Germany supports African Union with additional € 30 Million

Addis Ababa, 29 November 2012: After a week of constructive engagement and negotiations between the African Union (AU) Commission and the Federal Republic of Germany, the German Government has today pledged an additional amount of Euro 30 million in support of different programmes of the AU Commission.

This pledge comes against the backdrop of the German Government’s New Africa Strategy, which seeks to foster coordination and cooperation with regional actors in Africa. The cooperation with the AU is an integral part of this new Strategy. Focus areas of cooperation are peace and security, infrastructure, agriculture, education and capacity building.

During the negotiations, KfW Development Bank, on behalf of the German Government, signed a financial agreement with the AU Commission to support the full operationalization of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). Part of the funding will be used to scale up the pilot phase of the Trading for Peace Project of COMESA, which seeks to support small-scale trade in the Great Lakes Region and to foster peace-building. The Agreement constitutes an important milestone in the implementation of the AU Policy on Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development (PCRD) adopted in Banjul, in June 2006, which, among others, calls for the mobilization of resources for post-conflict reconstruction and development, as well as coordination and complementarity between the AU and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs). The Agreement comes at a time when the Commission is stepping up its efforts to mobilize support from Africa and beyond to assist countries emerging from conflict within the context of the recently-launched African Solidarity Initiative (ASI).

Speaking during the signing ceremony, the Deputy Chairperson of the AU Commission, Mr. Erastus Mwencha, expressed appreciation to Germany for its continued support to the AU Commission. “The funding will also create an opportunity for enhanced inter-departmental synergy on cross-cutting issues like infrastructure development in the post-conflict context, as well as deepen coordination between the RECs and the AU”, he noted.

Further assistance will be given to establish the Pan-African University (PAU). With the establishment of the PAU, Germany’s support intends to link up the fields of higher education,
knowledge exchange and cooperation with the private sector, based on German expertise, especially in the areas of climate, water and energy.

With regard to agriculture, Germany supports NEPAD in its Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), providing incentives to increase the agrarian-economic development up to 6 % growth in selected countries through systemic economic reforms and targeted investments. With additional technical support for CAADP, technical vocational education and training systems for the food and agriculture sector will be strengthened.

The AU Commission views the current support as a further demonstration of Germany’s confidence in Africa’s determination to carry forward its integration agenda. Germany being an important player in European integration, there is a lot that the two parties can share.

The AU Commission notes with satisfaction that, in spite of tough economic and political challenges in Europe, Germany support to Africa has been unwavering.

Several changes are currently on going within the AU Commission, which the new leadership intends to take forward and deepen. In this respect, the Commission will scale-up its efforts towards strengthening its internal systems and operations, to ensure that the support received from partners, such as Germany, is utilized in an effective, efficient, transparent and accountable manner.

Mrs Ulrike Haupt, Head of the German Delegation from the Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), stated: “Our interest is to assist Africa strengthen its capacity to address its security and developmental challenges in a more effective and sustainable way. The German contribution thereby aims to foster substantive progress of the AU in achieving political and economic integration, particularly by creating the required environment of peace and stability, including in the Horn of Africa. In this regard, the AU as actor on the highest political level in regional and continental politics has a key role to play”.

Ambassador Lieselore Cyrus of Germany acknowledged the achievements of the AU Commission in recent years, and lauded the new impetus under its newly-elected Chairperson, Dr Dlamini-Zuma: “The AU has demonstrated its political relevance in the region and its capacities to act in crisis through its conflict management efforts in Sudan – South Sudan, as well as the stabilization of Somalia, through AMISOM deployment. This deserves our highest recognition. However, political and security challenges on the continent persist for the AU – as just shown by the current crisis in Mali”.

Cooperation between Germany and the AU Commission dates back to 2006. Since then, and adding the new commitment of today, around Euro 172 million have been provided for bilateral development programs in the focus areas of peace and security, good governance and infrastructure (especially in water and energy sectors). This includes further projects, such as the German African Border Project, the Police Component of the African Standby Force, and the construction of the AU Peace and Security Building, amounting to Euro 42 million since 2009.

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