

GOVERNMENT DECISION-IN-PRINCIPLE



# Finland's **AFRICA STRATEGY**

**TOWARDS A STRONGER POLITICAL  
AND ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP**

Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland

## Suomen Afrikka-strategia

Strategia kattaa Suomen Afrikka-politiikan strategiset painopisteet. Sillä määritellään, mihin suuntaan Suomi haluaa suhteitaan Afrikan maihin, Afrikan unioniin (AU) ja alueellisiin järjestöihin lähivuosina kehittää.

Strategian tavoitteena on monipuolistaa ja syventää Suomen suhteita Afrikan maihin, AU:hun ja alueellisiin järjestöihin. Strategiassa painotetaan erityisesti molempia hyödyttävien poliittisten ja kaupallistaloudellisten suhteiden vahvistamisen tärkeyttä.

Suomi edistää strategian tavoitteita kahdenvälisen Afrikka-suhteidensa ohella osana EU:ta, pohjoismaisessa yhteistyössä, kansainvälisissä rahoituslaitoksissa ja YK:n ja muun monenvälisen yhteistyön puitteissa.

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## Finlands Afrikastrategi

Detta dokument redogör för de strategiska prioriteringarna i Finlands Afrikapolitik. I dokumentet definieras i vilken riktning Finland vill utveckla sina relationer med länder i Afrika, Afrikanska unionen (AU) och regionala organisationer under de närmaste åren.

Strategins syfte är att fördjupa förbindelserna till länder i Afrika, AU och regionala organisationer och göra dem mer mångsidiga. I strategin prioriteras särskilt vikten av att stärka de politiska och ekonomiska förbindelserna på ett sätt som är till nytta för båda parter.

Finland främjar strategins syfte förutom i sina bilaterala Afrikaförbindelser också som en del av EU, i det nordiska samarbetet, internationella finansieringsinstitut och inom ramen för samarbetet i FN och annat multilateralt samarbete.

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## Finland's Africa Strategy

The document covers the strategic priorities of Finland's Africa policy. It provides the direction for Finland to develop its relations with African countries, the African Union (AU) and regional organisations during the next few years.

The aim of the strategy is to diversify and deepen Finland's relations with African countries, the AU and regional organisations. The strategy emphasises the importance to strengthen mutually beneficial political and economic relations.

In addition to advancing the goals of the strategy bilaterally, Finland will advance them multilaterally in the EU, Nordic cooperation, international financial institutions, the UN and other multilateral cooperation.

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# Foreword:

# Africa strategy

## –towards a joint future

For the European Union and for many of its Member States, Africa is assuming an increasingly important role as a close neighbour and a partner. We should also discuss these issues in Finland so that we can understand the profound changes the African countries are going through, the rapid growth of the African economies and the huge potential of the continent's growing young population. Impressions often lag behind reality and are in need of updating. Finland's Africa strategy is part of this updating process. It also strengthens the image of Africa as a diverse and increasingly important continent.

The approach of this strategy is new. Its focus is not on development cooperation but on developing and diversifying political and economic relations between Finland and African countries. This strategy is a Government strategy but it can only be implemented in close cooperation with all relevant stakeholders.

It became clear during the preparation of the strategy that there is huge interest in Finland in expanding and deepening relations with African countries and African organisations. The huge challenges facing humankind, from climate change to health security, can only be resolved through closer political cooperation, by developing economic and trade relations and by sharing best practices. Central government, political decision-makers, the private sector, civil society and the scientific community must all be involved in this process.

The strategy was prepared in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs under the leadership of the State Secretary in close cooperation with other ministries and stakeholders. I would like to extend my warm thanks to all those parties that took

part in the broad consultation process. A thank you also goes to the partners, who arranged events complementing the official consultation process. A huge amount of information on cooperation between Finnish actors and African countries was produced during the process and many good ideas were presented. Cooperation on these matters will continue.

