



# EU Presidency Seminar on Africa “Strengthening Euro-Africa Partnerships: The Role of Parliaments”

LISBON, PORTUGAL, 7 - 8 NOVEMBER 2007



AWEPA seminar stresses importance of reinforcing the dialogue between African and European parliamentarians in light of the EU-Africa Summit in Lisbon, December 2007 and the Joint Africa-EU Strategy

*I am fully aware that if national, regional and continental African parliaments are to genuinely succeed in this role, they will need to see their powers strengthened. In this regard I have nothing but praise for the support offered by the AWEPA to national parliaments in promoting good governance. (European Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid, Louis Michel)*

The Portuguese EU Presidency Seminar on Africa, “Strengthening Euro-Africa Partnerships: The Role of Parliaments”, was co-organised by the Assembly of the Republic of Portugal, European Parliamentarians for Africa (AWEPA) and the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe, on 7 November 2007 in the Portuguese Parliament. The seminar entailed two main sessions which address two priority topics: the Joint Africa-EU Strategy and NEPAD and Parliamentary Oversight of ODA. The seminar was attended by over 110 participants from 10 countries in Africa and 19 countries in Europe. The participants discussed ways to strengthen Africa - EU partnerships and the role of MPs from both continents in enhancing the effectiveness and quality of development cooperation strategies towards Africa. In addition, in the framework of the European Development Days (EDD), AWEPA in cooperation with the European Commission organised a side event on 8 November at which the topic of the “EU Response to Situations of Fragility” in Africa was addressed. •



Dr. Jan Nico Scholten and Hon. Jaime Gama

## Results

The Portuguese EU Presidency Seminar on Africa sought to reinforce the dialogue between African and European parliamentarians and identify ways to strengthen Africa - EU partnerships. The seminar contributed to the promotion of a continent-to-continent dialogue on development strategies, awareness raising on NEPAD in Europe and mobilising European parliamentary action to support the initiative. As part of the AWEPA parliamentary support programme “Mobilising Parliaments for NEPAD” the participants discussed strategies aimed at enhancing effectiveness and quality of development cooperation strategies towards Africa. •

### THE JOINT AFRICA-EU STRATEGY AND ODA

In light of the EU-Africa Heads of State and Government Summit in Lisbon, 8-9 December 2007 the strategic framework for future relations of the EU and Africa, the Joint Africa-EU Strategy, was addressed at the seminar. In addition, the importance of parliamentary oversight of Official Development Assistance (ODA) was prominent on the agenda. The outcome of the discussions contributed to the Joint EP-PAP Statement on the Joint Africa-EU Strategy leading up to the Lisbon Summit, emphasising the incorporation of a parliamentary dimension in the “people-centred EU-AU partnership”. Parliamentarians as representatives of the people are an essential voice in the debate on the future joint priorities of Africa and Europe. The EP-PAP Statement also addresses the during the Presidency seminar discussed

need for clear provisions for parliaments to exercise their right of scrutiny, oversight and management of aid spending. Furthermore, the debate at the seminar on the Strategy and the importance of parliamentary oversight of ODA complements the Slovenian EU Presidency seminar about the role of New EU Member States in EU-Africa development policy and also the 118th IPU Assembly meeting in Cape Town. The Slovenian EU Presidency Seminar took place in Brussels, 27-28 February and the 118th IPU Assembly meeting was held in Cape Town, 13-18 April 2008. The EU Presidency Seminar established that there is a need for a stronger parliamentary voice through a bilateral parliament-to-parliament ODA dialogue, along with the allocation of a minimum portion of ODA expenditures for parliamentary capacity building. •

## Reinforcing the Africa-EU Dialogue

### THE JOINT AFRICA-EU STRATEGY

As a preparation to the EU-Africa Summit in Lisbon in December 2007 the framework for the future relations of the EU and Africa will be addressed, namely the Joint Africa-EU Strategy. This should mark the beginning of a new strategic long term partnership between both continents for the 21st century. This includes reinforcing political partnerships between the EU and Africa and addressing common challenges in this respect. These challenges include: the promotion of peace and security; sustainable development, human rights; trade and regional integration, including Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs). ●

### MOBILISING PARLIAMENTARIANS FOR NEPAD

This activity is part of the parliamentary support programme “Mobilising Parliaments for NEPAD” (MPN)<sup>1</sup>, aimed at facilitating a greater involvement in the NEPAD process for African and European Parliaments, by raising awareness and promoting parliamentary action in various areas of development relating to the NEPAD initiative.

