



Choosing a common future in a rapidly changing world

Charter of the Africa-Europe Foundation

Africa and Europe are two continents historically bound together by geographical neighbourhood and by shared cultural and linguistic ties. This constitutes key building blocks for a fresh and modern partnership in the face of existential global challenges. Our two continents can work together, collaborate in mutually beneficial ways, and “invest in the next generation” as the foundation for a prosperous and sustainable future.

The Africa-Europe Foundation (AEF) is a network of citizens and leaders from all walks of life across both continents, united by a passionate belief in this vision, and a commitment to work towards it. Together we have spent the last year in dialogue exploring the challenges and opportunities we face. Our exchanges, together with the [#reimagineAfricaEurope](#) global consultation, have exposed a growing appetite for a deeper partnership between the peoples of Africa and Europe; a partnership that includes civil society, cities and local authorities, the private sector and, in priority, young people. Against this background, the forthcoming AU-EU Summit represents a significant milestone in which to break new ground towards our shared future.

We believe that each continent brings unique strengths and resources to this partnership, and we can choose to use these strengths to build shared prosperity and stability based on common values. By the middle of this century, our two continents will comprise an even more significant proportion of the world’s population. Together we can become a powerful unifying global player; geopolitically and economically, counter-acting polarising forces, and fighting for our core values of inclusivity, equality of opportunity and justice.

To succeed we must acknowledge the prevailing power dynamics and inequalities of where we stand, build a strategic vision for where we want to go, and commit to take the necessary steps together, to make sure that commitments made are implemented.

Where we stand

The existing Africa-Europe relationship, as the past eighteen months have so vividly illustrated, is not a partnership of equals. The responses to the COVID-19 pandemic and climate emergency have highlighted the clear economic and power imbalances between our continents – unequal allocation of vaccines, unfulfilled pledges on climate finance and an increasing gap when it comes to energy access across our two continents - are examples which have served to undermine trust between peoples, nations, and continents. Acknowledging this, we need to take steps to repair the damage that has been done in order to build a solid foundation for our future partnership.

We share an extremely difficult prognosis in the near future, albeit with different trajectories. We both face major economic and social disruption in the coming decades. The climate crisis will affect all of us though these effects are not distributed equally. Relevant social and economic opportunities are out of reach for too many young people - particularly in Africa which is experiencing a youth boom,

while Europe's aging population is putting increasing pressure on governments. Technological shifts are already disrupting the economic and political order. We are likely to see future pandemics but have yet to emerge from the current one.

Where we want to go – A renewed, refreshed, and respectful relationship

Bring our people together: This is about the relationship between two continents, between the African people and the European people. It transcends the institutional relationship between the European Union and African Union, and between their member states. Young people and diaspora communities can play a central role in strengthening the exchanges and connections between the people of Africa and Europe. Moreover, we need to overcome the negative narratives running high within public opinions on both continents. We need to also highlight success stories and positive perspectives, challenge misperceptions and expand the reach of cultural mobility opportunities for young people on both continents.

Address our common challenges together: Business as usual is no longer an option – given the myriad of strengths and assets on both sides of the partnership, new ways of working, led by new actors need to be brought to the table. Africa has a large and dynamic youth population who lack economic opportunities. Europe has an aging population with liberal access to economic resources. Europe has power in the governance of international institutions and the regulatory tools with experience to direct private capital and shape markets; Africa has the natural resources required to secure a global energy transition. Both continents have the potential to open up space for existing youth innovation and entrepreneurship. By acknowledging and respecting our divergences in approach, we will be able to commit together what we each have and support specific initiatives to address our common challenges. We must also firmly shift from the current 'donor-recipient' model of development and introduce more focus on partnership opportunities to address our shared challenges from climate and pandemics to security and youth economic inclusion.

Act together on the world stage: With geopolitics veering towards a dangerous power competition between the US and China, among other multiple partners vying for influence, neither Africa nor Europe want to be pawns in this power struggle. Both continents are deeply committed to multilateral cooperation and the shared values embodied in the UN's Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063. Through the building of a diplomatic alliance, the two continents would be in a stronger position to address common challenges that require a shared position. The establishment of a strong and firm centre ground - geopolitically and metaphorically – can offer the opportunity to form a meaningful global player together on various challenges.

