



KEY TAKE-AWAYS FROM PANEL DISCUSSION BASED ON CONTRIBUTIONS FROM RELIGIOUS & FAITH-BASED ORGANISATIONS AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES

KEY MESSAGES

- The need to invest in strengthening local producers, markets and value chains in Africa is acknowledged by the EU. Putting this into practice – as well as implementing the Global Gateway's (GG) values (democracy, transparency, human rights) – will require **political will** to address difficult, sensitive issues that perpetuate imbalances, inequalities and injustices and that undermine policy coherence and trust between both regions.
- The imbalance in trade and Africa's dependence on imports, despite being rich in natural resources, require **changes in the governance of natural resources** so they can benefit local communities.
- The fact that **local producers suffer from unfair competition** with foreign (including EU) companies and that this distorts local markets, needs to be addressed.
- When it comes to agriculture and food systems, power imbalances and injustices are obvious: powerful private sector actors impose commodity production and monocropping to local communities, disregarding people's food sovereignty needs. There is a need to **build the capacities at community level** so that people can raise their concerns and claim their needs and rights (e.g. by providing direct institutional funding and political dialogue opportunities to local civil society actors representing affected communities). It is also paramount to **shift from an industrial and extractive model** towards a more local and sustainable one, grounded on **agroecology**.
- **Private sector engagement** should not lead to increasing inequalities or to negative impacts on the environment and human rights of local communities. The GG, private investments, and trade agreements, must all support **the economic diversification, the industrialisation, and the autonomy and resilience of African countries, while respecting human rights and protecting the environment**. They should support the Agenda 2063, the **AfCFTA, free movement of people and goods**, and local production. They should ensure that local and small businesses (**MSMEs, social economy types of business, small-holder farmers, women farmers**) benefit from economic activities, rather than allowing foreign companies to move the profits abroad.
- **Robust safeguards and accountability mechanisms** (including against conflicts of interest on the part of the most powerful) need to be put in place to ensure the GG's mandate for sustainable and inclusive development. Key stakeholders will then not view it as a competing strategy with the 2030 Agenda and development objectives, as encouraged by the European Commission.

HOW CAN THIS BE DONE? SOME FOOD FOR THOUGHT...

- Even though EPAs and GG might have the same objectives and principles, we will need to recognise that EPAs have different approaches, priorities and benefits. Rules of origin, for example, are controversial, as they are defined by the EU, and are not always aligned with regional integration needs. To make sure they contribute to regional integration in Africa, it would be important to **re-think the definitions and objectives of the EPAs** and to undertake impact assessments.

- “Walk the talk” – in close dialogue with African stakeholders and civil society, select **investments** that are sustainable for people, environment, and economies, and **benefit primarily local communities and markets** in Africa; facilitate **free movements of people and goods** within Africa and between Africa and Europe, in mutual terms.
- Subject the GG to greater transparency and accountability by implementing the proposal to create a **CSO dialogue platform** in the GG's governance, as endorsed by Commissioner Urpilainen.
- Reconsider the approach: recognise the limitations of the neoliberal capitalist model, which have become more apparent. Encourage a shift in philosophy that focuses on addressing structural issues, promoting justice, and building trust, in order to create a more equitable society.



If you come to Uganda, we have a lot of NGOs operating in small villages here, hundreds of them from all over the world. But why is it that, until today, the situation hasn't improved much? What is the real problem? One population shouldn't become so rich at the expense of others.

**Masaidio Kalenga, Kimanya-Ngeyo Foundation
for Science and Education (Uganda)**

This model has in some ways brought humanity forward, but it also has many limitations. Where is there room to have deeper conversations and to think seriously about whether we are replicating things that simply don't work for anyone, especially not for some regions of the world?

Rachel Bayani, Baha'i International Community



The panel discussion took place on 7 March 2023, at the European Parliament and online. It was co-hosted by MEPs Saskia Bricmont and Carlos Zorrinho and organised by ACT Alliance EU, AEFJN, Baha'i International Community, Caritas Europa, CIDSE, COMECE, Don Bosco International, EU-CORD, World Vision EUREP.

Speakers/panelists included:

- MEPs Saskia Bricmont (Greens) and Carlos Zorrinho (S&D)
- Chiara Adamo, Acting Director at DG INTPA G and Head of Unit G1 (Governance, Democracy, Gender Equality, Human Rights)
- Ivano Casella, Trade Affairs Officer at DG TRADE Unit C1 (African, Caribbean and Pacific, Overseas Countries and Territories)
- Claire Améyo Quenum, Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa (AFSA) (Togo)
- Lucy Esipila, Caritas Africa Advocacy Officer (Kenya)
- Masaidio Kalenga, Kimanya-Ngeyo Foundation for Science and Education (Uganda)
- Floris Faber, ACT Alliance EU Representative and Head of Office
- Fr. Manuel Barrios Prieto, General Secretary of COMECE

 [Link to recording](#)

