

Chapter 8: Multilateralism

This chapter deals with commitment 10 in the Final Declaration of the 6th Summit: promoting effective multilateralism.

KEY OBSERVATIONS

Potential areas of action:

- **Africa's growing representation on the global stage presents opportunities to push common agendas in these institutions.** The EU's support for an African Union seat at the G20, and for a third sub-Saharan African seat on the IMF's board could pave the way for future cooperation. Close Africa-Europe alignment on reform processes underway in the UN and Bretton Woods institutions remains critical, including a focus on the next IDA replenishment and joint positioning on the WTO reform ahead of MC13.
- **Further showcasing and strengthening an Africa-Europe partnership as a middle-ground within the global multilateral system is a key opportunity not to be missed.** Efforts can be stepped up on finding common ground to concretely advance multilateral agendas – from health and finance to climate-development. Focus could be on ensuring that the WTO reform process is on target for February 2024, that negotiations around the *Pandemic Treaty* are accelerated, on facilitating a joint positioning at COP28, as well on IDA replenishment.
- **'Partnership of shared values' must not necessarily translate into the 55 AU and 27 EU member states embracing a common position on every issue.** This misconception ignores both the historical contexts and current interests of each AU member state, and realities in Europe too. Coalitions of interest can be encouraged with member states joining forces around issues of joint interest to complement institutional processes, offering greater agility and speed in addressing urgent and complex issues across the board.
- **Partnership means steering away firmly, on both sides, from the donor-beneficiary approach, to embrace the crafting of common solutions and positions to shared challenges.**
- **Coalitions of individual member states grouped around issues of common interest are an important opportunity to complement institutional processes.** Arrangements of variable geometry offer greater agility and speed in addressing urgent and complex transnational issues. Because of limited institutional constraints, the shared interests of a smaller number of more cohesive members, and their greater ability to mobilise resources in support of joint actions, when traditional mechanisms fail or are blocked due to a lack of consensus, should be exploited. Enhanced investment in such diplomatic alliances across the Africa-Europe Partnership could foster accelerated results in all development domains, be it energy access, food security, global health, climate adaptation, mobility, and youth training and employment.
- **The need for frankness about the larger global geopolitical context within which the partnership finds itself, with the EU recognising that Africa cannot be a battleground in a 'new cold war' and the opportunity linked to African counterparts partnering with multiple global actors, including BRICS, in an effort to advance shared agendas; and with the AU acknowledging and transparently communicating about the fact that the EU and its member states remain the largest development provider and trade partner.**

EFFECTIVE MULTILATERALISM

The Ten Commitments Framework	Main Commitments
COMMITMENT 10: Promoting effective multilateralism	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. Promoting effective multilateralism, within the rules based international order, with the UN at its core II. Work towards more converging positions in multilateral fora to reduce global inequalities, strengthen solidarity, promote international cooperation, fight and mitigate climate change and improve delivery on 'global public goods', in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and AU Agenda 2063 III. Supporting the reform of the WTO to strengthen the multilateral trading system IV. Working together to develop WHO international agreement on pandemic prevention, preparedness and response as part of its commitment to multilateralism

I. Promoting effective multilateralism, within the rules based international order, with the UN at its core

Examples of progress to date:

- With the UN at its core, both in Geneva and in New York regular ambassador-level dialogues between the EU, its Member States and the African Group took place.
 - In New-York:
 - » Meeting of the EU and African Group Permanent Representatives to the UN in New York in April 2022, and in February 2023
 - » Meeting of the EU HRVP with the African Group Permanent Representatives to the UN-NY in July 2022
 - » Fourth Trilateral Meeting AU/EU/UN on 18 September 2023 on the margins of the UN General Assembly
 - the trialogue resulted in a call for more robust action to solve crises in the Sahel, the Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes regions, expressed support for financing of African Union-led peace support operations mandated by the Security Council, and addressed actions needed to accelerate just transitions and to address migration between African and Europe.
 - In Geneva:
 - » Sustainable and long-term dialogue between the EU and African Group Permanent Representatives in Geneva launched in May 2022.
 - » Second meeting in November 2022 with subgroups focusing on digital, migration and health.
- The AU was granted permanent membership in the G20 at the Delhi Summit on 9-10 September 2023, with the EU supporting a reinforced presence of Africa in multilateral fora, notably in the G20, as expressed by the European Council in June 2023.
- The 78th session of the United Nations General Assembly reaffirmed Africa's request to drive joint global agendas. Following the AU's G20 seat, African leaders continued to call for reform of UNSG to become more representative and effective. In their addresses to the UN General Assembly, the Presidents of Ghana, Sierra Leone, Namibia, Angola, Seychelles and Liberia all urged the rebuilding of trust and solidarity in the face of the current interconnected global challenges.