Finland is facing new competition when developing its relations with Africa. Closer cooperation with the continent is not only a priority for Finland and the European Union. We must strengthen those areas of cooperation in which we have particular added value and which are mutually beneficial. Finnish actors can also benefit from African expertise in such areas as research and scientific cooperation and health security.

It was also important for us to hear the views of African stakeholders during the process. We had good and useful discussions with the African diaspora in Finland and embassies of African countries. These discussions will continue.

We are in the middle of a pandemic and many African economies have been hit hard by the COVID-19 crisis. As the world economy recovers, African countries will also return to a growth path.

There is the word 'ubuntu' in the Bantu language. It means 'I am because we are'. It is also a good starting point for tackling global crises.

**Pekka Haavisto**  
Minister for Foreign Affairs

# 1. Introduction

## **The purpose of Finland's Africa strategy is to strengthen the political and economic partnership with African countries and African actors.**

The African continent has undergone major changes over recent years. Many African countries have experienced strong economic growth, the continent has become more integrated politically and economically, and the population is growing rapidly. At the same time, Africa has become more important strategically, and geopolitically and in terms of commercial and economic relations.

International actors have increased their political and economic presence on the African continent. The competition for influence and natural resources, as well as for control over transport, energy and digital connections essential to trade and investments has intensified. China is building closer political and commercial relations with African countries. Russia is pursuing the same goal within its own resources, focusing on military cooperation. Persian Gulf countries and Turkey are playing an increasingly active role in Africa. The European Union (EU) and many of its Member States are also seeking closer political and economic ties with African countries. Strong United States presence across Africa is opening up opportunities for cooperation for the EU and Finland.

For Europe and Finland, the African continent is particularly important as a neighbour. Its development and security have a direct impact on the EU and its Member States. About 70% of the 1.3 billion people living in Africa are aged under 30. With a rapid population growth, the number of young people continues to increase. Young people are an important development resource for African countries. The ability of the African countries to adapt to climate change, preserve biodiver-

sity and meet the challenges arising from population growth by providing young people with education, jobs and political power not only impacts development on the African continent, but also Europe and Finland. Global challenges can only be resolved with the participation of African countries, which comprise over one quarter of all UN Member States. Most recently, the COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the need for a global response.

With its Africa strategy, the Government wants to diversify and deepen Finland's relations with African countries, the African Union (AU) and regional organisations. Particular attention is paid to stronger political and economic relations. The aim is also to ensure a more comprehensive and coherent approach to Finland's Africa policy. The Government is building political contacts with African countries and organisations and is seeking to increase Finland's diplomatic and commercial presence in the region. The aim is to double the trade between Finland and African countries between 2020 and 2030.

From the perspective of Finland's own interests, it is important for Finland to contribute to positive development in Africa and to build new political and economic cooperation with its African partners that benefits both parties. Similarly, Finland possesses expertise that can benefit African countries as they develop their societies and diversify their economies.

The general principles, objectives and value base of Finland's foreign policy are set out in the Government Report on Finnish Foreign and Security Policy. The document defines hu-



man rights, the rule of law, democracy, peace, freedom, equality and the promotion of gender equality as the core values for all international activities pursued by Finland.

The Africa strategy specifies the objectives and priorities set out in the Government report that are relevant to the continent. Finland will promote these objectives through bilateral relations with African countries, as an EU Member State, in cooperation with other Nordic countries, in international financial institutions and within the UN and other multilateral fora. The European Union is Finland's most important external relations framework, the key channel for exerting influence and the security community in matters concerning Africa. In addition to the EU, the Nordic countries, which all share similar values and social models, are an important reference group for Finland.

In accordance with the Government Report on Finnish Foreign and Security Policy, Finland will take into account the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in all its activities. Most African countries have also committed themselves to implementing the provisions of these documents. The objective of Finland's climate foreign policy is to promote a global transition to low-emission and climate-resilient societies.

