



Brussels, 19 May 2017  
(OR. en)

9459/17

DEVGEN 110  
ACP 54  
RELEX 438

**OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS**

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From:	General Secretariat of the Council
On:	19 May 2017
To:	Delegations
No. prev. doc.:	9393/17 + COR 1
Subject:	European Consensus on Development

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## “Commitments to gender equality and women’s empowerment”

### 1.3. Principles and Values guiding development action

13. The EU and its Member States act in accordance with the principles of EU external action, set out in Article 21(1) of the TEU: democracy, the rule of law, the universality and indivisibility of human rights and fundamental freedoms, respect for human dignity, the principles of equality and solidarity, and respect for the principles of the United Nations Charter and international law. These universal values and good governance are at the heart of the 2030 Agenda.

14. Political dialogue is an important way to advance development principles and also has a preventive dimension aiming to ensure that EU values are upheld. The EU and its Member States will integrate, the respect of human rights, democracy, the rule of law and gender equality in their political dialogue. This dialogue will be conducted with and beyond partner governments and will be a major platform for action, where a shared understanding will be promoted, progress will be regularly reviewed and appropriate supporting measures identified.

15. Gender equality is at the core of the EU values and is enshrined in its legal and political framework. It is vital for achieving the SDGs and cuts across the whole 2030 Agenda. The EU and its Member States will promote women’s and girls’ rights, gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls and their protection as a priority across all areas of action.

16. The EU and its Member States will implement a rights-based approach to development cooperation, encompassing all human rights. They will promote inclusion and participation,

non-discrimination, equality and equity, transparency and accountability. The EU and its Member States will continue to play a key role in ensuring that no one is left behind wherever people live and regardless of ethnicity, gender, age, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation and gender identity, migration status or other factors. This approach includes addressing the multiple discriminations faced by vulnerable people and marginalised groups.

20. While acknowledging that the 2030 Agenda must be implemented as a whole, and not selectively, the EU and its Member States will address a range of cross cutting elements to achieve sustainable development and accelerate transformation, such as: youth; gender equality; mobility and migration; sustainable energy and climate change; investment and trade; good governance, democracy, the rule of law and human rights; innovative engagement with more advanced developing countries; and mobilising and using domestic resources.

24. Under-nutrition and malnutrition are major obstacles to development and a lifelong burden, because it causes cognitive deficits, lowers the ability of children at school and leads to poor health and reduced economic productivity. The EU and its Member States will work to ensure access for all to affordable, safe, sufficient and nutritious food. Particular attention will be given to individuals in the most vulnerable situations, inter alia children under five, adolescent girls and women particularly during pregnancy and breastfeeding. ...

28. Ensuring access to quality education for all is a prerequisite for youth employability and longlasting development. The EU and its Member States will support inclusive life-long learning and equitable quality education, particularly during early childhood and primary years. They will also promote education at secondary and tertiary level, technical and vocational training as well as work-based and adult learning, including in emergency and crisis situations. Special attention will be paid to education and training opportunities for girls and women. The EU and its Member States will intensify their efforts to ensure everyone has the knowledge, skills, capabilities and rights they need to enjoy a life in dignity, to be fully engaged in society as responsible and productive adults, and to contribute to the social, economic and environmental well-being of their communities.

## **2.1. People - Human Development and Dignity**

### **Youth**

Young people are agents of development and change and as such are essential contributors to the 2030 Agenda, including through their ability to innovate. Neglecting their education, employment, social and political needs will undermine achievement of the SDGs and leave them vulnerable to crime and radicalisation particularly in situations of conflict.

The EU and its Member States will focus on concrete actions to meet the specific needs of youth, particularly young women and girls, by increasing quality employment and entrepreneurship opportunities, supported by effective policies in education, vocational training, skills development, and access to digital technologies and services. This will aim to harness digital innovation capacity and create opportunities to benefit from technological progress. The EU and its Member States will also aim to strengthen the rights of young people and their empowerment in the conduct of public affairs including by promoting their participation in local economies, societies and decision-making notably through youth organisations.

33. The EU and its Member States will pursue the fulfilment of obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. They will

vigorously promote the protection and fulfilment of women’s and girls’ rights and work together with partners to eliminate all forms of sexual and gender based violence and discrimination, including harmful practices particularly forced, early and child marriage and female genital mutilation. The EU and its Member States will take action and strengthen policy dialogue to empower women and girls, promote their important role as agents of development and change and increase targeted action towards gender equality. This will include promoting their economic and social rights and empowerment, strengthening their voice and participation in social, economic, political and civil life, ensuring their physical and psychological integrity, and shifting the EU and the Member States’ institutional culture to deliver on their commitments. Promoting women’s equal access to productive employment, decent work, equal pay and financial services will benefit all members of society.

