



# EU - AFRICA STRATEGY

The renewal of the current EU-Cotonou agreement is a great opportunity to expand the aims for achieving gender equality and women's rights in the EU-Africa cooperation agreement. This can be done by ensuring gender equality targets in all policy areas, and adding specific objectives to the agreement. It is essential to broaden the scope of gender equality in the renewed strategy beyond development and equal participation, to challenges such as gender-transformative climate change action. Engaging local feminists and women's rights organisations in the EU-Africa strategy is essential for ensuring gender-just and sustainable societies. WECF wants to direct your attention to the following two subjects, for which we outline some recommendations.

## 1 SUPPORT FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND WOMEN-LED ORGANIZATIONS

**Women's rights organizations and women-led organizations are essential agents for sustainable development. We urge the Commission to support these organisations in their advocacy, action and operations.**

All EU funds and policies should be allocated with consideration of the impact on women and girls on the ground.

**We recommend supporting feminist and women's rights organisations:**

- At all levels (from local to national to international) in equal partnerships with global North partners.
- On all themes (e.g. green transition, peace and security, education and health including menstrual and reproductive health).

**Women-led organisations as partners for Green Transition**

- Supporting locally rooted, grassroots women-led economic cooperatives strengthens local communities and empowers women. For example, WECF supports women-led energy cooperatives to create access to sustainable energy, as well as to agricultural cooperatives to support locally grown, healthy food.
- Financial support should be allocated to women's rights and women-led organizations and to projects that take gender equality and women's rights into consideration.

- We support the target to move to 85% and ultimately 100% of ODA being gender-transformative n.b. that have gender equality as a significant or main objective (OECD Gender Marker 2). This needs to be integrated into the GAP III.

**Civil Society organisations as partners for sustainable development and SDG5**

- It is important for the EU to support African CSOs including feminist CSOs to support national policies and programs on the Agenda2030 on sustainable development and SDG5 in particular, e.g. [www.women2030.org](http://www.women2030.org).
- European Delegations, should promote capacity-building on gender equality and women's rights as a key building stone for sustainable development.



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# 2 POLICY COHERENCE TO ADDRESS SYSTEMIC BARRIERS TO GENDER EQUALITY

The EU needs to acknowledge that sustainable development and equality cannot be achieved without critically assessing all EU external action beyond development cooperation. We would like to highlight specific areas in which gender equality objectives need strengthening:

### Do the SDG-test

- Ensure all policies contribute to achieving the SDGs (and its indicators). We recommend giving specific attention to SDG 5.

### Do away with double standards

- Double standards and lack of capacity of border controls meant that chemicals and waste banned in the EU continue to be shipped to African partner countries, negatively impacting the health and environment of communities, including women informal workers (e.g. waste scavengers). (1)(2)

### Make EU investments work for African women

- More financial support is necessary to ensure EU investment policies do not harm rights of women and girls, this can be done by windows of grant funding added to loan funding e.g. for initiatives that combat climate change, pollution and exposure to hazardous chemicals and that promote women-led initiatives that offer non-toxic alternatives.

### Protect women on the climate frontlines

- With the EU's Green Deal, EU countries have pledged to take the lead in strengthening global efforts to protect biodiversity, and linked to this should address the increasing number of attacks against women environmental defenders, in particular indigenous women in forest areas impacted by plantations for soy, wood and palmoil.

### Support women's climate solutions

- Support women and community-led forest conservation programs, see WECF's gender just climate award winners from Cameroon and DRC. <https://www.wecf.org/gjcs/>



### Partners for multi-lateralism

- Support African feminist organisation, trade unions and other CSOs in their advocacy for the ratification of multilateral agreements such as the ILO Convention 190 to end violence and harassment in the work place and the Maputo Protocol on the rights of women in Africa.
- Work with CSOs, government and private sector partners to ensure that EU companies operating in African countries abide international and EU standards, including in the area of environmental, hazardous chemicals, waste and climate protection (e.g. BRS conventions).
- Apply lessons from prior scandals e.g. of beer company Heineken (abuse of PR women in Nigeria, Congo) (3) and the Trafigura toxic waste dumping (1) and continued e-waste dumping.



(1) Some examples of harmful practices: Multinational Trafigura dumping oil waste in Ivory Coast, leading to the death of 17 locals and serious health implications for 30 000 people. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2009/may/13/trafigura-ivory-coast-documents-toxic-waste>

(2) WECF has conducted multiple studies to highlight this effect, amongst others a case study in Nigeria. <https://www.wecf.org/brs-gender-and-chemicals/>

(3) [https://www.trouw.nl/nieuws/heineken-gebruikt-biermeisjes-en-prostituees-om-bier-in-afrika-aan-de-man-te-brengen\\_bf0bcc36/](https://www.trouw.nl/nieuws/heineken-gebruikt-biermeisjes-en-prostituees-om-bier-in-afrika-aan-de-man-te-brengen_bf0bcc36/)



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