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Towards a new partnership between the European Union and the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries after 2020

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Common global interests in a multi-polar world

1. To which degree has the partnership been effective in tackling global challenges?

ACP YPN strongly believes that the establishment of the ACP-EU partnership agreement has been an important and necessary step in the evolution of international relations between both regions, and this partnership can deliver to effectively tackle global challenges. While the ACP YPN recognises the concrete results, in line with the global strategies, such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), ACP YPN regrets that lack of targeted action on 'youth issues' enshrined in Article 26 of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement (CPA).

ACP YPN has identified that the partnership has been ineffective in directly tackling global challenges related to youth. ACP YPN does recognise the spillover effect of effective partnership on global challenges, such as health. However, the partnership can deliver more effectively in relation to the challenges linked to youth, youth development, and youth employment. ACP YPN believes that the partnership can be more effective through targeted action with concrete visible and communicable outcomes.

2. What would be needed to strengthen results in this respect and on which global challenges could the partnership add most value in the future, in the context of the new SDGs framework and in relevant international fora?

ACP YPN believes that 'youth friendly' policies, in the context of the new SDGs framework and in particular with regards to SDGs 1, 4, 5, 8, 9, 16, 17 will strengthen results and the added-value of the partnership

in the future. ACP YPN has identified a number of strategic actions to increase the effectiveness of the partnership in relation to the global challenge of education: (I) Foster exchange between young professionals in various fields, through the EU's Erasmus+ programme and complementary initiatives; (II) Establish a College of Europe ACP scholarship, which allows one A, one C and one P student per year to complete the advanced masters in the different EU-focused domains; (III) Assist ACP regions to establish regional College's based on the College of Europe model to foster regional. On the issue of employment: (IV) Assist the ACP Secretariat to establish a fully paid and effective internship scheme in both the Brussels and Geneva offices, based on the European Commission Bluebook model. On tackling global challenges in general, partnership should (III) strengthen diplomatic young professionals exchanges between EU member states and the ACP states.

The Agenda 2030 and its 17 SDGs requires a fundamental update of the 'software' of the international cooperation system and both parties should integrate the new policy domains of the Agenda 2030 into the existing framework. Within this new framework the EU-ACP cooperation should also focus on challenges such as: promoting sustainable industrialization and green economy; mainstreaming gender equality; fighting economic and social marginalization for youth and women and promoting their empowerment with a particular focus on youth unemployment; enhancing resilience to environmental disasters; enabling access to renewable energy and energy efficiency; protecting and respecting human rights, especially in times of conflicts; fighting increased vulnerability to climate change .

ACP YPN recognises the urgent need to implement strategies, with a dedicated 'youth' focus to: (I) Develop inclusive economic, political and social practices: In this context, future partnership should facilitate inclusive dialogue with all stakeholders on issues concerning the future of their country, regardless of ethnicity, religion, economic status, gender or political groups and ensure that each group at local or national level, has the opportunity to participate effectively in the resolution of the issues their country faces. This includes good local practices and building resilience for people and organizations in the private sector, civil society, as well as in youth organisations; (II) Boost economies to create jobs: Action needs to be taken to improve the macroeconomic environment and business-friendly conditions to develop a vibrant private sector with full inclusion of young entrepreneurs, young professionals and young business leaders (including large enterprises, SMEs, micro - enterprises, the informal sector and the cooperatives); (III) Support agricultural value chains that aim to solve the problems of food and nutrition insecurity, inter alia, addressing structural trade imbalances that undermines the notion of partnership; (IV) Encourage effective and responsible partnership vis-à-vis accountability i.e. stre

ngthening the capacity of States in order to offer better services (infrastructure, energy...); (V) Tackle climate change: the challenge of climate change has a number of spill over effects that could exacerbate food and nutrition security challenges, political and economic stability; (VI) Promote the inclusion and integration of local knowledge into international projects and programs.

Human rights, democracy and rule of law, as well as good governance

3. Have the mechanisms provided for in the Cotonou Partnership Agreement (CPA) (i.e. political dialogue, financial support, appropriate measures, suspension of the agreement) achieved meaningful improvements on human rights, democracy, rule of law and good governance, including the fight against corruption? Should the future partnership do more in this regard, and in what way?

ACP YPN firmly believes that the partnership's ability to achieve meaningful achievements in human rights, democracy, rule of law and good governance, including the fight against corruption, has been impacted by the lack of engagement on 'youth issues', which could catalyse the impact in these areas.

ACP YPN strongly believes that greater inclusion of youth through an enhanced process of dialogue contributes to building youth capacity and a more holistic process of policy-making. Future partnership should be better targeted on a number of issues of joint interest, as opposed to a broad wide-ranging partnership, which is harder to deliver on. The future of the partnership relies on learning from the shortfalls over the past forty years and strategizing towards a more tailored future partnership with key deliverables, including on 'youth issues'. Additionally, future partnership must not continue to repeat rhetoric - such as 'partnership of equals', 'ownership of development strategies', 'mutual obligations' and 'regionalisation' - if it does not also empower both parties to deliver on them.

4. Has the involvement of local authorities and non-state actors (i.e. civil society organisations, the media), national parliaments, courts and national human rights institutions in the partnership been adequate and useful to promote human rights, democracy and rule of law as well as good governance? Could they contribute more and in what way?

ACP YPN strongly believes that greater inclusion of youth through an enhanced process of dialogue contributes to building youth capacity and a more holistic process of policy-making.

Peace and security, fight against terrorism and organised crime

5. Are the provisions on peace and security in the CPA appropriate and useful and has the balance between regional and ACP involvement been effective?

ACP YPN believes that greater emphasis needs to be placed on the contribution and local actors in the field of peace and security, despite revisions of the CPA having taken into account the role of the AU and the RECs with regards to Africa. In a similar vein, partnership has not been effective in recognising regional ownership of various mechanisms, such as the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA).

6. Should the future partnership provide for more effective joint action on conflict prevention, including early warning and mediation, peace-building and state-building activities, as well as on tackling transnational security challenges? Should this be done in the EU-ACP context?

ACP YPN, in light of the EU's recently developed cyclical conflict early warning system, recognises that there is definitely potential to strengthen the engagement that has already taken place with some regional organisations within the ACP region that are operating in similar inter-governmental environments. The EU's cyclical conflict early warning system identifies long-term structural risks and dynamics that may lead to violent conflict or the escalation of existing violent conflict. The EU approach aims to promote comprehensive engagement across the wide range of EU competencies in order to maximise conflict prevention and peace-building impact in its relations with third countries.

ACP YPN believes that any future joint action in the domain of peace and security should avoid duplication and the establishment of yet another mechanism, which would hinder as opposed to harness cooperation in this area. The future partnership would need to clarify existing overlaps and strategise future joint action e.g. the existing EU-Africa Partnership (e.g. on Peace and Security), centred on the African Union. It should also place greater emphasis on existing activities already under going in target countries, as well as local approaches to conflict resolution.

ACP YPN considers that more joint action in the area of peace and security should equally be more inclusive. This means developing solutions based on the people's experience, their ability throughout history to respond and implement activities that address local needs. A good knowledge of these solutions is one of the first steps to identify relevant support strategies. In this regard, joint long-term early warning could be a useful area to promote technical and operational exchange on methodology and to build political attention for long-term early warning on b

oth sides. Additionally, the EU's dedicated capacity to support peace processes and mediation - through the in-house Mediation Support Team within the European External Action Service - can also benefit from greater interaction with partner country experts. This would support the process of giving advice, providing technical expertise, training and real-time support, as well as building relationships with key partners in this area.

ACP YPN strongly believes that a youth element of early warning must be developed, especially with regards to migration, radicalisation and mechanisms for the protection of vulnerable youth. Joint early warning must consider youth development.

