



**POSITION PAPER**

# **S&D GROUP POSITION PAPER FOR A RENEWED AFRICA-EU PARTNERSHIP**

*EUROPE IN THE WORLD: PROMOTING  
SOLIDARITY, FREEDOM, JUSTICE AND  
EQUALITY*

*The EU on the world stage*

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## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

1	Africa-EU towards a renewed partnership.....	3
2	Political partnership .....	6
2.1	The post-Cotonou partnership .....	6
2.2	Democracy and good governance .....	7
2.3	Human rights and fundamental freedoms .....	8
2.4	Women's rights and empowerment.....	9
2.5	Peace, security and stability .....	10
2.6	Terrorism .....	11
3	Economic partnership .....	12
3.1	Economic Partnership Agreements.....	12
3.2	Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreements .....	13
3.3	Aid for Trade.....	13
3.4	Generalised System of Preferences .....	14
3.5	Trade facilitation agreement/Doha Development Agenda .....	15
3.6	Responsible global supply chains .....	15
3.7	The fight against illegal fishing.....	16
3.8	Illicit financial outflows, tax justice and remittances.....	17
4	Partnership in facing global and regional challenges .....	18
4.1	Migration.....	18
4.2	The 2030 Agenda/Sustainable Development Goals.....	19
4.3	Sustainable agriculture and fisheries, food security and nutrition .....	21
4.4	Climate change and energy .....	22
4.5	Partnership with young Africans.....	23
4.6	Access to education.....	24
4.7	Access to health services .....	25

## **1 AFRICA-EU TOWARDS A RENEWED PARTNERSHIP**

The S&D Group:

- calls for a new and ambitious EU policy towards Africa
- believes in a renewed Africa-EU partnership overcoming the outdated vision of Africa which focuses on poverty, instability and conflicts, and embracing a more positive and constructive approach reflecting new realities
- stresses the importance of putting an end to the domination of European interests and concerns in Africa-EU relations with the aim of creating genuine co-operation between equal partners to benefit both sides
- aims to work less *for* but more *with* Africa – with the African Union and regional organisations, governments, local authorities and civil society – so Africans have a real ownership of our co-operation

Africa is at the heart of our globalised world. Although it is a continent often seen through the lens of global problems, it is also at the forefront in creating new opportunities. Therefore, the time has come to move on from the old-fashioned view of Africa which focused on poverty, instability and conflicts, and adopt a more positive and constructive vision reflecting new realities in this vast and rapidly changing continent.

Africans and Europeans must become genuine partners to the benefit of both hemispheres. We share a common history, full of achievements but also of suffering and pain. We face similar global challenges and we can work together for a better future. We share the same vision of peace, security, prosperity and social justice. However, our views often diverge on concrete initiatives and policies. Relations between Africa and Europe have been dominated by European interests and concerns – economic, security and migration issues – for too long, which has to end.

In the context of Africa-EU relations, we cannot ignore that Europe is facing a refugee crisis of a magnitude unprecedented in modern times. In this respect, the political and economic challenges (lack of freedom and opportunities) that many African countries

continue to face cannot be disregarded. The European response to this crisis must be based on solidarity between EU member states, but also on a proactive strategy for close co-operation with countries of origin, transit and destination in Africa, with a view to tackling the root causes of migratory flows. In addition, we should not forget that some African countries host more migrants than those arriving in Europe and that these countries need urgent support. As long as Africa experiences migration crises, Europe will have to face them too.

Africa-EU relations have a solid institutional background based on the Cotonou Agreement on EU co-operation with African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries (signed in 2000, revised in 2005 and 2010, and expiring in 2020), the 2007 joint EU-Africa strategy, the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 2015 Paris global climate agreement, as well as the outcomes of the 2014 EU-Africa summit, the 2015 Valletta summit and the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit. This framework should continue to develop with the follow-up to the Cotonou Agreement, Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs), the new EU strategy for Africa and the outcomes of the 2016 Habitat III conference and the next EU-Africa Summit in 2017.

Now more than ever, the EU needs an ambitious policy towards Africa, leading to a genuine partnership between both sides. This renewed partnership must be based on common interests and mutually shared values – human rights, democratic principles, the rule of law and good governance in particular – leading to win-win solutions that benefit both sides.

We have to keep in mind that Africa is a growing political and economic actor on the global stage. The majority of African countries have enjoyed a decade or more of uninterrupted economic growth – essentially based on the export of raw materials, which makes them dependent on volatile market prices, highlighting again the importance of diversifying their economies. However, economic development combined with increasingly solid regional organisations and the African Union (AU) strengthen African positions on the global level. Therefore, it is no surprise that Africa is becoming an important arena for global political and economic competition.