What we can commit to together

As a first step we must work together effectively to end the COVID-19 pandemic and limit the impacts of its economic and social aftershocks. We must ensure that 70% of the population in each country is fully vaccinated by September 2022 by providing the necessary economic support through: recycling IMF Special Drawing Rights, replenishing the World Bank's International Development Association and delivering the necessary innovative finance mechanisms. Through this, we will then have a platform for a more viable approach to health sovereignty, long-term health systems stability and anticipating the needs of future health workforces. One clear priority remains building the capacity to manufacture vaccines and other medicines within Africa.

We must then work together to tackle our most pressing challenges.

Post COP26, addressing the urgent need to invest in mitigating global warming to 1.5 degrees and offering mutual support to adapt to the changing climate, while responding to the health, economic and social needs facing both continents. With COP27 in Egypt acting as a platform for African countries and the continent as a whole to take the lead in the fight against climate change, Europe must show support and solidarity in both preparation and targets for the conference. Central to this is ensuring equitable and affordable energy for the 600 million people across Africa who still do not have access to power, and that enables industrialisation, economic diversification and sustainability on the African continent. An immediate first step should be investing in clean cooking solutions, both as a public health measure and an environmental one.

Addressing the future of work and ensuring economic inclusion for young people on both continents is a complex challenge which will require the combination of our respective strengths. Africa brings abundant natural resources, a vibrant labour force and an appetite for innovation and creativity. Europe brings regulatory experience, capital investment and technical know-how in building infrastructure. AEF believes that these distinct strengths can be leveraged to mutual benefit. However, to do so, migration, too often used as a smokescreen by politicians and now a sticking point in intercontinental dialogues, will need to be addressed. In the most immediate term, the need to better manage and facilitate mobility, both intra-continental and between an ageing continent and one going through a youth population boom is the first step toward the economic inclusion of the next generations. Looking long-term, Africa-Europe cooperation projects should embed youth employability and decent work opportunities as a priority criterion, addressing the mismatch between youth aspirations, training, jobs and market demand and prioritising youth access to housing, education, and cultural institutions. We recommend shifting the paradigm that has defined regional cooperation to date by agreeing an overarching impact indicator focused on youth participation, mobility, and employability.

The AU-EU relationship, historically, has suffered from a lack of trust, credibility, and visibility among the people of the partnership. This partnership will only have meaning if acceptance of its gains and benefits are understood by our societies.

The forthcoming Summit, therefore, needs credible outcomes, continuous follow-up, and effective monitoring, coordination, and delivery mechanisms. To ensure this, and embed ownership at all levels, we must create space for all stakeholders, including civil society, private sector, cities, media, and youth, and make sure they are involved in evaluating progress on the commitments made, advocating on programmes for those commitments and facilitating practical areas of implementation. We cannot wait for another Summit before taking action.

High-Level Group of Personalities on Africa-Europe Relations

The High-Level Group of Personalities on Africa-Europe Relations was co-founded by **Mo Ibrahim**, Founder and Chairman of the Mo Ibrahim Foundation, **Etienne Davignon**, President of Friends of Europe, Belgian Minister of State and former Vice- President of the European Commission and **Bono** Co-Founder of the ONE Campaign

The Group now represents the steering group of the Africa-Europe Foundation, providing the political and strategic orientations for the work of the Foundation; it is composed of representatives of the partner organisations, High-Level individuals as well as co-chairs of the Africa-Europe Strategy Groups affiliated to the Foundation:

Mo Ibrahim Co-Chair of the Africa-Europe Foundation, Founder and Chairman of the Mo Ibrahim Foundation

Etienne Davignon Co-Chair of the Africa-Europe Foundation, President of Friends of Europe, Belgian Minister of State and former Vice- President of the European Commission

Ellen Johnson Sirleaf Honorary President of the Africa-Europe Foundation, Former President of the Republic of Liberia and Nobel Laureate

Mary Robinson Honorary President of the Africa-Europe Foundation, first woman President of Ireland and Chair of the Elders

