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## **FOSTERING CLIMATE CHANGE COOPERATION: SHIFT FROM A TOP-DOWN APPROACH TO COLLABORATIVE OWNERSHIP**

Alarming facts about climate change published by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in 2021<sup>1</sup> has made and remade all Governments aware of human activities role in the current drastic environmental disaster that we are witnessing. Extreme rise in temperature has resulted with unprecedented natural disaster across many countries in Africa as well as Europe. African continent is widely known to account for the smallest share of greenhouse gas emissions<sup>2</sup>, yet, it needs to balance the most challenging missions of mitigating climate change risks while sustaining economic growth toward resilient future. Transboundary characteristics of environmental issues has somehow emphasized the need to strengthen climate change cooperation between European Union (EU) and African Union (AU). Top-down approach reinforcing donor-recipient relationship needs to gradually shift to a more collaborative relation valuing ownership despite diverging priority actions.

From the European Green Deal<sup>3</sup> to the European Commission joint communication “towards a comprehensive strategy with Africa”<sup>4</sup>, EU policy initiatives regarding climate strategy have been explicitly channelled. With upcoming discussion during AU-EU Summit in Brussels, the official launch of the “Africa-EU Green Initiative” has already sparked interest in transnational discussion platforms. Indeed, EU has made significant advancements in laying out its position in the actual “chess-game” on climate strategy. However, as climate change is now widely acknowledged as global issue, there will be no winner and loser. Either all countries are and will be able to manage environmental crises or they will put peoples live in imminent danger. To this extend, AU member states need to realize how crucial their roles are towards EU strategies. The major challenge for AU is simply not to follow blindly what the EU has planned but rather voice out its interests in taking a clear position accounting for all 55 member states. How the African continent can align its regional climate related policies with national initiatives and vice-versa? How countries like Madagascar will cope with financing green renewable energy while enlarging electricity access to its population? How providers of critical raw materials<sup>5</sup> such as Guinea (for bauxite) and Democratic Republic of Congo (for cobalt) will play strategic roles in supplying clean energy? How debate about fossil fuels will shape AU-EU

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<sup>1</sup> IPCC, 2021 : Summary for Policymakers. In : « Climate Change 2021 : The Physical Science Basis ». Contribution of Working Group I to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

<sup>2</sup> CDP Africa Report, March 2020, « Benchmarking progress towards Climate safe cities, states, and regions ».

<sup>3</sup> European Commission, 2019, « The European Green Deal », COM/2019/640 final, 2019.

<sup>4</sup> European Commission, 2020, Joint communication to the European parliament and the Council towards a comprehensive Strategy with Africa.

<sup>5</sup> Zainab Usman, Olumide Abimbola, Imeh Ituen, 2021, „What Does the European Green Deal Mean for Africa ?”, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

relationship? And how both institutions will manage to protect their citizen interests while fostering collaborative win-win partnership with each other?

Therefore, in attempting to achieve a collaborative relationship, both AU and EU need to rethink how they will envision their relationship's nature regarding climate change strategic cooperation? Will discourse about "renewed partnership" have a snow bowl effect of gradually transforming AU-EU partnership or be a trend to follow for symbolic purpose?