

Statement of the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy / Vice President of the Commission (HR/VP/)-H.E. Josep Borrell, on the Occasion of the Second AU-EU Joint Ministerial Meeting

Kigali, Rwanda, 26 October 2021

- Thanks Minister of the Democratic Republic of Congo and Chairperson of the African Union Executive Council, Christophe Lutundula. I would also like to thank our Rwandan host, Foreign Minister Vincent Biruta, for his country's very much warm welcome and generous hospitality.
- The **COVID-19 pandemic has been a wake-up call**. It has put the finger on what works and what doesn't work in today's interconnected and interdependent world. It has **accelerated the need to make our partnership fit for purpose**.
- I see **3 interconnected areas where we need, we have to do better together**.
- Firstly, **on our response to the pandemic**. When the pandemic started, Europe was the first continent to put in place a mechanism to show its solidarity with the world, in particular with Africa. Putting in place the mechanisms to save our own people, we worked in parallel to make sure that this answer was global. It has not been as global as wanted.
- Our over 3 billion euros contribution to the COVAX facility, increased sharing of vaccines doses with African countries (maybe not as much as needed). And 100 million euros for vaccination rollout campaigns in Africa are testament of our engagement. **Implementation has been slower than**

expected and the vaccination gap in Africa compared to Europe is significant. Too big the gap. So we need to do better – together – to close the gap. And we need to do it quickly; there is no question about it. The question is how.

- We **also need to continue pushing for more efforts on the debt sustainability front.** Europe has been leading the efforts to put this issue on top of the international agenda. We are working hard to the swift implementation of the G20 Framework on Debt Treatments. We are working hard to increase the allocation of Special Drawing Rights to benefit Africa, in line with the conclusions of the May Summit on the Financing of African Economies. And, together, we should also reach-out other partners to whom Africa holds the most significant part of its debt.
- On the medium to longer term, we are **working on a new Treaty on pandemics.** And we are working **to boost pharmaceutical production for Africa, in Africa.** Because it is the only viable long-term solution to any pandemic. We already invested in facilities in South Africa, Senegal and here in Rwanda.
- The second area for a step change is **building back better and greener.** 3 Bs and G. By combining your resources with your expertise, and vice versa, Europe and Africa can become champions of global sustainable growth. Green growth is not an European agenda imposed on Africa; it is an agenda imposed to all of us by a globalized world.
- This global sustainable growth has **two engines:** a transition to a green, circular and climate-neutral economy **and** digital transformation.

I hear from many of you that **these are also your ambitions**: building sustainable economies, prepared to better face the challenges ahead. We should therefore increase our exchanges on these common ambitions and clarify any misunderstandings on the best way to achieve them. Let's talk frankly and clear.

- In a post-COVID world, our priority should be **promoting economic stimulus programmes and mobilise private and public investments with a high multiplier effect** for economic recovery and job creation.
- **Building back greener..but also building back better by putting people at the centre of our policies and actions** by making women and young people fully part of the equation. By guaranteeing equal access to education, skills, land ownership, decent jobs and finance.
- Africa needs more investments. To bring more investments to Africa, we have put in place new and innovative financial instruments that should help boosting capital flows in Africa by **making investments less risky and more attractive**.
- In the coming weeks, **we will present our new connectivity strategy called "Global Gateway"**. We want investments in quality infrastructure, connecting goods, people and services. We want to create links and not dependencies. We wish to invest with Africa to create a market for green hydrogen that connects the two shores of the Mediterranean. We will focus on transformative projects that offer real competitive advantage. This is a concrete offer, not a mere wish or promise.

- The third and final area I would like to touch upon is working better together for **peace, security, and governance**. We as the EU are putting our strength behind “African solutions to African problems”. Rwanda is an inspiring country, also in Somalia, Sahel, Central African Republic, Mozambique, to name a few. We see those investments in peace and security in Africa “as a bulwark against the perils of global terrorism.”, which is a common threat for all of us.

- The EU is **your number one partner on peace and security issues**. No other partner match the level of our support – without any kind of hidden agenda. No other partner. At all levels thanks to our political, financial and technical support. You are well aware of it.

- But threats are constantly evolving, and **we need to adapt to fight them**. We also need **to work on conflict prevention as much as on crisis management**, to nip conflicts in the bud and avoid their calamitous human and economic consequences.

- But, as President Kagamé said the other day, it is a sentence very much fitted to our times *“No amount of external funding or troop commitment can create sustainable peace without putting governance at the heart of it”*. We must stay alert to challenges to human rights, democracy, the rule of law and good governance, and act in concert when needed. Any attack on these shared values is an attack on all of us. In some cases, internal political miscalculations and other misbehaviors put at risk our support. **Our very significant EU support must be matched with parallel serious**

commitments from our partners. It is a question of effectiveness of our joint efforts, but also a question of accountability vis-à-vis European taxpayers.

➤ Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Colleagues,

Tant de choses ont été dites sur les relations entre l'Europe et l'Afrique.

Tant de critiques récentes ont été formulées, parfois justes parfois injustes.

Des incompréhensions subsistent entre nous et nous devons ensemble les adresser.

Je sais que nous ne sommes pas d'accord sur tout.

Mais nous sommes d'accord sur l'essentiel.

Et cela doit nous permettre d'avancer ensemble.

Ensemble nous sommes plus de 1,7 milliard de citoyens.

Ensemble nous représentons 40% des Etats membres des Nations Unies.

Ensemble nous devons peser sur la marche du monde et le faire évoluer vers un futur plus brillant.

C'est sur cet essentiel que je voudrais que nous concentrions nos efforts.