Louise Mushikiwabo Co-Chair of the Strategy Groups of the Africa-Europe Foundation, Secretary General of the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie and former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Rwanda

Chrysoula Zacharopoulou MEP, Co-Chair of the Strategy Groups of the Africa-Europe Foundation, Vice-Chair of the Development Committee at the European Parliament

Ayodeji Adewunmi Co-Founder & Director, Emprego Holdings

Clare Akamanzi Chief Executive Officer of the Rwanda Development Board

Yvonne Aki-Sawyer Mayor of Freetown

Zeinab Badawi Chair of the Royal Africa Society, International Broadcaster and member of the advisory board of Afrobarometer

Fatih Birol Executive Director of the International Energy Agency

Joaquim Alberto Chissano Former President of the Republic of Mozambique and former President of the African Union

Aliko Dangote Founder of Dangote Industries and Dangote Group

Hailemariam Desalegn Boshe Former Prime Minister of Ethiopia and former president of the African Union

Tanja Gönner Chief Executive Officer of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)

Arancha González Former Minister of Foreign Affairs, EU and Cooperation of Spain

Gilbert F. Hounbo President of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)

Mahamadou Issoufou Former President of Niger

Abdoulie Janneh former UN Under-Secretary- General and Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa

Donald Kaberuka High Representative for the Peace Fund of the Africa Union Commission and former President of the African Development Bank

Horst Köhler, former President of Germany and former Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund.

Ramtane Lamamra African Union Commission High Representative for Silencing Guns in Africa and former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Algeria

Pascal Lamy Honorary President of Notre Europe- Jacques Delors Institute and former Director-General of the World Trade Organisation

Mark Malloch-Brown President of the Open Society Foundations and former head of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

Carlos Moedas Former EU Commissioner for Research and Innovation

Festus Mogae Former President of Botswana

Federica Mogherini Rector of the College of Europe and former EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security

Amina Mohammed Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations and Chair of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group

Isabel Mota President of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation

Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala Director General of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and former Chair of the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization and former Minister of Finance of Nigeria

Romano Prodi Former Prime Minister of Italy and President of the European Commission

Minouche Shafik Director of the London School of Economics and former Deputy Governor of the Bank of England

Rajiv J. Shah President of the Rockefeller Foundation and former USAID Administrator

Vera Songwe Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa

Mark Suzman Chief Executive Officer of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

In addition, the following members of the Strategy Groups are ex-officio members of the HLG:

Ousmane Badiane Co-Chair of the AEF Strategy Group on Agriculture, Executive Chairperson of AKADEMIYA 2063

Agnes Binagwaho Co-Chair of the AEF Strategy Group on Health and Vice Chancellor and co-founder of the University of Global health Equity

Gunilla Carlsson Co-Chair of the AEF Strategy Group on Health and Vice-Chair of the Strategy Committee

Bernard Gustin Co-Chair of the AEF Strategy Group on Transport and Connectivity and former CEO, Brussels Airlines

Connie Hedegaard Co-Chair of the AEF Strategy Group on Energy and former EU Commissioner for Climate Action and Chair of KR Foundation

Paula Ingabire Co-Chair of the AEF Strategy Group on Digital and Minister of ICT & Innovation of Rwanda

Elsie Kanza Co-Chair of the AEF Strategy Group on Transport and Connectivity and Ambassador-designate for Tanzania

Kandeh Yumkella Co-Chair of the AEF Strategy Group on Energy and former Chief Executive Officer of Sustainable Energy for All

Executive Committee of the Africa-Europe Foundation

Geert Cami Co-Founder and Secretary General of Friends of Europe

Nathalie Delapalme Executive Director of the Mo Ibrahim Foundation

Saliem Fakir Executive Director of the African Climate Foundation

David McNair Executive Director for Global Policy at the ONE Campaign

Africa Europe Women Leaders Network (WLN)

The Africa Europe Women Leaders Network (WLN) brings together leading personalities from the neighbouring continents to transform dialogue into action on the most pressing issues of the day, from much-needed job creation, to improved healthcare systems and tackling the climate emergency.

The Women Leaders Network was launched on the initiative of the honorary Presidents of the Africa Europe Foundation: Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Former President of the Republic of Liberia and Nobel Laureate, and Mary Robinson, first woman President of Ireland and Chair of the Elders.