The concept of reciprocity and mutual interests provide the basis for Finland's Africa policy. Understanding that Africa is highly diverse politically, economically and culturally, and a continent of 54 countries is an important starting point for developing the relations. The African countries are responsible for their own development and security and thus, the objectives set out in the African Union's Agenda 2063 'The Africa We Want Want' constitute an important basis for Finland's strategy.

Finland's long-standing relations with Sub-Saharan Africa are founded in particular on successful development cooperation. This provides a good basis for diversifying the relations and opens doors for building stronger political and economic ties. There is a long tradition of strong diplomatic, commercial and

economic ties between Finland and North African countries but also potential for closer links.

Development cooperation remains a key foreign policy instrument for Finland on the African continent. Its main objective is to support Africa to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular the eradication of poverty and reduction of inequality. Africa remains the geographical focus of Finland's development cooperation. The principles and priorities set out in the Government report on Development Policy across Parliamentary Terms guide Finland's development cooperation also in Africa. Finland is also seeking to increase its participation in crisis management in Africa.

Deepening and diversifying Finland's relations with Africa is not just a matter for the Government. We hope that the strategy will encourage cooperation between public, private and civil society actors across Finland and Africa. An up-to-date, diverse and realistic picture of African countries and of opportunities for cooperation on the continent is essential for attracting the interest of these actors.



# 2. Political relations and cooperation

## Finland strengthens political relations and cooperation with African countries and regional organisations

Many African countries are active players in regional and international arenas, and they are playing an increasingly important role in international cooperation, including in the UN. The voice and contribution of the 54 African countries are important in the efforts to ensure a multilateral rules-based order, such as promoting human rights, combatting impunity and resolving global challenges.

As African countries have become more important politically and economically, interest in them has grown and competition for partnerships with them has intensified. The EU and many of its Member States are now working to strengthen and diversify their ties with African countries.

Strong and trust-based political relations are necessary if Finland wants to promote its objectives, find partners and pursue shared interests. Good political relations are essential for promoting economic, trade and development cooperation. They are often a precondition for cooperation with local communities and civil society. At the same time, development cooperation can provide opportunities for closer political and economic bonds.

The broader relations between Finnish and African stakeholders at different levels can support strengthening of government-to-government relations and create opportunities for economic cooperation and trade. For example, the interna-

tional activities of the Finnish Parliament and its contacts with parliaments in African countries complement intergovernmental and economic cooperation.

### **Objective 1: Finland builds closer ties with African countries, the African Union and regional organisations**

- The Government strengthens its relations with African countries and regional organisations. More visits and meetings at the political level and between public officials will be arranged to promote Finland's objectives. Measures are taken by the Government to ensure better internal flow of information and joint goal-setting for cooperation with African countries.
- Finland expands its diplomatic and commercial presence in Africa to strengthen political and economic relations with the continent.
- Finland promotes cooperation between the Nordic region and African countries. Finland uses the opportunities opened up by Nordic cooperation and initiatives to achieve its political, commercial and economic objectives at country level, within the framework of the EU and in global forums.
- Finland supports regional integration in Africa bilaterally and as an EU Member State.



## Objective 2: Finland intensifies cooperation with African countries on regional and global issues

- Finland supports the goal of African countries to strengthen their representation in the UN Security Council.
- Finland intensifies the exchange of views and build cooperation with African countries, the African Union and regional organisations. This is done on a bilateral basis, in the EU and in international organisations. The focus is on the following themes:
  - Peace and security, in particular mediation and the UN resolutions on women, peace and security (1325) and youth, peace and security (2250).
  - A multilateral rules-based order and regional integration.
  - Climate-resilient and low-emission development and circular economy as well as sustainable management, use and protection of natural resources and biodiversity. In its climate foreign policy, Finland will promote the Coalition of Finance Ministers for Climate Action established at the initiative of Finland.
  - Implementation of human rights, democracy, the rule of law, equality and women's rights (including sexual and reproductive health and rights) at country, regional and global level.
  - Education, skills, knowledge and cooperation in the field of research and innovation. Finland actively contributes to the resolution of the global learning crisis.
- Finland builds dialogue and cooperation on migration as part of a broader political dialogue, especially with the African countries from which there is migration to Finland. The Government promotes opportunities for legal migration: In addition to the resettlement of refugees, pathways based on work and study should also be made more accessible. Parallel to this, it is essential to ensure the effective and fair return of people without the right to stay to their home countries in accordance with universal human rights, and to promote the reintegration of the returnees. In the long term, the development cooperation funding provided by Finland and its participation in crisis management will have an impact on the underlying causes of forced migration. Finland contributes to the efforts to combat human trafficking and migrant smuggling.
- Finland promotes cooperation in institution building and governance between government agencies, making use of the funding and cooperation opportunities provided by the EU.





