



**September 28-29, 2009
Nairobi, Kenya
Concept Note**

The next EU-Africa Business Forum will be held in Nairobi (Kenya) on September 28-29, 2009. The theme of forum will be “Africa and Europe: On the road to new win-win partnerships”. The 2-day forum, which will be hosted by the Mr Raila Odinga, Prime Minister of Kenya, will bring together more than 200 business leaders and government officials from Africa and Europe. It will be held a few months ahead of the African Union Summit of Heads of States and Government, scheduled to take place on January 26-28, 2010.

The Forum will be an unrivalled opportunity for businesses to share their views so as to better defend the interests of their sectors and to network with other businesses and policy makers. Traditionally, the forum is attended by African and European business leaders representing multi-nationals, large corporations, small and medium-scale enterprises and confederations, multilateral and regional institutions. The organization of the Forum is supported by the European Commission and the African Union.

The EU-Africa Business Forum

The EU-Africa Business Forum is an integral part of the Joint EU-Africa Strategy (JEAS), which was adopted in December 2007. Like the Strategy, the overriding vision of the EU-Africa Business Forum is to support Africa’s efforts to achieve the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and a gradual integration of their economies into the global economy.

The Joint Africa-EU Strategy foresees that “the EU-Africa Business Forum will play a key role in bringing together entrepreneurs and public and private investors from both Europe and Africa in order to

discuss ways of improving the investment and business climate and to raise the profile of doing business in Africa”.

Past forums

The first Forum was held in Brussels on 16-17 November, 2006. The second Forum took place at the International Conference Centre in Accra, Ghana, on 21-22 June, 2007¹. At the end of this Forum, participants came up with a private sector **declaration** as well as a set of recommendations on ways of improving Africa’s business climate. On the occasion of the second EU-Africa Summit of Heads of State and Government, the EU-Africa Business Forum issued a statement containing specific recommendations building on Forum meeting in Accra.

Objectives and approach of the upcoming EU-Africa Business Forum

The upcoming EU-Africa Business Forum will seek to strengthen its involvement in and impact on the political dialogue, with the objective of enhancing the private sector role in achieving economic ties between Europe and Africa that are stronger and mutually beneficial.

The Forum will consider how to better engage political leaders in a constructive dialogue, defining an effective process of communication and reporting on progress made in implementing recommendations. Besides advocacy, participants will be encouraged to use the Forum as a launch-pad for visible initiatives aimed at meeting the EU-Africa partnership challenges.

The Forum will evolve around the following main activities:

- Reflection on enhancing the relevance and effectiveness of the EU-Africa Business Forum will be based on the state of play in EPA negotiations, an assessment of achievements so far in implementing past recommendations and a review of global and regional situation and development prospects.
- A panel of key figureheads from international bodies and the business community will share their views about business challenges and opportunities in Africa to guide and set the stage for further discussions.
- The forum will seek to formulate specific and precise recommendations, as well as implementation roadmaps, in 5 key areas: Trade, infrastructure, ICT, SME entrepreneurship and

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/development/policies/9interventionareas/trade/eu_africa_business_forum_en.cfm

Energy & raw materials. This will be achieved through debates in breakout sessions.

The economic context: Recent development & prospects

The international environment facing Africa has turned decisively negative. Not surprisingly, the outlook for Africa has been adversely affected by the global recession. Despite the financial and economic crisis, new private activity in infrastructure continues to take place in developing countries, albeit at a lower project closure rate. The rate of project closure varies across regions with Sub-Saharan Africa attracting higher investments. Economic growth in Africa is expected to be only 2.8 per cent in 2009, following 5 years of consecutive growth above 5.5 percent.

None of the Sub-Saharan African countries is currently on track to attain all of the goals by 2015 and many countries are experiencing major power shortages as the recent expansion in generating capacity has not been able to keep up with demand growth for some time. In general, Africa continues to face severe hardships in spite of economic improvements. Yet, it is endowed with rich resources. To fully harness these resources successfully and achieve the goal of rapid and sustainable transformation of African economies, African countries have been accelerating the process of regional integration.