

Minutes of the Second Board Meeting of the European Union Emergency Trust Fund for stability and addressing the root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa (EUTF for Africa) - Brussels, 13 December 2016

The European Commission convened the Second Board Meeting of the EUTF for Africa which was attended by European Commission services (DG NEAR, DG HOME, DG ECHO) and the European External Action Service (EEAS) representatives of EU donor countries, Switzerland and Norway, as well as representatives of African partner countries and some regional organizations including ECOWAS, the Africa Union and UEMOA. The Meeting was chaired by the Director General of DG DEVCO, Mr. S. Manservisi.

Introduction Session

The Chair opened the Meeting by presenting the agenda which was adopted.

In his introductory remarks, the Chair highlighted some of the principles which inspire the work of the Trust Fund: mutual responsibility/partnership; migration and mobility as key issues for discussion; addressing root causes through the creation of employment opportunities; capacity to manage the EU laws on migration in full respect of human rights; and to manage borders in light of security concerns.

The Chair highlighted the most relevant steps in the last year: (i) establishment of the EUTF for Africa at the Valletta Summit (Nov. 2015); (ii) New Partnership Framework with third countries under the EU migration agenda and establishment of "compacts" with 5 partner countries (June 2016); (iii) mobilization of additional resources (EUR 500 M) to deliver on the Valletta Action Plan (VAP) priorities and "compacts" (October 2016). This has resulted in a comprehensive approach focusing on traditional instruments as well as political and policy dialogue and civilian missions.

As a result of the first year of work, 64 projects have been approved over the three regional windows for a total of EUR 1 billion and contracts with implementers for over EUR 470 million have been signed. A news pipeline of projects for the three regional windows totalling EUR 589 M is being submitted for approval to the relevant Operational Committees later this week. Should the pipeline be approved in its entirety, available resources as of January 2017 would amount to approximately EUR 1 billion;

The Deputy DG of NEAR, Mr. M. Popowski, highlighted that migration management requires a human rights approach. He also indicated that partnership priorities with Egypt and Algeria are being developed in the North of Africa region and that DG NEAR is ready to step-up cooperation on policy issues. He reiterated that the North of Africa window of the EUTF for Africa is focussing mainly on pillar 3 of the VAP (protection) although is engaged in other pillars as well.

The Deputy Secretary General of the EEAS, Mr. C. Leffler, highlighted the importance of the UN Summit on Migration and Refugees (Sept 2016) which will generate the Global Compact on Refugees and Global Compact on Migrants. He also indicated that managing migration is a human issue which requires working all together, and that migration has to be a personal choice.

The representative of DG ECHO, Ms. A. Kaminara, highlighted that resilience building is a key aspect of the EUTF for Africa which represents a complementary tool allowing for coordination between short-term actions and long-term development. She reiterated that DG ECHO is committed to contribute EUR 50 million to the Trust Fund, 10 million of which will be disbursed in 2016.

The representative of DG HOME, Mr. Onidi, expressed appreciation for the different processes set-in place in the course of last year including the partnership framework, high political dialogues, the implementation of the ETF for Africa and greater coordination among different stakeholders.

SESSION I: Stocktaking of the EUTF one year after the Valletta Summit

The Chair of the Board made a wide presentation of the current state of play of the EUTF for Africa including an overview of financial contributions, operational matters, the allocation of resources by partner country, by pillar of the VAP, by implementer, and an overview of progress in terms of research and monitoring.

In the overall, all Board members and observers expressed their appreciation and satisfaction for the work accomplished so far by the EUTF for Africa;

Several Board members reiterated the importance of a strong partnership between Europe and Africa including through the EUTF for Africa and other instruments (**NO, FR, BE, SI**);

IT highlighted that the EUTF for Africa represents a flexible and shift tool which has contributed to set a new positive dynamic in place with African partners;

UK indicated the need to be more considerate in order not lose focus on long-term development opportunities. **UK** indicated also the need to look at absorption capacity and opportunities to fund as much as possible innovative interventions;

Several delegates appreciated efforts made to ensure a balanced approach in contributing to the five pillars of the VAP (**DE, DK, ES, NO, FI, IE**);

NL indicated that tackling root causes is difficult, costly and long-term, and that the EUTF should focus its efforts to stop the flow of illegal migrants including through fighting against criminal networks;

