



The Africa Europe Climate Alliance

High-Level Group Report
of the Africa Europe Foundation

Towards an Africa Europe Climate Alliance

This report from the Africa Europe Foundation is the product of a dynamic process launched in 2020 under the strategic guidance of the “High-Level Group of Personalities on Africa-Europe relations”. The High-Level Group Report outlines the foundations for an innovative Africa Europe Climate Alliance as the central pillar to revitalise and strengthen relations between our two continents.

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About the Africa Europe Foundation

The Africa Europe Foundation is a platform to inspire and catalyse action in the fight against Climate Change and Inequality within a strengthened partnership between Africa and Europe – two continents with a shared future. The Foundation’s work is orientated by the “High-Level Group of Personalities” composed of high-level experts, much-respected experienced leaders, and co-chairs of Africa Europe Strategy Groups on themes of cooperation critical in both the COVID-19 context and in the face of the ongoing climate emergency.

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Executive overview

History has taught us that major crises create opportunities for accelerating social, economic and political change.

Evolving global dynamics – from the climate crisis to the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic – have exposed a lack of resilience in the fundamentals of life (water, food, energy...) and the urgency to reimagine our common future as Africa and Europe.

The High-Level Group Report on prospects for an “Africa Europe Climate Alliance” has been prepared against this historic backdrop and on the eve of a pivotal year for the Africa-Europe partnership on the global stage.

The Report is the product of a dynamic process carried out during 2020 with a multitude of stakeholders. Firstly, civil society, business and youth sector engagement through the “Debating Africa-EU” virtual dialogues involving hundreds of organisations and run together with AU and EU Commissioners. Secondly, think-tanks, research partners and expert foresight analysts were involved in preparing the Africa Europe Foundation sectoral reports on Agriculture, Energy, Transport and Connectivity, Digital and Health.

The strategic areas of action outlined in this report build on the data, analysis and diverse voices drawn from this far-reaching exercise, and collectively represent the foundations for an innovative “Africa Europe Climate Alliance” based on mutual learning and joint interest.

A first key message is that the High-Level Group (HLG) recognises the strategic opportunities and the potential pitfalls for both continents in working at the nexus of climate and development. This Report, and the engagement of the HLG, does not seek to displace the official negotiation process between the Africa Union and European Union but rather to establish a space for candid exchange and dialogue with a view to finding common ground and purpose, addressing diverging as well as converging issues and approaches, and identifying flagship partnership initiatives that have scale and transformative effects.

A second message is that there is a unique constellation of strategic milestones in 2021 and 2022 to build and deliver on an Africa Europe

Climate Alliance. These include: the sixth AU-EU Summit; the UN Summit on Food Systems and Dialogue on Energy; and the Global Health Summit. The timing of COP26 followed by COP27 in Africa, provides a framework for the Africa-Europe partnership to pivot climate change issues towards a fresh and new narrative, with greater emphasis given to the climate and development nexus.

The HLG Report highlights the strategic importance of climate change to the development agendas of both continents. The Report seeks to ensure that climate issues are not seen as a barrier to Africa’s economic development but are aligned with Africa’s vision of growth and prosperity for its people. The HLG stresses the importance of giving added impetus to green growth and climate resilient development as key to Africa and Europe’s sustainability, economic diversification, and strengthened capacity to deal with external shocks. The HLG recognises the devastating impact of COVID-19 globally but also the opportunity this provides to take a step back and recalibrate the response to immediate and longer-term challenges.

In terms of transforming dialogue into action, the HLG recognises two priority areas that are central to long-term transition and which demand major new sources of investment: sustainable energy and agri-food systems. Working at the interconnection of these sectors is also key. Energy provision remains critical for unlocking new sources of value-added growth in agriculture, and an energy revolution led by the agriculture and food sector can enable rural economic growth and diversification – including digital transformation and access to health, education services, and new markets.

Knowledge sharing and multi-stakeholder ownership must underpin an innovative Climate Alliance and provide key principles for the new Africa Europe Foundation Strategy Groups on Agriculture and Energy that were launched in December 2020. The Strategy Groups will be mandated to identify immediate steps which can be taken and catalytic initiatives to transform the Report’s recommendations into implementable actions.

Strategic areas of action

In the short-term, immediate measures in the domains of Agriculture and Energy include:

- Addressing the urgent needs of the most vulnerable populations impacted by COVID-19 and health issues as a result of climate change, including strengthening adaptation measures and assessing the gap in food and energy provision in different areas; and identifying the best means to bridge this gap – such as food distribution, energy access, cash transfers, food for work, and so on.
- Facilitating technical assistance measures for medium to large-scale investment in grid, off-grid and mini-grid schemes as well as programmes for restoring soils and preserving natural ecosystems that attract public and private capital, nurture blended finance and benefit local and regional economic development while tackling climate change.
- Rolling out clean cooking solutions to: ensure a safe daily environment for women and youth in rural and urban settings; fight deforestation; cut black carbon pollution; and address existing and future pulmonary and related health issues for women, children and the most vulnerable, while engaging with others to leverage the climate finance and action needed to radically transform the situation.
- Strengthening regulatory and training capacities with a focus on building up a cohort of regulators with a strong understanding and ability to: deliver credible, long-term regulatory mechanisms in different countries; encourage investment; and, with capacity to work peer-to-peer, enable this transformation with digitalisation and online courses.
- Integrating clean energy solutions and access as part of Africa's broader strategy for enhanced intra-regional trade, industrial development, local processing facilities and strategic beneficiation in key minerals of importance to the clean energy revolution, particularly as Africa holds significant reserves of rare-earths and other minerals.
- Laying the foundations of long-term sustainable African and European food systems through strengthening the resilience of local food systems, including livestock and fisheries, and the local economy including using decentralised structures to fund investment in climate resilience measures.