Sustainable and inclusive economic growth, investment and trade

7. How effective has the partnership been in promoting sustainable and inclusive economic development?

ACP YPN has identified a number of issues which impact assessing the promotion of sustainable and inclusive economic development in the EU-ACP partnership: (I) Sustainable development is a recent concept with several definitions, therefore it may be premature or incomplete to assess the effectiveness of sustainable development in the ACP countries; (II) The volume of aid is often not proportional to the development need of the ACP countries, based on relative population or size; (III) Some ACP countries have weak institutional capacities, which is compounded by cultural, ideological and historical issues that affect policy choices of ACP countries and political and trade related interest of EU countries; (IV) The issue of climate change is important when discussing sustainable development and in this regard ACP YPN commends the EU and the ACP for speaking with one voice at COP21; (V) It is not always discernable where the EU-ACP partnership brings additional progress or economic growth and where this would occur regardless of the partnership; (VI) Some sectors, usually in the primary agricultural/mining sectors benefit from the partnership, compared to others sectors such as manufacturing that do not. Therefore, clarification is needed on the type of sustainable development referred to i.e. sector-specific sustainable development or holistic sustainable development promotion in the partnership; (VII) Trade arrangements also impact sustainable development and this has been a key focal point of the EU principle of Policy Coherence for Development (PCD), which the future partnership should place greater emphasis on; (VIII) There is a difference between the EU's support for soft development programs that focus on promoting service delivery and good

governance, as opposed to infrastructure projects, which requires huge investment and can bring a sustainable development dividend in the long term; (IX) country ownership, alignment, aid predictability and other pillars of the Paris, Accra, Busan and other aid related international conferences are not fully implemented. This is one of the key elements to sustainable development and inclusiveness vis-à-vis country ownership of policy and aligning aid with the country strategy; (X) The ACP countries' dependence on primary agricultural and mineral exports to the EU can be considered as another weakness that contributes to the challenges of achieving a sustainable and inclusive development. This is largely due to the price volatility at the international commodity market and the vague business deals associated with mining.

ACP YPN welcomes the initiative that the EU has started by aligning its support to ACP countries national plans and strategies. ACP YPN recognises that there is still a long way to go and the question now is how to build on lessons to achieve sustainable and inclusive economic development. ACP YPN believes that regular consultations ex-ante and ex-post assessments and monitoring will be key in this process, as well as finding innovative solutions that prioritise a true partnership approach to issues of joint interest.

8. Taking into account the new SDGs framework, should the future partnership do more in this respect, and what?

ACP YPN believes that the future partnership, taking into account the new SDGs framework and in particular SDGs 1, 4, 5, 8, 9, 16, 17 should also have a strong focus to : (I) develop and foster an entrepreneurial culture among young women and men; (II) design tailor-made industrial policies according to the specific and dynamic needs expressed by the countries' manufacturing sectors; (III) use leveraging mechanisms to achieve multiplier effects and higher development impact of projects often achieved through collaborative partnerships; (IV) assess the skills demand of industrial sectors for young women and men through national and/or regional surveys; (V) strengthen the tripartite dialogue among the private sector, academia and government to better respond to the skills demand from industries and industrial services; (V) identify employment intensive value chains; (VI) expand and better coordinate financial and non-financial services; create dedicated funds (e.g. start-up funds, guarantee funds, etc.) for young women and men entrepreneurs.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are in harmony with many of the stated sustainable development principles enshrined in the Cotonou Partnership Agreement, including notably poverty reduction and economic a

and social development. In light of these synergies, the ACP YPN expects the future partnership to continue promoting these goals.

9. How effective has the partnership been in supporting macroeconomic and financial stability? In which areas would there be added value in ACP-EU cooperation on macroeconomic and financial stability?

ACP YPN recognises that a key issue of concern for ACP countries has been the loss of tariff revenues once the liberalisation of tariffs on EU originating goods occurs. Tariff revenues are an important source of government revenues in ACP countries and this has implications for the fiscal balances and domestic resource mobilisation of these countries. The Economic Partnership Agreements (EPA) do seek to mitigate this by allowing for phased tariff cuts over a time frame of approximately 25 years. However, this has proven difficult for many ACP countries to implement; exacerbated by the lingering economic challenges faced as a result of the global economic crisis. ACP YPN believes more needs to be done on mutual recognition agreements, and further dialogue on SPS and TBT standards, maintained by the EU, which serve as non-tariff barriers to trade.

10. How effective has the partnership been in improving domestic revenue mobilisation, in promoting fair and efficient tax systems and in combatting illicit financial flows? Would there be added value and more efficiency in stronger ACP-EU cooperation on these matters?

ACP YPN commends the EU's commitment to support developing countries tackling Illicit Financial Flows (IFFs), which tend to flow from developing to developed countries. However, ACP YPN regrets that EU Member States and other developed countries rejected the call by developing countries to turn 'the UN Committee of experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters' into an intergovernmental, transparent, accountable and adequately resourced tax body. In ACP YPN's opinion, this would have given developing countries higher representation and created a fairer balance of power in the formulation of tax regulation, which is currently dominated by developed OECD countries. Not only did it reveal an unwillingness to democratise global economic governance but a lack of seriousness in tackling the issue; it is widely acknowledged that multilateralism is the best approach to combating IFFs.

ACP YPN also regrets that EU Member States have vigorously promoted the use of private finance-PPPs and blended finance to facilitate sustainable development, while failing to endorse binding commitments to ensure that businesses are held accountable based on internationally recognised environmental standards and human and labour rights. Although the private sector certainly can be a potent tool for bringing about sustaina

ble development in ACP, thorough governance systems need to be in place . In particular, as Africa loses more in IFFs than it receives in ODA and FDI combined, and with the private sector accounting for 65% of IFFs , there is clear need to re-evaluate this support for the private sector at the detriment of the development of a continent and its ability to enforce tax governance. Combined with the failure of EU Member States and other developed countries, during the Third Financing for Development Summit, to scale up existing financial resources or commit new ones for climate and biodiversity, it becomes unclear as to whether the prevailing motive for ACP-EU cooperation is development or simply the pursuit of commercial interests.

ACP YPN believes that the future EU-ACP partnership, in whatever form it may take, must emerge from the veil of rhetoric on "shared interests" , "solidarity" and "unique partnership" and adopt a more open and pragmatic approach, in which goals are designed to be feasible and reflective of the socioeconomic and geopolitical realities. ACP YPN believes this begins with a re-evaluation of the rhetoric of "shared interests" because it fails to acknowledge the major conflicting interests and ideologies between ACP countries and the EU. A strong partnership will entail replacing the strong normative and value-driven rhetoric currently being used to justify the EU-ACP relationship with a more open dialogue about the EU's security and economic interests in the regions, and by fairer and more direct negotiations to reconcile those interests with those of ACP countries. In relation to Africa, it is obvious, through the prevalence of non-transparency and embezzlement of public funds in some government-owned companies in the extractive industries, that several African governments are complacent in creating IFFs. As such it is imperative that the EU cooperation with Africa in particular is targeted towards continental level institutions such as the AU and the Regional Economic Communities. These entities which are already less vulnerable to manipulation than individual governments will need to be strengthened in order to adequately drive and coordinate the fight against IFFs. The added advantages of working with such institutions is that they have longer-term and clearer strategic visions, and it would take away from the emerging view that the EU prefers to deal with individual African countries at the expense of the promotion of regional integration.

ACP YPN believes that future cooperation must inevitably deal with improving domestic revenue mobilisation, to promote fair and efficient tax systems and to combat illicit financial flows. While the OECD's Global Forum is currently trying to tackle the areas of capacity building assistance to assist the revenue authorities in ACP countries, training of staff and information sharing, a stronger youth component can involve young professionals to raise the awareness of the detrimental implications of this issue.

11. Has the partnership been able to contribute substantially to mobilising the private sector and attracting foreign direct investment?

ACP YPN strongly believes that partnering with the private sector is the foundation of any successful development strategy as the private sector, and industry has a non-negligible impact on the socio-economic development of country economies. Manufacturing and local value addition are key for creation of jobs, income and wealth as well as skill development, in particular for women and youth. Today, the gaps in value addition between industrialised and developing countries represent the difference between poverty and prosperity.

