with international human rights and humanitarian law standards.

2 - ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP

2.1. ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS

The S&D Group wants to ensure that Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) are a tool for genuine partnership, sustainable development and regional integration, and firmly rejects the use of coercion or threats to remove market access to make governments ratify agreements. We have long been committed to honouring the principle of having a coherent policy approach for development and the EPAs that the Parliament agrees to must follow that approach. Before we agree to EPAs the S&Ds will seek to ensure that they do not threaten fledgling industries, can support the diversification of the local economy and are accompanied by immediate, sufficient and appropriate aid. We also call for every trade agreement to include a binding sustainable development chapter with the full involvement of civil society in its implementation and monitoring. These agreements must not compromise or backslide on the high levels of ambition either in this field or in the fields of labour, human rights and environmental standards, which we have seen in other trade agreements. We also need to prevent lower tariffs leading to lower fiscal revenues in African states, including by providing EU support for the implementation of effective tax-system reforms in the partner countries concerned. We must also ensure that local industries and informal sectors that are not included in EPAs can develop and prosper, given the important role they play in African economies, especially for women.

2.2. SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS

The S&D Group supports the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreements (SFPAs) with African countries aimed at providing financial and technical support in exchange for fishing rights for surplus stocks in the partner country's exclusive economic zone. We want these agreements to focus on resource conservation and environmental sustainability, and to ensure that all EU vessels are subject to the same rules of control and transparency. We

welcome the inclusion of a clause on respect for human rights in all protocols to fisheries agreements. SFPAs should ensure fisheries are managed based on principles of sustainable exploitation, fish supply and the development of the fisheries sector in partner countries based on coherence between fisheries, environmental and trade policies and development co-operation.

The S&Ds stress the need to support the development of local communities whose livelihoods depend mostly on fishing, as well as supporting the transfer of technologies and know-how, capacity management, multi-stakeholder partnerships and other investments for the benefit of the fishing industry. SFPAs should represent an opportunity to involve women better throughout the value chain, from financing through to the processing and/or marketing of fish products, and reinforce their economic and social status. We call for all the financial support given in exchange for fishing rights to be fully monitored, both before and during the lifetime of the deal, and encourage the EU to avoid negotiating SFPAs with countries where corruption is accepted.

2.3. AID FOR TRADE

With instruments like Aid for Trade, the S&D Group aims to help developing countries negotiate, implement and benefit from trade agreements, expand their trade capacity and accelerate poverty eradication. We want to assist them in building capacities, in order to achieve sustainable growth and diversify their economies. The S&Ds also wish to make sure that tariff reductions in trade agreements with developing countries are phased in in a sustainable manner, do not give comparative advantages to imported products at the expense of local produce and do not have an adverse effect on the budgets of the partner countries, allowing them to safeguard the functioning of vital public services. We note, for example, the EU's 2015-2020 contribution to the West Africa (ECOWAS) region of €6.5 billion to finance trade, agriculture, infrastructure, energy and capacity-building for developing civil society through a regional Economic Partnership Agreement fund. However we encourage EU member states to further increase this and similar support in order to meet local needs and demand with the aim of fulfilling development co-operation commitments. The S&D Group also insists that sufficient financial resources should be committed for the whole implementation period.

2.4. GENERALISED SYSTEM OF PREFERENCES

The EU's Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) has proved very useful for the African countries which benefit from it, especially under the 'everything but arms' arrangement for the least-developed countries (LDCs). The duty-free and quota-free access to the EU single market it offers allows them to generate additional revenues through international trade, thereby assisting those countries in their efforts to reduce poverty and promote good governance and sustainable development. At the same time, access to the GSP should not prevent African countries from – or be used to pressure them over – ratifying Economic Partnership Agreements. Under certain conditions, these agreements can be useful development instruments and help countries to better integrate their economies into the world market. Despite the requirement to comply with core human rights and UN/International Labour Organisation labour conventions before countries can benefit from the preference system (preference status can be temporarily withdrawn in case of 'serious and systematic violation of principles' included in those conventions) in certain cases we noticed serious breaches of fundamental rights. A clarification of the meaning of 'serious and systematic violation of principles' would be useful to make it sure that the possibility of withdrawing the preferences can be actually used. The S&D Group has called for an EU delegated act to this end. It is crucial to show that the EU is serious about human-rights violations and environmental protection, and to give African and other partner countries more incentives to fully implement key conventions.