Medium-term measures in the domains of Agriculture and Energy include:

- Sustainable land-use and natural resource management linked to climate action, which recognises the need to strengthen local governance over land and natural resources, and identify priority investments for adaptation and build resilience at field, settlement, and wider landscape scales.
- A territorial approach for income and job creation, increased social protection and reduced inequalities, recognising the need to take into account the spatial, governance and generational dynamics that characterise a region or territory and that a transition to sustainability needs to be anchored in local dynamics, identity and culture.
- Sustainable transformation of African and European agriculture, through promoting farmer-to-farmer knowledge sharing, building solidarity strengthening decentralised energy access at farm and community level, and building systems for soil, water, nutrients, and seed which enhance resilience. Existing and new agri-digital technology offers farmers an array of options to help decision-making, in the face of changes in weather patterns, market information for crops and inputs, and other critical factors to ensure the success of local farming.
- Innovation and emerging technologies for sustainable energy, energy access, energy efficiency and the circular economy. To achieve progress by spurring innovation and facilitating exchange of technologies and processes between Africa and Europe and establishing partnerships on knowledge-innovation that are currently being deployed at scale or not yet mature but with great potential, for example renewable hydrogen, geothermal energy, waste-to-energy, biomass for energy and offshore wind
- Empowering indigenous communities with 80% of remaining biodiversity being in indigenous lands.

SECTION 01

Realising a shared vision: at the nexus of climate and development

The High-Level Group recognises the need to reinvigorate the current narrative of climate change from a focus on challenges, risks and vulnerabilities to viewing it as an opportunity to transform sectors and to unlock new avenues for development.

We will work at the nexus of climate and development

Addressing climate change and pursuing economic development have traditionally been viewed as separate, even sometimes antagonistic objectives, involving difficult trade-offs between reducing carbon emissions and stimulating industrial activity. However, as the necessity of addressing climate change becomes ever more pressing, and technical and scientific interventions become more accessible, this framing has been challenged. The continued socio-economic and political impact of COVID-19 on countries all over the world has also raised serious red flags about our collective ability to deal with climate change impacts, and provided important insights into what is required to improve our resilience. As such, governments and people across the world are beginning to re-examine the relationship between climate change and development, recognising not only the urgent necessity of building climate resilience but also the vast opportunities that climate change interventions have to unlock new avenues for development.

At its meeting on 1 July 2020, the “High-Level Group of Personalities on Africa Europe Relations” identified working at the nexus of climate change and development as a strategic opportunity for collaboration between Africa and Europe. The Group highlighted the critical importance of achieving a just transformation based on ecological development.

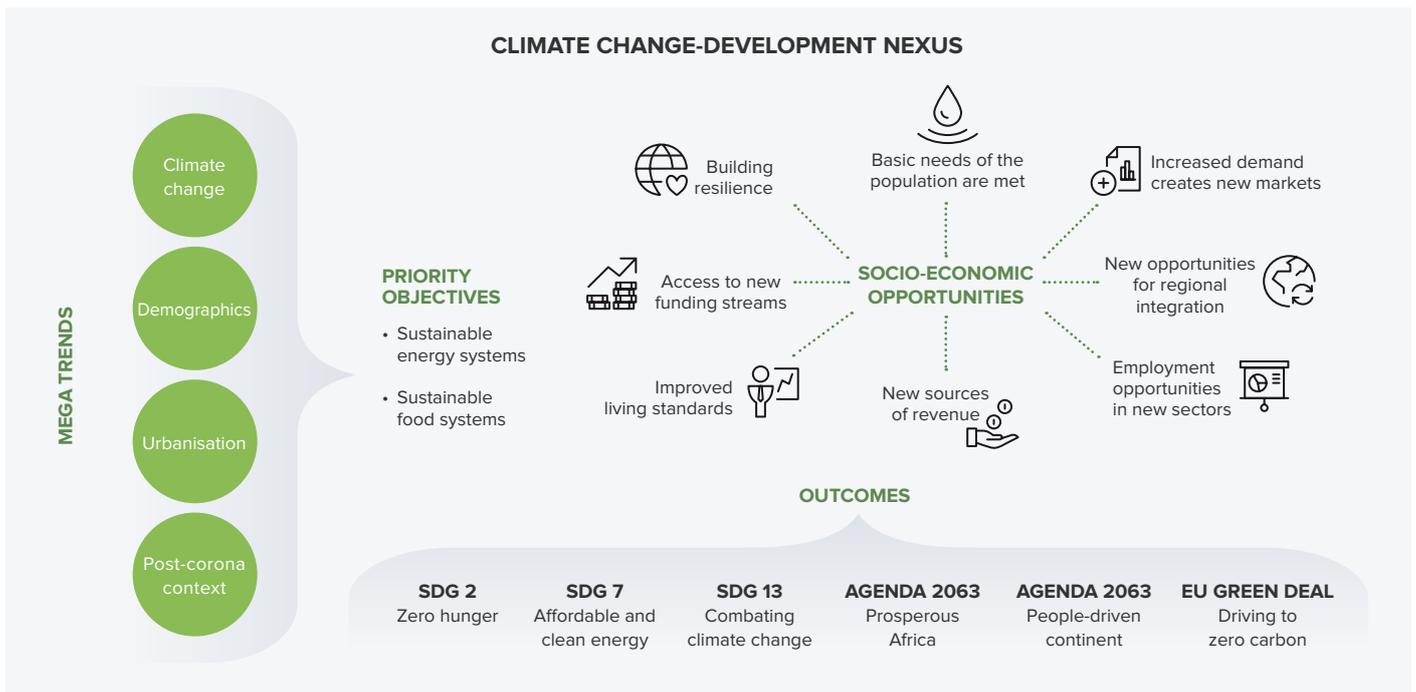
They recommended working towards a zero-carbon economy as the basis for collaboration between the two continents whilst recognising that they have different burdens, roles and responsibilities in reaching this global goal. Recognising the devastating impact that COVID-19 has had globally, the Group also emphasised the opportunity that this provides to take a step back and recalibrate responses to the immediate and longer-term challenges that we all face. In this context, it suggested that an Africa Europe Climate Alliance would provide an opportune vehicle through which to identify ways to unlock new avenues for sustainable economic and social development on both continents over the years to come.