ACP YPN believes that the EU could indeed make better use of its Private Sector Development support to promote crosscutting action on issues such as women entrepreneurship or youth employment, as well as the Decent Work Agenda. Skills development within SMEs can be facilitated by partnerships and skills transfer from large, established enterprises. The CPA paved the way for the EU & ACP private sector to play a key role in achieving development goals such as creating growth and employment or alleviating poverty, and introduced a comprehensive policy to do so. The three main components of the policy include: provisions for involving the private sector in dialogue, decision-making and implementation of ACP-EU cooperation; an integrated approach to private sector development, and the promotion of investment (including through the Investment Facility managed by the European Investment Bank (EIB)). The CPA has created space for the involvement of private sector organizations in policy processes, programming, implementation and political dialogue, as well as funding opportunities and capacity building programs. Yet, ACP YPN believes these should be better targeted to address inclusion of young professionals, entrepreneurs and business leaders in dialogue, decision-making, implementation and integration in policy processes, programming, implementation and political dialogue.

ACP YPN believes that the private sector, both in Europe and the ACP countries, could do more to promote dynamic and sustainable partnerships with particular regard to the integration and inclusion of young professionals, entrepreneurs and business leaders.

12. How could the potential of the EU and ACP private sector be better harnessed? What should be the main focus of EU and ACP private sector cooperation in a post-Cotonou framework, and what might be the role of ODA in this?

ACP YPN strongly believes that the potential of the EU and ACP private sector should be better harnessed in the framework of a Private Sector Support Strategy with the following key elements: (I) Supporting institutional capacity building, especially through the integration of youth,

including establishment and strengthening of youth departments, young professionals traineeships and complementary targeted policies for the integration of youth and young professionals; (II) Supporting investment promotion, including South-South (Intra-ACP) and triangular frameworks, with an emphasis on young entrepreneurs and integration of young professionals in businesses models; (III) Support ACP public sector reforms, especially those with direct or indirect implications for youth in future developments; (IV) Streamlining Instruments for Private Sector Support, especially with a focus on young business leaders; (V) Restoring trust, and acknowledging the risks inherent to the ACP private sector, especially those which deter young professionals and entrepreneurs. With regards to Africa, it loses more in IFFs than it receives in ODA and FDI combined, and with the private sector accounting for 65% of IFFs, there is clear need to identify and sanction these IFFs; (VI) Enhancing SME and young entrepreneurs' access to financing and exploring new financial tools: European SMEs should invest in ACP SMEs and young entrepreneurs to upgrade their capacity. A better understanding of the potential of ACP SMEs should be developed in the European private sector to emphasize the mutual benefit to grow together; (VII) Mobilizing resources in ACP countries and regions and international research funding, especially with regards to mobilising and supporting young entrepreneurs and young professionals; (VIII) Creating a network for ACP private sector stakeholders and promoting joint ventures and partnerships, with a strategic focus to integrate young entrepreneurs and youth stakeholders in this process; (VIII) Strengthening the ACP Secretariat and its engagement with young professionals.

ACP YPN believes that Official Development Assistance (ODA) remains vital where domestic resources are lowest, and all EU countries should maximize efforts to meet the 0.7% engagement. However, this must go hand in hand with a "capacity building and technical assistance" policy including for private sector actors.

13. In this setting, what opportunities do you see for the new, digital economy?

ACP YPN strongly believes that cooperation between EU and ACP countries should not bring about digital inequalities and exacerbate a digital divide, but it should create on inclusive digital societies. In this regard, future cooperation should enhance synergies between global strategies, including the action to empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion, or economic or other status. ACP YPN strongly believes that in today's digital age, there are plenty of opportunities waiting to be unlocked to benefit both EU and ACP citizens and companies. One of the main opportunities lies in data, includ

ing big data, cloud computing, the Internet of Things, as well as mobility and security, as well as cooperation on online platforms for social media, film and music, e-commerce, search engines.

ACP YPN has identified some key opportunities to be seized by the EU-ACP partnership with the onset of the new, digital economy. Firstly, ACP countries need to take targeted actions to seize opportunities offered by the new, digital economy in education and entrepreneurship: (I) The development of digital skills in higher education and adults is very important. Revised curricula and international training programs need to prepare the new generation for a digital world. An exchange programme similar to Erasmus would be an important tool to promote exchanges between young people in ACP and EU with a particular focus on the new, digital economy; (II) Open Access resources (education materials) can be mobilised for use in a coordinated and inter-continental manner. Equally, open online courses can be used for building digital skills and capacities; (III) Reducing barriers to entry for cross-border start-ups should be among the priorities e.g. simplifying registrations procedures for entrepreneurs from different regions (EU or ACP) should be on top of the priorities. Likewise, the applicable rules from the public administrations for investments and registration rules for business should encourage start-ups and companies to take part in the digital economy outside their country of residence. In turn, it is expected that public administrations should have comprehensive and user friendly online presence to facilitate this process.

Secondly, ACP can seek support from EU and aim to develop harmonised legal conditions within ACP countries where all organisations, private and/or public, offering digital goods or services on the ACP marketplace play by the same rules. This will enhance possibilities for coordinated EU-ACP action on digital issues at the international level.

Thirdly, ACP should seize the opportunity to leverage the EU's experience in developing its own Africa Digital Economy and Society Index (ACP DESI 2020 Initiative) and become capable of establishing high, medium and low performers across ACP for the weighted average of the five main DESI dimensions: Connectivity, Human Capital, Use of Internet, Integration of Digital Technology, Digital Public Services.

Fourthly, ACP countries can leverage the fourth DESI dimension (Integration of Digital Technology), the New Style of IT and EU Development Funds as to invest in developing and supporting ACP industries to become more agile. This would require assisting and training professionals to better procure, integrate and support, affordable and cost effective ICT solutions that not only are the enablers of the digital economy but also beneficial to ACP countries. This will contribute to bridge the digital gap that hinders sustainable development.

ACP YPN has identified some particular areas where the ACP can benefit from the new, digital economy and in turn, boost its partnership with the EU: (I) ACP countries must develop their rules governing the digital market e.g. with regard to management of Radio frequencies and the spe

ctrum and the rules governing Internet. ACP states could for example launch a Charter of Fundamental Rights in the Digital era (so called Internet Bill of Rights); (II) The digital economy, and for example 3D printers, could support production processes to harness their benefits for local and regional development; (III) Intellectual Property laws should be revised to facilitate the preservation of culture and traditions, as culture and knowledge should remain accessible; (IV) Citizenship could also benefit from ICT tools through the creation of inclusive digital spaces i.e. such tools could facilitate existing decision-making processes; (V) Digital tools and platforms can promote closer networks among citizens and in turn, have positive impacts on EU-ACP future cooperation; (VI) ACP countries still need to adopt Internet Protocol version 6 (IPv6).

14. To what extent has the partnership been able to contribute to increase agricultural development and trade?

ACP YPN believes there has been some progress during the last 40 years of this joint cooperation but it is now high time to review the terms of this partnership and adapt them to the current realities. ACP YPN has identified a number of areas which have hindered the success of the partnership to contribute to increasing agricultural trade and development: (I) The ACP group is largely diverse in terms of size, population and economy and therefore, the needs in relation to agricultural trade and development vary distinctly. Despite addressing the group as a single entity, disparities and differences exist between them e.g regions located on the African Continent with various sizes, populations and economies, the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) mainly in Pacific and Caribbean with some in Indian Ocean and West Coast Africa; (II) Despite privileges such as Duty Free Quota Free (DFQF) under the EU-ACP partnership, ACP countries have not tangibly benefited from this regime. There are still significant barriers to trade impeding the flow of goods from ACP countries to the EU markets; (III) The partnership, although a significant vehicle for movement of goods and services from ACP regions to EU, has a bias for EU export to ACP countries, as opposed to a two-way win-win flow of trade; (IV) The joint institutions for agriculture, such as the Technical Centre for Agriculture and Rural Cooperation (CTA), should have local or regional offices in ACP countries, and in turn, enhance the mobilisation of ACP expertise.

