

**Intervention of Luis Magalhães, European Co-chair of the 8th Partnership EU-Africa
(Science, Information Society, Space) at the EU-Africa High Level Policy Dialogue
on Science, Technology and Innovation (STI)
Senior Officials Meeting (SOM),
Addis Ababa, 10-11 October 2011**

Distinguished Co-chairs of this Senior Officials Meeting, Representatives of Member States and Commissions of the African Union and the European Union, and other multilateral organizations participating in the meeting:

Judging from this meeting we came a long way since the beginning of the Partnership in the Lisbon Summit of 2007.

The present Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) is starting very nicely the **High Level Policy Dialogue on STI which was decided in the Tripoli Summit of last year within the 8th Partnership EU-Africa** that covers Science, Information Society and Space, in order to add to its Science component a **strategic and political layer** and to ensure a **stronger commitment of the Member States**.

I was nominated in March of this year European Co-chair of the 8th Partnership EU-Africa following France, whose contribution I would like to specially acknowledge and congratulate.

Let me mention that, talking after Dr. Tema, I do not feel at all hampered by equality concerns in this Partnership, because it is obvious for me that from their different situations, both Africa and EU have equally large benefits from this Partnership, even if they are in unequal situations. In fact, it is diversity which brings specific mutual value to partnerships.

A FEW WORDS ON ORGANIZATION

From an organizational point of view, we have the Joint Experts Group of the 8th Partnership which brings together the European and African sides on Science, Information Society and Space issues.

In Europe, we have a European Experts Group for the 8th Partnership which works in plenary, and also three subgroups, one for each of the three areas: Science, Information Society, Space.

Since March of this year, we held two European Experts Group meetings, one meeting of the Science subgroup which is chaired by France, and one meeting of the Information Society subgroup which is chaired by Finland.

It was not yet possible to have the 1st meeting of the Joint Experts Group for the 2nd Action Plan (2011-2013), due to several difficulties but this meeting is now absolutely necessary. **We are looking forward to the Joint Expert Group to meet very soon.**

Besides this practical difficulty, **we must achieve an active involvement of more Member States** of both EU and Africa. For this, I appeal to your influence for sending representatives of the Member States here represented to the meetings of the Joint Experts group of the 8th Partnership EU-Africa. Your commitment here has to be carried on to the implementation structures of the Partnership, and this means active participation in the Joint Expert Group.

CONTENT OF WORK

The **8th Partnership in the Science component** includes now two lines of work:

- (1) **Continuation of the work on identification of project lines to pursue implementation** of the Partnership and **monitoring of their progress**, following on the work in the 1st Action Plan (2008-2010);
- (2) **Pursuing the EU-Africa High Level Policy Dialogue on STI** that is being initiated with the present meeting, ensuring the **coordination** of the **implementation actions** taken within the Partnership with the **policy deliberations and strategic directions** of the High Level Policy Dialogue on STI.

A large number of projects are being carried out on the topics identified in the Book of Projects prepared in 2008, as mentioned by Commissioner Ezin in the opening session, mostly with support of the EU 7th Framework Programme of RTD, the European Development Fund (EDF) and Member States contributions, namely on :

- African Research Grants
- Water and Food Security
- Agriculture and National Resources Management, including biotechnology for agriculture
- Desertification and forestry
- Climate change
- Health
- Energy
- Information and Communication Technologies
- Popularization of Science and Technology.

Within the European Experts Group a “non-paper” with proposals for a roadmap is being prepared to be discussed in the forthcoming Joint Experts Group, mainly along the following lines:

- (1) Establish a process of monitoring and assessing the implementation of the projects, as we need objective observation of progress;
- (2) Foster the creation of international Master and PhD programmes between Africa and EU universities (possibly with co-degrees), as a contribution to the Pan-African University project;
- (3) Assess the existing initiatives of enterprise incubators creation in Africa and strengthen their organization as a network of collaborating nodes with Africa and EU involvement, and as lessons of good practices for the creation of new enterprise incubators in other locations;
- (4) Promote networks of centers of excellence around technology and innovation platforms, building up on those created for water research;
- (5) Gather socio-demographic data to adequately address societal issues in Africa;
- (6) Build synergies with the other EU-Africa Partnerships, in particular:
 - P7 – Migration, Mobility and Employment, which includes the Erasmus Mundus, the Nyerere Programme for students exchange and the Pan-African University;
 - P4 – Millennium Development Goals, which includes food safety, health and education;
 - P3 – Trade, Regional Integration and Infrastructure;
 - P4 – Climate Change.

