



**PROSPECTS FOR AFRICA –
EUROPE'S POLICIES**

The VENRO-Project on the
Africa-EU-Partnership



PRESS RELEASE

13/2009

People in Africa left out VENRO calls for U-turn in Africa-EU Strategy

Bonn, 28.04.2009 –The Joint Africa-EU strategy will only be able to reckon with success if civil society is more strongly involved in the process. So far, the interests of the African population have only been given insufficient consideration, the Association of German Development Non-Governmental Organisations (VENRO) criticises on the occasion of the meeting between European and African ministers, held in Luxembourg on the 28th April.

“The Strategy explicitly guarantees people’s participation. But this is only on paper and has nothing to do with reality,” says Deputy VENRO Board Chair Christa Randzio-Plath. She adds that there are hardly any representatives of civil society in the Joint Expert groups. However, the topics addressed there, such as energy security, trade, climate change and gender justice, affect the poor population and the women of the African continent in particular.

At the Troika Meeting on the 28th April, progress made so far with the Joint EU-Africa Strategy, adopted in Lisbon in 2007, is to be examined. In addition, working programmes are to be submitted on the implementation of the strategy, which stands for a partnership “at eye level” between Africa and the EU. All in all, the plan of action comprises eight topics, including economic development and good governance.

Energy security is a further topic affecting both continents. “It has to be ensured that the population, especially those people living in Africa’s rural areas, are sustainably provided with energy in a climate-friendly manner. Renewable Energies need to be promoted both in Africa and in Europe,” Randzio-Plath stresses and adds that, in addition, the challenges of climate change have to be given sufficient consideration. This requires that the African countries be provided with European know-how as well as adequate finance.

From the 6th to the 7th April, a conference was held in Kenya’s capital of Nairobi with representatives from civil society organisations in Africa and Europe. At the end of the conference, a document was adopted containing the demands of civil society on the Joint Africa-EU Strategy.

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VENRO, reg. Ass., is the Association of Development German Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs). Its membership comprises around 120 German NGOs operating in the areas of private or Church development co-operation, humanitarian aid and development education, public relations and lobbying activities.

With the project “Prospects for Africa – Europe’s Policies” VENRO aims at making an active civil-society contribution on the implementation of the Africa-EU Strategic Partnership. The project is planned as a follow-up on the successful EU presidency project of VENRO and will continue for the next two years until December 2010. The German and African participants work out first statements on the main topics of the project Energy and Climate, Regional Integration and Trade as well as Gender and develop joint statements towards policy makers. The project is co-funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).