See also the NEPAD brochure, which is available in: Arabic, English, French, Portuguese and Swahili, see website: [http://www.awepa.org/awepa-news/nepad-brochure\\_en.html](http://www.awepa.org/awepa-news/nepad-brochure_en.html) ●

### PARLIAMENTARY OVERSIGHT OF ODA

In line with the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and in order to attain the MDGs, this seminar addressed the need for greater transparency and mutual accountability by governments in Africa

and Europe with regard to the achievement of commitments and goals concerning ODA. African and European parliamentarians have a central role to play in exercising oversight over their government on how the aid is spent and if it is spent effectively. Participants discussed obstacles to parliamentary oversight of ODA, as well as ways to overcome them. ●

### OTHER RELATED ACTIVITIES

The Portuguese EU Presidency Seminar was organised parallel to the European Development Days (EDD) on 7-9 November 2007 in Lisbon, bringing together development experts and the general public through debates and cultural events. For more information about the EDD in 2008 see website: <http://eudevdays.eu>

This year, in line with Millennium Development Goal 7 (ensure environmental sustainability), the EDD focused on “climate change and development”.

Sub-topics, such as vulnerability, poverty, migration and economic opportunities in relation to climate change were addressed at the plenary sessions and roundtables with high-level key-note speeches from, amongst others, Prime Minister José Socrates, President of the European Commission José Manuel Barroso, Commissioner Louis Michel and Mr. Kofi Annan.



*Mr. Thierry Pietrzak and Dr. Jan Nico Scholten*

AWEPA organised a side-event at the EDD on the “EU Response to Situations of Fragility in Africa” on 8 November, chaired by AWEPA President Dr. Jan Nico Scholten with a presentation from Mr. Thierry Pietrzak of the European Commission. A political debate followed with interventions from African and European parliamentarians.

During the EDD, AWEPA was also represented at an information stand at the so-called “development village”, that was set up for a number of actors to present their work related to the themes of the forum and to facilitate contacts and exchanges between development professionals. ●

1. The programme was endorsed by the following African institutions: the NEPAD Secretariat, the Pan-African Parliament, the African Parliamentarian’s Forum on NEPAD, the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA), the ECOWAS Parliament, SADC-Parliamentary Forum, and the NEPAD Contact Group of African Parliamentarians (NCGAP).

## Actions Highlights

The main highlights of the discussions which took place during the Portuguese EU Presidency Seminar on Africa, “Strengthening Euro-Africa Partnerships: The Role of Parliaments” can be summarized as follows:

- Parliamentarians are better informed about the new Joint Africa-EU Strategy and the EU response to situations of fragility in Africa.
- The result of the discussions on the Joint Africa-EU Strategy were presented at the PAP-EP pre-meeting which then fed into the EU-Africa Summit held in Lisbon on 8-9 December 2007.

- European Parliamentarians pledged to undertake action to hold their governments to account on international commitments, to exercise parliamentary oversight and to stimulate parliamentary questions and debates about the level, distribution and effectiveness of European ODA.
- African Parliamentarians were stimulated to build their capacity to analyse ODA data in the context of their national budgets, track government spending of ODA, and access the impact and effectiveness of ODA from the standpoint of their constituencies.
- European and African MPs were better informed and stimulated to

undertake action regarding the NEPAD commitments and to monitor progress of achieving the MDGs.

The results of the Portuguese EU Presidency Seminar were taken forward to the Slovenian Presidency Seminar on 27-28 February 2008 in the European Parliament in Brussels. In particular the findings regarding aid effectiveness will also be taken along to upcoming AWEPA regional and international parliamentary activities on aid effectiveness in Africa and the 3rd High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Accra in September 2008.

Furthermore, the seminar received a lot of media attention, mainly in Portugal: e.g. news articles, websites and television. ●

## KEY NOTE SPEAKERS

**Hon. Jaime Gama**, Speaker of the National Assembly of Portugal, opened the seminar expressing his concern about Africa: “among the 20 poorest countries in the world 18 are African countries”. He stressed the importance of a strong relationship between Europe and Africa, to allow further implementation of the Joint Africa-EU Strategy.

In line with the Speakers’ words **Hon. Prof. Dr. João Gomes Cravinho**, Secretary of State of Portugal for International Affairs and Cooperation, who was active for AWEPA in the early 1990s in Mozambique and South Africa, spoke about the need for a strategic partnership between Europe and Africa, as Portugal has with Brazil. In relation to this Hon. Cravinho highlighted the necessity of addressing global issues, such as good governance, migration flows, climate change and private sector development. “Africa has changed,” said **Mr. David Gakunzi** of the North-South Centre, “so we need to change the way we talk about Africa, as it certainly has a lot of possibilities.” ●

## THE JOINT AFRICA-EU STRATEGY AND NEPAD

The European Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid, **H.E. Louis Michel**, expressed his appreciation of the work of the Association of European Parliamentarians for Africa (AWEPA) in strengthening African parliaments. He also expressed his hope for further co-operation between the European Commission and AWEPA. “There is no better control than parliamentary control,” the Commissioner added. He also emphasised that the importance of freedom of the press, transparency and promotion of participation in the democratic process were vital for the creation of an appropriate environment for oversight.

