



Executive summary

Africa is undergoing a series of demographic, political, economic, social and climatic transitions. These transformations are shaping a rapidly changing Africa and call for a resolutely Afro-realistic approach of the continent. In a world where instability seems to become the rule, what

kind of relationship do we want with the African continent? With the treaties between the European Union and Africa back on the negotiations table, how can we rebuild and rebalance the Africa-EU relationship?

Africa is not waiting for France

Africa is above all a continent of opportunities. Good economic situation, political stability fuelled by the consolidation of democracy and a young population, which is a source of productivity and growth, are assets for the continent's development in the coming years. Urban, young, connected, the African population is both a challenge and an opportunity for African policy-makers.

France's assets are undeniable: a common language in 22 countries, cultural and legal proximity that builds bridges between France and a large part of the continent, subtle knowledge of the challenges facing Africa. France has become aware of the new African paradigm: whether it concerns the strengthening of institutions and democracy, the training and employment of young people, urban planning, the diversification of economies or the risk of a return to over-indebtedness.

This reality imposes itself on us. But are we ready for today's Africa and, even more so, for tomorrow's?

Our weaknesses remain numerous. We remain focused on African risks, ignoring opportunities and associated profitability. France, far from being different from other States, has not been able to propose a long-term strategy for the continent's economic development. As it is challenged by the emerging countries, first and foremost China, it is struggling to build a renewed discourse, entangled in a past that it has long refused to fully assume in order to move forward.

Companies, for their part, have often deployed volatile strategies, alternating ebb and flow on the continent. The insufficient match between supply and financing needs, the narrow spectrum of companies receiving public aid, the tendency to under-optimize existing public aid schemes and the poor structuring of technical assistance have prevented our companies to develop sufficiently. Today, while French market shares remain at 14% in French-speaking Africa, they have been divided by 2.5 since the early 2000s in sub-Saharan Africa.

For a 'restart' speech

France must pursue a frank economic development policy and strategy in Africa. It is imperative to leave our inhibitions behind by collectively choosing a 'restart'. It involves lifting taboos. Corruption, democratic changeovers, financial practices in some emerging countries, the CFA Franc, should not be addressed only in words. These subjects must be opened more widely to democratic debate in order to create abscesses created by a lack of transparency. Above all, this discourse must dispel the fantasies that feed in turn the Afro-optimists and Afro-pessimists. This 'restart' is resolutely Afro-realistic, pragmatic. It allows us to be ready for today's and tomorrow's Africa.



Our proposals

Proposal 1

Under France's leadership, redesigning the regulatory framework for international institutions at the European level, by requiring that they monitor and verify that the projects they fund comply with the application of clauses.

Proposal 2

Ensuring that French Official Development Assistance further targets startups, very small businesses, SMEs and mid-caps.

Increasing the amounts dedicated to venture capital and seed capital, through Proparco and the new fund between AFD (the French Development Agency) and the Caisse des dépôts et consignations.

Proposal 3

Creating a single window for French companies' access to various funding, insurance and technical export assistance tools.

Considering the advisability of further concentrating certain tools within a French export bank.

Proposal 4

Making use of French institutional relays in development organizations to help French companies seize the opportunities offered by the implementation of private sector funding tools by funders.

Using technical expertise more effectively as a source of both information and influence to mobilize funding.

Proposal 5

Strengthening our technical assistance system by:

- Promoting international technical assistance to administrations, in order to facilitate the provision of these voluntary public skills internationally, and in particular in Africa;
- Accelerating and finalizing the merger of public operators in charge of international technical cooperation, in order to improve their ability to mobilize French public expertise to exclusively serve the interests of the countries supported and of French companies.

Proposal 6

Promoting the creation of Public-Private Partnerships in education, by including companies investing in Africa, foreign and African schools and universities, and African public authorities.

Focusing these PPPs on skills that are both more technical and less developed on the continent (mathematics, engineering, etc.); directing them towards the BAC - 2 / BAC + 3 education level, in particular through the development of BTS training.

This diversification and massification must serve as a solution to the decisive challenge regarding training for middle management, technicians, innovation, research and development in Africa.

Proposal 7

Facilitating the issuance of economic and student visas in order to increase opportunities for Africans in France. All the administrative procedures required to recruit African employees must follow the same simplification approach.

Proposal 8

Within the framework of the 5th Africa-EU Summit, proposing a clear, renewed and coordinated strategy for European policies in Africa. Relying on the Franco-German couple to redefine the post-Cotonou development goals, in coordination with African public authorities. Involving the European private sector, which is a crucial stakeholder, in these negotiations.

Proposal 9

Promoting a French discourse centred on the notion of 'restart' in Africa, carried by public authorities, in order to free our companies from a historical and political burden that hinders their development on the continent. This 'restart' discourse should favor French companies' access to African markets.