2.5. TRADE FACILITATION AGREEMENT/DOHA DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

Through its trade policy, the EU is committed to opening up European markets in order to boost trade and investment, and help African countries create opportunities – especially for young people who demand more and better jobs. The 2013 Bali World Trade Organisation (WTO) agreement, in particular on trade facilitation, will reinvigorate the multilateral trade system, which remains the best guarantee for open, free and fair trade, beneficial to both developed and developing countries. However, this is just a first step towards the more ambitious Doha Development Agenda (DDA), which the S&Ds are eager to see completed in order to further unlock the potential of developing countries, including in Africa. The S&Ds also wish to see the European Parliament and indeed the WTO Parliamentary Assembly play a crucial role in monitoring the fulfilment of DDA development objectives.

2.6. RESPONSIBLE GLOBAL SUPPLY CHAINS

The S&D Group leads the fight against the illegal exploitation of natural resources – such as conflict minerals – in Africa. We are pushing for the existing compulsory due-diligence system to be fully implemented along the entire supply chain of minerals, raw materials and products that reach Europe, from Africa and elsewhere, and we call for further binding and enforceable due-diligence standards. It is what our citizens have asked for and what they expect. Due diligence is the responsibility for companies to check and improve the practices of all partners and suppliers to ensure they meet the standards required. Strong EU legislation in line with the internationally agreed OECD guidance on due diligence and with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights will play a pivotal role in improving global supply chains and the lives and well-being of millions of workers, reducing poverty and inequality, and empowering some of the world's most marginalised people, especially in Africa.

The S&Ds have led the fight against conflict minerals in the European Parliament and beyond. In 2010, we successfully pushed the European Parliament to make an official demand for a legislative proposal from the European Commission. As the conflict minerals negotiations near completion, the Commission must carefully monitor its implementation and ensure that EU member states effectively oversee due-diligence standards along the entire supply chain. The S&Ds welcome the legislation, but highlight that the vast majority of wars, internal conflicts and displacements, including in Africa, are as a result of disputes over natural resources. We reiterate therefore that in any review of the legislation the scope could be expanded to include other natural resources which are known to fuel conflicts, such as diamonds, jade and coal.

2.7. THE FIGHT AGAINST ILLEGAL FISHING

The S&D Group continues to fight against illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing. African countries suffer proportionally more from illegal fishing than any other region in the world – a crime which puts the environment as well as the livelihoods of coastal communities at risk and leads to increased migration. We call for the EU's regulation on IUU fishing – as well as the corresponding control measures – to be strictly applied in order to prevent, deter and eliminate these practices. The EU has to support African countries to improve their capacities to monitor activities at sea, to identify IUU operators and to apply sanctions in case of infringement.

We welcome the recent entry into force of the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation's Port State Measures Agreement, making it easier to control and identify IUU vessels. The S&Ds encourage all African coastal countries to ratify this agreement and to deny port entry and services to vessels suspected of illegal fishing. As illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing is a global crime which requires global solutions, the S&D Group aims to strengthen Africa-EU co-operation to tackle this problem.

In addition, in the context of the General System of Preferences, the S&Ds stress the importance of the fight against illegal fishing for the sustainable development of Africa. In the next review of the GSP regulation, the IUU regulation could be added to the conventions that eligible developing countries have to ratify and effectively implement to be granted GSP+ (additional trade preferences for countries that apply international standards on issues like human rights and good governance). In that case, a lack of compliance on illegal fishing would lead to the withdrawal of GSP+ privileges.

2.8. ILLICIT FINANCIAL OUTFLOWS, TAX JUSTICE AND REMITTANCES

Africa loses more than €45 billion every year in illicit financial outflows due to fraudulent schemes aimed at avoiding tax payments to some of the world's poorest countries. This flow of resources out of Africa impedes development projects and denies poor people access to crucial services. The continent is estimated to have lost in excess of €900 billion in illicit financial flows over the past 50 years. This sum is roughly equivalent to all the official development assistance (ODA) received by Africa during the same timeframe. The S&D Group calls for EU support for the African Union's High-Level Panel on Illicit Financial Flows, as well as for individual African states in building improved anti-money laundering institutions and effective, transparent and progressive tax justice systems conducive to sustainable development. This should include legislation stopping illicit flows, creating financial intelligence units and monitoring banking activities.

The S&D Group underlines the crucial importance of the EU's engagement with Africa in terms of the international tax agenda in order to ensure that African countries receive appropriate support in identifying and addressing the specific challenges they face. A truly global and intergovernmental tax body, where all countries can discuss

the reform of the global tax system on an equal footing, is vital to achieve this. Fair treatment for developing countries should be guaranteed when tax treaties are negotiated on an international level, taking into account their particular situation and ensuring taxation rights are fairly distributed between source and residence countries. At the same time, the EU should address aggressive tax avoidance and evasion practices by EU businesses in Africa, and make it sure that domestic tax policies in Europe do not have a negative spill-over effect on partner countries.

