

New Challenges in Europe-Africa Cooperation *A posição de África nos mercados internacionais está actualmente mais fragilizada do que há três ou quatro décadas, seja em termos de comércio e de investimento, seja no âmbito da Ajuda Pública ao Desenvolvimento. Com efeito, o continente africano é o único que não apresenta progressos nos indicadores de pobreza, pelo que uma nova parceria com a Europa – o único «vizinho» em termos geográficos – se torna particularmente urgente. Esta parceria não pode estar relacionada apenas com fluxos de recursos, mas deverá equacionar as causas profundas dos problemas e englobar uma estratégia de longo prazo que dedique especial atenção a questões cruciais como a dívida externa ou o acesso a mercados. A NEPAD e a União Africana são já sinais de mudança importantes (particularmente com o mecanismo de «revisão pelos pares»), em relação aos quais a Europa terá, mais do que quaisquer outros actores internacionais, um papel fundamental a desempenhar.*

All my life I spoke on behalf of the United Nations or governments. Now, for the last decade I've been on the other side, speaking for the civil society, which means there is more freedom to talk and get to the root of the problem. I agree with the previous speaker of the EU, that indeed the European commission intends to have dialogue,

more seriously and more frequently, with the civil society. The views from the trenches are very important and you never get to the heart of the matter until you have the opportunity and privilege of speaking to people who are working in the field. In the past, it's true our civil society wasn't well organised. But that is no longer the case and we should take advantage of the opportunity and encourage candid discussion and an open dialogue by involving civil society in the debates. When I left the UN, I joined the African Centre for Development and Strategic Studies. In 1993, with the emergence of the New World order, we held a conference in Dakar "Beyond Dispossession and Dependence" under the chairmanship of Julius Nyerere who was the president of the body of Governors of that centre.

It is said by Elliot that the past and the future are both contained in the present. You really cannot talk about tomorrow if you don't take into full acquaintance today and if you forget what happened yesterday. Of course you should not be bound by what happened yesterday, but you should know and always remember what happened yesterday. This book dealt in extent with what happened with Africa in the past, Africa in the present and what lessons might be drawn in the world in which we are, for the future.

Africa has no neighbour other than Europe. Africa is to Europe what Latin America is to the US. Therefore, more than any other region in the world, Europe has a strong responsibility towards the African continent. And when you have a neighbour that is getting poorer, where conflicts are more prevalent than peace, where people are marginalized and the continent is getting weaker in terms of its contribution to world development, the richer neighbour ought to ask, "what are we doing wrong?" I believe that this forum should be the beginning on a discussion about "how can we really make a difference in Africa?"; "what do we need to do?" We need to be innovative, rather than pursuing the old lies. I took part in the establishment of the EU-ACP cooperation

– Lomé I, Lomé II, Lomé III – and the only one I missed was Cotonou. In all those years the African continent has receded in several areas. Africa is less important today than it was at the time of Lomé I, in terms of trade with Europe, in terms of investment and Official Development Assistance (ODA). "Why", is the question we must ask ourselves. Africa is a poor competitor vis-à-vis Latin America and Asia. While in Latin America and East Asia most poverty indicators show an improvement, for Africa and South-Asia poverty is growing. However, we must not forget that in South Asia there is India, which is going through a process of fast change and in five years from now we'll find out that Africa is the only continent where poverty is going up. Already the UN millennium plan objectives for 2015 are now being changed for 2025. The situation hasn't really improved. Whatever we talk about new democracy, the concept of new development has not yet been internalised in Africa and I believe the need for new partnership between Africa and Europe is now more urgent than ever. All the brains in Europe and Africa should get together to design such partnership, to go beyond the usual and see what really needs to be done. It's not so much in terms of flow of resources; it goes far beyond that. It needs address to the root of the problems and design a long-term strategy that will allow Europe to save itself from an increasingly impoverished neighbour, as well as helping Africa emerging from poverty and become a real partner in this relationship.

In this sense there are some specific issues that need to be immediately addressed. Africa cannot make any effective progress in the development field as long as it has

to carry a heavy debt burden. For most countries, the debt service is larger than the total annual export earnings. All the solutions that have come from the G7 or the G8 have really been playing the other side. The debt situation is worse today than it was 5 years ago and worse than in 1986, when I first called the African Summit on Debt. The majority of the creditor countries are in Europe; therefore, this is an area where Europe can play a major role. Unless something positive happens, and happens urgently, the cumulative process of debt is unbearable. In Africa we have paid more than what we borrowed because we have not been able to service that debt regularly. This is an area where we need serious dialogue with European countries and institutions. There are presidents in countries that have been unable to pay their debt and yet are being helped out of their debt trap. Why can't Europe apply that to Africa?

The second issue that needs urgent attention is access to markets. A man called Col-lin Clark wrote a book in the late 50s, in which was said that the future of the World depends on agricultural countries because the terms of trade were in favour of the trade in commodities. That has been proved wrong. Not because agriculture is not important, but because Europe has become an agricultural continent. This is positive for food security in Europe but has a tremendous impact particularly in its neighbour, Africa. This explains the failure of Cancun. Again, Europe has a direct responsibility in promoting dialogue to really give Africa access to its market. This was realised in the early days of EU-ACP cooperation, when *Stabex* was formulated to stabilise incomes. Currently, all that has gone with the wind and therefore there is no protection for Africa and no safety for the farmers, which means low savings, not and ultimately no invest-ment. Even if there are foreign investments, how can an economic sector grow without domestic savings and investment?

Currently, people talk about new partnerships. NEPAD and the African Union mean that we believe that old partnerships are not working. Regarding the revolution that is taking place in Africa with the "peer review mechanism" I'd like to point out two things:

- For the first time the African Heads of State have themselves involved in working out a new development partnership – the New Economic Partnership for African Development (NEPAD). Personally, I also have been involved in establishing the Lagos Plan of Action and all that followed it. I welcome the fact that the heads of state have taken the role to design one for themselves, but it continues to worry me that it was mostly the G8 that came out openly in its support – not the EU, that is concerned mostly with Lomé/Cotonou. Does it mean that NEPAD has no meaning in the Cotonou framework? If it is going to be a new partnership, we have to look at Cotonou agreement again to really bring it to the level, or the type, of new partnership that NEPAD is talking about.
- The second revolution in course is the so-called "peer review mechanism". I am one of the seven that have been appointed to carry out the peer review. Our heads of state have declared that they are willing to subject themselves to this evaluation. I never thought it would go beyond the paper, until they announced the names of the panel that are responsible of carrying out this process. Without assistance from abroad there will be nothing to review. Let Europe help in every way to make sure that the peer review, which has been welcomed by the whole world, is given

full meaning by assuring that the African countries themselves pursue democratic processes. Democracy has no high prospect in a poor society. The PPP– public-private partnership – is very important. However, the private sector in Africa has still a very low participation in the partnership. I defend that the external private sector should focus on the productive sector. The UNCTAD made a study three or four years ago to see where the priorities lie in terms of investment in Africa. They find out that, apart from mineral prospecting activities, there is very little interest elsewhere. Therefore, we have an inconsistency between the priorities of the private sector – represented by transnational corporations – and the priorities defined in the text of NEPAD. How do we coordinate these different axes? This is also an area of great challenge in Europe-Africa relations.

There are many areas that need to be looked into. I have only mentioned a few, because if we can break the deadlock in those issues, the other areas of oppression will be relatively easy to address, ultimately giving a stronger meaning to Europe-Africa Cooperation.