Opening the next chapter in Africa Europe relations and seizing the opportunity for a new model

Countries throughout Africa and Europe face the daunting task of managing the social, economic and political impact of COVID-19. However, there is also a window of opportunity for both continents to steer their recovery on a path that invests in low carbon development and builds greater resilience against climate change. COVID-19 therefore presents an ideal moment for Africa and Europe to pioneer an Africa Europe Climate Alliance that — through mutual learning and close collaboration — can unlock the opportunities that exist to drive recovery at the nexus of climate change and development.

The Climate-Development Nexus

Within the Africa-Europe partnership context, it makes sense to treat climate change and development issues as being one and the same rather than two separate aims with different solutions. Mitigation, adaptation and resilience strategies that speak to the climate change agenda cannot be addressed without also redressing pressing issues such as poverty, inequality and the need for inclusive economic growth. The High Level Group Report stresses the importance of giving added impetus to green growth and climate resilient development as key to Africa and Europe’s sustainability, economic diversification, and strengthened capacity to deal with external shocks.



At the meeting of 1 July 2020, the High-Level Group identified two priority areas for enhanced cooperation in this regard, namely, supporting energy transitions and access; and developing climate-resilient agriculture and sustainable food systems. From Africa's perspective these two sectors are key to generating economic growth, jobs and structural transformation, improving resilience, and realising socio-economic development. From Europe's perspective, these two areas of cooperation are in line with its climate mitigation and adaptation strategies, and ambitions for global climate diplomacy.

"Building a strong Africa Europe Climate Alliance allows both continents to pool their intellectual capacity to develop strategies to simultaneously build climate resilience and unlock new opportunities for economic and social development"

There are also common challenges in the fields of energy and agriculture that provide opportunities for peer-to-peer learning. Europe, for example, has pledged to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% by 2030, compared to 1990 levels. This will necessitate a rapid growth in clean power generation and transmission, and significant improvements in energy efficiency. While Africa's energy challenge combines universal access with a large increase in generation, the need to address its energy deficit using the most cost-effective technologies will itself necessitate a significant roll out of clean energy solutions. Both continents need to invest in "smart" grids with much greater capacity.

In the field of agriculture and food systems, both continents are experiencing changes in weather patterns, which are impacting production. More extreme weather events, like droughts and flooding, are evident in both Europe and Africa, as are more erratic rainfall patterns, heat waves, and high levels of water stress in some parts. Soils on both continents are also under pressure, losing fertility, structure and biodiversity, which impact on agricultural productivity. Realising the availability of nutritious, healthy food for all while reducing greenhouse gas emissions, adapting to climate change, and reversing biodiversity loss is thus a common and complex challenge for both continents going forward.

Thus, while African and European countries have different starting points when it comes to energy and agriculture, they have many common goals. Building a strong Africa Europe Climate Alliance allows both continents to pool their intellectual capacity to develop strategies to simultaneously build climate resilience and unlock new opportunities for economic and social development.

A foundation for collaboration: building on the UN Agenda 2030 and the AU Agenda 2063

While there are varied approaches to climate action, there are strong synergies between Africa and Europe and a great deal of common ground on which to build a strong Africa Europe Climate Alliance. The Africa 2063 Agenda specifically targets Zero Hunger (SDG 2), Affordable and Clean Energy (SDG 7) and Climate Action (SDG 13). Africa and Europe are committed to full implementation of the 2015 Paris Agreement and 2016 Marrakech

Action Plan adopted at COP22. These take into account the commitments on climate finance made in Copenhagen (2009) with a target of reaching USD 100 billion per year by 2020, to support developing countries in responding to climate change. The AU and EU have also committed to invest in climate change mitigation and adaptation, disaster risk management and reduction, as well as the sustainable management of natural resources and ecosystems. They recognise the importance of energy efficiency and roll out of renewables as well as the need to ensure food security and to take stringent action to deal with climate change challenges in agriculture. By doing so, both parties are strong supporters of the African Renewable Energy Initiative (AREI) and their strategic alliance through the AU-EU Energy Partnership (AEEP).

“Africa Europe Strategy Groups will revitalise EU-Africa relations by offering a space for the emergence of catalytic initiatives and create the right ecosystem for transformation and forward thinking”

An Africa Europe Climate Alliance can work towards meeting all global goals completely across both continents by 2030. Europe has emphasised this ambition with the Joint Communication Towards a Comprehensive Strategy with Africa, published in March 2020, and in view of the 6th AU-EU Summit to be held in 2021. Africa and Europe have set challenging domestic targets for sustainability, under both the Africa 2063 Agenda and the EU Green Deal, which offer two independent but complementary platforms for mutual learning between governments, businesses and citizens within and between Africa and Europe.

Starting in 2021, the next two years will be critical for raising global ambition and realising the investments

required to achieve the SDGs as framed by the Decade of Action. Landmark international events in 2021 include the UN Summit on Food Systems and the UN High-Level Political Dialogue on Energy, as well as the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) COP26 to be hosted in the UK in partnership with Italy and the subsequent COP27 that will take place in Africa in 2022.

In this context, the High-Level Group is calling for a two-pronged approach. The first involves enhancing political commitment at the highest level to ensure the Africa Europe Climate Alliance is established as a central pillar for revitalising and strengthening relations between our neighbouring continents and that it is an initiative that is truly owned by multiple stakeholders.