In 2009 the G8 committed to the '5x5 goals' aimed at reducing the global average fee for remittances by five percentage points within five years. Despite some progress, it is still close to 8% globally and to 12% in Sub-Saharan Africa. The S&D Group therefore highlights the importance of reducing the costs of remittances to less than 3%, as agreed in the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

3 - PARTNERSHIP IN FACING GLOBAL AND REGIONAL CHALLENGES

3.1. MIGRATION

With the ongoing refugee crisis in Europe and in our neighbourhood, we have seen that improved co-operation and co-ordination on migration with Africa is crucial. No region or country can respond to this challenge alone. More should be done to tackle the root causes of migration, such as conflicts and violence, the lack of political freedom, poverty and inequality, the lack of opportunities, human rights abuses, corruption and climate change. In particular, we need more and better jobs for young people, quality education for every child and more empowerment for women, in order to improve the living conditions of potential migrants in their home countries. It is equally important to prevent conflicts, genocide and mass atrocities, strengthen resilience capacities and provide increased assistance and greater protection in humanitarian crises. We must also address the situation of those migrants who are not granted asylum in Europe or who wish to return to their home country, including through facilitating a safe passage home.

The S&D Group remains convinced that migration – in particular circular migration (where people move repeatedly between their home country and other destinations, usually to work) – is also an opportunity for development. We urge the EU to develop and enhance policies to explore the development potential of migration by opening legal and safe channels for migration, mainstreaming development co-operation in migration policies, working to reduce the costs of remittances to less than 3% and strengthening diaspora organisations.

The S&Ds refuse to allow development aid to be used for security purposes, including in the case of the Africa Trust Fund after the Valletta Summit. While the creation of the Trust Fund is welcome, it should not be used for reinforcing borders between countries, but should prioritise food security, education, employment and combatting radicalism. We are concerned about the increasing emphasis on return and readmission, and development aid must not be used as a bargaining chip to make partner countries accept the return of migrants. At the same time, a new financial instrument for external action in the field of migration could be created within the EU budget, linking with the aims of the existing Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund and the Internal Security Fund.

3.2. THE 2030 AGENDA/SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Certain aspects of poverty have been reduced in Africa over the past 15 years but the poverty challenge remains enormous. 75% of the poorest countries in the world and millions of people living on less than US \$1.25 a day are still to be found in the African continent. The S&D Group is committed to eradicating poverty in all its forms, fighting inequalities, promoting inclusive sustainable development and creating economic growth with a focus on people and improving the lives of the poor, in Africa and beyond.

In this respect, successfully implementing the 2030 Agenda with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is of critical importance. The universal nature of the Agenda requires efforts on all levels: national, regional and international alike. The three dimensions – social, economic and environmental – and the interdependence of the SDGs should be fully taken into account in the external and internal actions of the EU and its member states, as well as in African countries' national plans. It is crucial we have effective monitoring and follow-up for the 2030 Agenda and for each Sustainable Development Goal to ensure they are put into practice effectively.

Human rights, non-discrimination and gender equality must be the basis for implementing the 2030 Agenda and ensuring no one is left behind must be our guiding principle both in Africa and in Europe in this field. Tackling poverty and inequalities is key, as well as fighting climate change. Structural adjustments are needed to guarantee a better distribution of power and resources. The S&D Group calls for parliaments and civil society to be more involved in this process because accountability matters.

The efficient implementation of the 2030 Agenda not only requires policies to move towards sustainable development, but also sufficient financial resources. EU countries must respect their commitment to channel 0.7% of their GNI (gross national income) to official development assistance (ODA), while fighting illicit financial flows and building strong, efficient and just tax systems should remain priorities. On their side, African countries should act to mobilise domestic resources, including the private sector. The most vulnerable and least-developed countries require special attention: the S&Ds would like to see donors providing 0.15-0.2% of their GNI as aid to these countries.

In the light of the fact that by 2050 80% of the world's population will live in urban areas – a matter of particular interest for growing African cities – the S&D Group highlights the strong connection between urbanisation and sustainable development. Therefore, the outcomes of the October 2016 Habitat III conference on housing and sustainable development in Quito (Ecuador) have an important role to play in the successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

In the context of the 2030 Agenda, raising awareness and providing reliable public information are also critical at the international, regional and national levels, both in African and in Europe. Strengthening data collection and statistical capacities in African countries are indispensable to ensure the 2030 Agenda is successfully implemented and monitored.

