

## European Union development policy and practice

Development is a comprehensive process which aims to improve the well-being of all. **Ending poverty in all its forms is, and will remain, the primary objective of EU development policy.** The EU fully supports the comprehensive and multidimensional nature of development, recognises the central role of human beings as subjects of development, and remains strongly committed to promoting respect, protection and fulfilment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, achieving sustainable development and eradicating poverty; working towards ensuring international peace, security, conflict prevention and resolution; and encouraging the rule of law, good governance, gender equality, accountability and equitable globalisation. These principles are reflected in the EU's founding treaties, its Global Strategy and a series of strategic documents, such as the recently adopted New European Consensus on Development.

The EU and its Member States, together the **largest providers of Official Development Assistance** in the world, consider that development and human rights are interlinked, mutually reinforcing and complementary. We also wish to underline the importance the EU attaches to the integrity and accuracy of universally agreed instruments and documents such as the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. . As stated in Art. 10 of the Vienna Declaration, **development facilitates the enjoyment of all human rights, however the lack of development may not be invoked to justify the abridgement of internationally recognized human rights.** The primary responsibility for the creation of conditions favourable to the development of individuals rests with the States they are citizens of.

The EU has a **rights-based approach to development encompassing all human rights.** Human rights, democracy, the rule of law and good governance on one hand and inclusive and sustainable growth on the other are the two basic and mutually reinforcing pillars of the EU's development policy. We underline that sustainable development cannot be achieved without respect for and protection and fulfilment of human rights. Our rights-based approach to development aims to strengthen the enjoyment of human rights, while also contributing to improved quality and effectiveness of development results and outcomes. This approach is premised on human rights principles and standards being both a means for and a goal of sustainable and inclusive development.

**The rights-based approach to development cooperation is based on the universality and indivisibility of human rights and the principles of inclusion and participation in decision-making processes, interdependence and interrelatedness, non-discrimination, equality, transparency and accountability.** These principles are central to EU development cooperation and we remain committed to ensuring the empowerment of the poorest and most vulnerable.

The right to development also contains essential components **on access to affordable health care, education, clean drinking water, sanitation and housing for all citizens,** crucial for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, and therefore the sine qua non for any development policy, including EU development policy. According to the EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy for the period 2015-2019, we are committed to promoting the

human rights dimension in areas such as social policy, health, education, access to food and water, and standard of living.

The European Union played a pivotal role in the adoption of **the 2030 Agenda** at the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit in September 2015. The EU is committed to maintain its leadership position and is determined to contribute to **accelerating achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals** through its internal and external action, including its development policy. The SDGs and their strong human rights anchorage provide an uncontroversial rationale for fully embracing a human rights-based vision in EU development cooperation, which is fully consistent with EU values. It reaffirms that peaceful and inclusive societies, access to justice for all and effective, accountable and inclusive institutions are vital to sustainable development. It strives to ensure that no one is left behind. **The EU policy framework properly reflects this commitment.**

The EU is currently reinforcing its policy framework, *inter alia* by issuing Human Rights Guidelines on water and sanitation. These guidelines will provide political and operational guidance to officials and staff of the EU Institutions and delegations for their work in third countries and in multilateral fora. They will not develop new standards, but use existing framework from the UN system, in particular from the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Special Rapporteur on human rights to water and sanitation, as well as UNGA and HRC resolutions on the human right to water and sanitation. These guidelines will be complementary to the EU Toolbox on a Rights Based Approach in the field of water and sanitation.

The EU continues to provide financial and technical support to achieve concrete progress in this crucial area. EU support for the environment, including climate change, sustainable energy and water, represented 5.7 % of total funding for development, corresponding to €2.71 billion over the period 2007-13. EU support to land governance for improving food security, poverty reduction and inclusive development has been properly ensured for the subsequent period 2014-2020. This includes the EU support to education in 40 partner countries, including in fragile contexts.

Below you will find concrete **examples of good policies, action plans and practices on the connexion between Human Rights and Development.**

**The EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy** for the period 2015-2019 outlines that sustainable peace, development and prosperity are possible only when grounded in respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law. A development path in which human rights are not respected, protected and fulfilled cannot be sustainable, and would render the notion of sustainable and inclusive development meaningless. EU development actions require systematically integrating a rights-based approach, encompassing all human rights.

**The 2016 EU Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy** provides a vision for joined-up, credible and responsive EU engagement in the world. The firm commitment to a rules-based international order, which ensures human rights, sustainable development and lasting access to the global commons, features strongly in the EU Global Strategy. EU action addresses the root causes of conflict and poverty, and

champions the indivisibility and universality of human rights. The set of SDGs is a cross-cutting dimension of EU action to implement the EU Global Strategy.

On 19 May 2017, the EU adopted **a new European Consensus on Development "Our World, Our Dignity, Our Future"**. As the EU response to the whole of the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs, it balances the three dimensions of sustainable development, economic, social, environmental as well as peaceful and inclusive societies. Structured around the five core themes of the 2030 Agenda – people, planet, prosperity, peace, and partnership – the European Consensus defines a new and collective European development policy for EU Institutions and Member States and signals a new era of closer EU collaboration, working together with our partner countries toward the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

The European Consensus outlines that human rights, democracy, the rule of law and good governance are essential preconditions to achieve sustainable development and long-term stability. In the new Consensus **the rights-based approach (RBA) to development cooperation** is the principle and working methodology guiding EU development action. It encompasses all human rights, regardless of ethnicity, gender, age, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, migration status or other status and it promotes inclusion and participation, non-discrimination, equality and equity, transparency and accountability. By ensuring via the rights-based approach that no one is left behind, the EU delivers on the primary objective of EU development policy: reduction and, in the long term, eradication of poverty.

