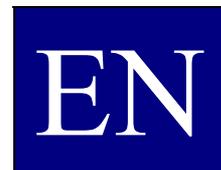




**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



Ljubljana, 20 May 2008
9721/08 (Presse 137)

**NIGERIA-EU Ministerial Troika Meeting
Ljubljana, Slovenia, 20 May 2008**

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

1. A ministerial troika meeting between Nigeria and the European Union (EU) was held in Ljubljana, Slovenia, on 20 May 2008, under the Co-chairs of His Excellency Mr Ojo Maduekwe, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, and His Excellency Mr Dimitrij Rupel, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia, representing the Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

P R E S S

2. The EU Troika included Mr Stefano Manservigi Director-General of the Directorate General for Development and Relations with African, Caribbean and Pacific States representing the European Commission and Mr Jean-Christophe Belliard, Personal Envoy for Africa of Mr Javier Solana, High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, Secretary-General of the Council of the European Union.
3. The meeting was held in recognition of the importance that Nigeria and the EU attach to their relations and to follow up on previous initiatives that have been progressively expanding the list of topics of mutual interest and/or concern.
4. The EU and Nigeria recalled that the basic framework for their political dialogue is provided by Article 8 of the revised "Cotonou Partnership Agreement" signed in Luxembourg on 25th June 2005 and reaffirmed that the Summit of heads of state and government from EU and Africa held in Lisbon, Portugal, on 8th and 9th December 2007 gave a crucial impetus to the dialogue between the EU and the African countries and to establishing an Africa-EU strategic partnership.
5. Nigeria and the EU recognised that the Africa-EU strategic partnership launched in Lisbon provides the vision and principles to deepen their political dialogue and engagement and which, in view of their respective roles and positions, would greatly contribute to the implementation of the "Joint Africa-EU Strategy".

A. POLITICAL DIALOGUE

6. Nigeria and the EU discussed the agenda and objectives of their political dialogue and agreed to adopt some general guidelines identifying the main issues of mutual interest and concern. The guidelines follow the principles and objectives enunciated in the revised "Cotonou Partnership Agreement" and recalled in the Lisbon "Joint Africa-EU Strategy".

7. Topics in the agenda of the Nigeria-EU dialogue will include, but are not limited to: peace and security at global, continental, regional and local level; migration; development; food security, environment; global challenges including climate change; democratic governance including reforms of electoral processes; human rights and fundamental freedoms (including children's rights, gender equality and ethnic, religious or civil discrimination); sustainable economic development including industrialisation; achievement of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); regional and continental integration in Africa, including ECOWAS; trade development and EPAs; HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis and other pandemics; energy security and sustainability; reform of the United Nations and of other key international institutions; terrorism; proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons; drugs, human trafficking and organized crime; knowledge-based society issues such as ICT; science, technology and innovation; cultural cooperation and exchanges.
8. Nigeria and the EU agreed to continue their regular political dialogue by meeting once a year in troika format at ministerial level and at local level regularly.
9. The Federal Government of Nigeria and the EU affirmed the importance, as well as their resolve, to enhance their dialogue and cooperation with other tiers of the Nigerian Government (State and Local Governments) in accordance with the competences attributed to them under the Constitution and to seek participation from civil society, non-state actors and private sector, whenever relevant and appropriate.

B. ISSUED DISCUSSED

GLOBAL ISSUES

10. Nigeria and the EU emphasized the need to strengthen their dialogue to promote **peace and security at global level** and in the appropriate fora. The parties agreed that their experience, common understanding and commitment in the area of conflict management and prevention could form the basis for future cooperation.