The second involves ensuring the active engagement of Member States in amplifying the impact and reach of multi-stakeholder Africa Europe Strategy Groups to be launched on the eve of 2021 in the domains of energy transitions and access, and climate-resilient agriculture and sustainable food systems. These will provide a multi-stakeholder platform for dialogue and learning between businesses, civil society, researchers, professional groups and policymakers. They will:

- pinpoint the changes that are needed to deliver kilowatts to people’s homes, and food to their plates;
- revitalise EU-Africa relations by offering a space for the emergence of catalytic initiatives;
- create the right ecosystem for transformation and forward thinking;
- and enhance the policy climate to leverage public and private investment in both sectors in the short and medium-term. —

Agency, ownership and leadership: climate action by, with and for young people

Youth communities are hard hit by climate change. At the same time, young people have an important voice in the climate debate and are central to driving climate action as part of a reinvigorated Africa-Europe partnership.

In recent years there has been increasing institutional recognition of youth voice and agency: from the landmark UN Security Council Resolution 2250 on Youth and Peacebuilding to the launch of the first Office of the African Youth Envoy. What will be key will be the mainstreaming of youth voices across all areas and sectors of the Africa-Europe partnership, from sustainable energy and agriculture to health, digital and education. 2021 provides the stage to put young people front and centre in transforming the next Africa-EU Summit into a forward-looking “solutions” Summit. It also implies mainstreaming youth-centred priorities for a new partnership: from climate action to cultural mobility and from economic citizenship to education reform. In the context of COVID-19, surveys carried out among the Mo Ibrahim Foundation’s “Now Generation” network highlight how health risks still rank behind multiple and complex structural concerns such as economic instability and the extent to which youth communities in both Africa and Europe recognise the global health crisis could become an opportunity to amend current policies, either specific to health or economic policy. In looking forward, investment in youth-led intercultural dialogue, exchange and mobility will be key to bringing diverse voices together for climate resilience and adaptability as well as ensuring political initiatives on climate action have the buy-in of citizens across Africa and Europe.

SECTION 02

Theory of change: a strategic focus on food and energy

The High-Level Group recognises two priority areas that are central to long-term transition and which demand major new sources of investment: sustainable energy and agri-food systems. Working at the intersection of these sectors is key.

Energy and food are the fuels that power people and enable economic activity

They constitute critical factors of production and consumption, enabling citizens to unleash their dynamic capacities. Alongside access to better health and education, these two services are vital ingredients for socio-economic development.

Focusing on sustainable energy and agriculture therefore puts human well-being at the heart of the Africa Europe Climate Alliance and lays the groundwork for the structural transformation of African and European economies, for the best interest of their people.

The Africa Europe Climate Alliance can play a vital role in identifying and supporting joint initiatives – scientific, commercial and grassroots – which will enable both continents to achieve their development goals.

Both Europe and Africa face challenges in meeting the energy and food needs of their people, albeit in different ways. In Africa, for example, despite the progress made in the past decade or so, approximately 600 million people still lack access to electricity. This represents around three-quarters of all people living without access to electricity worldwide. Furthermore, 900 million Africans lack access to clean cooking services. In Europe, while the challenge is not one of access, energy poverty is widespread.

Similarly, “end(ing) hunger, achiev(ing) food security and improved nutrition and promot(ing) sustainable agriculture”, as per SDG 2, remain challenges for

both continents, albeit in different ways. In Africa, roughly half of the continent’s population – around 650-670 million people – face food insecurity, with more than 250 million of these people considered to be severely food insecure. In Europe it is estimated that more than half the population is overweight or obese, creating a serious health burden for the continent, while more than 30 million people rely on social protection payments to feed their families.

For Africa, the next decades are expected to bring about continued economic growth and rapid structural change, driven by population growth, digitalisation, and urbanisation. For Europe, the next few decades should see a radical transition to a net-zero economy, bringing people and nature into a closer symbiosis, as envisaged in the Green Deal. Investments in the energy and agri-food sectors thus have the potential to launch the two continents into a competitive, greener, healthier and smarter future, which provides employment for their people.

This is critical given that employment will become an increasing concern for both continents. In Africa, it is estimated that 10-12 million youth enter the job market each year, but that only 3 million of them are able to find employment. In Europe, the impact of COVID-19 has created increased job insecurity amongst its youth.

However, to foster structural transitions in energy and agriculture at the scale and pace necessary to create resilient economies in Africa and Europe, a number of conditions must be met. These include: creating the right regulatory environment for domestic and international investors to commit funds; testing new digital business models; investing in education; and paying deliberate attention to research and development, science and technology.

Fortunately, there is already a strong foundation for joint action and investment, building on existing and complementary attributes on both continents. European firms, for example, are at the forefront of digital and green technologies globally and can offer access to the skills and equipment needed to roll out renewable energy at scale, and to enable sustainable food systems to operate.

“Potential flagship initiatives could include programmes to set up innovation hubs that marry indigenous knowledge with formal science, establishing joint education and training initiatives, and the sharing of data and geographic information systems”