# 3. Cooperation to promote peace and security

## **Finland increases cooperation on peace and security with African countries, the African Union and regional organisations and strengthens the capacity of African countries to bear responsibility for their own security**

Promoting peace and security in Africa is one of the key goals set out in the Agenda 2063 of the African Union. It is in the interests of the EU and Finland to support the achievement of this goal. The security challenges facing Africa, such as protracted conflicts and natural disasters, have a negative impact on the security of Europe and Finland and they are reflected i.a. in higher levels of irregular migration. The activities of international terrorist organisations and their spread to new areas in Africa pose a threat to regional and international security and have a direct impact on Finland. By taking part in supporting security in Africa, Finland is also strengthening its own security. The Horn of Africa, Sahel and Libya in particular are the key areas on the continent from the security perspective. Attention should also be paid to areas to which instability is spreading.

Finland approaches the question of peace and security in a comprehensive manner from the perspective of broad security. Security can only be on a sustainable basis if it arises from human rights, democracy, the rule of law and gender equality. The future prospects of the growing young population of Africa, such as education and employment opportunities or the lack of them, is directly linked to social stability. Actions

focusing on reducing poverty and inequality also contribute to security. It is important to take into account the disputes involving climate, environmental and natural resource issues behind the conflicts.

Finland will contribute to the resolution of peace and security issues in the EU, the UN and within the AU. For many years, Finland has supported peace and security in Africa by participating in crisis management operations, by providing crisis management training, by supporting the security sector and through arms control projects and mediation. These activities will continue.



**Objective: Finland promotes conflict prevention and resolution by supporting the development of peaceful and democratic societies and the strengthening of crisis resilience.**

- Finland influences the underlying causes of conflicts by strengthening support to the crisis resilience of African societies. This is done through collaboration between peacebuilding, humanitarian aid, crisis management and development cooperation. Finland works to ensure that the EU and the UN give consideration to these questions and take coherent action on them.
- Finland promotes comprehensive and effective action in the EU to strengthen peace and security. The capacity of the EU to foresee new crises and instability and respond quickly to them must be strengthened. It is important for Finland that the EU continues to support the stabilisation of the Horn of Africa and the Sahel region. It is also important to intensify cooperation and dialogue between the EU and the African Union in crisis prevention and resolution.
- Using the Centre for Mediation of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Finnish mediation expertise, Finland strengthens its support to African peace processes, especially in the areas where there is special expertise available in Finland. These include inclusive peace processes (women and youth), water diplomacy and the role of traditional and religious leaders.
- Finland supports the development of African crisis management and conflict prevention capabilities both bilaterally and through the EU, UN, AU and other partnerships. Finland supports the strengthening of the financial sustainability of African peacekeeping operations in the UN and through the European Peace Facility and encourages African countries to increase their funding for the AU Peace Fund.
- In accordance with the Government Report on Finnish Foreign and Security Policy, Finland intends to increase its participation in crisis management in Africa in particular. Currently, one fifth of Finnish civilian crisis management experts and about 10 % of all military personnel taking part in Finland's crisis management operations are posted in Africa. Finland will significantly strengthen its participation in crisis management operations to better reflect the importance of Africa to the security of Finland and Europe. Finland will fully utilise the cooperation opportunities with Nordic countries and other key partner countries.
- Finland continues to support the cooperation with the EU, UN and AU to prevent and combat violent extremism and radicalisation, terrorism, human trafficking and violence against women.
- Finland highlights democracy, human rights, equality and the rule of law issues in its dialogue with African countries and the AU. It also supports actors promoting human rights, democracy, the rule of law and good governance on the continent.
- Finland supports the efforts to combat the proliferation of small arms and other conventional weapons in Africa.
- Finland continues cooperation with relevant partners to promote health, environmental and water security as well as food security and land rights in Africa at national level and through international organisations and initiatives. The emphasis is on One Health thinking that combines human, animal and environmental health.



