

Introduction

Beyond Development Aid is a publication of the Europe–Africa Policy Research Network (EARN) that intends to address the EU–Africa political dialogue on global issues of common concern. It is published at the initiative of the three institutes in charge of the EARN Working Group on Global Issues: the Institute for Strategic and International Studies (IEEI), the South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA) and the European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM).

EARN was created in 2007 by a group of diverse African and European institutions, namely development institutes and think tanks, with the purpose of promoting knowledge, encouraging co-operation and partnerships between policy research institutes in Europe and Africa, and enhancing interaction between the world of policy research and policy making on issues of common interest to Africa and Europe.

African and European Heads of State and Government have, in December 2007, supported and committed to *new approaches* (“...to build a new strategic political partnership for the future, overcoming the traditional donor–recipient relationship and building on common values...”, Lisbon Declaration) and added *new objectives* for their partnership (“...to reinforce and elevate the Africa–EU political partnership to address issues of common concern...”, Joint Africa–EU Strategy – JAES). The JAES was indeed formulated in order to strengthen the political relationship and the EU–Africa cooperation as an answer to geopolitical changes, globalisation and the growing integration processes taking place in both continents. By setting an innovative and ambitious vision, the JAES is, undeniably, a test of political will, capacities and common interests of European and African institutions and its Member States.

Notwithstanding the proclamations, common positions and actions *beyond development* and *beyond Africa* have been rare and some of the proclaimed intentions are yet to be fulfilled. On the other hand, the European and African civil society actors, namely the research communities, very rarely – if at all – interact and discuss issues outside the scope of Africa, in a rather biased approach, as if poverty, security, good governance or economic crisis were only African.

This publication is precisely the result of a networking exercise, promoting exchange and dialogue through a series of debates organised by EARN members, in partnership with other European and African institutes. It brought together European and African policy-makers and experts from different thematic areas with the aim of fostering dialogue between public and policy spheres in Europe and Africa, and across perspectives, beyond the “traditional” areas of EU–Africa relations. In the process, EARN also organised public conferences to bring information and debate on EU–Africa relations, and namely on the JAES, into the wider public and beyond the ‘usual’ big political capitals of Europe and Africa.

With this publication, EARN intends to stress and bring the attention to the political dimensions – not always acknowledged – of EU–Africa relations and shift the focus from Africa and African problems into global issues of common concern. Although timely targeted to promote such a discussion around the 3rd EU–Africa Summit, the publication aims to deal with issues that go beyond the framework and time range of the Summits.

Beyond Development Aid analyses the main constraints and opportunities for engaging in a more strategic dialogue and partnership between the two continents. It focuses on what have been the outcomes of the political dialogue between the two continents in the period between Summits (2008–2010) and discusses relevant issues that impact upon both regions and on their partnership, namely on the areas of peace and security, global governance, trade and regional integration, and climate change. Finally, the last text, “An Agenda for Action” explores which upcoming opportunities and common agenda can be envisaged for the near future, in light of the written contributions hereby published and the debates held all along this process.