3.3. SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES, FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION

Fighting hunger and malnutrition and creating sustainable agriculture and fisheries require joint efforts between Africa and Europe. Achieving zero hunger by 2030 must be a global priority with the aim of ensuring that not one single child suffers from malnutrition or dies from hunger. In this spirit, the S&D Group welcomes the adoption of the Africa-EU research and innovation partnership on food and nutrition security and sustainable agriculture.

Agriculture and pastoralism are closely connected to food security, the accessibility of social services in rural areas and the preservation of ecosystems and biodiversity. All possible efforts should be made to prevent abusive speculation in staple food and agricultural produce markets, since these generate volatile food prices, which can put staple foods beyond the reach of consumers and do not benefit producers. Promoting local production in Africa, investing in family and smallholder businesses – especially women farmers – building productive capacities and facilitating access to financing should be priorities.

Improving nutrition, especially for the most vulnerable – children and women – requires specific reforms, such as bio-fortification, fortification and nutrition policies, and malnutrition treatment. In this respect, the S&D Group highlights the existing commitments under the country co-operation frameworks of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) and its regional implementation frameworks or, for policies on nutrition, under the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) initiative.

Sustainable fisheries play a key role with regard to food and nutrition security in Africa. As more than 25% of the fish caught by EU vessels are caught outside EU waters, and a large proportion of this total in African waters, the external dimension of the EU's fisheries policy must contribute to the development of local fisheries sectors and to the protection of local fishing communities in Africa. Sustainable fishing is a way to address some of the root causes of migration and flight. The financial compensation in the Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreements includes an amount dedicated to sectorial support aimed at strengthening the capacity of the partner country to sustainably manage its fisheries. The S&D Group calls for the extension of such policies and for them to be implemented in a transparent way.

Land grabbing is another escalating problem which directly concerns the rights of local populations in Africa. Governments, transnational and domestic companies, and individual investors must respect the traditional land use of smallholder farmers and pastoralists, and must ensure that investments in agriculture lead to genuine progress in rural

areas and do not violate people's rights to their land. The S&D Group calls for strict legislation on land acquisitions at an international and national level in order to make systems more transparent and prevent abusive practices.

3.4. CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENERGY

Developing countries, including many African ones, remain the most vulnerable to the effects of climate change. The changing climate leads to famine, forced migration and new conflicts, or further aggravates existing ones. The S&D Group calls for the effective alignment of EU development co-operation with the fight against climate change in order to build resilience and reduce the vulnerability of local populations, and improve their capacity to prevent and reduce the risks from disasters. Unless the EU and its member states, as well as other international players, deliver on the commitments they made at the 2015 Paris COP21 conference, the primary objectives of the Sustainable Development Goals and of EU development policy will be jeopardised.

The S&D Group also calls for more synergies between development co-operation and humanitarian action, including in the fields of climate change and natural-disaster-risk reduction, which must be a constant, systematic and effective facet of EU development policy. In addition to climate-friendly and resilient development co-operation, the EU must deliver on its climate finance commitments. We have a great responsibility to achieve the US \$100 billion goal by 2020 and we must ensure that all EU countries contribute to this in a fair and balanced way. Adequate resources remain key to increasing climate resilience and adaptive capacities in Africa.

Only one in three Africans have access to electricity and hydraulic, geothermal, solar and wind power capacities are significantly underexploited in the continent. Wood still accounts for 40% of African energy consumption, leading to drastic deforestation in some areas. Africa has enormous potentials in terms of renewable energy, which could fuel growth and development, reduce fossil-fuel dependency and decrease Africa's vulnerability to energy-price fluctuation. Renewable energy should be recognised as a key development component, since access to modern energy services is a necessary precondition for sustainable development in the continent. The S&D Group suggests that Africa, with the EU's support, should become a world leader in the production and the use of renewable and efficient energy. A key goal should be universal energy access for all Africans by 2030. In this spirit, the S&Ds welcome the Africa-EU Energy Partnership (AEEP), the UN's Sustainable Energy for All (SE4All) initiative and Sustainable Development Goal 7 on affordable and clean energy for all, and call for their successful implementation.

