

**MINUTES OF THE FIFTH BOARD MEETING OF THE EU EMERGENCY TRUST
FUND FOR AFRICA (EUTF FOR AFRICA)
Brussels, 21 September 2018**

The European Commission convened the fifth meeting of the Board of the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF for Africa) which was attended by European Commission services (DG DEVCO, DG NEAR, DG HOME, DG ECHO) and the European External Action Service (EEAS), donor countries including EU Member States, Switzerland and Norway, partner countries, and concerned regional organizations. The Director General of DG DEVCO, Mr. S. Manservisi, chaired the meeting.

Introduction session

The Chair opened the meeting by presenting the agenda, which was adopted. In his opening remarks, the Chair briefly indicated the main questions for the Board meeting: (i) verify if the EUTF for Africa is on track and assess progress achieved so far; (ii) confirm whether the six priority criteria discussed at the last Board meeting are still valid; (iii) take stock of the June European Council decisions and assess whether EU MS can provide additional contributions; (iv) assess the distribution key used to allocate the recent EU contribution (EUR 500 M from the EDF reserve); (v) assess whether there is willingness to extend the EUTF beyond end 2020 to make sure its work continues without interruption.

The Deputy Secretary General of the EEAS, Mr. C. Leffler, stressed in his remarks that the EUTF Africa has been key to develop a good understanding of needs and to improve partnership with partner countries, and it has represented the only instrument the EU can use in Libya where the AU, IOM and the UN are delivering successfully. He stressed that while the EU needs to reinforce its efforts in Morocco, Sahel remains a region which deserves a great deal of attention. He confirmed the EUTF for Africa has proven its added-value on the ground providing support to refugees, IDPs and host communities and will be able to mobilize efforts to improve stabilization in the Horn of Africa to respond to economic and social challenges, which persist despite the encouraging moves in the region.

The Deputy Director General of DG NEAR, Mr. M. Popowski, highlighted the work that has been carried out in the North of Africa region to respond to the European Council Conclusions of June 2018, including the adoption of a regional facility on border management. He stressed the need to pursue further the efforts of the EUTF in the North of Africa region aimed at protecting migrants, supporting voluntary humanitarian return and reintegration and stabilization of communities in Libya, and implementing capacity building activities in support of Libyan authorities. He also recalled the importance of including the needs of partner countries. In this respect, he advocated for the adoption of a legal migration programme in the region at the next operational committee of the North of Africa window. He also stressed the need to continue supporting Morocco to address the challenges on the Western Africa migration route.

The Director A of DG HOME, Ms. M. Cygan, reiterated that the EUTF Africa is a tool which has delivered on the ground, ensuring quick responses to challenges and improving local capacities. She referred to the important decrease in arrivals to Italy as the result of the work

done not only on the Central Mediterranean. She highlighted the need for quick responses to avoid the creation of alternative routes, reinforcing the capacities of North African partners in border management. In particular she referred also about the importance of giving a quick response in support to the work done by EUBAM in Libya. She also stressed the need of addressing root causes of migration and create conditions for growth. Furthermore, Ms. Cygan highlighted the good cooperation with international organizations such as IOM, and stressed the need to ensure that (i) commitments made on concluded/ ongoing readmission negotiations are honoured, (ii) allocation of EUTF funding is aligned to progress in the cooperation with African partners (iii) stronger ownership of partner countries on migration management, data collection and analysis, border control, readmission and reintegration is ensured.

The Director C of DG ECHO, Ms. A. Kaminara, reiterated the relevant role played by the EUTF Africa in creating synergies and complementarities with other development and humanitarian instruments, and stressed that albeit humanitarian aid is not included in the mandate of the Trust Fund, the EUTF Africa has been instrumental for the humanitarian-development nexus.

SESSION I – Stock-taking of progress achieved by the EUTF Africa

The Deputy Director General of DG DEVCO, Mr. K. Doens, made a presentation on the state of play of the EUTF Africa including approved programs, contracts signed with implementers and other operational matters, selected results achieved so far, an overview of financial contributions to the Trust Fund as well as an indication of progress achieved in terms of reporting and monitoring, as well as communication and transparency.

The Deputy Director General of DG NEAR, Mr. M. Popowski highlighted the main results from actions in Libya and called for increased support from EU Member States to speed implementation of actions implemented by their respective development agencies.

Comments by delegations:

Virtually every delegation (donors and partner countries/regional organizations alike) has expressed strong support for the work accomplished by the EUTF Africa, which has demonstrated its added-value on the ground strengthening partnerships, changing the narrative on irregular migration, producing good results, and ensuring a good level of transparency. Overall, delegations expressed their support to a balanced approach among the different pillars of the Valletta Action Plan (VAP) and EUTF strategic objectives, although some partner countries would favour a greater focus on addressing root causes of irregular migration (**ET, GN, GM**) and others (**DK, NL**) consider the EUTF should rather respond mainly to migration-related challenges.