- The Africa-EU Partnership is based on shared commitments to pursue the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as well as the AU Agenda 2063. The SDGs provides guidance to global action, with the recently adopted EU Voluntary Review showing the progress in the implementation of the SDGs in its main areas of action, notably in the development of the Global Gateway Strategy in Africa. In this line, UNGA78 clearly exposed the need for more ambitious collective action: the midterm report of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development outlined, that while 12% are on track, close to half, though showing progress, are moderately or severely off track and despite the efforts some 30% have either seen no movement or regressed below the 2015 baseline.

II. Work towards more converging positions in multilateral fora

Examples of progress to date:

- Examples of African and European collaboration in the multilateral system include:
 - UNFCCC: the EU and Africa welcomed the *Sharm el-Sheikh Implementation Plan*. Both continents are committed to the *Paris Agreement* and the outcomes of the COPs.
 - UNCBD: the EU and the Organisation of ACP States called for an ambitious global agreement on biodiversity.
 - UN Water Conference: launch of the new TEI on *Transboundary Water Management in Africa* in March 2023.
 - WTO
 - » Launch of a *climate coalition of trade ministers*.
 - » Ministerial declarations (Emergency response to Food Insecurity; UN WFP Food Purchases Exemptions from Export Prohibitions and Restrictions).
 - » *Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies* setting bunding rules to curb harmful fisheries subsidies, which are a key factor in the widespread depletion of the world's fish stocks. The agreement prohibits support for illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing, bans support for fishing overfished stocks, and ends subsidies for fishing on the unregulated high seas. It also recognises country needs by establishing a fund to provide technical assistance and capacity building to assist in the implementation of the obligations. The EU accepted the agreement in June 2023; Nigeria, Gabon, Gambia, Cote d'Ivoire and Botswana have also accepted.
- Peacebuilding: UN General Assembly *Resolution on Financing for Peacebuilding*, facilitated by Kenya and Sweden and adopted by consensus (September 2022).
- 1st Africa Climate Summit saw a range of partnership announcements and commitments made between European and African countries on adaptation, renewables, digital infrastructure and others. Among such initiatives are:
 - » launch of the *Green Hydrogen Strategy and Roadmap for Kenya* under the EU's Global Gateway Initiative (grants worth \$12 million)
 - » announcement by Germany of a EUR 60 million debt swap with Kenya in return for investments in green projects.
 - » Finland's EUR 3 million commitment to strengthen data governance in Africa with a focus on green transition.

- » Norway's International Climate and Forest Initiative (NICFI) commitment of \$US 25 million between 2023-2026 to support Ethiopia's forest sector, including the conservation of 1.5 million hectares of forests.
- » Portugal signed a guarantee agreement with the African Development Bank worth EUR 400 million euros under the Lusophone Compact, to support investments, principally in renewable energies, in Angola, Cabo Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Equatorial Guinea, Mozambique and São Tomé e Príncipe.
- » Belgium announced EUR 24 million to climate adaptation projects in Burundi, Guinea, Mali, Senegal and Tanzania in 2023 and 2024.
- The Samoa Agreement, signed in November 2023, provides a framework for EU-OACPS partnership, replacing the Cotonou agreement. Complemented by 3 regional protocols for Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific, the Samoa Agreement aims to strengthen the capacity of the EU and ACP countries to jointly tackle global challenges. The EU-Africa Regional Protocol specifically envisions a more prominent role for dialogue between the EU and the AU, aligning with the Comprehensive Strategy for Africa. Pending approval ratification from at least two thirds of OACPS members, the agreement provisionally apply from January 2024.

III. Supporting the reform of the WTO to strengthen the multilateral trading system

Examples of progress to date:

- The 12th WTO Ministerial Conference (MC12) in June 2022 was key for the WTO Reform Process,
 - *Trade Negotiations Committee (TNC)* meeting held on 20 July 2023 ahead of senior officials meeting in Geneva on 23-24 October 2023 prepared a comprehensive process of WTO reform, for delivering meaningful outcomes by the 13th Ministerial Conference (MC13) in February 2024.
 - Informal meeting on WTO reform at the request of the African Group and the EU with a focus on trade and industrial policy (25-26 September 2023).
 - The EU and the African Group part of the process on *dispute settlement reform* the US is leading in Geneva. There is also focus on reforming the *deliberative function*.

IV. Working together to develop WHO international agreement on pandemic prevention, preparedness and response

Examples of progress to date:

- The EU continues to engage with African countries in Geneva to develop a WHO international *agreement on pandemic prevention, preparedness and response (the Pandemic Accord)*. A draft text of the Accord was shared on 16 October 2023 with the agreement expected to be finalised at the *World Health Assembly* in 2024.
- While some progress is under way in developing the Accord, there have been multiple points of contention in the draft texts, including misalignment in demands surrounding IP rights, pathogen access and benefit sharing, financing of research and more broadly issues of national sovereignty and relevant deadlines for agreeing on a pandemic instrument.
- The draft text of the agreement forms the basis of negotiations with multiple convenings scheduled to conclude the process. Following sessions in 2023, two additional meeting rounds are scheduled in 2024: 19 February - 1 March and 18-29 March. These convenings present an opportunity for EU and AU, and their Member States, to work together for a common positioning as part of the negotiations.

Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes regions, expressed support for financing of African Union-led peace support operations mandated by the Security Council, and addressed actions needed to accelerate just transitions and to address migration between African and Europe.

Additional comments:

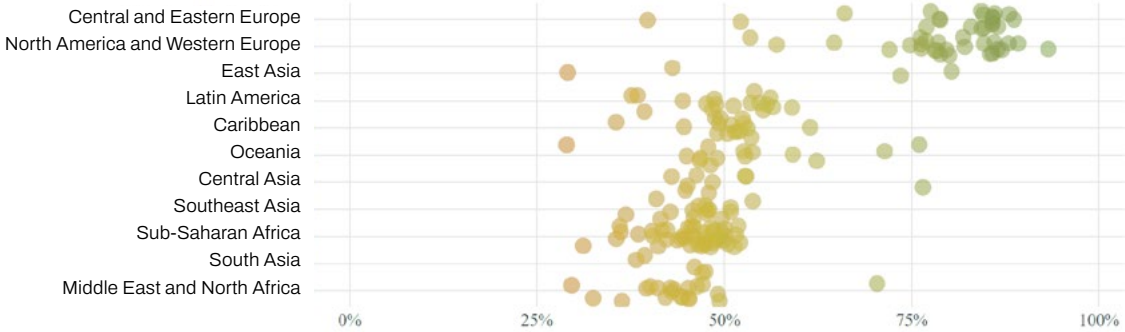
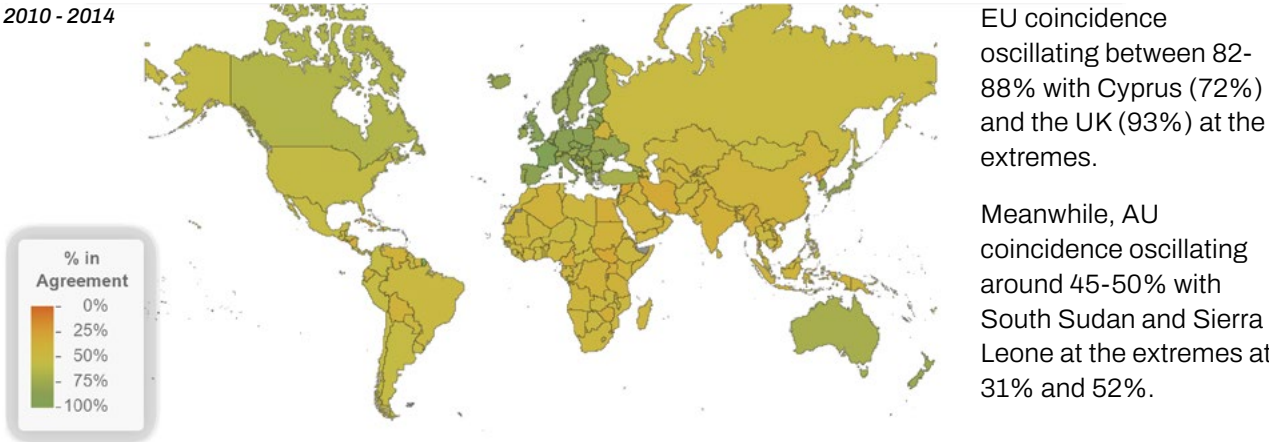
- Progress linked to the reform of the trading system with the WTO as well as a joint response at the WTO to the food security crisis and overall support to the COP process can be seen as positive examples of strengthened collaboration within the global governance framework.
- Historical data on working together through multilateral system indicates decline. In the context of the UN, historical data on voting coincidence between the EU and AU Member States, as expressed in coincidence with the French vote, shows that alignment between the two blocs has decreased between the periods of 2010-2014 and 2015-2019 (no newer analysis readily available). The same period highlights weakened alignment within the two blocks, not just between them.

Potential areas of action:

- Reaching an agreement on WTO reform at the 12th Ministerial Conference is noteworthy. There is a window of opportunity to agree a joint position or proposal for a reformed WTO ahead of the 13th Ministerial Conference planned for February 2024. Consultations to this end started between the AU and EU in September 2023 at the request of the African Group.
- The *Fourth Trilateral Meeting* of the AU, the EU and the UN on the margins of the 78th session of the UN General Assembly called for more robust action to solve crises in the Sahel, the

Graphic 9: Voting coincidence of EU and AU Member States in the UN (in reference to the French vote) in the periods 2010-2014 and 2015-2019

2010 - 2014



2015 - 2019