# 4. Trade and investments and job-creating green growth

## Promoting sustainable economic growth and structural change and boosting trade and investments are in the interests of Finland and African countries

The African continent is a large and rapidly growing market. It is a challenging market offering huge opportunities. COVID-19 has slowed down economic growth on the continent, and it will take time for the African countries to recover from the effects of the pandemic. However, the big picture remains unchanged: there is great potential for building business ties between Finland and African countries, and the relations can be developed in a manner that will benefit both Finnish and African actors. Successful entry to new markets will benefit Finnish companies and will thus also boost economic wellbeing in Finland.

By entering the African market, Finnish companies can introduce cutting-edge and competitive expertise and technology that can help to create decent jobs and increase the productivity of African companies. Finnish companies can play a part in helping African economies to adopt cleaner and more sustainable solutions and tackle the challenges arising from climate change and biodiversity loss. These challenges include the supply of clean water, management of natural resources, food security and sustainable forestry. Responsible Finnish companies can also position themselves as pioneers of ethical business practices and corporate social responsibility in Africa.

Successful cooperation between Finnish and African actors in such areas as research and innovation can lead to new technological solutions. As a result, both Finnish and African companies can become more competitive in Africa and on the global scale. Cooperation to promote digitalisation as well as solutions in the field of circular economy, bioeconomy, waste management and renewable energy are promising areas.

In its Africa policy, the EU is focusing on the promotion of the green transition and digital transformation and it is channeling substantial funding to these sectors, which can also provide opportunities for Finnish actors. Investments in sustainable connections in transport, energy and the digital economy are key instruments in promoting structural change in the economy. Measures involving renewable natural resources and supporting climate change mitigation, such as afforestation, sustainable forest management and related information systems, offer opportunities for a country like Finland.

Young people of Africa play a key role in the development of the continent. Creating decent jobs for the young and growing population of Africa is a key challenge facing the conti-



ment. Solutions to improve access to quality education can significantly boost economic growth, competitiveness and the employment of women and youth in African countries. Learning and education involve significant business opportunities for Finnish companies. Creative industries can also offer new commercial opportunities. Finland promotes the participation of women in economic activities through its development cooperation.

The multilateral rules-based trading system is in the interests of both Finland and African countries. Cooperation in multilateral organisations can be intensified. The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) is expected to significantly increase trade between African countries and boost economic reforms. The common market and the growth and diversification of trade and production will open up new opportunities for Finnish companies. Finnish expertise, such as the utilisation of digital solutions in the customs clearance of goods, can be used in the implementation of AfCFTA.

**Objective 1: The aim is to double the trade between Finland and Africa between 2020 and 2030, and efforts are made to significantly increase investments of Finnish companies in Africa and of African companies in Finland during the same period**

- Finland will focus the inputs of its governmental export actors more clearly on countries and sectors with the greatest commercial and economic potential. The priority countries and sectors will be jointly determined with Finnish business organisations and companies.
- Finland sets the strengthening of commercial relations as a key task for its missions in the priority countries, and the missions (and Team Finland teams) are resourced accordingly.
- Finland increases ministerial and other high-level visits to Africa. Promotion of exports and strengthening of commercial and economic relations will be made a key strategic part of all visits to Africa and the political discussions taking place in connection with them.