Several delegations have welcomed the EUR 500 M EU contribution to the EUTF and openly recognized the need for additional funding from either Member States and other donors or the EU budget, especially for the North of Africa region since it cannot benefit from EDF funds. While **NO** has announced the decision to top-up its contribution with additional EUR 6M, other donors (**PT, FR, UK, SE**) have informed the Board that they are considering a possible new contribution. **BE** has taken note of the funding needs and informed that this question is currently under examination. A number of donors, (**DE, NL, FI, DK, BE, SE**), however have expressed

their interest in receiving as soon as possible the report of the ECA on the performance audit of the EUTF Africa (which will be available at the end of the year) and/or the results of the mid-term evaluation of the Trust Fund (which will be available only in 2019). **PT** informed the Board of the possibility to increase its overall contribution to EUR 5 M. **CH** is currently analysing internally the possibility of a contribution. As an element of its decision, **CH** has requested whether contributions can be earmarked by country and project.

DE, NO, NL stressed the importance of a transparent reporting by the Commission on the compatibility of the EUTF-funded activities, especially those addressing border management issues, with Official Development assistance (ODA)/Development Assistance Committee (DAC) requirements.

IT highlighted that the replenishment of the EUTF Africa is indeed a matter of solidarity and shared responsibility. From an operational perspective, **IT** indicated that the EUTF Africa should complement with bilateral and regional programmes should remain engaged in the different pillars of the VAP, and additional efforts should be made to better communicate the Trust Fund results.

ES highlighted the recent increasing trends in terms of migration flows (Western African route) which are affecting mostly Spain and Morocco, and made a call for additional support to the North of Africa region, and in particular Morocco, in order to prevent arrivals to Spain of irregular migrants. **FR, SD** and **ML** supported these remarks.

DE highlighted that migration governance remains a priority areas aiming at reducing arrivals in Europe and enhancing return and reintegration efforts. **DE** stressed that, as it is the largest bilateral contributor to the EUTF for Africa, at present it is not in a position to commit any additional bilateral funding. Moreover, **DE** highlighted that even if the Trust Fund is replenished, it is foreseeable that resources will be depleted before it expires in 2020 and consequently there is a need for a plan of action covering 2019 and 2020. Finally, **DE** reiterated the need to make the co-financing efforts currently amounting to EUR 61 M more visible on the EUTF Africa website.

DK welcomed the M&E systems put in place and the website as an efficient communication tool. **DK** mentioned also that priority should be given to aid effectiveness and delivery of results while transparently choosing the best possible implementing partners. As to the need for additional resources, **DK** stressed the need to set in place a well-structured replenishment process with a funding plan covering needs up to end of 2020.

FR highlighted that due to limited resources the EUTF Africa should cover only on the six priority criteria focussing in particular on support to dialogues, securization of documents, fight against smuggling of migrants and traffic of human beings, voluntary returns and reintegration. and that addressing the root causes of migrations should be dealt with by other instruments. **FR** indicated also the need to look at the latest trends in terms of migration routes, recognised the efforts made in terms of transparency and communication through the website and suggested that selected EUTF projects be discussed also in the relevant working parties of the Council.

ML stressed that the sensitization campaigns have been very effective and should be further reinforced. **ML** called also for a continued political dialogue between the EU and partner countries and for additional efforts to improve project implementation at country level.

Other comments include:

- Some delegations mentioned that given the considerable reputational risk in working in difficult circumstances, it is of utmost importance that the Commission and implementing partners give top priority to mitigating such risk and applying the 'do-no-harm' principle while ensuring human rights compliance. The cooperation with the UN in this respect was commended and further encouraged;
- It is essential to share the Board documents well in advance (**SE, BE, UK, DE**);
- Additional efforts are required to better communicate on the EUTF Africa (**BE, IT**);
- Coordination efforts should be strengthened further at country level with EU DELs and local partners (**NL, GN, ML**);
- Need to focus on human rights (**SE, NO**);
- Need to keep providing the Horn of Africa region with a good level of funding to respond to their needs (**UK, SE**);
- Need to make additional efforts to promote legal migration (**SE, GH, GN**)

Conclusions by the Chair:

The Chair concluded that (i) the EUTF for Africa has demonstrated added value in the way of working in real partnership with partner countries and donors, in particular by offering valuable opportunities for joint programming and joint implementation at country level; (ii) migration dialogues encompass all partner countries; (iii) the EUTF should try to keep a balanced approach in terms of strategic priorities; (iv) the EUTF, despite the great emphasis on migration-related challenges, does a remarkable amount of work to address root causes of irregular migration; (v) prioritization efforts needs to be pursued further due to limited financial resources; (vi) synergies with partners and donors should be further strengthened also in the attempt to obtain additional resources pending the conclusions of discussions on the next MFF; (vii) a Replenishment Action Plan should be developed presenting a perspective beyond 2020; (viii) additional efforts are required in the area of legal migration in full cooperation with EU Member States; (ix) communication efforts can be reinforced in partnership with donors and stakeholders; (x) all activities in the Sub-Saharan regions are compatible with DAC requirements; and (xi) the results of the ECA performance audit will be shared with the Board as soon as they will become public.