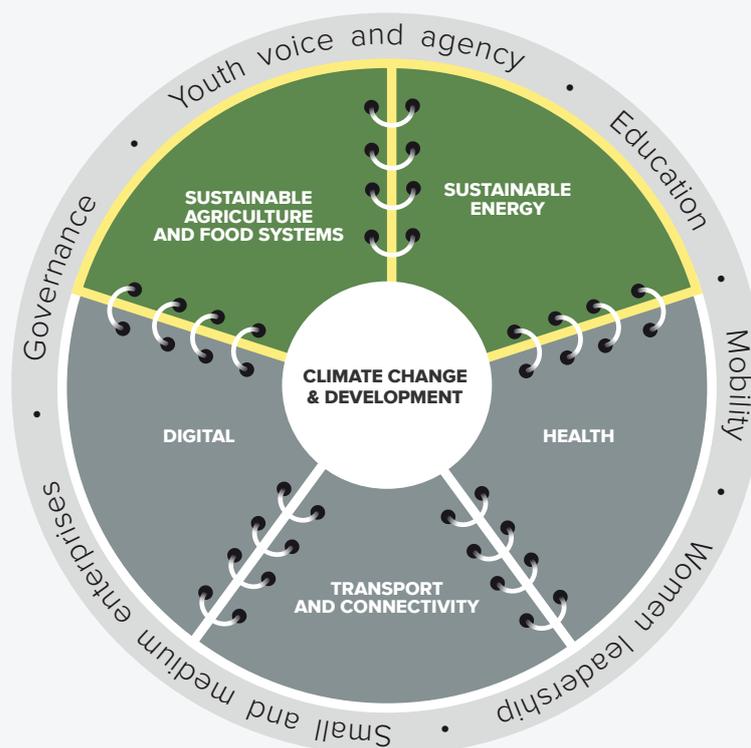
For Europe, green investments in these fields will generate new employment opportunities. African countries are home to a vibrant ecosystem for digital innovation, especially in the SME sectors. In this regard, an important catalyst and area for potential cooperation between the two continents will be the de-risking of future investments. This is an example of one area in which the EU, through its Development Finance Institutions (DFIs) and its Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI), can provide blended finance for African countries.

Fostering knowledge-sharing through the Africa Europe Climate Alliance

Knowledge sharing will be critical for addressing the challenges facing both continents. Creating an environment for the sharing of ideas and experiences brings people together, fosters relationships and enables more robust strategies for realising prosperity and peace. The recent explosion of technological progress and data availability creates a perfect enabling environment to enhance knowledge-sharing initiatives and improve monitoring and accountability.

There is ample scope to develop strong and innovative platforms for knowledge sharing between the two continents with the potential of digital technologies and platforms to bridge the divide and cost of knowledge sharing and exchange. Initiatives could, for example, include the deepening of scientific collaboration and networks; the establishment of African and European Centres of Excellence working together to strengthen the science-policy interface; and the setting up of monitoring processes and observatories. Information services could be created to share experiences with building resilience to climate shocks, reducing uncertainties, informing policymakers and supporting mitigation and adaptation strategies at all scales. Monitoring, reporting and verification tools could be co-developed to understand the impact of initiatives and their transferability. Potential flagship

IN FOCUS: AGRICULTURE-ENERGY NEXUS



initiatives could include programmes to set up innovation-hubs that marry indigenous knowledge with formal science, establishing joint education and training initiatives, and the sharing of data and geographic information systems. The Africa Europe Climate Alliance provides a vehicle through which knowledge sharing initiatives, tailored to meet the needs of both continents, can be developed and tested.

Transforming the COVID-19 pandemic into an opportunity: Building Forward Better and shaping a sustainable future together

While the pandemic has threatened economic progress in Africa and Europe, and exacerbated long-standing inequalities, it has also generated important lessons on which to build. By exposing weaknesses in the current system, this crisis has demonstrated how quickly major and collective steps can be taken when the need is urgent. The crisis has also brought home certain truths, such as the centrality of government in ensuring that people are safe, and the necessity of working together to find common solutions. Far from being the most vulnerable to the virus, many African countries have shown remarkable capacities to prevent pandemic spread, protect the most vulnerable, and provide local health support.

“The COVID-19 crisis has brought home certain truths, such as the centrality of government in ensuring that people are safe, and the necessity of working together to find common solutions”

The COVID-19 pandemic offers a “learning moment” which creates space for thinking through new ideas and strategies that are better able to deliver the transformations all continents need. All countries are formulating ways to spur an economic recovery, to revitalise those sectors that have been damaged and recover those jobs that have been lost by COVID-19’s impact.

The “Build Back Better Greener” message is a call to action to use post-COVID-19 recovery packages to strengthen sustainable development ambitions and to fast-track the “just transition” so as to deliver inclusive economies and realise climate neutrality by 2050. Designing this new pathway offers great potential for joint action and investment by Africa and Europe, working together to align their visions for growth in the form of the Africa 2063 Agenda and EU Green Deal.

In view of the challenges faced by both continents, the High-Level Group believes that Africa and Europe should cooperate in a partnership of equals, developing joint answers to the ever-growing

climate crisis as well as investing and innovating in new pathways for economic, social and cultural progress. Building capacity for resilience, particularly of women, youth and marginalised groups; enhancing participatory governance and democracy; and involving education and research institutions should all be integral to the partnership.

“The High-Level Group believes that Africa and Europe should cooperate in a partnership of equals, developing joint answers to the ever-growing climate crisis as well as investing and innovating in new pathways for economic, social and cultural progress”

Time is of the essence. The groundwork has been laid, but action is urgently needed to deliver energy transitions and build sustainable agri-food systems. The declaration by the African Union and European Union at the 5th AU-EU summit in Abidjan in 2017 spoke of an ‘opportunity for a paradigm shift to an even stronger, mutually beneficial partnership in the spirit of shared ownership, responsibility, reciprocity, respect and mutual accountability and transparency’. More recently, in February 2020, the two Commissions took note of progress made on the priorities set in the 2017 Abidjan Declaration and agreed that there is a need to align positions on a number of specific areas, including: sustainable growth, trade, investment and digitalisation; and climate change and resilient infrastructure.

In all priority areas, both continents reiterated their commitment to support multilateralism as the means to address global challenges. The two Commissions recognised the multiple challenges climate change poses to the development of both Africa and Europe, and to making progress towards the goals of the Africa 2063 Agenda, the EU Green Deal and Agenda 2030. They noted the adverse impacts on food production, health, infrastructure, water resources, migration, peace and security. And the two parties reaffirmed their engagement to implement their respective commitments under the Paris Agreement, based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, in the light of national circumstances.