Africa is full of potential for the future. Demographic trends in African societies are both a blessing and a challenge. Economic growth has to be translated into job creation – African countries need to create 18 million jobs per year in the short term – and into a fair distribution of wealth within society. The EU and its member states, which are not



## S&D GROUP POSITION PAPER FOR A RENEWED AFRICA-EU PARTNERSHIP

only the main donors but also the main investors in the continent, will play a major role in developing the local economy in Africa. This must go hand-in-hand with social justice and reducing the huge inequalities in African societies, as well as fighting illicit financial flows and corruption.

In political terms, strengthening democracy, the rule of law and human rights remain key challenges in Africa. The S&D Group is ready to invest in institutions promoting democratic values and the rule of law in African countries – including the ACP-EU framework and its Joint Parliamentary Assembly – as well as in our relations with democratic political forces in the continent, especially with progressive political parties and like-minded civil-society organisations keen to protect these values. Strengthening the participation of civil society remains a crucial challenge, which needs to be addressed through inclusive political dialogue and appropriate consultative forums and processes. In this spirit, the S&Ds welcome the emergence of young democratic movements such as *Balai citoyen* in Burkina Faso, *Filimbi* in the Democratic Republic of Congo or *Y en a marre* in Senegal, to name just a few. These movements can play an important role in strengthening democracy and the rule of law in their respective countries and deserve our support.

This position paper advocates a new partnership between the EU and Africa. It is based on the S&D Group's conviction that we should work less *for* but more *with* Africa in the spirit of African ownership of our joint action. It does not aim to cover all possible dimensions of Africa-EU relations, but focusses on policy areas and issues of particular importance for the S&Ds, as a solid basis for defining an S&D Africa action plan. Although we agree that the challenges in North Africa are as much African as Mediterranean issues, the scope of this paper is limited to Sub-Saharan Africa, without expanding our reflections to the Maghreb and Mashreq regions, which are part of the European Neighbourhood Policy.

## **2 POLITICAL PARTNERSHIP**

The S&D Group:

- supports the strengthening of the culture of democracy and good governance in Africa, beyond just the electoral processes
- is ready to invest in our relations with democratic stakeholders in Africa – especially with progressive political parties, young democratic movements and like-minded civil society organisations – with the aim of transforming words into reality through dialogue and joint action
- continues to support those fighting for human rights and fundamental freedoms in Africa, and reiterates the call for full respect for the freedom of civil society, which should be able to operate without fear, repression and intimidation in all African countries
- calls for the empowerment and full respect for the rights of African women, with the aim of preventing violence and discrimination against them, as a matter of human rights but also of benefitting African societies
- calls for the root causes of violence and terrorism to be tackled through inclusive development in Africa, including increased investment in conflict prevention, mediation and resolution

### **2.1 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.

### **2.2 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.

## 2.3 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.

### **2.4 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.

### **2.5 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.

### **2.6 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.

### **3 ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP**

The S&D Group:

- aims to ensure that trade policy, Economic Partnership Agreements, Aid for Trade and the Generalised System of Preferences, as well as Sustainable Fisheries Partnership Agreements, are tools for creating genuine partnerships with Africa and fostering sustainable development
- continues to fight against the illegal exploitation of natural resources – such as conflict minerals – in Africa and reiterates its call for binding and enforceable due-diligence standards along the entire supply chain of African minerals, raw materials and products that reach Europe
- fights against illicit financial outflows due to fraudulent schemes aimed at avoiding taxes in African countries and reiterates its call for reducing the cost of remittances, which are of crucial importance for African economies and societies

#### **3.1 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.

### **3.2 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.

### **3.3 Aid for Trade**



## S&D GROUP POSITION PAPER FOR A RENEWED AFRICA-EU PARTNERSHIP

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.

### **3.4 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.

### **3.5 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.

### **3.6 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.

### **3.7 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.

### **3.8 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.

## **4 PARTNERSHIP IN FACING GLOBAL AND REGIONAL CHALLENGES**

The S&D Group:

- calls for improved co-operation and co-ordination with Africa on migration in order to tackle the root causes of migration – the lack of freedom and opportunities – but also to explore the development potential of migration, especially circular migration
- stresses the need for joint Africa-EU action on tackling hunger and malnutrition – especially for the most vulnerable: children and women – and in achieving sustainable agriculture and fishing in Africa, including preventing land-grabbing practices in African countries
- calls for joint Africa-EU action in the fight against climate change and in making Africa a world leader in the field of renewable and efficient energy
- supports the empowerment of young people in Africa through a comprehensive and consistent programme and co-ordinated action between African and European partners on international, national and local levels. Young Africans can make the difference in tackling global and regional challenges
- continues to stand for access to healthcare services and free high-quality education for all in Africa, through serious investment in education and in health systems, which must be a priority for the international community and for African governments

### **4.1 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.

### **4.2 The 2030 Agenda/Sustainable Development Goals**



## S&D GROUP POSITION PAPER FOR A RENEWED AFRICA-EU PARTNERSHIP

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.

### **4.3 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.

### **4.4 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.

### **4.5 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.

### **4.6 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.

### **4.7 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 POSITION PAPER FOR A RENEWED AFRICA-EU PARTNERSHIP

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.