The Deputy Director General of DG NEAR confirmed that future work with Morocco on the Western Mediterranean Route will be fine-tuned based on a needs assessment planned in October, and that a tentative amount of up to EUR 100 M may be made available for Morocco in 2019. On the issue of compatibility of border management programmes with DAC requirements in the North of Africa, he confirmed that this is being verified, but mentioned that the notional approach applied to contributions of the budgetary instruments allows for programmes that are non-DAC compliant.

SESSION II – Future perspectives of the EUTF for Africa

The Deputy Director General of DG DEVCO made a presentation on the strategic priorities and the current financial state of play of the Trust Fund. This was followed by a presentation on the strategic priorities of the North of Africa region by the Deputy Director General of DG NEAR.

The Chair clearly indicated that the future pipelines of projects, to be submitted to the next round of Operational Committee meetings in the fall, will be inspired to the strategic priorities presented to the Board and will be based on the resources currently available under the three regions. He highlighted that future work will continue focusing on the Central Mediterranean Route, will keep investing in the Horn of Africa supporting stabilization efforts, refugees populations and hosting communities, and will look at the Western Mediterranean Route.

Comments by delegations:

Overall, delegations have expressed support for the six priority areas presented which will inspire the future work of the EUTF Africa.

BE highlighted that the 6 criteria remain relevant but insisted that future interventions should address in particular (i) the protection of vulnerable migrants and their access to basic services with a special attention to female migrants facing a lack of access to reproductive health services; (ii) the reinforcement of civil registry systems; and (iii) the socio-economic integration of migrants upon their return. **BE** also recalled the importance to integrate a human-rights based approach in the programming cycle as well as the respect of the 'do-no-harm' principle. In this respect, **BE** requested a detailed state of play of projects supporting integrated border management in Libya.

DE expressed the need to build a contingency reserve to top-up successful projects or those that cannot be funded by other instruments, as well as to cover unforeseen events. **DE** also recommended screening approved projects that are not yet operational in order to consider re-programming options.

FR reiterated the need to focus on countries of origin in the Sahel and North of Africa addressing border management, fight against migrants smuggling and criminal networks and civil registry reform.

IT stressed the need to preserve a balanced approach, to keep focussing on Libya and Tunisia and on reintegration efforts in the Horn of Africa (Ethiopia and Eritrea).

In reiterating the need for a structured funding plan, **DK** recommended to look at EU budget resources more carefully to cover 2020 funding needs and suggested to broaden the donor basis.

PT supported the strengthening of the EU-IOM/UNCHR Initiative and suggested providing support to SMEs through training and skills development.

ECOWAS supported stronger interactions between national and regional projects and greater investments for regional activities.

LY expressed concern for the high number of migrants still in Libya despite the efforts made and for the return operations that are not considered as very successful, and suggested that border management efforts be further strengthened, investing more resources for operations in southern Libya.

Conclusions by the Chair:

The Chair concluded that (i) there is quite broad endorsement for the six priority criteria and the EUTF will continue its work based on the pipelines presented to the Board; (ii) the current programming is based on the available resources at this point in time; (iii) at this stage, the EU has no additional funding to top-up. Hence, Member States will need to join the resource mobilization efforts providing additional funding or financing some activities bilaterally; (iv) the EUTF will consider the possibility to re-program approved funding related to activities which have not yet become operational.

SESSION III – Extension of the EUTF for Africa

The Chair stressed the need to have a legal basis to continue the work of the EUTF for Africa beyond its closing date currently set at end 2020. This would allow consolidating and completing the different work streams, and keeping addressing the multiple challenges related to irregular migration in the three concerned regions. The Chair informed the Board about the steps required in order to extend the duration of the Trust Fund: (i) formal request to the Board; (ii) approval by the Board; (iii) draft decision by the Commission; (iv) consultation with the European Parliament (EP) and the Council (v) approval of the decision by the Commission amending the Constitutive Agreement.

Several delegations (**DE, NL, DK, BE, CZ, HU**) indicated that in order to make a decision on this matter further discussions and analyses are needed, keeping into account the on-going discussions on the future aid architecture (NDICI instrument) and the next MFF. They requested the Trust Fund to submit a report to this effect. **NL** and **BE** emphasised the importance of the complementarity between the EUTF Africa and other instruments, which are being discussed under the MFF. **NL** added also that the report should include options on how the EUTF would look like in the future.

In his concluding remarks, the Chair reiterated the need to launch a broader discussion on the need and opportunity to extend the EUTF for Africa beyond end of 2020 irrespective of the outcome of the negotiations on the new instrument NDICI and the next MFF. He stressed that the EUTF for Africa is to be considered as a dedicated implementation tool which can be funded by different source of financing and that the Board will need to decide whether to have such a tool beyond 2020. The next Board Meeting will be held most likely in early 2019 in light of the decisions made at the next round of Operational Committee meetings and the deliberations of future European Council meetings.