There is a recognition, given the nature of different pathways to development, that both continents will attach different meanings, approaches and the sense of pace at which they want to make progress on building the sustainable agenda as key elements of their recovery and development programmes.

SECTION 03

The climate alliance: joint ownership and joint action

There is a unique constellation of strategic milestones in 2021 to build and deliver on an African Europe Climate Alliance. Knowledge sharing and multi-stakeholder ownership must underpin the common foundation.

2021 will be a pivotal year for Africa-Europe relations

Preparation of the 6th AU-EU Summit provides a timely framework for leaders on both continents to rethink our future socio-economic pathways and identify tangible steps to “build forward” better and in a sustainable way. There are multiple opportunities for collective leadership by those representing both the African and European Unions, and by individual member states. In both the African and European context, each member state’s particular profile and history bring together an important combination of insights and assets.

For example, in Europe, certain countries have invested heavily in wind-power while others have deep expertise in solar energy, from which they can offer specific knowledge and “can-do” skills. Equally in Africa, each member state of the Union has had to evolve policies and practices to address the unique challenges they face. Africa also holds some of the key minerals that are crucial for solar and wind-power industries. Africa therefore has an interest to optimise the benefits of the new climate economy as it seeks to expand the scope of use of these technologies and develop its own industrial capabilities.

“In both the African and European context, each member state’s particular profile and history bring together an important combination of insights and assets”

The new European Commission has identified climate change as its biggest concern, and the EU Green Deal as its flagship initiative. Similarly, the African Union’s 2063 Agenda speaks of building “a prosperous continent, with the means and resources to drive its own development, with sustainable

and long-term stewardship of its resources and where Africa’s unique natural endowments, its environment and ecosystems, including its wildlife and wild lands are healthy, valued and protected, with climate resilient economies and communities.”

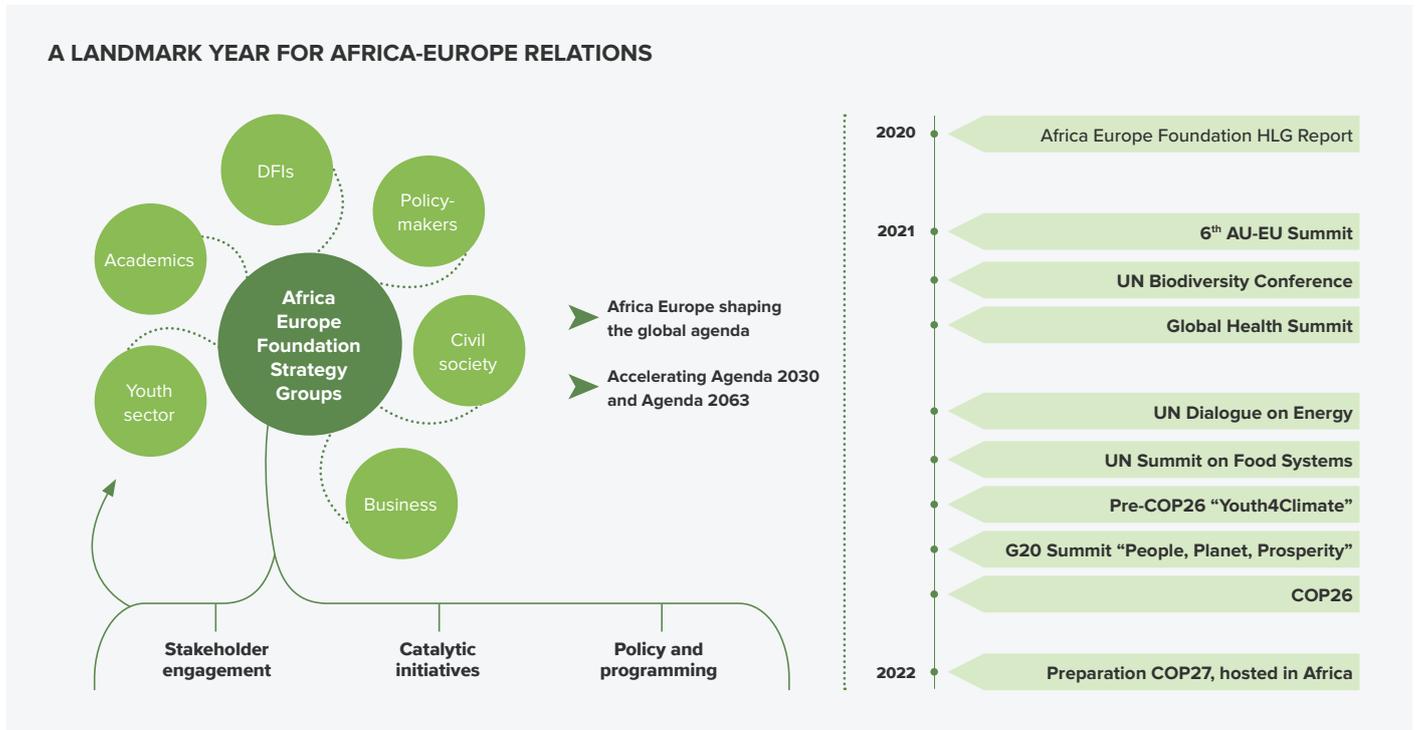
At the next Summit, the emphasis will be placed on realising these ambitions in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063. In addition to these, critical attention will be devoted to how the transitions in energy and agri-food systems can move beyond words and acquire tangible substance, generating employment and training opportunities.

