

1st Africa Policy Dialogue

- Africa session in line with GSEF 2018 Bilbao

1. Background

The Global Social Economy Forum (GSEF) brings together efforts from Local Governments and Social and Solidarity Economy organizations and networks for partnership and collaboration at global level. GSEF has been organizing Policy Dialogues in Asia and Europe to provide a neutral space inviting GSEF members and partners as well as civil society actors in the sector in the respective region. In 2018 in the run-up to the GSEF in Bilbao from 1 to 3 October, 2nd Europe Policy Dialogue and 5th Asia Policy Dialogue are planned to be held in June and July as preparatory sessions in order to get in-depth understanding among regional actors for more intensified discussions the Bilbao Forum with actors from other continents.

As for African region, a first Africa Policy Dialogue (AfPD) is planning to be held to be able to invite African Local Governments and Civil Society organizations with the aim to contemplate and identify ways forward for interregional partnership and cooperation through international and innovative and supportive approach.

According to the document of European Economic and Social Committee, Social Economy in Africa plays important roles: "*... concerns Africa, a revival in interest in the social economy is to be expected, given the fact that this sector truly reflects the continent's "real" economy and can be considered its "third pillar", complementing the traditional concepts of the formal and the informal sector. In a continent where 80 to 95% of the population is employed in the informal economy, the population has sought out innovative solutions to daily social and economic challenges. As a consequence, although largely ignored for decades, the social economy constitutes a significant proportion of the economic and social activity in Africa... Ultimately, the African social economy has an important role to play in poverty eradication and should be recognised as an ally by the African authorities and the EU. Secondly, the social economy has a key role to play in bridging the informal and formal economy, through employment creation, skills development and social cohesion. (2010)*"

The AfPD provides an opportunity to invite and initiate a dialogue Local Governments and Social Economy Networks from Africa, which then can be fuelled in the GSEF Bilbao Global Forum.

2. Objectives

- SSE actors from the region will be provided with opportunities to share best practices and challenges they are facing in terms of building the enabling and sustainable ecosystem.
- AfPD will be a channel for GSEF to connect with African members and other possible members and advocate for social economy in the region.
- AfPD will give space for ideas and knowledge sharing as well as networking building opportunities among African actors and European and Asian partners.