- Finland improves the cooperation between public and private sector actors and the effectiveness of their work in export promotion. The Team Finland network sets clearer export promotion goals and indicators for assessing the effectiveness of export promotion activities.
- The system of private and public funding and services available to Finnish companies are developed to better meet the needs of the African markets and Finnish companies. Ways are sought to promote Finnish impact investments and sustainable funding in Africa. Measures are taken to promote investments by African companies in Finland.
- The Team Finland network creates opportunities for making the Finnish export offerings into larger packages. The aim is to build ecosystems in which the international growth of small and medium-sized enterprises is supported by spearhead companies. One of the objectives is to create ecosystems for jointly defined priority areas around potential Finnish actors already operating in the market. Actors are encouraged and supported to take a long-term approach to the activities.
- Measures are taken to better utilise the networks of business operators and higher education institutions in export promotion, including international chambers of commerce cooperating with Finnish partners.
- Finnish companies are provided with more information on the market and financing opportunities available in Africa.

**Objective 2: Measures are taken to combine Finnish expertise with the promotion of job-creating green growth and sustainable transition in African countries.**

- Measures are taken to increase scientific and research cooperation in areas relevant to green transition and the mechanisms impacting climate change and biodiversity loss. The aim is that the cooperation will lead to commercial relations between Finnish and African actors.



- Measures are taken to increase interaction with key African countries and organisations at the level of experts and government agencies in areas that are of interest to Finnish companies and in which Finland possesses expertise that is of interest to African countries (such as the impact of artificial intelligence on future work). In the cooperation between Finnish and African government agencies, more use will be made of sector-specific cooperation protocols and agreements that also take into account the role of companies.
- Cooperation between African and Finnish actors in the field of technology and innovation will be intensified. Finland's bilateral, regional and multilateral development cooperation, private sector financing instruments (including Finnpartnership and Developing Markets Platform) and other development funding channels will be strengthened to meet future needs. Opportunities for cooperation arising from multilateral actors' innovation programmes funded by the EU and Finland will be utilised.
- Finland increases broad-based cooperation to improve educational opportunities, especially in the field of vocational education and training. This provides the basis for the knowledge and skills that are needed by young people in the work of the future and that are required in the creation of such jobs. This lays also the basis for competitiveness and innovations promoting sustainable development.
- The aim is that investments in Africa will account for at least 50% of the value of Finnfund's new funding decisions. The Government ensures Finnfund's operating prerequisites and adequate risk-taking capacity.
- At least 60% of the loans and investments within the framework of Finland's development cooperation (development policy investments) will be allocated to Africa between 2020 and 2023. A substantial part of this will support green transition in Africa, as at least 75% of all development policy investments will be allocated to climate funding.
- Finland examines ways to step up efforts to promote the participation of Finnish companies in projects

funded by the EU and international financial institutions and organisations.

- Finland promotes measures to improve prerequisites for business operations and investments in African countries and supports the adoption of the principles of ethical business. This can be achieved through bilateral ties, multilateral cooperation (especially in development banks), Nordic cooperation and activities within the EU. One option is to target development funding in a manner that supports reforms of the business environment, such as strengthening of transparency and the rule of law.
- Economic diversification and the creation of new service structures will be supported by tapping into the competence of creative and cultural sector.
- Africa plays a key role in the Finnish Taxation for Development Action Programme 2020-2023. Finland contributes to the efforts of the African countries to improve the sustainability of their economies by supporting their tax systems and their actions against capital flight and by helping to ensure that their voice is heard in the negotiations on the global tax policy. Finland also promotes the tax responsibility of companies supported through development cooperation funding in Africa.

### **Objective 3: Finland defends the multilateral rules-based trading system and supports regional economic integration in Africa**

- Finland intensifies its cooperation with African countries in international organisations.
- Finland supports the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and other economic integration mechanisms, especially in areas where Finland can offer expertise. The implementation of AfCFTA and regional integration will also be promoted through development funding.