11. Being an important element of the Joint Africa-EU Strategy the parties discussed **environment and climate change**. Both parties voiced support to a global alliance on climate change. The EU informed Nigeria of the development of new initiatives, including through partnerships, to help African countries achieve results on the ground: the EU Water Initiative providing the framework for strategic partnerships on water and sanitation, the EU Energy Initiative, and more recently the recent setting up by the EU Commission of the Global Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Fund (GEEREF).
12. The parties recognised the need for further cooperation to tackle international **terrorism**, including addressing its causes, and will seek to deepen their ties while respecting their obligations under international law. Nigeria and the EU also discussed what concrete steps could be taken to implement international obligations to prevent and suppress the financing of terrorism.
13. The parties stressed the importance of addressing the issue of Illicit **trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons** (SALW) and in particular exporting countries' responsibility and the traceability of SALW exports. They agreed to explore in the nearest future how to deepen cooperation in this field.
14. **Drugs, human trafficking and organised crime**: Nigeria and the EU expressed great concern about drug trafficking in the region and its linkages with organized crimes such as human trafficking, money laundering, corruption and terrorism. The parties noted that the trafficking phenomena were especially pronounced in the Sahel region. Nigeria and the EU agreed that the matter of drugs was a matter of urgency and should be raised higher on the political agenda in the relationship between the EU and all West African countries. They also agreed to support ECOWAS actions in combating this menace.

15. In pursuing the understanding reached at the EU-Nigeria dialogue on migration and development in Abuja on 28-30 April 2008 the parties agreed to reinforce their dialogue on **migration and mobility** in a holistic approach with a view to achieving joint efficient management of migratory flows, in full respect of the fundamental human rights of the migrants. In this context, in order to facilitate the exchange of information in this area, they underscored the need to improve collection of data and their processing into statistics in order to better assess the migratory trends and planning as a means to support the development of effective policies. The EU expressed its readiness to support the efforts of Nigeria in this respect.

The EU took note of the significant progress achieved in the institutional and regulatory framework in the area of migration put in place by Nigeria. The EU also underlined its readiness to support future developments in this respect aimed at improving coordination, reinforcing the national strategy, in particular by adopting the National Policy on Migration.

The EU welcomed the role of Nigeria as a key player in the regional framework. In this context, the EU took note of the active involvement of Nigeria in the implementation of the ECOWAS Common Approach on Migration. Furthermore, the two sides recognised that migration and development are intrinsically linked in many ways and underscored the need to further discuss these and other issues addressed during the dialogue, including the possibility of establishing a Cooperation Platform in the future.

16. Nigeria and the EU agreed to promote **human rights and fundamental freedoms** and join efforts at global and regional level. The parties agreed to cooperate and establish a dialogue in order to promote the implementation of all human rights conventions at all levels.

EU-AFRICA ISSUES

17. Both parties exchanged views on the **peace situation of the region** which witnessed a number of positive developments in 2008, in particular consolidation of peace in Liberia and Sierra Leone and steps towards stabilisation in Guinea-Bissau and Côte d'Ivoire. They expressed their concern on cross-border threats to peace and security such as trafficking in drugs, human beings and small arms and light weapons. Both parties welcomed the progress and efforts made by ECOWAS in its conflict prevention, mediation and peace keeping policies. This will enable ECOWAS, with the support of its Member States and in particular Nigeria's assistance, inter alia to react to regional crisis, consolidate democracies in the region and provide support for post conflict reconstruction and development.

Nigeria and the EU reiterated their concern about the deteriorating security situation in the northern parts of Mali and Niger. Both Parties considered that the situation poses a threat to the stability of the neighbouring countries. They affirmed their support for the stability of Niger and Mali. They called for a sub-regional conference on the security situation and development in the Sahel.

18. The EU and Nigeria reiterated the urgency to fully deploy UNAMID on the ground and to relaunch the Darfur peace process. The EU commended the constructive role played by Nigeria with regard to Darfur.
19. The parties affirmed their confidence in the on-going process of **regional and continental integration**. The importance of further strengthening the institutions of the African Union was underlined by the parties. They also commended the efficient role of ECOWAS as the engine of regional integration in West Africa.

20. The parties recalled the talks held during the 13th Ministerial ECOWAS-EU Troika meeting in Luxembourg on 28 April 2008. They reaffirmed their support and commitment to its conclusions on **trade development, EPAs and regional integration**. The parties exchanged views on the priorities and objectives of the regional strategy for West Africa which focuses on fostering the integration process and supporting the peace and security agenda of the region. The parties called for urgency in EPA negotiations. In this regard, they welcomed the preparation by the West Africa region of an EPA related support programme and restated that through the EPA the Nigerian Government and the EU shared the aim of attaining long term development.

