

EIGHT BOARD MEETING OF THE EUROPEAN UNION EMERGENCY TRUST FUND FOR AFRICA

07 December 2021

MINUTES

The European Commission convened the eight meeting of the Board of the European Union Emergency Trust Fund for stability and addressing root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa (EUTF for Africa). The meeting was attended by Commission services (DG INTPA, DG NEAR, DG HOME and DG ECHO); the European External Action Service (EEAS); donor countries, including EU Member States, Switzerland, Norway and United Kingdom; partner countries; and concerned regional organisations. The Director for Sub-Saharan Africa of DG INTPA, Ms Sandra Kramer, chaired the meeting.

Introductory remarks

In her introductory remarks, the Chair, welcomed the participants for joining the Board Meeting and highlighted the developments since the last meeting held on 29 September 2020:

- (i) Overall financial resources have not changed, remaining at EUR 5 billion (EUR 4.4 billion from the EU and EUR 0.6 billion from MS and other donors);
- (ii) The number of approved programmes have reached 251 for a total of more than EUR 4.9 billion, and signed contracts are now amounting to more than EUR 4.8 billion;
- (iii) In terms of implementation, 31% of the amounts contracted are implemented by EU Member States agencies; between 18% and 25% by international and local NGOs (if we consider sub-contracts signed with NGOs by other implementing partners); 31% by UN Agencies; around 8% by international organizations and private sector entities; and nearly 12% by partner countries through budget support;
- (iv) Monitoring and learning systems in place keep showing concrete and visible results;
- (v) Additional communication activities have been implemented to present the achievements of the EUTF Africa, including a virtual photo-exhibition, social media campaigns, updates and news on the Trust Fund website and regional videos.

The Chair recalled that the final date of implementation (FDI) of the EUTF Africa has been set to the end of 2025 and that as of January 2022, and until the end of 2025, it will be possible to sign contracts only for administrative activities related to audits, evaluation and communications. She also mentioned that a final evaluation of the EUTF Africa may take place most likely in 2025 although the details on such evaluation have not yet been discussed and agreed upon.

Finally, the Chair highlighted that going forward work will be carried out under the new financial instrument NDICI-Global Europe, within the framework of national and regional Multi-Annual Programs.

The Head of the Migration Unit of **DG NEAR**, Mr Francisco Gaztelu, highlighted that:

- (i) The Trust Fund represented a successful tool which produced valuable results over the years;
- (ii) The increased visibility and magnitude of the EUTF helped placing migration on several partner countries' agendas in an unprecedented way;
- (iii) The North of Africa region focussed on the strategic objective 3 of the Trust Fund (migration management) through four different priority areas (i) protection, voluntary return and reintegration and community stabilization; (ii) integrated border management (including smuggling and trafficking); (iii) labour migration and mobility; and (iv) migration governance;
- (iv) All available funds for the region will be committed by the year of 2021;
- (v) The COVID-19 situation further impacted negatively the most vulnerable groups of the population resulting in an increased dependency on emergency/humanitarian assistance.

The Managing Director for Africa of the **EEAS**, Ms Rita Laranjinha, highlighted that the EUTF for Africa represented a successful instrument, which ensured complementarity with other tools, with a multiplayer effect in the concerned regions. She recognised that the EUTF for Africa used a comprehensive approach addressing the root causes of irregular migration while fighting criminalities. She also recognised that the Trust Fund should be considered as a positive partnership between the EU and a number of African partners, and that this trend needs to be maintained in the future. Finally she highlighted that a great number of political challenges remain in the Sahel/Lake Chad, Horn of Africa and Libya requiring long-term investments and durable partnerships, taking into account fundamental principles as the respect of human rights and rule of law.

The Director for International and Horizontal Affairs of **DG HOME**, Mr Henrik Nielsen, recalled that the EUTF for Africa represents the main operational initiative of the Valletta Action Plan agreed in 2015, and recognised that over the years, the Trust Fund has achieved a lot thanks to the policy dialogue with African partners and has ensured complementarity with other programs. He also recalled the contribution of DG HOME to the EUTF for Africa amounting to EUR 135 million. As to the way forward, Mr Nielsen highlighted the need to continue addressing challenges in the different migration routes working closely with African partners and EU MS in line with the New Pact on Migration and Asylum. In particular, he underlined the need to carry on working on common priorities and joint governance cooperation such as protection and resettlement mechanisms, agreements and best practices on readmission and return, Common Operational Partnerships to fight smuggling and trafficking, and Talent Partnerships to support mobility towards Europe.

The Head of Unit for West and Central Africa of **DG ECHO**, Mr Giuseppe Angelini, highlighted that the EUTF for Africa to which DG ECHO will have contributed EUR 50 million has been instrumental in ensuring complementarities between EU development and humanitarian assistance in different realities. He also recognised the flexibility and adaptability of the Trust Fund and its contribution to strengthen the triple nexus (humanitarian-development-peace nexus). In particular, he mentioned the positive examples of collaboration between EUTF for Africa and ECHO programs in the Sahel region (G5 countries in particular) and the Horn of Africa, as well as the role of the Trust Fund in paving the way to address structural needs in health and education in Libya.

ITEM I – State of Play of the EUTF for Africa

The Director for Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) in **DG INTPA**, Ms Sandra Kramer, made a presentation on the state of play the Trust Fund as of end of November 2021. The presentation provided information on overall resources, the level of approvals by region, the level of participation of the different categories of implementers in programmes implementation, and communication activities realized in the course of 2021. During the presentation, Ms Kramer emphasized once more that the Final Date of Implementation (FDI) of the Trust Fund has been set at end of 2025 and that between January 2022 and the FDI it will be possible to sign only contracts related to administrative activities such as audits, evaluations and communications.