# 5. The European Union's relations with African countries, the African Union and regional organisations

**Finland actively contributes to the formulation of the European Union's policy on Africa and promotion of the values and interests of the EU in Africa.**

The EU is Africa's largest trading and investment partner, the largest source of migrant remittances, the continent's most important development partner, and the largest source of funding for African regional integration and the African Union's peacekeeping operations. The substantial contributions of the EU should also be reflected in a stronger political partnership. However, the position of the EU in Africa is increasingly challenged by other international actors and by political, economic and ideological competition.

Both the EU and African countries would benefit from more reciprocal and closer political and economic cooperation. Solutions to common challenges can be found through cooperation. It is important for the EU that African countries will develop in an economically, environmentally and socially sustainable manner. The way in which the young people of the continent view their own future and the future of their countries is essential for both African countries and Europe.

The positive development of the African continent will improve the security of Africa and the EU and provide more opportunities for mutually beneficial trade and cooperation in other areas. It is necessary to expand connections between Europe and Africa by investing in transport, energy and digital networks. This will create economic opportunities for both Africans and Europeans.

To strengthen its role in Africa, the EU must take a more strategic approach and act more efficiently. EU Member States and institutions must be able to cooperate and coordinate their activities more seamlessly. A more unified approach by the EU would provide a better basis for closer political cooperation and formulation of common positions with African countries. A political and economic partnership based on common interests would be the most effective way to promote the values and objectives of the EU.



In Finland's view, there is a particularly strong basis for common interests in peace and security, economy and trade, education and climate and environmental issues. In all its activities, the EU must promote socially, economically and environmentally sustainable development and gender equality in a cross-cutting manner in line with the 2030 Agenda, and put young people at the centre of its Africa policy.

### **Objective 1: Finland promotes relations between the EU and African countries based on reciprocity and common interests**

- Finland contributes to closer relations and concrete cooperation between the EU and African countries. Finland is prepared to support the relaying of EU messages to African countries and to promote the exchange of views between the EU and African countries.
- Finland supports substantial EU investments in the green transition of African economies, digitalisation, sustainable development creating decent jobs and sustainable connections. Finland participates in this cooperation and uses the opportunities created by EU-level action to expand trade between Finland and African countries.
- Finland works to strengthen multilateral cooperation between the EU and the AU. In Finland's view, it is important that the EU supports the strengthening of the African Union's role and African integration.
- Finland participates in the climate diplomacy of the EU. It is important for the EU to promote objectives linked to climate change and biodiversity loss in its political discussions with African countries.
- Finland helps to ensure that in the planning and implementation of the EU's development cooperation, measures are taken to improve aid effectiveness and to emphasise local ownership.
- Finland supports the efforts of the EU and the AU to strengthen the role of young people in the partnership, emphasises the importance of consulting youth and civil society, and encourages Finnish young people to take part in the cooperation. Finland supports the initiative of the European Commission to increase EU-level inputs in education.

- Finland believes that the EU should strengthen the dialogue and cooperation on migration with the AU and African countries as part of broader relations and partnerships between the EU and African countries. EU support and action should be used to reduce irregular migration and to tackle its underlying causes proactively. The EU must also create better opportunities for legal migration and support internal mobility in Africa.

### **Objective 2: Finland takes action to support the strengthening of the role and unity of the European Union in Africa**

- Finland plays an active role in EU coordination, joint Team Europe activities, and the strategic communications of the EU and its development in Africa.
- In Finland's view, the EU must make a stronger contribution to safeguarding European know-how and competitiveness in the African market, especially in sectors that are strategically important to the EU.

### **Objective 3: Finland promotes the participation of Finnish actors in the implementation of the EU-AU partnership**

- Measures are taken to promote the use of Finnish expertise (state institutions, companies, actors in science, research and education, cultural actors and civil society) in the implementation of the EU-Africa partnership. The opportunities for cooperation with other EU countries will be explored. Availability of EU funding to Finnish actors is examined and Finnish actors are encouraged to seek a role in the implementation process.
- In cooperation with other central government actors, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs systematically promotes the recruitment of Finns to Africa-related tasks in the European External Action Service and the European Commission that are central to Finland's interests.