3.5. PARTNERSHIP WITH YOUNG AFRICANS

The demographic trends of the continent underline how important the role of young people must be in dealing with global and regional challenges in the context of Africa-EU relations. They have an enormous potential to shape their society, foster democracy and the rule of law, promote human rights and fundamental freedoms, and innovate in business and in public services. The S&D Group strongly believes that creating opportunities for young Africans must be a cornerstone of a renewed Africa-EU partnership. In the light of this huge potential, youth issues should not be perceived as a separate policy area, but should be 'mainstreamed' into all areas of Africa-EU co-operation. Nevertheless, action and progress in this field should be co-ordinated and monitored through a dedicated and consistent mechanism based on an Africa-EU youth plan.

Youth unemployment in Africa is at crisis level. While young people are a key potential source of economic development in the continent, many young people – around 15 million of whom enter the labour market each year in African countries – are unable to find jobs, either because there are none available or because their skills do not match the needs and requirements of employers. At the same time, many young African entrepreneurs are constrained by political and social instability and/or a lack of access to credit, land or productivity-enhancing infrastructure. Therefore, the S&D Group calls for free high-quality education for all to be a policy priority in our partnership with young Africans. Priorities should include: ICT skills; active labour market programmes upgrading skills and improving employment opportunities; vocational training; entrepreneurship education through new learning models; and the active participation of young Africans in governance structures, in particular in local decision-making and development processes in their respective countries.

Nevertheless, empowering young people should not lead to the neglect of the elderly who are at risk of old-age poverty and exclusion in many African countries due to the lack of appropriate social security and welfare systems.

Their interests and rights have to be respected and protected. Therefore, youth empowerment should be part of an integrated approach emphasising inter-generational solidarity, responsibilities and duties in order to avoid inter-generational tensions and to allow all African people, young or old, to live a decent life.

3.6. ACCESS TO EDUCATION

Although significant improvements have been achieved in education over the past 15 years in Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa remains the region with the lowest literacy rate in the world. Therefore, as education is a basic human right and a public good, creating inclusive, fair and free high-quality education systems in Africa must be a priority. The EU's strategy in this field should follow Sustainable Development Goal 4 to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all." The global education agenda (the Education 2030 agenda – part of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals) should be fully supported in Africa via the Incheon Declaration (the education community's commitment to Education 2030) and the Framework for Action.

Africa needs a paradigm shift in education as the need for increased investment in education and for qualified teachers cannot be stressed enough. The S&D Group calls for literacy and numeracy campaigns focussing on the African countries that are the most in need of help in reducing the literacy gap, by taking into account local differences. Key to successful outcomes are: spreading best practices; setting up national and regional literacy policy frameworks; incorporating gender perspectives into formal and non-formal education policies; and ensuring that girls and women get equal access to quality education. Particular emphasis should be put on value chains through the promotion of vocational training, a sector dramatically underdeveloped in Africa despite the fact that it is vital for the development of qualified personnel for industries to diversify.

Education is of crucial importance in humanitarian emergencies, in Africa and around the world, and the S&D Group's EDUCA campaign advocates for funding for this to be doubled, at a European and global level. We also call for 'education corridors' through agreements between European universities and the Mediterranean Universities Union to host refugee students arriving from conflict areas. The EU should continue to promote university exchange and mobility schemes with African countries as well as ICT skills and competences in Africa to prevent a deepening digital gap between our continents.

3.7. ACCESS TO HEALTH SERVICES

Substantial gaps exist in health systems across the African continent and the poor and the vulnerable have limited or no access to healthcare. The consequences of this situation became obvious in the recent Ebola crisis in West Africa. The S&D Group remains committed to the principle of universal healthcare in Africa through serious investment in health systems with the aim of achieving the World Health Organisation's goal of 4.45 health personnel per 1,000 inhabitants and affordable access to essential medicine for all in the continent. Nevertheless, while increasing investment in public health is essential in all African countries, it is not sufficient. Improved co-ordination and co-operation among African countries is needed to avoid devastating epidemics. The S&D Group also calls for special attention to be given to the needs of people living with disabilities in African societies, who often face exclusion, marginalisation, poverty and a lack of support.

Women in Africa represent over 50% of the continent's population and so women's health has huge implications for Africa's development. Access to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), including family planning and legal and safe abortion, are key for sustainable population growth in several African countries. Sexual and reproductive health and rights – which are not a priority for many African leaders – are also important for women and girls to live self-determined lives. In 2015, nearly 6 million children under the age of five died in Africa – half of these cases could have been prevented through access to simple, affordable interventions. The S&D Group calls for such interventions to be available for all children, which will save many young lives.

MUCH HAS ALREADY BEEN ACHIEVED BUT MUCH REMAINS TO BE DONE. WITH A NEW AFRICA-EU PARTNERSHIP WE CAN LOOK FORWARD TO BUILDING A BRIGHTER FUTURE TOGETHER.

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