ACP YPN regrets that in over forty years of cooperation the EU and the ACP states are still unable to develop harmonised rules and regulations that benefit both countries. ACP YPN also regrets that many ACP countries may face dire food security concerns due to their critical status' as net food importers, largely from the EU.

ACP YPN commends the partnership for the developments it has made with regards to agricultural policies, value addition, and smallholder empowerment through market information systems and capacity building. ACP YPN believes that in order to boost the momentum and improve the partners ability to contribute to agricultural trade and development several key issue should be addressed: (I) the partnership's policies should address sector needs directly, depending on country and regional needs; (II) the funds supporting ACP agricultural value chains should target smallholder farmer's needs and empower them through creating sustainable and efficient markets for their produce; (III) financial sectors need to be user-friendly for ACP smallholder farmers. Creation of convenient financial support in the sector is key at meeting consumer/market demand, which is expected to increase to 9billion by 2050; (IV) local sourcing and matching sourcing may enable higher economies of scale and success in accessing export markets; (V) reinforce links with the secondary sector e.g. by reducing post-harvest losses (in Africa up to 70% in fruits and vegetables), by extending the shelf-life of food, by adding value to commodities and by improving the quality and safety of foods, processing will effectively contribute to food security; (VI) reinforcing the role of the private sector in agribusiness value chains, from the smallholder farmer over the medium sized processor to the large retailer, will make a difference in using agriculture as an effective vehicle for wealth creation in developing countries.

ACP YPN strongly believes that with developments in farming tools and technologies, ACP countries can tackle the issues of food and nutritional security. Furthermore, local value addition to commodities through processing as well as agri-business and agro-industry will translate into jobs and income creation, especially for youth. This potential of increased productivity of agriculture and more value creation in the supply chain contributes to reducing poverty and boosting trade, which will in turn boost sustainable markets and foster a positive partnership on a more level playing field.

15. What has been the contribution of the partnership trade preferences to the integration of ACP countries in the world economy and to its development goals?

ACP YPN strongly believes that the key challenge facing ACP economies is not their integration into the world economy - as there is a general level of openness and trade liberalization through the multilateral system - but rather the nature of that integration and participation. Structural transformation of ACP economies can only take place through an effective partnership with the EU; a partnership, which encourages ACP economies to move up the value chain, from the production and export of primary goods and products into value added goods and services. ACP YPN regrets that the well-intentioned trade preferences, which were

meant to stimulate ACP trade, development and integration into the world economy has not been achieved. The ACP share of EU imports has declined significantly over the years. Yet the dependency on the EU market is still high for traditional products linked to the colonial system of trade, namely sugar, bananas and beef, which were all protected under special protocols.

ACP YPN also regrets the unfavourable terms of trade and negative spill over effects EU's Common Agricultural Policy, has had on ACP economies. While the EU has been advocating for free trade and anti-protectionism for the ACP, history has shown that it has protected its own farmers, industries and exports. Despite recent advances to eliminate export subsidies at the WTO multilateral level, ACP YPN regrets that this is likely to remain a contentious in future partnership, due to the historic impact, imbalance and hindrance it has created for ACP trade development policies and goals.

ACP YPN recognises that the EPAs are already having some positive impacts and spill over effects, notably on (I) economic reforms, (II) competition and on (III) the increasing interest of private operators to invest in the local economy to reap the benefits of access to the EU market.

ACP YPN recognises the critiques surrounding the EPAs: (I) On regional integration, due to overlapping membership of countries in several African Regional Economic Communities (RECs), countries had to make a choice. Except for the RECs with a deeper and more advanced state of integration - ECOWAS and EAC (both have a Customs Union) - the other African RECs did not negotiate with all their members; (II) On scope, all remaining EPAs cover only trade in goods and development cooperation, with the exception of the CARIFORUM EPA, a comprehensive Agreement covering investment, services and a number of trade-related regulatory issues (from public procurement to competition and intellectual property rights); (III) On objectives, importance should also be given to the Implementation of EPAs as EPAs are not an end in itself. The Caribbean experience has shown that the road to implementation is paved with good intentions, but is also long, with many hurdles that need to be systematically addressed for countries to reap the full benefits of the agreement. (IV) On complementarity, the WTO requirements and the EPAs signed/negotiated between EU and ACP RECs bring new challenges. Measures to address Sanitary Phytosanitary Measures (SPS) and Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) issues as well as support to upgrade and modernize partners' private sector development to compete on more level playing field will be important. This essentially means attaching flanking and accompanying measures and industrial development components to FTAs or EPAs and implementing them fully.

16. Is there still a need for specific provisions on trade cooperation in the post-Cotonou

framework, also taking into account the ACP countries which have not signed an EPA? If so, what could/should they cover?

ACP YPN strongly affirms that ACP-EU engagement on trade cooperation must be part of the post-Cotonou framework and it must go beyond the current scope of the EPA agreements. There is room for broader cooperation on issues, such as on frameworks on investment and the integration of ACP countries into global value chains. Due to the controversial and differentiated status of the various EPAs, it is important that provisions for engagement on crucial and inter-related trade, investment and development issues feature in the post-Cotonou framework. For the ACP countries that have not signed an EPA, there is nevertheless an on-going need to continue trade cooperation in the post-Cotonou framework, inter alia, on development assistance and commitment to facilitating partnerships between the private sector of the ACP/EU countries.

ACP YPN is aware of the current structural imbalances in the global trade system and strongly believes that the future framework should address these deep-rooted economic issues that exacerbate issues of poverty and under-development. Trade cooperation has the potential to support ACP countries to create a wide base employment, which is a great opportunity for local populations, especially with regard to youth. This will have a number of positive spill-over effects - from curbing migration and enhancing economic governance, including the stemming of IFFs - with the goal of promoting inclusive and sustainable development and integration of ACP states with the global economy.

ACP YPN regrets that the EPAs have been steeped in controversy and that there is a lack of clarity on some of the most contentious issues raised. There is much concern about future unfair competition for ACP infant industries from the EU's mature and globally integrated industries; the threat the EPAs may pose to the process of endogenous regional integration, as opposed to the EU's exogenous regional integration; the consequent loss of substantial revenues and the loss of critical policy space that the governments of developing countries need to support economic and social development, including the stemming of IFFs. The current EPA status quo is not a positive evolution of EU-ACP trade agreement as many issues are left unresolved and indeed, brought forward into future partnership, with non-negligible negative implications e.g. the EU decision to remove the unilateral trade preferences by 1 October 2014 for countries that have not signed or ratified the EPAs failed to address issues that will nevertheless have to be addressed further down the road and in turn, this only serves to reinforce negative views that continue to block effective ACP-EU cooperation.

ACP YPN is nevertheless optimistic that future partnership can develop beyond the contentious issues of the current EPAs. ACP YPN strongly believes

ieves that provisions should cover key aspects such as: (I) WTO compatibility of economic and trade issues; (II) Recognition and respect of developing countries' policy space to achieve meaningful growth and development; (III) Special and differential treatment that allows ACP countries to assume commitments consistent with respective adjustment capacities, development financial and trade needs. Any concessions should thus be on an issue by issue and wherever possible on a product by product basis; (IV) Ensuring that the post-Cotonou cooperation should first and foremost promote development and structural transformation of ACP countries, while at the same time fully recognising the fact that ACP countries and economies are at varying stages of development with different needs and concerns; (V) Commitments to development financing should be honoured.

ACP YPN has also identified other issues that would be important to include in the post-Cotonou framework: (I) Enhanced consultation processes and engagement with both EU and ACP CSOs; (II) Joint declarations of consensus on essential elements of the partnership would reinforce in which policy areas both parties want to move forward in a unified manner; (III) Enhanced clarity between the EU's development and trade policy, as to make Policy Coherence for Development (PCD) a reality and to combat claims of selective EU double standards; (IV) Stronger Sustainable Impact Assessments, both ex-ante - including more local knowledge and diversity in terms of input (e.g. diversity in indicators, but also diversity in models) - and ex-post monitoring and follow-up of trade agreements.

