



Taking Stock of Valletta : Africa and European Civil Society Consultation Initiative **Concept Note**

Background

The Valletta summit on migration (11th to 12th November 2015), brought together European and African Heads of State and Government in an effort to strengthen cooperation and to address the current challenges, but also the opportunities of migration. Leaders participating in the summit adopted a political declaration, an action plan and agreed upon a list of 16 concrete actions to be implemented by the end of 2016. The [Action Plan](#) stipulates that existing mechanisms of the [Rabat Process](#), the [Khartoum Process](#) and the [Joint EU-Africa strategy](#) will be used to monitor its implementation. The [EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa](#) (aimed at fostering stability and addressing root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa) was also formally launched at the occasion of the Summit.

In order to evaluate progress on the implementation of the Valetta Action Plan and EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa, a **Senior Officials Meeting** with participants from European and African governments as well as representatives of the Rabat and Khartoum processes **will take place on 8th and 9th February 2017 in Malta**. During this meeting, a report tracking the progress made on the 16 priority initiatives of the Action Plan and a tool for the long-term monitoring of its implementation will be presented.

The role of Civil Society in shaping the 2015 Valletta Action Plan

In 2015, International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC), in collaboration with Norwegian Refugee Council and the [MADE Africa Network](#) (coordinated by Caritas Senegal) organised a series of events to ensure that Civil Society's opinions and views were taken into account during the Valletta Summit. Two Civil Society representatives attended the Summit and a [Joint Civil Society Statement](#) was also issued making the following recommendations to European and African leaders:

- 1) Tackle the root causes that force people to migrate, while respecting the right to mobility
- 2) Ensure safe and regular migration routes to Europe to prevent migrant and refugee deaths and suffering
- 3) Ensure effective implementation of anti-trafficking legislation and plans with a focus on victim-centred and gender-sensitive provisions
- 4) Strengthen international protection to ensure that refugee and migrant rights are respected and their needs are met
- 5) Ensure the protection of human rights in all return operations and in the negotiations of migration cooperation agreements, including readmission agreements
- 6) Support African countries to develop coherent migration and asylum policies and improve migration and asylum governance at the national and regional levels
- 7) Facilitate and support the contribution of migrant and diasporas to development
- 8) Include a Partnership principle in the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa in order to ensure that funding priorities match the needs in the region and that civil society contributes to the programming process
- 9) Support citizen mobilization to change perceptions on migrants and refugees in host countries



Input to the 2017 Senior Officials Meeting

One year after the Valletta Summit and in light of the upcoming **Senior Officials Meeting** in Malta, it is time to take stock of the results achieved thus far. Considerable differences in approaches and priorities between those involved in the processes related to the Valletta Action Plan and the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa remain, and the lack of transparency regarding its implementation and use of monitoring mechanisms have been criticised. There is thus scope for involving African and European Civil Society more closely in shaping decisions and policies by contributing their grassroots experience and political expertise to the discussions related to the Valletta Action Plan and the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa.

Since the 2007 Joint Africa-EU Strategy, consultation with African and European Civil Society and with the private sector in the area of migration and development has improved, and become more consistent. However, despite this progress, there is still little consistency in the consultative processes and Civil Society does not yet constitute a equal and genuine partner alongside institutions and governments of EU and African States.

Cognizant of this fact, the [Joint Statement](#) released by African and European Civil Society prior to the Valletta Summit in November 2015 called upon leaders to strengthen civil society's contribution to the design, implementation and monitoring of the Joint Africa-EU Strategy. More specifically, leaders were requested to *“Empower civil society actors and create conditions that enable them to play an active role in conflict prevention and post-conflict reconstruction process, in line with ... the 2007 Joint Africa-EU Strategy”*.

The Valletta Action Plan itself states the importance of involving civil society actors in the implementation of its priority actions. Enabling African and European Civil Society to become trusted partner in the governance, implementation and monitoring of Action Plan and EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa is therefore paramount. A more participatory approach would also help to increase the transparency of the implementation of the Valletta Action Plan's thematic priorities and funding instruments.

In an effort to engage with stakeholders and those steering and implementing the Valletta Action Plan, ICMC Europe and the MADE Network will pursue a three-pronged approach to influence discussions and decision-making processes at the Senior Officials Meeting in Malta:

- 1) Gathering a representative sample of the views and recommendations of African and European Civil Society regarding the implementation and future of the Valletta Action Plan and EU Africa Trust Fund, via a short survey. This survey has been distributed to over 80 civil society organisations (of which over 50 are based in Africa) and 40 African civil society organisations were also consulted individually at the [Global Forum on Migration and Development](#) in Dhaka. Specific thematic and regional issues will be further explored through in-depth interviews with survey respondents
- 2) Organising a Civil Society Consultation (CSC) in Brussels on 30th January 2017 which will bring together approximately 40 members of African and European Civil Society at director level, as well as representatives of relevant regional processes and the of the EU.
 - Before the Consultation, participants will receive an assessment of the survey's outcomes, and proposed recommendations. These will be discussed and further refined during the CSC in order to ensure a **unified voice of Civil Society** in their assessment of the processes related to the Valletta Action Plan.



- During the CSC, twelve members of African Civil Society organisations will present their views on the **governance processes** of the Valletta Action Plan and EU Africa Trust Fund. They will also share their experiences of how the Valletta Action Plan has been translated “**on the ground**” in Africa.
 - A **Summary Paper of the Civil Society Consultation with recommendations** will subsequently be presented to participants at the Senior Officials Meetings in February in Malta by one African and one European Senior Civil Society Representative
- 3) Facilitating the participation of two representatives of European and African Civil Society at the Senior Officials Meeting in Malta on 8th and 9th February

Goal

The goal of this three-pronged approach is to ensure that the **experiences and recommendations of African and European Civil Society are incorporated** throughout the implementation of the Valletta Action Plan and EU Trust Fund for Africa. This links to an effort at global level to take into account local realities and priorities in the shaping of decisions and policies around migration and development, as exemplified by the negotiations surrounding the UN Global Compact on Migration, and fora such as the Global Forum for Migration and Development. Through these mechanisms, Civil Society will increasingly become a genuine partner in the shaping of thematic priorities and the implementation of people-centred, needs-first and rights-based policies in both migration and development.

Through this three-pronged approach, ICMC hopes to further open up dialogue spaces and opportunities for constructive exchange between Civil Society, governments, regional organisations and institutions and to set a precedent for a more systematic consultation of Civil Society by stakeholders of the Valletta Action Plan and EU Africa Trust Fund.

Activities

In order to achieve the stated goal, and within the framework of the MADE network (co-funded by the European Commission), ICMC Europe will carry out the following activities:

1. Organise and distribute a survey to at least 80 civil society organisations in both Africa and Europe, and evaluate the responses
2. Conduct additional in-depth research, to be consolidated with the findings from the survey. This will be carried out by an external consultant hired by ICMC Europe for these purposes.
3. Facilitate one-day consultation in Brussels to bring together European and African Civil Society (12 participants from Africa and 12 to 15 from Europe), senior personnel from European Institutions and their African counterparts.
4. Produce a summary report of the Civil Society Consultation with recommendations to be presented at the Senior Officials Meeting in February in Malta.