### **Gender Equality**

Equality between women and men of all ages is critical for sustainable development. It has a multiplier effect in achieving poverty eradication and is key to unlock the development of democratic societies based on human rights, social justice and sustainability. Furthermore, gender equality is positively correlated with increased prosperity, stability and better outcomes in areas such as health and education. The EU and its Member States recognise women and girls as key agents of development and change, including their role in peace building and conflict resolution and humanitarian response.

Still many women and girls continue to be deprived of rights, resources and voice. Gender inequality intersects with other forms of exclusion. Promoting women’s and girls’ advancement and gender equality requires working with boys, men, girls and women to understand rights, equality, roles in society. This also entails working with key actors in societies such as teachers, religious and community leaders to eradicate discrimination against girls and women.

The EU and its Member States will ensure that the gender perspective is systematically mainstreamed across all policies as a key contribution to the successful achievement of SDGs. They will accelerate their efforts to achieve gender equality and empowerment of women by deepening multi-stakeholder partnerships, strengthening capacity for gender responsive budgeting, planning, and ensuring the active participation of women and women’s organisations in decision-making.

42. The EU and its Member States will promote the dignity and resilience of long-term forcibly displaced persons and their inclusion in the economic and social life of host countries and host communities, recognising that displaced persons’ capabilities are a vital portable asset, essential for their resilience and rebuilding their lives as well as a contribution to their host communities. The EU and its Member States will apply a rights-based approach, paying special attention to women, accompanied and unaccompanied minors and highly vulnerable persons. They will protect longer-term social structures, integrating persons in protracted displacement into wider development planning, including through access to education and decent jobs.

### **2.3. Prosperity - Inclusive and sustainable growth and jobs**

47. Creating decent jobs, particularly for women and youth is essential for inclusive and sustainable growth. Shared prosperity and growth are key contributors to human welfare and dignity. Inclusive sustainable growth builds long-term resilience in partner countries, by

creating opportunities for vulnerable population groups and those most at risk, to participate in, and benefit from, wealth and decent job creation. ...

49. The EU and its Member States will help to create a more business-friendly environment in developing countries, that respects international human rights standards and principles. They will contribute to improving conditions for inclusive economic activity by promoting more sustainable policies and regulatory frameworks, human rights, including core labour standards and due diligence requirements, conducive better business environments, new business models and greater government capacity. They will promote broad access to financial and micro financial services, including for women, for the poor and for MSMEs. They will also promote private sector initiatives and social enterprises, cooperatives, and women and youth entrepreneurs, to boost the provision of local services as well as inclusive and green business models.

55. ...

The EU and its Member States will support improvements in governance relating to sustainable forest management, participatory rangeland management, and to equitable access to land tenure, particularly for women, respecting the rights of local populations and of indigenous peoples, including customary land use and access to water. They will promote the creation of farmers' organisations and cooperatives, to address among others, better productivity of family farms, land use rights and traditional farmer based seed systems. They will contribute to increase the quality of sanitary and phytosanitary conditions. The EU and its Members States will aim to develop agricultural markets and value chains in partner countries, which benefit the poor and encourage the agroindustry to generate jobs and added value. This will include supporting youth integration and women's empowerment, promoting research and innovation. Investments in sustainable agriculture and in the agri-food sector are needed to diversify local and regional production systems, prevent malnutrition and generate increases in productivity and decent jobs, without harming the environment.

57. The EU and its Member States will continue to support information and communication technologies in developing countries as powerful enablers of inclusive growth and sustainable development. Digital technologies are being adopted in the developing world at an unprecedented rate. However, lack of connectivity remains a major obstacle to development in many developing countries, notably in rural and remote areas, especially in Africa. Moreover, limited competition can make digital technologies often inaccessible and unaffordable for a large part of the population. The EU and its Member States will work on better mainstreaming digital solutions in development and promote the use of digital technologies in a range of priority areas (such as e-governance, agriculture, education, water management, health and energy). They will support enabling environments for the digital economy by enhancing free, open and secure connectivity, removing obstacles to unleash its full potential for sustainable development. They will support digital entrepreneurship, including for MSMEs, to develop locally relevant content, promote innovation and decent job creation. They will also support digital literacy and skills to empower people, especially women and persons in vulnerable and marginalised situations, to promote social inclusion and to facilitate their participation in democratic governance and the digital economy.

68. ...

The EU and its Member States will address all aspects of preventing and responding to sexual and gender-based violence in conflict and post-conflict situations, and support women as positive agents for conflict prevention, conflict resolution, relief and recovery and building sustainable peace.

121. The EU and its Member States will boost the statistical capacity of developing countries, including through strengthened capacity for the production and analysis of data, to inform policy and decision-making, which should be disaggregated where possible by income, gender, age and other factors, and provide information on marginalised, vulnerable and hardto-reach groups, inclusive governance and other issues, consistent with the EU's rights-based approach. It will also include investments in stronger statistical institutions at sub-national, national and regional level, and the use of new technologies and data sources. The EU and its Member States will encourage their partner countries to include the voices of marginalised communities in monitoring the SDGs and to promote concrete mechanisms to this end.