ITEM II – Results achieved in the three regions

The Head of Unit for SSA Regional Programmes in **DG INTPA**, Mr Hans Stausboll, made a presentation of the major achievements in the Sahel/Lake and Horn of Africa regions up to the end of June 2021, providing figures on the first semester 2021 and cumulative figures. A more complete document on results in the two regions had been sent to all Board members and observers in advance of the Meeting. The presentation showed quite clearly that the Trust Fund has made substantive progress in the different areas of work in the course of the last year including in the response to COVID-19. The presentation included also the summary of a couple of outcome analyses on completed programmes. Additional information on the latest results and outcome analyses will be available in the upcoming Report of the Monitoring & Learning System of the EUTF for Africa that will be uploaded soon on the website.

The Head of the Migration Unit of **DG NEAR**, Mr Francisco Gaztelu made a thorough presentation of the results achieved by the EUTF for Africa in the North of Africa region in the four main priority areas above indicated. As to the first priority area (protection, voluntary return and reintegration, and community stabilization), he highlighted the achievements under the EU-IOM Joint Initiative, a comprehensive programme which allowed African partner countries, the EU and IOM working together to ensure migrants' protection along all routes. As to priority area 2 (border management including fight against smuggling and trafficking), he mentioned the results of a couple of successful programmes. For priority area 3 (labour migration), he presented some results achieved and highlighted the need to scale-up operations in the future, mobilize private sector actors and to focus on circular

migration. Finally, on priority 4 (migration governance), he mentioned key results of a specific programme supporting the operationalization of the Tunisian national strategy on migration.

Interventions by delegations

MEP, Mr. G. Holvenyi, from the **DEVE Committee of the European Parliament (EP)**, recognised the added value of the EUTF for Africa and acknowledged its learning exercises. He highlighted that it will be relevant for the EP to observe how the new financial instrument (NDICI-Global Europe) will be able to follow-up on EUTF for Africa programs and achievements. He also expressed interest in peace-building activities in Ethiopia and the difficulties in the implementation of an FAO-executed program in South Sudan.

MEP, Mr. J. Lewandowski from the **BUDG Committee of the EP**, who was not able to intervene due to connection challenges, sent a statement attached to these minutes.

Three delegations (**DE**, **IT** and **ES**) expressed their support and satisfaction for the promising results achieved over the years by the EUTF for Africa. The Trust Fund is recognised as a successful tool to address development and migration-related challenges and to strengthen partnerships with stakeholders in the three regions. Delegations also highlighted the need to move towards long-term strategies taking into account lessons learned and the priorities of partner countries, while maintaining a comprehensive approach and the necessary flexibilities in addressing needs and challenges. **DE** reiterated also the need to continue working on the 5 pillars of the Valletta Action Plan (VAP) including labour migration, through a specific policy, and to ensure close coordination between the EU and EU Member States in the area of migration and forced displacement, notably through the planned Team Europe Initiatives (TEI). **FR** expressed interest on how the NDICI-Global Europe will be able to follow-up on the work of the EUTF for Africa.

In response to some questions raised, Mr Hans Stausboll, **DG INTPA**, highlighted that National and Regional Multiannual Plans under NDICI-Global Europe will respond to needs and challenges in the different areas and that the partnership with African partners needs to be further strengthened. He mentioned also that two TEIs, one on the Atlantic Route and one on the Central Mediterranean Route, will continue to address the 5 pillars of the VAP and reach partner countries. He reassured participants that a substantive amount of resources (12% of available funding for the SSA region) will be used to address migration-related issues through a number of programs, and informed that 2 programmes to support the EU-IOM Initiative and forced displacement have been approved in the framework of the Annual Action Plan 2021.

Mr Francisco Gaztelu, **DG NEAR**, confirmed that new programmes in the 4 priority areas will be funded on an annual basis under the NDICI-Global Europe, allocating a greater amount of resources (10 to 15% of available funding) to legal migration to scale-up interventions with diaspora. Return operations will also be pursued further with a greater

focus on reintegration activities. Increased attention will be given also to migration governance issues. In particular, he mentioned that the Annual Action Plan 2022 will include actions on return and reintegration, migrants' protection (including the fight against smuggling), border and migration management, and legal migration, covering all countries of the region.

ITEM III – AOB

The Chair highlighted that as of next year there will be some unspent funds remaining available in the framework of specific EUTF for Africa programmes, which will be de-committed. In agreement with DG BUDG, it was decided that these de-committed funds may be re-committed only for activities of an administrative nature such as audits, evaluations and communications. The amount of the de-committed funds will be known at later stage as programmes will reach their completion date. The Chair also mentioned that this arrangement is fully in line with the Constitutive Agreement of the EUTF for Africa and with the principle of sound financial management.

The Board has agreed in principle with this proposal. The Trust Fund Managers will keep the Operational Committees duly informed on this process.

Concluding remarks

In her concluding remarks, the Chair:

- (i) Thanked warmly Commission/EEAS colleagues and all Board Members and Observers for participating in the Board Meeting;
- (ii) Reiterated that the EUTF for Africa has demonstrated its added value as an innovative implementation tool; has contributed to reinforce political and policy dialogue with partners; strengthened the partnership with the EU and African stakeholders; pooled together resources and expertise from different sources; and more importantly, produced concrete and visible results;
- (iii) Reiterated that the EU will continue providing support to African partners by capitalizing on the work accomplished by the EUTF for Africa over the years, and that some EUTF-funded actions may be followed-up by new interventions funded under NDICI-Global Europe at country or regional level.

The Chair confirmed that as usual minutes of the Board Meeting will be circulated to Board Members for approval.