Some delegations stressed the need to widen up the base of implementers (**UK, DK, EE, FI**);

DE stressed the need to make progress in contracting and to have partner countries fully involved from the start of the project;

A number of delegations stressed the need to invest more in research and apply an evidence-based approach (**FR, CZ, DK, HU, BE, SI**);

Other delegations stressed the need to focus more on cross-cutting and cross-window interventions as well as on south-south cooperation (**ES, CH, BE**);

FR and FI highlighted the importance to ensure EU visibility for the overall activities of the EUTF for Africa;

IT informed the Board of the decision to provide additional EUR 22 million to the EUTF for Africa in the context of the Partnership with IOM.

EE announced an additional contribution to the EUTF for Africa of EUR 300,000

A number of observers also expressed their views:

MT highlighted the importance of the political dialogue between Europe and Africa; reiterated that the EUTF for Africa is a flexible and shift tool which was able to approve a great number of projects in 1 year and now needs to focus on implementation. **MAL** also indicated that addressing root causes is a long-term process and that the Trust Fund should be able to demonstrate results in pillars 2 to 5 of the VAP at the next Board Meeting;

SN stressed the need to focus on protection aspects, pursue the political dialogue, promote national ownership and apply a research and evidence-based approach;

ER confirmed its willingness to work with the EUTF for Africa due to its full involvement in the migration debate;

MR agreed that addressing root causes is a long-term process;

GM highlighted that the root causes of migration are lack of employment opportunities, governance-related issues, and the local political context. **GMB** also advocated for an increased financial support of the EUTF for Africa;

EG expressed support for the work of the EUTF and highlighted the need to strengthen the dialogue Egypt/EUTF bilaterally. **EGY** agreed with a balanced approach in the allocation of resources among the 5 Pillars of the VAP and stressed the need for a stronger cooperation among the 3 regional windows;

ECOWAS indicated that political engagement in migration management has to remain very strong, and stressed the need to ensure national ownership and widen-up the geographical and thematic scope of the EUTF to respond to needs;

In the overall, it was agreed the following:

- ✓ The EUTF strategy approved in Nov 2015 remains valid;
- ✓ The key principles of the partnership are: greater sense of national ownership; greater articulation between short-term and long-term actions; re-balancing) the different components among countries and regions; improving the evidence-based approach in moving forward;
- ✓ Managing effectively short-term versus long-term perspectives.

SESSION II (youth, job creation & employment) and SECTION III: (stability, security & resilience). The Chair suggested combining section II and III in the agenda.

The Chair highlighted the main points emerging from the information note on youth, job creation & employment: (i) *strong correlation between lack of employment and willingness to migrate;* (ii) *alarming demographic pressure in Africa;* (iii) *private sector potential to generate jobs; and the role of diaspora;* and from the information note on stability, security& resilience: *supporting resilience to the benefit of the most vulnerable through food, nutrition and security, health and education;* (ii) *support livelihoods and self-reliance opportunities for displaced people;* (iii) *support state building/god governance as well as the fight against terrorism.*

Based on a lively debate on these areas, the Chair concluded the following:

- ✓ The EUTF for Africa should be considered as "pilot" inspiring future work in these thematic areas, and it is necessary to create a dynamic outside the Trust Fund as it will come to an end at some point;
- ✓ On working modalities: the flexibility of the EUTF allows to act quickly and the number of implementers could be increased depending on the willingness and motivation of Member States to become implementing partners;
- ✓ On complementarity: it is necessary to ensure complementarity with other instruments such as the future European Investment Plan, blending mechanisms, etc.

SESSION III – Migration management

The Chair invited the IOM Regional Director in Brussels, Mr. E. Ambrosi, to present the latest trends in migration flows:

- *Migration represents a massive phenomenon, with 1 billion people on the move today;*
- *In relative terms, percentage of migrants to total population has not increased, or only slightly, but total numbers are higher and complexity has increased: diversification of countries of origin and destination, routes including more stops and overall higher vulnerabilities;*
- *South-South migration remains higher than South-North;*
- *Remittances are important results of migration;*
- *Migration feeds into urbanisation trends;*
- *In West Africa migration routes are long-standing and displacement continues; the Horn of Africa has the largest number of refugees and some of the most long-standing refugee situations;*
- *North Africa (Libya, Algeria) used to be a prime destination. It remains so, but the onward movement to Europe depends from the situation found on arrival;*
- *Latest trends in Europe: in the Eastern Mediterranean we can observe a dramatic decline after the EU-Turkey agreement. So far, there has been no clear diversion to the Central route;*
- *Steady increase in migrant vulnerabilities and need to focus on safeguarding people, itself linked to work on trafficking and how to address irregularity.*
- *Returns need to be addressed with a greater focus on sustainability, thus leveraging the potential to have positive impact on local development.*

The Chair highlighted some key elements related to migration management: numbers (stock and flows) and behaviours in terms of dialogues as well as projects and programmes; criteria for allocations and dialogue are not set in stone (there are more dimensions relating to return, trafficking, and asylum). All our partners are ready for dialogue and actions depend on the intensity of dialogue. In our experience, Niger is a positive paradigm; in Mali dialogue is very high, in Senegal cooperation is not perfect but dialogue is going on bilaterally; in Ethiopia partnership is on mobility, there is no much work on returns but a lot on refugees. In Nigeria, negotiations on readmission agreements are on-going; Sudan is willing to cooperate more; and in Eritrea there is no official dialogue but two programs were adopted by the Operational Committee. As a result of this, there is no ground for negative conditionality as all countries are willing to cooperate one way or the other. Focus should be on win-win partnerships.

SESSION IV – Strategic orientations for 2017

In opening this section, the Chair of the Board highlighted the following points:

- EUTF for Africa has invested EUR 1 billion in different areas;
- Approximately EUR 1 billion will be available for new actions after the approval of the pipeline submitted to the Operational Committee in December;
- In the future, it will be necessary to do more qualitative work based on evidence
- The issue of complementarity needs to be addressed
- The geographical scope of the EUTF should be enlarged by making Guinea, Ivory Coast and Ghana eligible countries.

A number of Board members and observers expressed their views:

The strategic framework of the trust Fund should remain unchanged (**IT, PT, BE**);

The EUTF for Africa should strike a balance among the 5 pillars (**NO, ES**). NOR, however, added that priority should be given to fighting trafficking and illegal networks, returns and reintegration. Capacity building efforts at country level should also be intensified;

The EUTF for Africa should keep acting in full complementarity with other instruments (**FR, PT, SN**);

FR indicated that greater focus should be put on the implementation of approved programs by ensuring the effectiveness of such interventions;

The geographical scope of the EUTF for Africa should be enlarged to Ivory-Coast, Guinea and Ghana (**FR, NL, IT, PT, SN, EG**). **DE** expressed some reluctance to include Ghana among eligible countries due to limited absorption capacity and the current political context;

Funding should be directed to countries producing greater results (**DE, DK**). **MR** on the contrary, stated that all countries should be supported irrespective of their level of performance;

SN stressed the need to focus on awareness campaigns and communications especially among young people;

CONCLUSIONS

The Chair of the Board presented the following conclusions:

1. The strategic framework of the EUTF for Africa is broad and clear enough to remain valid with migration, stability and development as centre of gravity. However, considering resources available for 2017 and the level of knowledge & evidence, the European Commission will be more selective for the actions to be proposed to the Operational Committee, in full synergy and complementarity with other EU instruments, including the European external investment plan

2. The current balanced approach in allocating resources between the five pillars of the Valetta Action Plan should be maintained and the Trust Fund should keep supporting inclusive

dialogues on migration and creating incentives, guided by the Valetta principles of solidarity, partnership and shared responsibility.

3. In terms of geographical scope, and considering the current trends in terms of migration flows, a favourable opinion is given to the enlargement of the scope of the EUTF for Africa to Guinea, Ivory Coast and Ghana.

4. In terms of functional scope, a more selective approach will be pursued for the identification of future projects in order to ensure i) incentive and complementarity (i.e. doing more with those cooperating more), ii) coverage of priority areas (such as security of documents, civil registries, etc.), iii) multicountry, cross-window and cross-cutting projects and iv) interaction with the Rabat/Khartoum process.

5. Collective efforts, including from Member States Agencies, will be needed to speed up implementation and to demonstrate results on the ground in the next months.

6. The next Board Meeting of the EUTF for Africa will be held in June 2017.