The Consensus thereby reinforces the EU's commitment to the rights-based approach as outlined in the 2012 EU Strategic Framework on Human Rights and Democracy, the 2014 Tool-box "A Rights-Based Approach, encompassing all human rights, for EU development cooperation" and the respective Council Conclusions.

In order to achieve its goal, the EU has been implementing **a dedicated support programme** on rights-based approach since early 2016 with trainings in headquarters and in-country at EU Delegations worldwide. So far, Delegations to Botswana, Burkina Faso, Ecuador, Bolivia, Honduras & Guatemala, Peru, Palestine, Israel, Afghanistan, Congo Brazzaville, DRC, Uganda, Zambia, Cambodia, Guyana, Turkey, Rwanda, Tajikistan, Mozambique, Algeria and Laos (& the Philippines), Morocco, Bangladesh, Sudan, Nigeria, Fiji (first pilot training RBA & GENDER), Kenya & Somalia, Ukraine, Cuba, Azerbaijan, and Armenia have benefitted from the training programme. With the upcoming trainings in Guinea, Pakistan, the Gambia, Kyrgyzstan **38 delegations world-wide will have trained over 600 persons by mid-June 2018, with joint RBA & Gender trainings organised in Fiji, Azerbaijan, Pakistan, Gambia and Kyrgyzstan.**

**The training aims to empower colleagues** in EU delegations **to operationalise the rights-based approach** in all aspects of their work. Some delegations have had special sessions for civil society. The training offers a comprehensive introduction to the conceptual framework of the rights-based approach and combines this with practical exercises during which participants apply the theory of a rights-based approach to case studies and EU Action Documents. The training makes an explicit link to other policy requirements such as gender equality, rights of the child, of persons with disabilities, of indigenous peoples, and conflict-sensitivity which are integral parts of the rights-based approach.

The combination of training sessions in rights-based approach followed immediately by **technical assistance sessions** for delegation staff and the experts is an effective approach to root and make directly relevant the content of the course, **allowing practitioners to apply the theory to their own practice**. The positive feedback from practitioners at delegation level, both during the training and technical assistance sessions, indicates that these inputs have helped to establish a foundation for entrenching a rights-based approach. The need for clear, committed and informed leadership at the delegation and headquarters level is key to moving forward with the rights-based approach.

In several of the in-country trainings EU Member States implementing development cooperation from a rights-based approach have shared their experiences. OHCHR, when present in-country with either an office or a human rights advisor in the UN country team, participated and provided input to the trainings. Looking at successful training approaches, this **inclusion of external partners in-country**, including Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), national partners, such as the National Audit Office (NAO), EU Member States and other cooperating partners, increased the overall value as well contextualisation of the training content and helped to underline the rights-based approach as the working methodology to facilitate the realisation of human rights and the SDGs.

At EU HQ level, work is done from various angles **to progressively integrate the rights-based approach into trainings and procedures**. The EU successfully managed to:

- Integrate the rights-based approach into programme and project cycle management (PPCM) training;
- Get the rights-based approach included in the current Action Document (AD) template and properly addressed in various sections of the AD, with the focus on following up action documents coming from RBA-trained EU-delegations;
- Organise trainings for geo coordinators at HQ to complement training in Delegations;
- Hold briefings with thematic units in order to discuss application of the rights-based approach in various sectors of intervention;
- Further integrate RBA guidance in the new budget support guidelines, including for sector reform contract;
- Build content on a rights-based approach on internet and intranet – the Tool-box in three languages is available on the intranet and capacity4development specific group ([http://www.ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sectors/rights-based-approach-development-cooperation\\_en](http://www.ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sectors/rights-based-approach-development-cooperation_en));
- Introduce RBA elements during the revision of relevant guidance documents (e.g. on joint programming, evaluation) and action document templates (currently ongoing).

It is still too early to check results from RBA-implemented actions, but **significant improvements are seen in the action design** from actions coming from delegations which have been trained in the RBA methodology: Some examples from different modalities:

- ✓ Sector Reform Contract (SRC) Justice Uganda, with specific indicators related to the country's international human rights commitments;
- ✓ Action Document Sector Reform Contract (SRC) Health in Burkina Faso with an accountability monitoring component by civil society;

- ✓ European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) Global Calls 2016 and 2017 with project proposals to be designed with a RBA methodology;
- ✓ Turkey 2017 Action Documents (in particular on civil society and on fundamental rights) fully integrating RBA working principles. Subsequent calls for proposals (launched in early 2018) also include RBA as part of the methodology required from applicants.
- ✓ European Joint Strategy in support of Palestine 2017-2020: towards a democratic and accountable Palestinian state. This key joint programming document explicitly mentions RBA as a guiding principle, and fully takes into account the RBA principles both in the analysis and the proposed joint response. Action Documents from the Palestine 2017 and upcoming 2018 Annual Action Programme fully integrate RBA.

Furthermore, Action Documents coming from RBA-trained delegations now include:

- ✓ Deeper context analysis with references to the international and regional human rights framework, and to EU human rights commitments;
- ✓ More stakeholder analysis in line with the RBA, focusing on the capacities of rights-holders to claim their rights and of duty-bearers to meet their obligations;
- ✓ Better understanding of the States' duties to respect, protect and fulfil human rights, the cross-cutting nature of human rights obligations, and the linkages with EU policy framework for external cooperation;
- ✓ More focus on participation of relevant stakeholders, both duty-bearers and rights-holders;
- ✓ More consideration for complementarity with activities targeting human rights objectives, either within the action or in relation to other actions under thematic instruments;
- ✓ Better indicators, more disaggregation of data (e.g. justice programme in Uganda including indicators on persons with disabilities);
- ✓ Risk analysis reflecting on unintended negative consequences on human rights (e.g. Uganda infrastructure programme).