

## **Luxembourg and Africa in 2011**

Luxembourg's diplomacy in Africa takes the shape of a deepening and diversifying commitment.

Africa is a rapidly evolving continent, full of potentialities, far from the Afro-pessimism that prevailed a few years ago.

The idea is not to hide the difficulties and challenges the continent has to face, but to recognise that there are also good reasons to welcome its ongoing evolution, as, for example, the spread of values that are of utmost importance and which we promote, such as democracy and the rule of law. In this respect, it is essential to mention the exemplary democratic transition experienced in Niger and the even more recent political changeover that occurred in Zambia. The example of the post electoral crisis in Ivory Coast reminds us that democracy is fragile even though the ballot box eventually prevailed. This crisis also reminds us that democracy is not only about organising elections, it also implies that the various political actors accept the results of the elections.

As a committed player, responsible and supportive of Africa, Luxembourg does not only talk about democracy. We are also actively involved in the promotion of a lasting anchoring of democracy. Thus, we are active in the Peace-building Commission of the UN since its inception and we contribute concretely to the democratic transition in Guinea-Bissau as well as in Guinea. At the request of the Guinean authorities, we assume the Presidency of the "Guinea Configuration" of the Commission which was established in February 2011.

Another positive development took place in Africa on the political side: the birth of a new state, namely the Republic of South Sudan, which Luxembourg recognised on the day of its independence, last July 9. The independence of the new State, decided through a referendum of self-determination, is to be welcomed but one has to keep in mind the challenges that the new country will have to face in the future. Africa plays and is likely to play a growing role internationally, either economically or diplomatically. Time has come to take into account this new reality and to draw the consequences, while remaining consistent with our ambition to be a committed and responsible actor, supportive of Africa.

For some years Luxembourg has been promoting the development of a more diversified and more committed partnership with the Sub-Saharan Africa. We have decided to strengthen our relationship with Africa, adding to the traditional development cooperation component a political-diplomatic aspect (a) as well as an economic (b) and a cultural (c) component. In doing so, we are entirely consistent with the rationale pursued at the EU level with the establishment of a more strategic partnership with Africa.

From the political-diplomatic perspective, the most visible and significant illustration of our growing commitment vis-à-vis Africa is certainly the opening of a diplomatic mission in Addis Ababa in Ethiopia, which will serve not only as a Permanent Representation of Luxembourg to the African Union but also as a bilateral Embassy to Ethiopia.

Lately, Addis Ababa has become an essential centre of international diplomacy. A modern diplomacy, conscious of the new geopolitical realities must be represented on the ground. Our Embassy in Addis Ababa will enable us to strengthen our relationship with the Commission of the African Union, with which we have already started to cooperate, as for example in the field of security sector reform. Moreover, this will enable us to further strengthen our relationship with other African countries represented in Addis, which is an asset for a country not represented in each African country.

A committed and responsible diplomacy has to be proactive and seek contact with our African partners. It is therefore important that our diplomacy travels and takes the initiative to seek the contact with our African partners in their own countries. It is in that perspective that I have visited many countries of the continent and that I will continue next year, in order to promote mutual understanding.

From the economic point of view, our involvement in Africa is also increasing. This is illustrated by the first trade mission in Angola last year followed by another in Algeria and also by the fact that our companies show a growing interest for Africa. Obviously, the strengthening of our relationship with Africa does not solely rely on the political component. The engagement of the private sector is needed too.

The cultural aspect of our relationship with Africa should not be neglected. Is Ethiopia where we will have a physical presence not considered to be the cradle of humanity? African culture is increasingly known and appreciated. There is certainly a potential to explore. Our cultural cooperation agreement with Cape Verde provides a good example.

The diversification of our relationship with Africa involves the establishment of an integrated approach based on the conviction that the various aspects of our external action, namely development, diplomacy and defence, are complementary and mutually reinforcing.

The Horn of Africa provides the most eloquent example in this respect. The emergency in that region is clearly humanitarian, because of the terrible drought that prevails there. One should welcome the speed with which the Luxembourgish Cooperation has reacted to assist people in need. A committed, responsible and supportive player however can not only rely on humanitarian emergency response. In order to solve the problem in the long term, we must also address the political causes of the situation. Indeed, we must acknowledge that the devastating consequences of drought are not only a climate issue, they are also linked to the deteriorated security situation in Somalia, whether on land or along the coasts of Somalia. This gives even more relevance to our involvement in the context of the EU military mission designed to train security forces of Somalia (EUTM Somalia) and to our contribution to the EU maritime operation designed to combat Piracy in the Indian Ocean (EUNAVFOR ATALANTA).