# 6. Relations between peoples and communities

The Agenda 2063 of the African Union emphasises the importance of people for the future of the continent. Investments particularly in young people and women and people-to-people contacts are also priorities in the EU-Africa partnership. The links between peoples and communities and better cultural understanding also provide a basis for stronger political and economic relations.

Finnish societal actors have long-standing relations with Africa across the continent. Particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, development cooperation lies at the core of the relations. There is also cooperation in areas such as trade and between educational and research institutions. It is important to diversify and expand these ties further. To achieve this, the interest and expertise of people working in educational and research institutions, the private sector, the cultural sector, the media, organisations and other areas of society are needed. There is also a need for stronger awareness of what opportunities the mutually beneficial cooperation with Africa can offer. It is also important to promote cooperation and networking between Finnish actors.

Finland's growing African diaspora and diaspora organisations are a resource in developing relations between Finland and African countries, in development cooperation and in trade and economic links. Finland is committed to promoting cultural and linguistic diversity and views culture and arts as important means of strengthening the cohesion of societies.

Building connections between young people in Africa and Finland is key to developing stronger ties. Digitalisation can pro-

vide new means for achieving this. It is also important to support societal engagement of young people.

## **Objective: Finland promotes relations at different levels of society**

- Finland continues to support non-governmental organisations and encourage the development of civil societies.
- Finland engages in a regular dialogue with actors in different sectors operating in Africa and with the African diaspora. Actors are encouraged to increase their cooperation.
- Higher education institutions, research organisations and think tanks are encouraged to develop mutually beneficial partnerships with their African counterparts. They should also use the funding opportunities provided by the EU to promote exchange studies and exchange of researchers between Finland and African countries. More information on mobility paths should be provided. The Nordic Africa Institute and the networks of Finnish higher education institutions are utilised in the development of researcher cooperation.
- Cultural and creative sectors are encouraged to develop partnerships.
- The opportunities for participating in EU cooperation to develop channels for legal migration are examined. In particular, the opportunities for circular migration are utilised for supporting sustainable economic growth.





- Finland encourages the development of links between young people in Finland and African countries, for example by supporting start-up and innovation activities.
- Development cooperation between the Finnish education sector and African countries continues and strengthens. Most of the support is channelled to comprehensive development of the education sector at primary and secondary level, including vocational education and training. The capacities of higher education institutions and research institutes are also supported to promote knowledge, innovations and sustainable development. Finnish expertise in the development of quality education, including teacher training is used in this cooperation.
- Provision of information on Africa will be developed by using different channels (including the social media) to give a more comprehensive and multi-faceted picture of Africa. Information will also be directed at young people. Research on Africa and information on the situation on the continent will be promoted in society in general and it will also be directed at different target groups (such as the media and teachers).



# 7. Objectives, implementation and resources

- The implementation of the strategy and the achievement of its objectives will be reviewed on a regular basis, and sufficient resources will be allocated for its implementation at the central government level.
  - The Government will appoint an inter-ministerial steering group to monitor the implementation of the strategy, to manage coordination between ministries and to promote the sharing of information and the setting of common objectives.
  - Based on the overall objectives of the strategy, each ministry will prepare an action plan for its own administrative branch to ensure a more detailed implementation of the strategy, taking into account budgetary and resource issues. The steering group will receive the action plans for information.
- The Government will examine ways to enhance Africa expertise of the Finnish central government and to use it more flexibly in its Africa cooperation.
  - International job openings in Africa or concerning Africa will be considered when decisions on recruitments and secondments supported by central government are made.
  - Cooperation with Finnish Africa-related actors will continue. They are also encouraged to establish new partnerships to implement the strategy.





Ulkoministeriö  
Utrikesministeriet



Ministry for Foreign  
Affairs of Finland