Human and social development

17. Has the partnership delivered on its human development objective in an effective and efficient way, in particular on poverty eradication, and also concerning gender equality and empowerment of women? How could it be improved?

ACP YPN recognises that much progress needs to be made on fulfilling human development objectives and this requires taking a 'citizen friendly' approach. This means that objectives must be communicable to local populations and achievable. In a similar vein, in order to fulfil objectives particularly related to youth, gender equality and empowerment of women, the approach equally needs to be 'youth, gender and women friendly'. This will require the partnership to enhance its inclusivity in programming and assessment of objectives.

ACP YPN has identified the need to improve the achievement of human development objectives through the following actions: (I) Diversify from p

project-based approaches (that are not always efficient as they rely on funding) to support for employment and sustainable economy activities of national and regional governments or governance structures; (II) Diversify the methodology for measuring human development, poverty eradication and gender equality through use of alternative country or region specific indicators i.e. recognise the different realities of partner countries and integrate this into planning and assessment of actions; (III) Strengthen youth and women organizations capacities both in the EU and ACP states.

18. Taking into account the new SDGs framework, what are the main challenges related to human development that the future partnership should focus on?

Although all SDGs are of crucial importance, ACP YPN has highlighted these particular SDGs – SDG 1, 4, 5, 8, 9, 13, 16, 17 – as non-negligible in tackling the main challenges of human development in the future partnership:

(I) Strengthening peace and security: Objective 1 to 'Eradicate poverty in all its forms and everywhere in the world' and Objective 16 to 'Promote the advent of peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, ensure access to justice for all and implement, at all levels, effective institutions, responsible and open'.

(II) Fostering economic model of sustained and sustainable growth: Objective 8 to 'Promote economic growth, shared and sustainable, full and productive employment and decent work for all'. In particular, sub-section 8.6, underlines that there should be a substantial reduction of the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training by 2020. Additionally, sub-section 8b notes that there should be the development and operationalization, by 2020, of a global strategy for youth employment and the ILO Global Jobs Pact should also be implemented; Objective 9: 'Building a resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation'.

(III) Supporting strategies consistency with the requirements of sustainable development: Objective 12: 'Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns'; Objective 13: 'Take urgent measures to fight against climate change and its impact'. In particular, sub-section 13.b, which refers to the promotion of mechanisms for raising capacities for effective climate change related planning and management, in LDCs, including focusing on women, youth, local and marginalised communities.

(IV) Strengthening international cooperation: Objective 17: 'Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development'; (V) ACP YPN also recognises the importance of Objective 4 to 'Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all', with particular regard to the need to increase the number of youth and adults with relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent

t jobs and entrepreneurship (sub-section 4.4). This also includes the need to ensure that all youth and a percentage of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy (sub-section 4.6). Objective 5 to 'Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls' is also of paramount importance.

ACP YPN remains committed to facilitate the development of inclusive institutions and processes, whereby youth can contribute their capacities to foster positive international relations through dialogue and exchange.

Migration and mobility

19. Has the partnership been a useful vehicle for discussing migration issues and has it positively contributed? Has Article 13 CPA been fully applied?

The intensity of human right violation, poverty and climate change have led to a very important population movement within the ACP countries, European Union countries and between the two groups. The partnership did correctly assess the migration issues, but from today's viewpoint, this partnership has failed to apply the appropriate solution to the crises. The technical barriers that exist to legal migration - through obtaining a humanitarian visa or working visas - mean that there is increased means to migrate using illegal and dangerous means.

20. Should a future partnership do more in this regard, and on which particular aspects should it focus (legal migration and mobility, addressing root causes of migration, return and readmission, tackling human trafficking and smuggling, international protection)?

The Valletta summit, which brought European and African countries together around the same table, ended with a political agreement and action plan that the next ACP-EU agreement has to take that into account.

Concrete action should be made to: focus on the creation of legal route; encourage the use of Humanitarian visa; grant visa based on family reunification; reassess the conditions and reasons to get working visa (to include climate change and poverty, which must also be considered as a rightful); encourage the recognition of ACP diplomas by EU countries: qualification recognition would encourage the use of safer route; initiate a real discussion on migration with the grassroots actors locally including NGOs and youth organizations in order to find lasting and viable solutions for all stakeholders in a healthier depoliticized environment;

A new form of win-win collaboration is possible and where the ACP countries, would stabilize politically and economically in order to be able to retain its youth. At the same time, Europe would find solutions to its problem of aging population.

Bearing in mind the current context of migration and asylum in the EU, there should be targeted action and enhanced use of existing tools to tackle the issues of protecting the rights of children and youth, especially those of girls, as outlined in Art. 26 (a) CPA. This also includes reintegrating into society children in post-conflict situations through rehabilitation, as outlined in Art. 26 (d) CPA.

A stronger political relationship

21. How effective has the political dialogue been and at which level is it the most effective: national, regional and through the joint EU-ACP institutions? Should the scope of political dialogue be widened or narrowed?

ACP YPN recognises the importance of political dialogue, but also recognises the limits under the current partnership. Various notions of rhetoric used between or within the two regions leaves the ACP-EU relationship open to blunders in policy implementation. There is a clear sense of fatigue within the ACP of the EU's seemingly patronising attitude, inconsistencies between its value-driven agenda and its security and economic interests, the double standards and conditionality displayed in its relations with different African countries and leaders in particular, and the perceived imposition of its Agenda on Africa regardless of whether that agenda is in the best interests of the ACP states. Likewise, there is growing frustration within the EU with ACP inconsistencies, as reflected by the African continent's inability to speak with one voice, the limited legitimacy and moral authority of the AU to speak on behalf of Africans, the lack of implementation to go along with ambitious declarations, and the continued addiction to EU aid despite significant increases in (mostly resource export-based) incomes. These issues should be brought to the forefront of policy formulation and implementation. Despite significant gains in both economic and political governance on the continent, progress in that area has been disproportionate and remains vulnerable.

ACP YPN firmly believes that joint cooperation on political dialogue should have a youth element. Greater involvement and engagement of youth on political dialogue issues can take place through regional representatives and joint platforms.

22. Would a stronger involvement of EU Member States, associating their bilateral policies and instruments to the political dialogue at national level, enhance the dialogue's effectiveness and efficiency?

ACP YPN believes that stronger involvement of EU MS, associating their bilateral policies and instruments to the political dialogue at national level can enhance to dialogues effectiveness and efficiency. This will only be achieved provided that the dialogue promotes more "accountability" of the authorities, the establishment and consolidation of peace and real participation. In this context, European countries should expand their views, see further than their own interests and understand that Europe and the ACP may have a common future.

23. Has the fact that the agreement is legally binding been instrumental to its implementation as compared to other regional partnerships based on political declarations?

The legally binding nature of the CPA, in particular with regard to Article 26 CPA on Youth issues, has not been instrumental to its implementation compared to other political partnerships based on political declarations. This assessment is based on ACP YPN's analysis of Art. 26 CPA. ACP YPN suggests that the next few years running up to the expiry of the CPA, both the EU and the ACP should make headway on dealing with youth issues and recall the legally binding nature of the agreement in order to advance strategic implementation of these issues.

ACP YPN reaffirms its commitment to deliver on the 'youth issues' and reasserts its availability to work with the EU, the ACP and third partners to implement this key area of the CPA.

Coherence of geographical scope

24. Could a future framework be usefully opened up to other countries than the current members of the ACP Group of States? Which countries would that be?

See response to question 26.

25. What kind of framework should govern EU and ACP relations? How could an ACP-EU successor framework relate to the more recent EU regional partnerships with Africa, Caribbean and Pacific States? Could a future ACP-EU framework include distinct partnerships with regional partners?

