



The Danish Prime Minister, Mr. Anders Fogh Rasmussen, is chairman of the Africa Commission.

Africa has seen many positive developments and experienced progress in several areas in the past decade, globally thanks to Africa's own efforts and reforms. However, development must be accelerated further. In a global context, Africa has largely been left behind in the area of economic growth, which is a prerequisite for solving many of the still existing challenges. The Danish Government is therefore actively seeking to put economic growth and employment in Africa higher on the international agenda. As a consequence, the Commission on Effective Development Cooperation with Africa has been established.

The main goal of the Africa Commission

The aim of the Commission is to present new and creative strategies to revitalize and improve the economic situation in Africa. It is the Commission's ambition that the strategies will rejuvenate the political willingness to improve the effectiveness of international development cooperation with Africa, to the benefit of its people.

Focus areas for the Commission

The overall focus of the Commission will be Youth and Employment. The high population growth and the high share of youth (46 per cent of the population are between 5 and 25 years old) in Africa represent a particular opportunity and challenge when trying to ensure a prosperous and meaningful future for all.

With jobs and prospects for a better future, young people are a dynamic driver of development and economic growth. But without education, jobs and prospects of a meaningful future, youth might fuel instability, migration, radicalisation and violent conflict. In partnership with Africa, the international Community must help to create the millions of new productive jobs that are needed.

Within the overall framework of Youth and Employment, the Commission will analyze a number of inter-linked topics:

How the Africa Commission works

Over the course of its work, the Commission will have three main meetings. The first meeting will be held in Copenhagen on 16 April 2008. The second meeting will take place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on 20 November 2008, and the third and conclusive meeting will be in Copenhagen in May 2009. Here the findings and the recommendations of the Commission will be presented.

In between the main meetings, the Commission will have a number of thematic conferences and workshops in Africa. Each of these meetings will put forward a set of recommendations, which will give crucial input to the deliberations of the Commission. Commissioners will assume responsibility for thematic issues and participate in workshops and conferences. The Secretariat will be responsible for the administrative, facilitating and organizing these meetings.

The members of the Commission

The Commission consists of international members drawn from Heads of State and Government, politicians, experts, business leaders and representatives of national and regional organizations as well as the academic world. The majority of the Commissioners are from Africa. The Danish Prime Minister, Mr. Anders Fogh Rasmussen, is chairman of the Commission.

In addition, at least one Youth Forum will be held in Africa, in Addis Ababa in November.

At its first meeting, the Commission adopted two important papers outlining the forthcoming program of work for the Commission. The Workable Program can be found on the website of the Africa Commission.

The five Thematic Conferences

The themes, dates and places of the thematic conferences are as follows:

- The Educational Challenge in Africa: Ougadougou, 16 June 2008
- Women and Employment in Africa: Maputo, 15 August 2008
- The African Youth and Employment: Accra, 5 September 2008
- Climate Change in Africa: Nairobi, 18 September 2008
- Creating Economic Growth in Africa: Kampala, 30 October 2008

The conferences will bring together regionally anchored representatives from universities, think tanks and research centres, by relevant regional and international organizations, NGOs, the private sector (including representatives from unions and employers' associations), public and governmental representatives and think tanks.

The aim of the conferences is to obtain relevant input to the Commission's Workable Program, to facilitate a solid and practical foundation for the input to the Africa Commission's work and recommendations. The one-day conferences are divided between plenary sessions and smaller working groups. Initially, all participants will come together with the

hosting Commissioners, who will open the conference and act as moderators during the day. Invited key note speakers will identify some of the key challenges.

Participants will subsequently form a number of working groups, which will discuss the issues at hand within chosen sub-themes. The result of the working groups' discussions should be concrete recommendations, which will be presented in plenary at the end of the conference.

The outcome of the conferences, including the recommendations, will be discussed in working groups which will feed into a consolidated conference paper that will form the basis for the Commission's further deliberations.

The reports from the thematic conferences can be found on www.africacommission.umcd.dk.

Workshops between the second and third meeting

At the second meeting of the Commission, it is the intention to focus on a set of draft recommendations within each of the focus areas. The second meeting will be followed by a series of four workshops, most of them in Africa. Here approximately 10-15 experts will have the opportunity to discuss concrete inputs for the final report.

Outcome of the Commission's work

In its final report, the Commission will present a new look at how development cooperation, including aid and other relevant policies, can support Africa's own efforts to improve its economic situation. The report will include the recommendations of Africa's diversity. The aim is to propose a strategy on how to increase the effectiveness of international development assistance, especially with regard to youth and employment.

In drawing up its conclusions, the Commission will build on recent analyses of development assistance to Africa, assessments of the development framework and participation in the Commission's work. The Commission will also build on the work of the EU Council of Cooperation with Africa, as well as continued dialogue with high-level African and international experts.

Working towards the United Nations Millennium Development Goals and the African EU strategic partnership is an underlying goal of the work of the Commission.

In addition to seeking to contribute to a more effective international development cooperation with Africa, the conclusions will contribute to the framework for Danish development cooperation with Africa in the years to come.