As an initiative which aims to unlock new opportunities for action through an enhanced Africa-Europe partnership, the WLN meets on average once a month under the Chatham House Rule allowing informal and trusted discussions across critical areas of inter-regional dialogue. The regular exchanges are also directly connected to the work of the Africa Europe Foundation Strategy Groups which have an initial focus on Health, Agriculture, Energy, Transport and Connectivity and Digital. Gender is a cross-cutting theme for the Africa Europe Foundation and all the Strategy Groups.

Members

Ellen Johnson Sirleaf Honorary President of the Africa Europe Foundation

Mary Robinson Honorary President of the Africa Europe Foundation

Yvonne Aki-Sawyer Mayor of Freetown, Sierra Leone

Zeinab Badawi Chair of the Royal Africa Society; International Broadcaster and member of the advisory board of Afrobarometer

Agnes Binagwaho Co-Chair of the AEF Strategy Group on Health and Vice Chancellor and co-founder of the University of Global health Equity

Samira Bawumia 2nd Lady of Ghana; Chief Executive Officer and Founder of the Samira Empowerment and Humanitarian Projects (SEHP)

Tariye Gbadegesin Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of the ARM-Harith Infrastructure Investment LTD

Sharan Burrow General Secretary of the International Trade Union Confederation

Nathalie Delapalme Executive Director of the Mo Ibrahim Foundation

Bineta Diop Special Envoy of the Chairperson of the AUC on Women, Peace and Security

Kristalina Georgieva Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund

Kate Hampton Chief Executive Officer of the Children's Investment Fund Foundation

Leela Hazzah Co-founder and Executive Director of Lion Guardians, Co-founder & Leadership Council of WE Africa

Connie Hedegaard, Co-Chair of the Africa Europe Foundation Strategy Group on Sustainable Energy; former EU Commissioner for Climate Action; and Chair of the Board for the KR Foundation

Hadeel Ibrahim Board Director of the Mo Ibrahim Foundation and co-Chair of the Board of Directors of the Africa Center New York

Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim Coordinator, Association des Femmes Peules et Peuples Autochtones du Tchad

Agnes Kalibata Special Envoy for 2021 Food Systems Summit

Musimbi Kanyoro Senior Adviser, "Together Gender Equality" UN Global Compact and former President and CEO of Global Fund for Women

Dymphna van der Lans Chief Executive Officer of the Clean Cooking Alliance

Chebet Lesan Founder and Chief Executive Officer of BrightGreen Renewable Energy

Wanjira Mathai Vice President and Regional Director for Africa at the World Resource Institute

Najma Mohamed Policy Director of Green Economy Coalition
Amina Mohammed UN Deputy Secretary-General and Chair of the UN Sustainable Development Group
Vanessa Nakate Founder of the Rise up Climate Movement and Youth for Future Africa
Damilola Ogunbiyi Chief Executive Officer and Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Sustainable Energy for All and Co-Chair of UN-Energy
Sanda Ojiambo Chief Executive Officer and Executive Director of the United Nations Global Compact
Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala Director General of the World Trade Organization
Sheila Oparaocha ENERGIA International Coordinator and Programme Manager
Madji Sock Partner, Dalberg Advisors
Vera Songwe Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
Gunhild A. Stordalen Founder and Executive Chair of the Eat Forum
Halla Tómasdóttir Chief Executive Officer and Chief Change Catalyst for The B Team
Laurence Tubiana Chief Executive Officer of the European Climate Foundation
Sabine Mauderer Executive Board member of the Bundesbank
Margot Wallström Former Sweden's Minister for Foreign Affairs and Vice-President of the European Commission
Chrysoula Zacharopoulou Member of the European Parliament and Vice-Chair of the European Parliament Committee on Development

Observers

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**Africa-Europe Foundation launches its Charter:
“Choosing a common future in a rapidly changing world”**

Read the full Charter [here](#)

Brussels, 2 December 2021 – The Charter of the Africa-Europe Foundation (AEF) launched today on the occasion of its first anniversary event, outlines how Africa and Europe can work together to achieve tangible progress and pave the way for a more equal, prosperous and sustainable shared future.