The legal framework that governed the EU and ACP relations (on aid, development and trade) over the last four decades had its advantages at a period where these three entities - African, Caribbean and Pacific coun

tries - had a similar level of development after the period of decolonization. Compared to other partners of ACP, the EU is the only entity that has a framework for these three regions. Most of other partners have a single framework for each of these regions. ACP YPN acknowledges the difficulties of projecting this partnership in a globalized world. Furthermore, the legally binding framework has been criticized widely with regards to its efficiency. Although the framework is an efficient platform for dialogue between the EU and these countries, there is certainly room for improvements concerning the follow-up, the implementation and the delivery of objectives.

The successor of the ACP-EU partnership should therefore be more flexible. Even if some issues are common to the three regions (like climate change, fight against poverty) it is not the case for all of them. For instance the issue of refugees and terrorism amongst others primarily concerns African countries.

At the same time it is important to take stock and put the Cotonou agreement in a global perspective with the recently agreed SDGs and the new Agenda 2030 that will pave the way for the development cooperation of the next 15 years, as well as the current issues faced by ACP countries (climate change, migration, etc). The next framework should build on the source of opportunities of the EU-ACP partnership: political opportunity for the diffusion of principles and values as well as economic and commercial opportunities.

ACP YPN strongly believes that future partnership must have a stronger youth focus and recognise the 'youth impact' of various policies, as well as the unique role of the Diaspora.

26. Is there scope for building in more structured relationships with Asia, Latin America, the Middle East and North Africa?

ACP YPN believes that there is indeed scope for a more structured relationship with Asia, Latin America, the Middle East and North Africa. These non-EU countries, in particular emerging countries like China, Brazil, and Saudi Arabia amongst others, have started to engage more with ACP countries. For instance China is today one of the main trading partners and largest investors in ACP countries. The future of EU-ACP relations would need to take into account this emerging phenomenon. Furthermore, this also provides opportunities to build a more structured relationship with regard to youth issues amongst new and emerging partners.

Cooperation tailored more towards groups of countries with similar

development level

27. Is the current system of allocation of development resources, based on need and capacities as well as performance, sufficient for channelling funds towards those countries where the highest impact can be obtained? Should allocation of resources continue to prioritise countries most in need, including fragile states?

ACP YPN strongly believes that the current measurements used for the allocation of development resources, based on need and capacities as well as performance, is not sufficient to channel funds towards countries, nor does it contribute to attaining the highest impact. ACP YPN strongly advocates for the use of additional and complementary means of measurement, beyond gross domestic product (GDP), in future allocations of development resource. In addition to this, the partners should establish or use specific indicators related to development and inclusion.

28. What kind of cooperation could help to cover the specific needs of more developed ACP countries with a view to attaining more equitable and sustainable growth?

See response to Q.27.

Strengthen the relationship with key actors

29. Has the current model of stakeholder engagement been conducive to attaining the objectives of the partnership in an efficient way? Which actors could play a more significant role in the implementation of the partnership? How could this be addressed?

ACP YPN believes that the current model of stakeholder engagement has been largely ineffective in obtaining the objectives of the partnership, and this is evidenced in the lack of engagement with EU and ACP youth organisations to achieve the 'youth issues' (Art. 26 CPA).

Firstly, civil society, (social partners and non-governmental organizations including youth organizations), must be involved far more actively and in a far more structured way in shaping development programs, monitoring their implementation and evaluating their outcomes and impact. Both the EU and ACP countries therefore need to systematically put together and improve the system for monitoring development aid processes and involve the relevant civil society organizations in it. Relevant programs must also support civil society organizations and help them build their capacity.

Secondly, even though some positive results have been achieved as a result of the CPA between the ACP countries and the EU, both parties should

d be more strategic in identifying clearly where they could join forces in international fora on global issues of common concern. A more coherent positioning on both sides, an ACP - EU alliance could be a major force in the UN and other multilateral organizations. Therefore, the current model of stakeholder engagement might be revisited in order to allow other actors to enter "into the game" and further reinforce the role and strategic importance of the CPA.

ACP YPN recognizes that due to the rising importance of RECs and Regional Intergovernmental Organizations (RIOs), the new model of stakeholder engagement in the framework of the CPA should take into consideration the importance of facilitating interactions and policy dialogues between such organizations and the ACP group and EU. The revamping of an institution like the ACP Inter-Regional Coordination Committee (IROCC), which became operational in 2011 could be a good starting point. The IROCC aimed at bolstering cooperation between the six ACP regions beyond mere aid management issues. It sought to promote regular interactions between the stakeholders and the adoption of common actions to challenges of mutual interest. The overall expected outcome was a better alignment of interests among regional organizations within the ACP Group.

ACP YPN reiterates that it has established itself as an organisation to facilitate effective cooperation on youth issues, in particular with regard to Art. 26 CPA and remains committed to implement and advance the objectives of the partnership.

30. What could be done to promote effective and efficient involvement of both international and domestic private sector, civil society, social partners and local authorities in the partnership?

ACP YPN recognizes that when the Cotonou Agreement was signed in 2000, business, civil society and local government leaders in the three major ACP regions spontaneously joined forces and established an ACP Business Forum, an ACP Civil Society Forum and an ACP Local Government Platform. The original enthusiasm and dynamics of these ACP umbrella organizations has faded in the course of the years. Renovating this organizational model with these organizations, and newer organisations such as the ACP YPN, would be key for an effective and efficient involvement of the private sector and CSOs in the partnership.

Civil society, (social partners and non-governmental organizations including youth organizations), must be involved far more actively and in a far more structured way in shaping development programs, monitoring their implementation and evaluating their outcomes and impact. Both the EU and ACP countries therefore need to systematically put together and improve the system for monitoring development processes and involve the

relevant civil society organizations in it. Relevant programs must also back up civil society organizations and help them build their capacity .

ACP YPN believes that civil society should be actively involved in establishing the role and setting the indicators measuring the contribution of the private sector. The creation of a broad platform at the ACP and the EU level bringing in all interested parties would help this process. The private sector should also be involved in implementing projects that are - at least in part - commercially unviable through public-private partnerships (PPPs) and funding these through "blending". The prerequisite for successful implementation is an ex ante assessment of the sustainability of compliance with the principles of transparency, including reporting, mutual accountability and enforceability of commitments.

Additionally, International organizations, such as the UN, play a critical role in facilitating and/or brokering partnerships with the private sector and CSOs for development, acting as interlocutors between the private and the public sector.

31. Should the partnership be open to new actors as referred above?

Openness towards new actors should be considered; especially for new partners that might share priorities in South-South and triangular cooperation. For instance, Mexico has as priority for its cooperation efforts in ACP countries such as Haiti or Dominican Republic. Belize is part of a cooperation platform called 'Proyecto Mesoamerica' which is led by Mexico. The same could apply to other ACP countries, which are targeted by potential new donors.

Regional positions and institutions might be also be considered; the new partnership can be used as a tool to strengthen the regional institutions already created and therefore facilitate the cooperation among the diverse groupings created among ACP countries. Other international organizations as the Economic Commissions of the UN or other specialized agencies might also be good contributors or facilitators to create consensus in their areas of expertise.

In addition, one should consider emerging economies from Asia. On one hand, the ACP-EU Partnership could foster exchange with major emerging countries like China and India that have increased their presence in ACP countries. On the other hand, ACP countries could exchange experiences with regional organisations such as ASEAN, facing similar challenges seeing as the EU is already in the process of strengthening its collaboration with ASEAN.

ACP YPN believes that the partnership should remain open to potential new players under the condition that they bring fresh and innovative ideas to boost the partnership, especially in relation to South-South and triangular cooperation. It is key that one builds up a more efficient and engaged partnership, where duplication is avoided and common interests will be at the heart of cooperation. This also facilitates the creation of international youth structure that can contribute to global governance by involving youth and young professionals in policy-making processes.

32. In this regard, should the possibility of opening up the partnership to 'associated members' or 'observers' be considered?