21. In terms of achievement of **millenium development goals** (MDGs) the parties recognised the unique challenges and opportunities that Nigeria, the most populous country in Africa, currently face. They recognised the prevalence of poverty in Nigeria. The parties also noted that oil revenue has been steadily increasing and that prudent economic and fiscal policies and discipline in the past years has enabled the country to set aside significant foreign reserves and to increase allocations to poverty reduction programmes. The parties agreed to continue working together to ensure that the savings from the cancellation of Nigeria's debt will continue to be effectively utilised to reduce poverty.

EU-NIGERIA ISSUES

22. **Energy security and sustainability:** The EU recalled that Nigeria is an important supplier of oil and gas to the EU market exporting more than 20% of its crude oil production and 80% of its liquefied natural gas production to Europe. The parties recognised that European oil companies have made significant investments in Nigeria which should aim at supporting the development of the country. They noted that important energy infrastructures which include large gas liquefying plants and gas pipelines and new projects – such as the Trans-Saharan Gas Pipeline project – included in the NEPAD i-STAP could become key strategic infrastructures in the future.

The EU expressed appreciation for Nigeria's new policy encouraging gas producers to allocate a specified amount of gas from their reserves and annual production to the domestic market but it also encouraged the Government of Nigeria to be more active with regard to measures aiming at reducing gas flaring. In particular the parties recognised that much more needed to be done, both through regulatory action by the Government and investment initiatives by the oil companies, to reduce natural gas flaring, a practice which has severe harmful impact, locally and globally, both in environmental and economic terms.

The EU and Nigeria agreed that energy projects should play a significant role for the development of the countries and regions concerned and recognised that both should take a responsible stance vis-à-vis domestic and regional energy demands and encourage and support the governments of energy producing countries to look into solutions and projects that would also contribute to meet their own energy needs.

The EU recognised the enormous challenges faced by Nigeria to achieve a nearly 30-fold increase of its electricity generation capacity within the next two decades and the importance of this to achieve the MDGs and to sustain the industrial development of the country. The EU and its institutions therefore stand ready to support and advice the Government of Nigeria in the implementation of its plans in this sector.

23. Sustainable economic development including industrialisation. The parties recognised that Nigeria, along with a number of other countries in Africa, has the potential to become a major player in responding to the global food crisis. Nigeria has the profile to influence the regional agricultural policies as well as the conditions to develop its agricultural sector including: land, fertilisers, ability to increase mechanised agriculture and a policy to develop the industrial sector, natural resources (oil and gas) to sustain mechanised agriculture, human resources and a need to generate employment, good weather conditions in a sizeable part of the country to grow crops demanded by the international market, a large domestic market able to absorb any local production and also to draw large quantities of food produced elsewhere in the region. The parties agreed to keep exchanging views and advice each other over the response strategy on high food prices in developing countries.

24. Democratic governance, including the reform of Nigeria's electoral process. Nigeria has put in place mechanisms to provide good governance to the people through the provision of checks and balances among the three arms of government. The parties agreed that the EU can assist in capacity building and other relevant support to the various arms of government.

The current administration in Nigeria has shown determined effort to reform the electoral process in order to remove flaws and ensure more credible elections in the future. The parties agreed that the EU can support this process by providing assistance to the INEC, NDLEA, NAFDAC, police, customs authorities etc.

25. Peace and security at local level: the Niger Delta. The Nigerian government is making tangible efforts aimed at resolving the Niger Delta problem which remains a priority as it formed part of the 7-point Agenda of the current administration. The parties welcomed the master plan for the development of the Niger Delta and the establishment of the peace negotiation committee put in place to address the problem by, among others, meeting all the stakeholders in the region. The parties agreed that the EU should fully support this process.
26. The parties recognised that the development of **science and technology** is essential to enhance socio-economic growth and sustainable development in Africa. Nigeria and the EU agreed that the cooperation between them in this area should develop by facilitating partnerships in the private and public sector, especially with regard to ICT.
27. The two parties agreed to engage in a dialogue on **cultural cooperation and exchanges** in an effort to increase the access of the European and Nigerian populations to culture and to means of cultural expression, including arts, multilingualism and sports.

C. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE JOINT AFRICA-EU STRATEGY

28. Nigeria reaffirmed its readiness to actively engage in the implementation of the action plans agreed in Lisbon, in particular with regard to the priority actions set out in the attached list of possible priority actions.

D. JOINT WAY FORWARD

29. The EU recognised the importance of Nigeria as a leading player on a regional and international level. Nigeria recognised the merits of the EU initiatives taken over the years and its commitments towards Africa. Both parties stressed their consensus on values, common interests and strategic objectives and recognised the mutual advantages of taking their relationships to a new level through intensified dialogue and enhanced cooperation.
30. Nigeria and the EU reaffirmed their commitment to the principles, issues and action plans forming the Lisbon "Joint Africa-EU Strategy" and recognised that this document, together with Cotonou Partnership Agreement, provides the framework for intensified dialogue and comprehensive cooperation.
31. Nigeria and the EU recognised the significant role that well targeted development cooperation programmes can have to help Nigeria consolidate the reforms introduced by the former administration and support the initiatives undertaken by the current one. Past and current efforts to curb corruption, consolidate the banking sector, control public expenditure and reduce the public debt have vastly improved Nigeria's economic outlook. Beyond the consolidation of these achievements, one of the challenges of the current Nigerian administration is to promote political reforms.

32. The parties confirmed their commitment to the 2005 Paris Declaration on aid effectiveness and recognised that the European Union's aid could play an important role from a qualitative viewpoint by supporting key government initiatives to improve governance, enhancing the EU-Nigeria political dialogue and promoting mutual understanding and long-term cooperation.
33. Nigeria and the EU recalled that:
- The European Development Fund is an important instrument to finance development cooperation in ACP countries. The programming, engaging and disbursing of EDF funds is regulated by the revised Cotonou Partnership Agreement.
 - An amount of € 579.7 million (approximately Naira 109 billion¹) has been allocated to Nigeria for the period 2008-2013 (10th EDF) but the process of programming the use of these funds has been delayed and needs to be completed.
34. Nigeria and the EU recognised that the "Joint Africa-EU Strategy", Nigeria's home-grown development and policy strategy papers (namely the NEEDS I and II and the 7-Point Agenda), as well as the discussions held during this meeting, had underlined the need for priority actions in the following areas:
- (a) Peace and security,
 - (b) Governance and human rights
 - (c) Trade and regional integration
 - (d) Key development issues including environmental sustainability and climate change.

¹ Exchange rate 1€ = 188.4 NGN (17 April 2008)

35. The parties considered it important to concentrate on the financial resources allocated to Nigeria under the 10th EDF and bilateral aid from EU Member States to address jointly specific priority issues within the above areas and recognised that there exists a unique opportunity to put rapidly into practice a first set of concrete initiatives that would give life to the Nigeria-EU partnership. They therefore decided that the respective responsible institutions should resume the programming of the 10th EDF immediately.
36. The parties agreed to meet again in 2009 at a date to be determined by them to review the scope and results of political dialogue between the two meetings and to explore further opportunities to deepen and broaden the relationship.

List of priority actions

- Enhance dialogue on challenges to peace and security;
- Operationalisation of the African Peace and Security Architecture;
- Funding for African-led Peace Support Operations;
- Strengthen cooperation in the area of cultural goods;
- Support the African integration agenda;
- Strengthen African capacities in the area of rules, standards, and quality control;
- Accelerate the achievement of the Food Security Targets of the MDG;

- Implement the Energy Partnership to intensify cooperation on energy security and energy access;
 - Build a common agenda on climate change policies and cooperation;
 - Implement the Declaration of the Tripoli Conference on Migration and Development;
 - Implement the EU-Africa Plan of Action on Trafficking of Human Beings;
 - Support the development of an inclusive information society in Africa;
 - Support S&T Capacity Building in Africa and Implement Africa's Science and Technology Consolidated Plan of Action;
 - Enhance cooperation on space applications and technology.
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