“Preparation of the 6th AU-EU Summit provides a timely framework for leaders on both continents to rethink our future socio-economic pathways and identify tangible steps to ‘build forward’ better and in a sustainable way”

Political leadership and multi-stakeholder ownership

Achievement of SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 7 (Clean and Affordable Energy) and SDG 13 (Climate Action) needs a clear vision and strategic direction by Heads of States and Ministers. The AU’s 2063 Agenda and the EU’s Green Deal align closely with the SDGs but need to be anchored at national and local levels, to develop context specific, needs informed strategies for realising their objectives.

These strategic visions need to be backed up by sound analysis, based on data describing the current situation and trends looking forward over the next 10-15 years. It is essential to be clear about the targets to be achieved, the pace of progress, the political choices to be made, and the approach to be followed.



Making progress demands a joint effort by many different actors – no single stakeholder has all the answers. Government, business, SMEs, farmers, urban dwellers, NGOs, local communities, labour unions, researchers and others need to collaborate, form alliances, and create joint platforms at local, national and regional levels, to explore solutions which respond to the diversity of contexts faced.

Foundations of the Africa Europe Climate Alliance

Constructing a Climate Alliance as the central pillar of the next chapter of partnership between Africa and Europe means:

- Facilitating a deep understanding of what climate issues and sustainable development options mean for both continents, and how the two continents’ trade and investment policies can be used as enablers of low carbon transitions rather than barriers.
- Strengthening global climate diplomacy, with the AU and EU both looking to take shared leadership

roles at multilateral fora and developing a more closely-aligned common position in the world.

- Working towards an innovative EU-Africa climate partnership that can mobilise investment and launch emblematic projects for a sustainable recovery to “build forward better greener” together.
- Making the most of the diverse strengths offered by the particular assets and ambitions of individual member states, and the weight of the collective response generated by the African and European Unions.
- Reinforcing co-ownership and multi-stakeholder dialogue through the launch of the Africa-Europe Strategy Groups in priority domains of cooperation. Leveraging these Strategy Groups to identify quick wins and catalytic initiatives to transform this Report’s recommendations into immediately implementable actions.

An African-European vision for sustainable energy and food systems

The High-Level Group Report puts priority focus on the potential of food and energy power to accelerate progress to better livelihoods for citizens across Africa and Europe. The COVID-19 health pandemic has exposed the central importance of energy, agriculture and the food economy in both Africa and Europe, and the particular vulnerability of the urban poor and landless people in times of disruption.

There is a historic impetus for African and European leaders to set out a shared strategic vision for sustainable energy and agriculture in the next two decades and prioritise the actions today to transform the societies of tomorrow.

In the domain of sustainable agriculture, Member States of the Africa-EU partnership need to work with a multitude of stakeholders to explore:

- How best to combine increasing agricultural incomes, regenerating soils, and addressing rural poverty;
- Ways to connect small-scale farmers with large-scale commercial systems;
- Combining competitive external trade, alongside meeting domestic food demand;
- Ways to build more climate resilient systems, lowering greenhouse gas emissions and meeting local people's needs;
- Avenues for encouraging domestic investment in agri-food systems; and
- Shifting from industrial forms of agricultural intensification based on high carbon inputs towards climate smart and decarbonised models of agricultural production, in which soil capital and biodiversity are enhanced.

In practice, an African-European vision is likely to seek a balance between these different objectives, and to seek better connections between big and small producers, depending on crop and context.

In the domain of sustainable energy, Member States of the Africa-EU partnership need to accelerate achievement of low carbon transitions and working towards net-zero targets based on alignment with each continent's development needs by:

- Re-designing the renewable energy architecture better to combine central, decentralised and distributed energy provision for both urban and rural areas.
- Upgrading and integrating grid, mini-grid and off-grid renewables generation to enhance energy efficiency and access.
- Diversifying energy suppliers away from reliance on a single state utility to provide incentives for household and community renewable generation, alongside private sector supply.
- Recognising the medium-term value and use of gas as a transitional fuel provided it supports driving a cleaner energy mix and ensures affordable energy access.
- Designing credible long-term regulatory, tax and smart subsidy frameworks, including public-private partnerships and independent power purchase agreements to encourage investment in renewable generation.
- Making the energy sector more resilient to climate change.
- Identifying ways that energy provision can have significant transformative value for the agri-food sector noting that lack of energy currently holds back agri-business at small and large scales, and combining energy with digital access offers major avenues for agri-food livelihoods.
- Establishing just transition mechanisms and funds for both continents where the risks of stranded assets are high, and fossil fuel phase-out needs to be accelerated.
- Establishing mechanisms for concessionary and other sources of finances to support energy transitions that are cost-effective and deployed in ways that enhance economic value and beneficitation.
- Depending on the choices made, regulatory changes and technical assistance must be identified and put in place, and public funds allocated to support this approach.

Strategic initiatives for sustainable energy

In the short-term, immediate measures are required in the post-COVID-19 recovery packages to:

- **Bring energy access and delivery to a new level of political priority**, linking its critical role in delivering the climate change agreement, and in preparation for SEforALL's Africa dialogue in Rwanda, the UN High-Level Energy Dialogue and COP26;
- **Facilitate technical assistance measures for large-scale investment in energy access** in grid, off-grid and mini-grid schemes, that attract public and private capital;
- **Roll out clean cooking solutions**, to ensure a safe daily environment for women in rural and urban settings, fight deforestation, cut black carbon pollution, and address health issues for women and children, engaging with others to leverage the finance needed to radically transform the situation;
- **Strengthen regulatory capacities** through the combined training opportunities represented by the African School of Regulation, which brings together the different schools of training and capacity building across Africa. The aim is to build up a cohort of regulators with a strong understanding and ability to deliver credible, long-term regulatory mechanisms in different countries, to encourage investment, and support peer to peer exchanges; and
- **Integrate clean energy solutions** and access as part of Africa's broader strategy for enhanced intra-regional trade, industrial development and strategic beneficiation in key minerals of importance to the clean energy revolution, given Africa holds significant reserves of lithium, rare-earths, cobalt and other minerals.