The ACP YPN recognises that both single countries and regional organisations should be able to contribute to the partnership as associate members and observers. Naturally, a distinction between the two should be made i.e. China, India and other emerging countries may receive the status of "associate members", whereas regional organisations like ASEAN may be able to join as "observers". The final objective to create the most convenient links towards the success and functionality of the partnership should be a key criterion in deciding upon this.

ACP YPN as an organisation strongly believes it should be granted observer status in order to harness its cooperation activities with the EU and the ACP group of states.

33. How could a new framework promote triangular and South-South cooperation, including the increased involvement of ACP States as development actors in support of other ACP countries?

ACP YPN recognises the great potential of the ACP group, which can be harnessed due to its "tri-continental" reach (intra ACP; with the European Union and other international organizations and emerging economies as well as countries with like-minded interests and values as the ACP), to be a dynamic platform and "hub" for South-South and Triangular Cooperation. There is already much interest in the following fields: energy, technologies and innovation capacity, environment, agribusiness, private sector development.

ACP YPN strongly believes that regional and international forums can contribute to discussions particularly on targeted business environment reforms in Partner countries and reveal new areas of partnership for North-South, South-South and triangular collaboration. Indeed, Southern enterprises (multinationals) are becoming increasingly important in shaping private sector development in developing countries through increased

investments and trade. And, southern value chains with their own distinct chain governance patterns are emerging. This gives ample scope for the ACP group, in collaboration with the European Union, its main development partner to extend and deepen its relations to other countries and organizations globally. New emerging donors like China, Brazil or India already engage in South-South development cooperation and there are new examples of triangular collaboration and triangular development cooperation between BRICS, the EU and ACP countries.

These partnerships constitute a tangible reality by creating new development cooperation spaces built on "policy ownership" and principles of "subsidiarity and complementarity". These new approaches generate new knowledge and carve out alternative and complementary means of implementing those policy domains or sectors identified as "priorities" by developing countries. For example, financing the infrastructure gap is a key area in order to alleviate the major obstacles hindering the success of this new and interconnected type of cooperation. It also opens the door for new thinking on cooperation, such as increasingly innovative means of development cooperation e.g. as in the case of Japan, which gives material aid as opposed to tied financial aid.

ACP YPN recognises that it offers a number of opportunities from streamlining the institutional set-up and functioning of the partnership, to a number of areas of collaboration on South-South and triangular cooperation, particularly on youth issues.

Streamline the institutional set-up and functioning of the partnership

34. Has the joint institutional set-up (with the ACP-EU Council of Ministers, the ACP-EU Committee of Ambassadors, and the Joint Parliamentary Assembly) been effective in debating and promoting common views and interests and in providing political guidance and momentum to the EU-ACP partnership and the implementation of the CPA?

In the opinion of ACP YPN, there has been a clear missed opportunity by not engaging youth in the various joint institutional set-ups. In the case of the Joint Parliamentary Assembly (JPA), despite the presence of young members of parliaments on both the EU and ACP sides, there has been little to no collaboration on youth issues, youth involvement in politics or even the establishment of a youth parliament. The JPA has however, proven to be effective in promoting open and free discussions of ideas and opinions concerning key issues of the EU-ACP partnership. However, bearing in mind that only government representatives are present, the full diversity of opinion in various states or regional groupings may not come to the fore. Furthermore, in the current structure, there is a discrepancy in representation, wherein the ACP counterparts come f

from their respective nation states and do not meet in regional parliamentary groupings like their EU MP counterparts, who are de facto regional MPs.

ACP YPN urges the EU and the ACP to facilitate the establishment of exchanges between youth members of parliament, youth divisions of political parties and the establishment of model youth parliament to promote common views and interests and to provide political guidance and momentum to the EU-ACP partnership and the implementation of the CPA.

35. What is the added value of the joint ACP-EU institutions as compared to more recent regional and regional economic community frameworks for dialogue and cooperation?

ACP YPN strongly believes that the ACP and the EU, representing 79 and 28 member states respectively, constitutes a unique and powerful coalition of 107 states from the global North and South. This makes up over half of the WTO membership and can be mobilised as a force to be reckoned with at the UN. However, insofar as the two partners are unable to speak with one voice in international fora and agree amongst themselves, any potential added value is lost to the detriment of over forty years of EU-ACP partnership. The regional frameworks are an added value to the existing EU and ACP structure and can be mobilised to benefit future partnership. In particular, from the perspective of ACP YPN, there is a lot of potential to establish effective regional youth coalitions, which will be the future vanguard for a united North-South global coalition.

36. What institutional arrangements would most effectively help address common challenges and promote joint interests?

There should be a number of 'youth friendly' institutional arrangements, which recognise and reinforce the contribution capacities of young professionals from both EU and ACP countries to address common challenges and promote joint interests. In this regard, ACP YPN has identified a number of key areas: (I) Fostering exchange between young professionals in various fields, through youth and young professionals forums/platforms; (II) Establishing a College of Europe ACP scholarship, which allows one A, one C and one P student per year to complete the advanced masters in the different EU-focused domains; (III) Strengthening diplomatic young professionals exchanges between EU member states and the ACP states to effectively address challenges, but also to form a network to address joint interests before they become challenges; (IV) Assisting the ACP Secretariat to establish a fully paid and effective internship scheme in both the Brussels and Geneva offices, based on the European Commission Bluebook model, and foster synergies between the two via networking events; (V) Assisting ACP regions to establish regional College's b

ased on the College of Europe model to foster regional integration, the refore building the academic institutional capacity.

37. Should a higher degree of self-financing of this functioning (ACP-EU Joint institutions and ACP secretariat) by the ACP States be required?

Yes. See response to Q.42. There is already a trend towards increased self-financing, for example, with the joint EU-ACP institute for agriculture, the CTA (Annex III, CPA).

Better adapted and more flexible development cooperation tools and methods

38. Is there added value in having a dedicated financing instrument in support of the ACP-EU partnership? If so, what are the reasons and how would it differ from other external financing instruments funded by the general budget of the Union? Is this instrument flexible enough, especially to address crisis situations? Can this instrument be deployed differently?

ACP YPN is of the opinion that ACP states are in need of a steady financial plan, which enables them to achieve financial autonomy, and the EDF development aid package has not brought the intended benefits both parties sought to achieve. The financial elements of the EU-ACP should aim for long-term benefits, and avoid short-termism, which could negatively impact future developments.

Having a financing instrument dedicated to the ACP-EU partnership is not detrimental to enabling ACP and EU partners to achieve the objectives set in the Cotonou agreement, namely poverty reduction, sustainable development and the integration of ACP countries in the world economy. The EDF is currently one of the most tangible and relevant aspects of the ACP-EU relationship as it is the main financial instrument that EU Member States use to provide development assistance to ACP countries, which may also receive some funding from thematic development programs under the EU budget. As a cornerstone of the CPA the EDF has several aspects: (I) predictability allows stakeholders to plan their development actions in the medium term, which in turn contributes to the effectiveness of relevant programs; (II) clear-cut division of implementation modalities - Project approach, Budget support and Sector support - also enhances effectiveness through clarity of approaches to EDF; (III) flexibility in the face of crises as illustrated by EU response to the earthquake in Haiti, the setting up of the Food Facility, the Vulnerability Flex and more recently the Bekou Fund for Central African Republic and the Emergency Trust Fund on migrations.

The EDF has however demonstrated some weaknesses: (I) tendency to respo

nd to crises by creating a multiplicity of dedicated funds and facilities runs counter to EU and other major donors' willingness to rationalize development assistance; (II) slow implementation process is often criticized and should therefore be improved; (III) weaknesses in aid programming in crisis and fragile situations, risk reduction and managing exogenous shocks; (IV) Predictability needs to be complemented by efficient flexibility in procedures, adapting quickly to changing circumstances, as well as in the rigid and complex procedures.

ACP YPN strongly advocates for a special allocation of budget for youth issues to expedite action on the issues set out in Art. 26 CPA.

39. What is the added value of the EDF's co-management system involving national authorities in the programming and management of aid programmes, as compared to other EU cooperation instruments in non-ACP countries?

