

Brussels, 2 July 2010

The EU – Zimbabwe political dialogue: moving towards enhanced cooperation

Today, the High Representative / Vice President Catherine Ashton and Commissioner for Development Andris Piebalgs met with a Ministerial Delegation from the Zimbabwean Government in the framework of the Political Dialogue, as foreseen in the Cotonou Agreement, which was re-launched in June last year.

Following the meeting, Catherine Ashton said: "The EU appreciates some progress made implementing the Global Political Agreement in Zimbabwe and remains ready to continue the dialogue and to respond flexibly and positively to any clear signals of further concrete progress."

Commissioner for Development, Andris Piebalgs added: "Despite the political issues, the Commission continues to provide direct aid for health, education, food security and governance to the people of Zimbabwe. I want to make clear that the Commission remains committed to provide further assistance based on continued progress and clear signs of improved political environment in Zimbabwe."

Both sides reinforced their wish to move the political dialogue forward. They engaged in open and constructive discussions with the ultimate objective of progressing towards normalising relations between the European Union and Zimbabwe. It was also agreed to intensify the dialogue in Harare. The mandated parties in Harare are tasked with defining the indicators, setting the timetable for the achievement of concrete objectives based on their respective roadmaps of commitments, and monitoring the progress.

The EU took note of the progress made so far in the implementation of the Global Political Agreement, which is a power sharing agreement signed between M. Tsvangirai (MDC T), Mutambara (MDC M) and R. Mugabe (ZANU PF) in November 2008. It foresees a number of political and economic reforms and led to the creation of the Government of National Unity (GNU) in February 2009. In recognition of the creation of the Unity Government early 2009 we have provided €180 million to Zimbabweans in health, education, food security and governance. The EU announced its intention to decide a further allocation of € 20 million for improving food security, social sector and governance in Zimbabwe. During the discussion there was a particular attention to constitutional and security reforms.

The Delegation from Zimbabwe included Mr Elton Mangoma, Minister of Energy and Power Development, Mr Patrick A. Chinamasa, Minister of Justice and Legal Affairs and Ms Priscilla Misihairambwi-Mushonga, Minister of Regional Integration and International Co-operation representing the 3 political parties of the Zimbabwean Government of National Unity - MDC-T, ZANU-PF and MDC-M.

Background

The EU- Zimbabwe political dialogue started in June 2009 with a Ministerial troika meeting in Brussels and continued in September with an EU Troika visit to Harare. Since then, the dialogue was carried out in Harare. EU's objective is to normalize relations (including lifting of Art. 96 of the Cotonou Agreement and restrictive measures) alongside with tangible progress in the implementation of the Global Political Agreement.

Since 2002, "appropriate measures" under Article 96 of the Cotonou Agreement apply to Zimbabwe and prohibit government to government cooperation. Zimbabwe is also subject to CFSP "restrictive measures" mainly consisting of arms embargo, a visa ban and freeze of assets of targeted individuals and entities. These measures have been put in place in response of violation of human rights, democratic principles and the rule of law. Renewal of both measures is done on an annual basis but reassessment is possible at any moment. In February 2010 the EU adapted and extended for another year the 'appropriate' and 'targeted measures' as progress in the GPA implementation was considered insufficient.

More information on DG Development Relations with Zimbabwe –

http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/acp/country-cooperation/zimbabwe/zimbabwe_en.htm

The EU Delegation to Zimbabwe –

<http://www.delzwe.ec.europa.eu/en/index.htm>

DG AIDCO case study in Zimbabwe –

http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/documents/case-studies/zimbabwe_health_hiv_en.pdf