**H.E. Mahamat Saleh Annadif**, Permanent Representative of the African Union to the European Union and the ACP, welcomed the Joint Africa-EU Strategy, based on common challenges and shared values. The Ambassador stressed that to achieve the objectives of the strategy, Africa should be treated as a single entity. ●

**Mr. Geert Laporte** of the European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM), saw the Joint Africa-EU Strategy to be a major step forward, but also noted

its pitfalls. Mr. Laporte highlighted the lack of prioritisation, indicators, instruments and timing in the action plan. There is also no clear provision for parliamentary monitoring of the Strategy’s implementation. ●

## PARLIAMENTARY OVERSIGHT OF ODA

In relation to the ODA and the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) discussion, **Hon. Kabakumba Labwoni Masiko Princess**, MP Uganda, Vice-Chair of the NEPAD Contact Group of African Parliamentarians, called on the developed countries to fulfill their promise of doubling aid as agreed at the G8 meeting and “to open up their markets to

fair competition and more trade with Africa”. ●

To mark the occasion, AWEPA’s Director, **Dr. Jeff Balch**, Director Research and Evaluation of AWEPA, launched a new AWEPA research report, “Tracking European Aid, Debt, and Trade Commitments to Africa,” on Official Development Assistance (ODA), indicating to what extent the individual European countries had met their obligations. Parliamentary scrutiny of ODA was now recognised as a necessity, along with allocating a portion of ODA to parliamentary capacity building. ●



*Dr. Jan Nico Scholten, Hon. Jaime Gama, Hon. Prof. Dr. João Gomes Cravinho, Mr. David Gakunzi of the North-South Centre*



*H.E. Mahamat Saleh Annadif*

*Hon. Kabakumba Labwoni Masiko Princess*



*Mr. Geert Laporte*



*H.E. Louis Michel*



Hon. Veronica Macamo and  
Mr. Pär Granstedt

## Programme Descriptions

### EU PRESIDENCY SEMINARS ON AFRICA

In conjunction with the rotating chairs of the EU, AWEPA organises twice a year EU Presidency Seminars on Africa. The main objectives of these seminars are:

- To keep African priorities, in the context of NEPAD/MDGs, on the political agenda of the EU and the EU member states
- To promote partnerships between European and African (members of) parliaments to strengthen strong parliamentary democracies
- To promote dialogue and networking for parliamentarians from Africa with each other and with their colleagues from Europe to exchange experiences and stimulate action to achieve the MDGs

The EU Presidency Seminar in Lisbon, Portugal was an activity funded by Portugal (IPAD) and part of the the AWEPA programme "Mobilising Parliamentarians for NEPAD" under the sub-programme "Mobilising European Parliamentary Action to Support NEPAD in Europe" funded by Sweden (SIDA) and Denmark (DANIDA). •

AWEPA thanks the Portuguese, Swedish and Danish governments for their support of the seminar.



## About AWEPA

The Association of European Parliamentarians for Africa (AWEPA) works in cooperation with African Parliaments to strengthen parliamentary democracy in Africa, keep Africa high on the political agenda in Europe, and facilitate African-European Parliamentary dialogue. It has some 1500 current and former

parliamentarians as members from the European Parliament and European national parliaments. AWEPA works in Africa through capacity building programmes to strengthen the core functions of parliaments: oversight, representation and legislation. In Europe, AWEPA members work to increase the commitment among parliamentarians and other political leaders towards important issues in Africa. •

## About AWEPA sections

AWEPA works to intensify its efforts to keep Africa on the political agenda in Europe and to promote a North-South dialogue. In this regard, AWEPA has built up a broad member network of current and former European parliamentarians, usually grouped in a so-called section. A section consists of a group of European parliamentarians in the concerned parliament who are interested in African-European affairs, and who like to be briefed on AWEPA's programmes and/or participate in these programmes. By enabling existing and new sections to perform advocacy and support functions in an effective and efficient way, AWEPA can help to develop a more prospective, coherent and visible European development policy towards Africa. High on AWEPA's agenda in Europe are the following topics:

- HIV/AIDS with a special focus on Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC)
- NEPAD related themes, such as Agriculture and Climate Change
- The Paris Declaration and Parliamentary Tracking of ODA. •

## The Way Forward

AWEPA organises twice a year international parliamentary seminars under the auspices of the rotating EU Presidency to strengthen African-European partnerships. The next Presidency of the EU will go to Slovenia. On 27-28 February AWEPA organised together with the European Parliament, the International AIDS Vaccine Initiative (IAVI) and the Society for International Development (SID), the Slovenian EU Presidency Seminar in Brussels on 'The Role of New EU Member States in EU-Africa Development Policy' in light of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. For more information see website:

[http://www.awepa.org/projects/slovenian-eu-presidency-seminar-on-africa-belgium-27-28-february-2008\\_en.html](http://www.awepa.org/projects/slovenian-eu-presidency-seminar-on-africa-belgium-27-28-february-2008_en.html)

The results of both the Portuguese and Slovenian seminars will be taken forward to upcoming AWEPA regional and international parliamentary activities on aid effectiveness in Africa, and the 3rd High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Accra in September 2008. •

### More information

See the 'Projects' section on [www.awepa.org](http://www.awepa.org) for seminar information in English and French including the recommendations, working group reports, speeches, participants list and programme.

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