ACP YPN recognises that the need to ensure ownership of the development process has been widely acknowledged as a condition for sustainable impact (Paris Declaration, Accra Action Agenda, and Busan Outcome Document). In this light, the CPA's co-management principles and structures were innovative and ground-breaking in their time. However, today, the challenge of effectively fostering country ownership of external support still remains. The reality of the practice of 'co-management' under the CPA reveals that programming remains largely EU-driven, from the decision of the total sum to be allocated, to the entirety of the process itself. Despite the rhetoric of the 'partnership of equals', the EU appears to follow a top-down approach, as opposed to an inclusive co-management system as set out in CPA. Going forward there needs to be effective co-programming and co-management, which functions in a mutually beneficial manner.

There have been a number of non-negligible issues related to the National Authorising Officer (NAO), which need to be reviewed in order to move forward in a coherent and effective manner. Indeed, NAOs in ACP countries is not a guarantee in itself of stronger country ownership due to a number of key issues: NAOs appointed by the ACP countries may be overruled in the choice of priority sectors, aid modalities and implementation choices; NAOs may suffer from limited capacities and services; poor synergies between the NAOs and other concerned ministries tasked with implementing projects and programmes; lack of harmonization between country systems and EU procedures. The capacities of the various ministries involved need to be reinforced and the role of the NAO needs to be effectively enhanced in order to fulfil clear, strategic and achievable objectives.

40. Does the current set-up of the programming process and implementation of activities lead to real ownership by the beneficiaries? What could be improved? How can the EU and Member States maximise the impact of joint programming?

In the opinion of ACP YPN, the current set-up of the programming process and implementation of activities does not adequately lead to real ownership by the beneficiaries. It is of utmost importance that beneficiaries be involved at all stages of the project/programme cycle from design through to evaluation. As such the programming process through to implementation should be adjusted: (I) Within the limits of what is actually in place, management of these programmes should be extended to firms within the ACP region, with full or part ownership by citizens or entities of the ACP; (II) Management of the money also means managing where it goes, hence the importance that it is a joint process; (III) A quota system should be put in place as a trial for a percentage of programmes, in order to gauge the effectiveness of quotas to contribute to real ownership; (IV) EU experts on the field should be 'twinned'/partnered with local equivalents in order to share and exchange knowledge, and to ensure the local counterpart also has the knowledge, skill and expertise to continue ex-post and supplementary, or similar work when the EU expert is no longer on the ground.

While the EU has the final word on the approval of programmes, Programme Estimates (PE) - through from PE0 to the PE4 - allows for varying degrees of ownership. It is worth reviewing this process to see where best ownership is achieved and whether this can also be applied at certain stages of programming, which may not benefit from a heightened engagement of partners and hence, a lack of ownership. Additionally, ownership would also require the inclusion of local authorities and domestic stakeholders in a systematic and truly participatory process.

EU policy priorities, such as the Agenda for Change should also adhere to the EU's principle of Policy Coherence for Development (PCD), in order to ensure a real alignment on partner countries' policies and strategies and to guarantee that the EU support is catalytic and effective. In this vein, joint programming should complement, supplement and work in harmony with bilateral EU Member states' process of programming.

41. Does the variety of existing tools adequately support the EU and ACP common principles and interests and are there gaps that should be addressed? How do you assess the effectiveness and efficiency of various implementation modalities?

Despite the existence of Article 26 CPA on Youth issues, there has been inadequate allocation of tools and resources to effectively fulfil the aspirations agreed to in this article. This assessment is based on ACP YPN's analysis of Art. 26 CPA. ACP YPN suggests that the next few year

s running up to the expiry of the CPA, both the EU and the ACP should make headway on dealing with youth issues and mobilising relative expertise in the area.

There has been inadequate promotion of the skills, energy, innovation and potential of youth as outlined in Art 26 (b) CPA. This is linked to a lack of engagement with regards to partnering with community-based institutions, such as ACP YPN, to give children the opportunity to develop their physical, psychological, social and economic potential as set out in Art. 26 (c).

Bearing in mind the current context of migration and asylum in the EU, there should be targeted action and enhanced use of existing tools to tackle the issues of protecting the rights of children and youth, especially those of girls, as outlined in Art. 26 (a) CPA. This also includes reintegrating into society children in post-conflict situations through rehabilitation, as outlined in Art. 26 (d) CPA.

There is a stark lack of platforms, programmes and presence of EU-ACP collaboration on youth issues to accelerate diversification of the economies of the ACP states, and coordination and harmonisation of regional and sub-regional policies, as laid down in Art. 26 (d) CPA. This could be achieved with relative ease through, inter alia, youth and young professionals' exchanges, scholarships to the College of Europe and internship opportunities.

The promotion and expansion of inter and intra-ACP trade and with third countries, Art. 26 (e) CPA, could be harnessed through exchanges of youth and young entrepreneurs, as well as targeted traineeship schemes.

ACP YPN reaffirms its commitment to deliver on the aforementioned youth issues and reasserts its availability to work with the EU, the ACP and third partners to foster inclusive 'youth friendly' international relations policy-making.

42. Should a higher degree of self-financing from the ACP States be required for activities to ensure ownership? Would this apply to all countries? On which principles should this be based?

In today's context, ACP YPN believes that a higher degree of self-financing is expected from ACP countries in order to ascertain ownership. This also requires ACP states to take ownership of aligning project aims and outcomes. Indeed, several ACP countries benefit from large revenues based on their natural resources and several have substantial sovereign wealth funds (e.g. Angola and Nigeria). Nevertheless, ownership depends on a plurality of factors: political traction; the elaboration of consistent and realistic development policies and strategies by ACP partner countries; disbursement of funds allocated by partners in a timely and consistent fashion to meet project expectations; donors' alignm

ent with the beneficiaries' priorities.

The level of self-financing should be estimated according to several criteria, not limited to GDP, including the countries situation (human, socio-economic development level, fragility, economic vulnerability, income per capita, resources incl. oil, uranium, bauxite etc).

Additionally, ACP YPN supports innovative and complementary sources of financing, such as: (I) Crowdfunding: crowdfunding and investment are potential tools for financing smaller development projects. These instruments should be defined and an appropriate regulatory framework should be drawn up; (II) The contribution of international charities and associations: the growing number of international charitable funds, foundations and programmes to promote sustainable development can provide novel sources of financing i.e. direct financing via the transfer of funds, or financing through the provision of resources; (III) Remittances to countries from Diasporas: funds coming from Diasporas can catalyse existing and future initiatives. They can be effectively targeted and channelled to facilitate programmes, projects and to achieve the SDGs. Alongside the move to bring down tariffs globally, costs of remittance transfers should be reduced as far as possible to allow the free movement of remittances.

43. How can the expertise of the EU and its Member States be better mobilised, particularly in the middle-income countries?

There should be a number of 'youth friendly' initiatives, which recognise and reinforces the contribution capacities of young professionals from both EU and ACP countries. ACP YPN has identified a number of key areas where EU expertise can be mobilised: (I) Fostering exchange between young professionals in various fields, through the EU's Erasmus+ programme and complementary initiatives; (II) Establishing a College of Europe ACP scholarship, which allows one A, one C and one P student per year to complete the advanced masters in the different EU-focused domains; (III) Strengthening diplomatic young professionals exchanges between EU member states and the ACP states; (IV) Assisting the ACP Secretariat to establish a fully paid and effective internship scheme in both the Brussels and Geneva offices, based on the European Commission Bluebook model; (V) Assisting ACP regions establish regional College's based on the College of Europe model to foster regional integration.

In the opinion of ACP YPN, EU and its MS expertise can be mobilised in targeted areas to support both capacity building projects and business partnerships in ACP countries with specific focus on youth and young professionals. This will inevitably require a true and honest exchange of expertise, based on dialogue, exchange and sharing best practices that can benefit EU-ACP relations. In this regard, ACP expertise, in partic

ular, should be valued and recognised, in order to create the best synergies for effective outcomes of projects, programmes and partnerships.

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