Ahead of the next AU-EU Summit taking place on 17-18 February 2022 in Brussels, the AEF has released its Charter presenting its priorities to foster economic inclusion, bring youth at the centre of conversations and address the climate-health nexus.

By the middle of this century, Africa and Europe will represent a third of the world’s population. Yet the past months have highlighted the economic and power imbalances between Africa and Europe. The forthcoming AU-EU Summit represents a significant milestone to revitalize the partnership.

Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, honorary co-president of the Africa-Europe Foundation and former Nobel laureate commented that: **“Our Charter builds on the Africa-Europe Foundation’s core belief that both continents have much to offer each other. Neither will solve their respective problems in isolation, rather it is through cooperation that we will be able together to reinvigorate our partnership.”**

If the situation continues, both continents will face major economic and social disruption in the coming decades and young people will suffer the most.

Mo Ibrahim, co-founder of the Africa-Europe Foundation and chairman of the Mo Ibrahim Foundation added: **“Putting young citizens in the driving seat of dialogue and debate is the way forward and critical to finding solutions to Africa, Europe and the world’s most pressing challenges. This is why youth participation in decision making is a central component of our Charter.”**

The Africa-Europe Foundation Charter outlines areas of actions including:

- **Build the capacity to manufacture vaccines and other medicines within Africa.** We must ensure that 70% of the population in each country is fully vaccinated by September 2022 by providing the necessary economic support.
- **Invest in mitigating global warming to 1.5 degrees and knowledge sharing to adapt to the changing climate.** An immediate first step should be investing in clean cooking solutions, both as a public health measure and an environmental one.
- **Address the future of work and ensure the economic inclusion of young people.** Africa and Europe have distinct strengths from the type of resources, innovations, to regulatory and infrastructure experience that can be leveraged to mutual benefit.
- **Shift European perceptions of Africa and African perceptions of Europe.** People across both continents need to understand the potential of the partnerships. The support of a wide range of stakeholders is needed from the media, NGOs, CGOs, corporations, artists, and other personalities.

We must work together on specific initiatives to solve our shared problems and make sure to evaluate progress, implementation and impact during that journey.

Mary Robinson, honorary co-president of the Africa-Europe Foundation and chair of the Elders, emphasized that: *“Whether it’s for health, the climate crisis or other issues, the moment is now and we urgently need bold ideas and action to reshape Africa and Europe’s common future together.”*

The Africa-Europe Foundation Charter is an initiative launched at the AEF’s first anniversary on 2nd December following a year of capturing shared learning and the joint priorities between both continents. It brings together the voices of young people from across Africa and Europe, members, leaders and partners of the Foundation and its Strategy Groups across Health, Digital, Transport and Connectivity, Sustainable Energy, Agriculture and Food Systems.

The full list of recommended priorities of the Africa-Europe Foundation is available [here](#).

The Anniversary meeting of the High-Level Group of Personalities and Women Leaders Network launching the Charter will take place at 17.00 CET. Media are invited to attend [here](#).

Contact us

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Note to editors

About the Africa-Europe Foundation:

The Africa-Europe Foundation is a consortium entity co-founded by Friends of Europe and the Mo Ibrahim Foundation, in partnership with the African Climate Foundation and the ONE Campaign and with a multitude of stakeholders from civil society, business, policymaking and the youth sector across Africa and Europe. The purpose of the Africa-Europe Foundation is to facilitate multi-stakeholder dialogue, catalyse partnerships and unlock new opportunities that can transform Africa-Europe relations into action.

About the Women Leaders Network

The Africa-Europe Foundation Women Leaders Network (WLN) brings together leading personalities from the neighbouring continents to transform dialogue into action on the most pressing issues of the day. The Women Leaders Network was launched on the initiative of the honorary Presidents of the Foundation: Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Former President of the Republic of Liberia and Nobel Laureate, and Mary Robinson, first woman President of Ireland and Chair of the Elders. For more information about the Members of the WLN please click [here](#).

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- Website: africaeuropefoundation.org
- Twitter: [@AfricaEuropeFdn](https://twitter.com/AfricaEuropeFdn)