Establishing relations with these Partnerships will enable connecting Science to other public policy areas, which is a goal of general interest. The orientation to build synergies with several of the other Partnerships was also present in interventions of several representatives in this Senior Officials Meeting.

To this effect, I would also add the exploration of possible synergies between the three components of the P8 – Science, Information Society, Space. In the Information Society component, the **Africa Connect Project** launched in May of this year for high speed connection of the research and education networks in Africa with the European research and Education network GEANT and consolidation of the emerging **National Research and Education Networks (NRENS)** in African countries will have an obvious high impact on Science and international cooperation activities. In the Space component, the projects on applications of satellite **Earth Observation** for several areas of Science are also relevant.

This is the state of play of our work.

OBSERVATIONS FROM THE PRESENT MEETING

Yesterday, some participants in this meeting presented several desirable priority themes, which are already being pursued within the 8th Partnership EU-Africa, following the Book of Projects of 2008 already mentioned. So, regarding priority themes, **this meeting is basically confirming the identification of priority themes done several years ago.**

Also yesterday, we heard an opinion that we should narrow our focus to two or three priority themes. My personal advice is not to do it. **The reasons for not focusing in just two or three priorities are twofold:**

- (1) There is already **very good work being done in all the proposed themes** which was initiated in the period beginning in 2008, so it does not make sense to abandon these themes now!
- (2) We are considering two very large continents, with several regions with high heterogeneity and diversity of priorities as targets. So, **we should approach this diversity with a sufficiently wide *panoplia* of instruments and themes**, allowing for **diverse arrangements of short, medium and long ranges** which have differentiated relevance in different places. In this matter: “One size does not fit all!”

From the present meeting, I take back home the following points:

- The central importance of **capacity building**, mainly in **human resources** for Science (Masters, PhDs, and I would add PostDocs), but also in **research labs and infrastructures**;
- Another point is the need of **linking the Science component of the 8th Partnership EU-Africa to a number of other EU-Africa Partnerships** related to application areas, in order to better connect public policy in these areas with Science;
- A **combined short, medium and long range approach** should be adopted to plan strategically the actions to consider;
- **Governance and leadership** should be concerns addressed for success and sustainability of initiatives in Science;
- The **engagement of businesses** was suggested by two means:
 - Today, it was given the example of Nigeria in bringing multinationals to contribute to strengthening human resources for Science, by requiring them to sponsor the delivery of a specified number of new PhDs in a specific period in areas of their interest;
 - Yesterday, Innovation Parks were mentioned as a contribution to engage businesses, both national and foreign, with university researchers, for specific purposes, on the basis of legal agreements regarding the governance and nature of the initiative, and property of the results to be obtained, which should be shared by the involved institutions, as well as the adoption of

common technological/scientific platforms/facilities of development, which should also be shared.

Finally, I would like to emphasize the ultimate goals of our work, which should be clearly centered in **PEOPLE**:

- (1) We must concentrate in ensuring full commitment of Member States and the two Commissions on the importance of STI to the knowledge based economy of now-a-days, and on how it can contribute to the **benefit of Africa and Europe PEOPLE**.
- (2) In scientific cooperation, as in many other human activities, it is most important to establish strong relationships of **TRUST** and **CONFIDENCE** in high quality **collaborative work**, and to create appropriate **processes for their SUSTAINABILITY**. Trust and confidence are social constructs. They will ultimately depend on personal **relationships** between **excellent researchers**, and between **research institutions, universities and enterprises**. We must work towards the creation of the best possible framework for **bottom up collaborations to flourish** and to produce **excellent research** contributions to **Science, Society and Economy**.

The challenge now is **EXECUTION** and **DELIVERY**. To assure impact of the actions taken within the Partnership I am afraid that there are no shortcuts to “glory”. There is no quick fix with miracle new approaches like Innovation at the expense of Science and/or Education. They have to go together! It is an arduous path and we progress through it doing our best every day and being sure that, at the end, **everything will rest on the development of human talent** that is developed on the way.

Thank you very much for your attention.