



The Copenhagen Statement

1. As members of the Africa Commission, we met in Copenhagen on May 6 under the chairmanship of Mr. Lars Løkke Rasmussen, Prime Minister of Denmark.

2. The Commission delivers its recommendations in the midst of a very serious global economic crisis. The crisis has its genesis in the developed world but is already hitting Africa hard. The Commission has factored these challenges into its work.

A REFOCUSED AGENDA

3. At the meeting, we agreed to promote an agenda for international development cooperation with Africa, refocused towards job creation for the growing African youth population. We found that the present global economic crisis underscores the need for African countries and organisations supported by international development partners to follow this course.

4. In doing so, we emphasize that growth which generates productive employment and decent work, will be an effective means of reducing poverty and aid dependency. We also found that job creation is the response to the economic crisis in the short as well as the longer term. We must focus on increasing the competitiveness of the private sector, including agriculture. This will require strong partnerships between the public and private sectors to eliminate barriers to growth.

5. We highlight that growth driven by private investment can and should lead to higher revenues for governments to finance vital social services and infrastructure. It will also contribute to reducing aid dependency of developing countries. Strong growth and employment opportunities are required to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and sustain progress already made in the areas of health, food security and education. We propose that this be recognised by the 2010 UN MDG review conference.

6. We stress that progress on democratic governance is a prerequisite for economic growth and development. Efforts should aim to develop effective and robust public sectors that combat corruption, protect property rights and ensure the rule of law, promote gender equality, and strengthen the role of civil society and the private sector in holding governments accountable.

7. We emphasize that the international community must do more to open markets, including south-south trade. Goods from African countries should be granted full and free access to markets, including through easing rules-of-origin requirements, removing technical barriers to trade and phasing out trade-distorting subsidies. There is a case for allowing African countries privileged access to markets, relative to other developing countries, at least for a limited period of time.

8. We agree that gender equality and improved economic opportunities for women should be promoted by mainstreaming and benchmarking gender equality in all private sector development policies, strategies and actions, and through special efforts by governments, the private sector, labour market organisations, civil society and development partners.

9. We recognize that for development cooperation with Africa to be effective, there must be African ownership and African solutions to African challenges. We recommend development partners direct attention towards private sector-led growth, for example, by supporting African countries' development strategies. International development assistance must build upon and support such strategies.

10. We emphasize that if the political will can be mobilised and jobs created, the energy and talent of Africa's young women and men will be a force for positive change in Africa. The potential of Africa's youth must be realised by giving them influence over policies and strategies. Engaging and including youth in decision-making processes should be promoted at all levels. This will build a strong future platform for democratic governance and human rights in Africa.

11. We do not claim to address all the challenges of Africa. Rather, we highlight priority areas which require urgent action if Africa is to

achieve its full potential. African countries are diverse, and we recognize that there cannot be a 'one-size-fits-all' solution. Our recommendations, which focus on Sub-Saharan Africa, are backed up by existing knowledge and innovative thinking and expand on proven ideas. We are therefore proposing specific actionable initiatives to address the need for greater growth that creates jobs as a necessary condition for sustainable development, reducing poverty and achieving the MDGs. We will target these initiatives to selected countries and institutions that have demonstrated their commitment to using public resources effectively.

FIVE INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVES WHICH WILL CREATE EMPLOYMENT

12. On this basis, we have decided to launch five concrete initiatives which will create growth and jobs for Africa's youth. All initiatives will be implemented jointly by African countries and international development partners, through African organisations. All five initiatives will actively promote gender equality by setting ambitious benchmarks and mainstreaming gender equality in their activities. In our individual and collective capacities, and through the institutions and networks to which we belong, we will support the implementation of these five initiatives:

Benchmarking African Competitiveness

In partnership with the African Union Commission and the World Economic Forum, we will ensure coverage of a significant and increasing number of African countries in the World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Index, and encourage policy impact through measures to engage business and government

leaders in a results-based dialogue on the reforms required to enhance competitiveness.

Access to investment finance and capacity development for small and medium-sized enterprises

We will develop an African Guarantee Fund in partnership with the African Development Bank to foster growth in the availability of financial resources for the investment needs of small and medium-sized enterprises and increase the capacity of financial institutions. Furthermore, we will ensure support for enterprises to improve their business management and technical skills so they can gain access to finance and improve their competitiveness.

Unleashing African Entrepreneurship

In cooperation with the International Labour Organisation we will develop assistance packages for young existing and would-be entrepreneurs that will complement entrepreneurship training with advisory services, mentorship, and access to finance for both rural and urban entrepreneurs. In order to strengthen the sustainability of this initiative, all enterprise support services will be offered through existing local providers, such as business associations, youth-led organizations, private consultancies and training providers, and public agencies.

Access to Sustainable Energy

We will address the African energy deficit in cooperation with the African Development Bank. This initiative will stimulate and expand the emerging market for sustainable energy, primarily in rural areas, by strengthening the role of small and medium-sized enterprises in the delivery and productive use of energy from local and renewable energy sources. It will build upon positive experiences with decentralised

energy systems in Africa and contribute to the Africa-EU Energy Partnership.

Promoting Post-Primary Education and Research

Recognizing that education is both a right and a necessary condition for growth, productive employment and decent work, we will launch an initiative along two tracks that will help ensure that education reflects the needs of both the private and public sectors.

Track One will promote innovative ways to expand demand-driven technical and vocational skills development targeting out-of-school youth, by upgrading existing apprenticeships and developing demand-driven technical and vocational training in underserved rural communities.

Track Two links university education, research and private sector development in sustainable agriculture and agro-business, to increase the business skills of graduates and promote private sector innovation with a special focus on value chains. Closer linkages between universities, research and the private sector will require capacity building. This track will be implemented in partnership with the African Union Commission through its agreement with the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa.

We will work towards fully funding and expanding the Education for All - Fast Track Initiative to include post-primary education, including technical and vocational skills development, as part of a comprehensive approach to education for all.



THE PROCESS: NEXT STEPS

13. The work we have initiated does not end with today's meeting. The success of our Commission will ultimately be judged by our ability to implement our recommendations and provide opportunities for Africa's youth, women and businesses to prosper.

14. We have therefore agreed that we will actively engage with national and international partners in the public and private domain as well as youth organisations in Africa, to promote our refocused agenda for international development cooperation with Africa and our five concrete initiatives. This process will include:

- Working towards recognition by the 2010 UN MDG review conference that strong growth, productive employment, decent work and scaled up and predictable aid are

required in order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

- Working towards anchoring the monitoring and evaluation of our initiatives within the joint secretariat of the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank and the UN Economic Commission for Africa, based in Addis Ababa.
- Promoting our agenda within the framework of the EU Africa Strategy, and by offering our five initiatives as concrete and implementable activities within the individual Partnerships of the Strategy.

ation with Africa and our five initiatives. To review the implementation of the five initiatives and ensure that our work is delivering the results we seek, a progress report will be issued prior to the UN MDG review conference planned for the autumn of 2010. Members of the Commission will be involved in the preparation of this report.

Adopted at the third meeting of the Africa Commission in Copenhagen on 6 May 2009

By adopting the Copenhagen Statement we commit ourselves to promoting this refocused agenda for international development cooper-

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