



1. Introduction and Importance to the EU

International relations have been of great interest to the EU for many years – dating back from the Treaty of Rome where a collective European development policy was first established. The EU is committed to provide ODA to its partners, yet the evolving and unfolding international circumstances forces our member states to reconsider the EU’s relations with ACP (African, Caribbean and Pacific) states and the EU’s development policies.

2. Proposals on Post-Cotonou Framework for EU–ACP Relations

The ACP has long been of deep interest in the project of European integration and Italy believes it would be of great interest to continue the level of engagement with the ACP region as was in the Cotonou Agreement. Acknowledging the soon expiration of the agreement, the Republic of Italy would like to propose the following:

2.1. Strengthening “Take Back” Agreements and cooperation with the African continent

As migration continues to affect Europe at large, particularly Italy and Greece, Italy feels it would be of certain member states interest to **strengthen Take Back Agreements with African countries**. According to the European Commission, only 40% of migrants are sent back to their home country or to the country from which they travelled to the EU. Hence, it is vital for member states to take stronger action to ensure the return of irregular migrants.

The EU has taken various actions such as Dublin Regulation and the EU-Turkey Deal to curb the number of migrants coming to Europe. Although the number has drastically decreased, Italy strongly believes strengthening “Take Back” Agreements can further help decrease migrants coming to Europe through the Central Mediterranean Route while enabling EU to maintain control over migrants from African countries. Italy is concerned on the toll migration may bring to the EU in the future so we would like to call on member states for **safe relocations of migrants and enhancement of cooperation with African countries**.

2.2. Maintaining intimate ACP-UK relations

The United Kingdom has been an important contributor towards EU-ACP relations and **Italy feels it would be of interest for member states to continue to establish a friendly relationship with UK** as it prepares to leave the union. As UK has been a crucial contributor to the European Development Fund (EDF) and a key actor in developing EU-African policy, it would be important for EU member states to ensure the privileges enjoyed by the ACP states can still be continued in a post-Brexit era.

Countries like St Lucia, Beize, Fiji and South Africa heavily rely on exports to the UK and it would be a major loss for these ACP countries if they feel that their interests are not considered. Hence, Italy believes it would be vital for member states to **ensure future UK-Africa policy remains as closely aligned with that of the EU's as possible** so as to ensure the interests of the EU are safeguarded while we can continue to work together with the UK based on our common economic interests.

2.3. Concentrating on climate change and agricultural development in future Sustainable Development Goals

Prevalent issues like climate change and agricultural development are deeply affecting the African, Caribbean and Pacific regions and as a leading global power, the EU needs to step up and combat these issues on an international level. **Italy hence calls for all member states to focus on these two areas of development in future EU-ACP relations.**

As rates of respiratory and heart-related illnesses continue to rise in ACP due to climate change, Italy feels it is the duty of the EU to work and help the regions. In order to overcome this pressing matter, **Italy recommends fellow member states to work towards a circular, low-emission economy that is resilient to climate change impacts and to other global changes endangering local communities.**

Moreover, many citizens in the region work in the agricultural industry where 60% of employment in Africa is related to agriculture. With a majority of the economy relying on agriculture, Italy believes this would be an important sector for investment - to help grow and expand the region's wealth and labour opportunities. Hence, the Republic of Italy would like to call upon member states to **work on providing economic opportunities in rural areas to reduce rural-urban mobility and mitigate urbanization.**

3. Proposals on Delivering EU Development Goals

3.1. Revising the policies on ODA

The Republic of Italy suggests enhancing development outcomes by increasing ODA. Providing over 50% of all global development aid, the EU and its Member States are collectively the world's leading donor. The Republic of Italy is aware of the importance of realizing the New Consensus in lieu of the previous one with additional focuses on economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, while poverty eradication is an emphasis of development policy. As a comprehensive approach to implementation is indispensable for this new consensus, the ODA becomes an even more important driver. The European Union and its Member States continue to be the world's leading provider of Official Development Assistance (ODA) with an overall amount of €75.7 billion in 2017. The EU collective aid has also grown by €7.8 billion (12%), while the ODA/GNI ratio grew by 6%, underpinning the EU's and Member States' sustained efforts to promote prosperity, peace, and sustainable development worldwide.

The Republic of Italy believes it is more than important to maintain and increase ODA to achieve a smooth transition to the post-Cotonou era as well as a success of the commitment in the New Consensus. In this regard, the Republic of Italy urges all the member states to increase ODA by 1%.

3.2. Including the EU Development Fund in the budget

The Republic of Italy would like to draw fellow member states' attention to the budget support and dialogue with partner countries. This delegation is aware of the fact that effective policies tools are always based on scientific budget plan, and thus would suggest the inclusion of EU Development Fund (EUDF) in the annual EU budget. This delegation also believes this area of reform could be extended to a special committee that make up, execute and supervise the EUDF and report to the president of the EU annually. Also, the receivers should notify the EU how those funds are being put to use.

The Republic of Italy believes that the special budget for the EUDF should be consistent with: promotion of human rights and democratic values; better financial management & macroeconomic stability; sector reforms; other specific challenges. To conclude, budgetisation of EUDF will guarantee the budgetary basis for policy consistency in the post-Cotonou era.

3.3. Confirming priorities of the development goals

EU development policy seeks to foster the sustainable development of developing countries, with the primary aim of eradicating poverty. In light of the poverty eradication remains the primary objective of development policy under the New Consensus, the Republic of Italy sees an imperativeness to confirm other goals following the top priorities. This delegation supports any potential EU coordination groups on these goals. **The republic of Italy would like to set priorities on international trade and partnership.**

At the same time, the Republic of Italy underlines the links between development and other policies, including peace and security, humanitarian aid, migration, the environment and climate change. This delegation also welcome supporting policies on cross-cutting elements such as: youth; gender equality; mobility and migration. Moreover, the Republic of Italy recommends the European Union to work within the current frameworks and mechanism.

4. Conclusion

The Republic of Italy assures the EU's commitment in foreign aid and fulfils the EU's consensus on development goals. The Republic of Italy is prepared to cooperate with other member states through negotiations. This delegation believes that this conference would be able to formulate a promising blue print in the near future.