In the medium-term, the establishment of an African Energy Leaders' Group in the form of a Public-Private Partnership Platform (PPPP) can bring together high-level African decision-makers. This platform will champion energy delivery in Africa, and encourage a cross-fertilisation of ideas and experience, between political leaders for mentoring and sharing lessons in delivering energy transitions and access for all. It will help matchmaking between European and African businesses and investors in the energy field and create momentum through peer-to-peer learning. Within the African Energy Leaders' Group, targets could be agreed in many aspects of power delivery, of which those listed below are only indicative:

- **Mini-grids:** to enable 10 fast track countries across the African continent to achieve their targets, using these as examples to scale-up progress elsewhere;
- **Reconfigure and ensure state utilities are fit-for-purpose to address and embrace the clean-technology revolution:** to help five struggling power utilities through regulation, finance, planning, training and capacity building, knowledge transfer, peer-to-peer mentoring and EU technical assistance;
- **Accelerate access to renewable energy country-wide for 8 African states** seeking to lower fossil fuel dependency, broaden their energy mix, ensure sustainable energy futures, and improve energy trade-balances;
- **Jointly invest in emerging technologies for sustainable energy and energy access**, to spur innovation and facilitate exchange of technologies between Africa and Europe, establishing partnerships on technologies that are not yet mature but with great potential in both geographies, for example renewable hydrogen, geothermal energy and offshore wind.

Strategic initiatives for sustainable food systems

In the short term, immediate measures are needed in the post-COVID-19 recovery packages to:

- **Address the urgent needs of the most vulnerable African populations** impacted by COVID-19 and, in certain countries and regions, by the plague of locusts. Key steps include assessing the gap in food provision in different areas, and the best means to bridge this gap – food distribution, cash transfers, etc. Launching a systematic campaign immediately against locusts to prevent them spreading further is urgent, alongside ways to ensure the 2021 farming system is well-prepared.
- **Lay the foundations for long-term sustainable food systems** through strengthening the resilience of local food systems and the local economy, including through using decentralised structures to fund investment in climate resilience measures.
- **Bring climate action to a new level of political priority** through committing to an Africa Europe Alliance on Climate and agreeing the early stages of bringing this Alliance into being.

In the medium-term, it is vital to transform Africa's agri-food sector and rural economy, aligning with the principal axes of the Food Systems Summit being prepared for September 2021 by taking forward the following priorities:

- **A territorial approach for income and job creation**, recognising the need to take into account the spatial and governance dynamics that characterise a region or territory. A transition to sustainability needs to be anchored in local dynamics, identity and culture, and ensure participation by local people in management of land and natural resources. In relation to the Food Systems Summit, it is about raising incomes, distributing risks, and promoting full employment and decent work for all to advance equitable livelihoods and value distribution. Investment is needed to encourage economic activity and bring life back to rural areas.

- **Sustainable land and natural resource management linked to climate action**, which recognises the need to strengthen local governance over land and natural resources, and identify priority investments to build resilience at field, settlement, and wider landscape scales. Examples include: The Devolved Climate Finance (DCF) mechanism – an innovative model for building sustainable and climate-resilient livelihoods at the local level in Kenya, Mali, Senegal and Tanzania. European landscapes need to develop similar decentralised methods for climate finance. In relation to the Food Systems Summit, it is about building greater resilience to climate shocks, reducing emissions and sequestering carbon, and regenerating critical ecosystems to boost nature-positive production at sufficient scales.
- **Sustainable transformation of African and European agriculture**, through promoting farmer-to-farmer knowledge sharing, building solidarity, strengthening renewable energy access at farm and community level, and building systems for soil, water, nutrients, and seed which enhance resilience. Existing and new agri-digital technology offers farmers an array of options to help decision-making, in the face of changes in weather patterns, market information for crops and inputs, and other critical factors to ensure the success of local farming.
- **Development of both the African and European food industry and markets** by building on successful practices, to further strengthen local market connections and infrastructure, training and credit for processing activities, and support to SME associations and cooperatives. The rapid urbanisation and rising incomes amongst urban Africans offer an unparalleled opportunity to develop the African food economy. In the European context, local food producers are gaining ground through association with territory and cultural attributes. In relation to the summit, it is about reducing waste, improving nutrition for the most vulnerable, generating new jobs from agri-food processing, supporting innovation, and strengthening local market connections.

Thinking ahead

COVID-19 has forced tectonic shifts in thinking on both continents. There is a recognition that the old way of doing things is no longer tenable and is simply not capable of dealing with long-term and long-run vulnerabilities on both continents.

Climate change presents risks of additional, external shocks, and the ability of the Africa-Europe partnership to turn climate change vulnerabilities into strategic interventions and investment opportunities needs to be enhanced.

The High-Level Group Report of the Africa Europe Foundation outlines an innovative Climate Alliance to respond to the rapid pace of events as part of a reinvigorated and reimagined Africa-EU partnership.

Such a partnership must be of mutual benefit – a partnership of equals on a confident footing, able to accommodate each other's vision for the future. Such a platform is timely, and necessary to shape outcomes from the succession of global meetings in 2021 and 2022, anchored by COP26 and the preparation of COP27 hosted in Africa, which could do so much to put our continents on the path to a sustainable future.

The High-Level Report is conceived as a living document and its launch in December 2020, on the eve of a pivotal year for Africa-Europe relations, aims to widen and deepen the debate among the peoples of Africa and Europe – two continents with a shared future.

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This report is the combination of work undertaken during 2020 by the founding partners of the Africa Europe Foundation and under the strategic guidance of members of the “High-Level Group of Personalities on Africa-Europe relations”.

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