

Europe is Africa's partner for building our joint future

I am travelling this week to Africa, a vibrant continent that is preparing its future: pushing ahead the digital transformation, making farming more efficient and sustainable, building new infrastructure to reinforce connections between people, shaping the collective security of the continent and investing in Africa's greatest resource: its youth.

On all of this, we propose Europe to be Africa's partner of choice. European investment in Africa is over five times more than that of China. A quarter of African trade is with the EU; it is only 15 percent with China and two percent with Russia and 90 percent of African exports enter the EU duty-free.

The EU works with African partners on building the continent's first manufacturing sites for vaccines and we approved at the AU-EU summit a Global Gateway €150 billion (more than M2.5 trillion) investment package. With the European Peace Facility and our training missions, we help strengthen peace and security.

However, the world's future is clouded by the devastating consequences of Russia's war against Ukraine on food security, energy prices, debt and security issues.

This war is affecting everyone, but Africa is one of its main

collateral victims.

While we know that some countries on the African continent look at this war from a different perspective than we do, I think we can agree on four fundamental points.

First: Europe, Africa – and the entire world – cannot accept a world of “might makes rights”, where big powers can claim “spheres of influence” and attack neighbours to annex their territory.

The Russian aggression against Ukraine is a perfect example of 19th century type of cruel imperialism that Africa experienced. Precisely because Europeans are aware of their responsibilities in that era, the EU intends to stand against renewed imperialism.

We must uphold and reinvigorate the multilateral order, to defend the rule of law as we decided jointly at the recent EU-Africa Summit.

That is one particular reason why the EU supports the call of President Sall for a G20 seat for the African Union.

Second: We must act to ease the current food crisis.

With over 70 partners, many in Africa, the EU is delivering along four strands of action: solidarity with those who cannot afford food; support to food production;



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facilitating agricultural trade including by getting Ukrainian grain to Africa; and, aligning our food security response in the multilateral system with the UN at its core.

Others try to distract from their responsibility by blaming sanctions.

However, the facts are clear: EU sanctions do not prohibit African countries from importing and transporting Russian agricultural goods, or from paying for them. The Russian war is the problem, not sanctions.

If our African partners face any concrete issues importing agricultural goods that seem related to our sanctions, we will jointly look at this.

Third: We need to step up our joint work to preserve Africa's security and safety. In that area, the EU is Africa's most reliable partner, supporting African peace efforts in eleven missions across the continent.

Last April, we supported the African Union with a further €600 million to improve conflict prevention, crisis management and counter-terrorism. This week, I will be in Mozambique

and Somalia.

In Mozambique, the EU supports the armed forces so they can restore security in the Cabo Delgado province, and our assistance measures via the European Peace Facility now amounts to €89 million. We are also finalising programmes to support the SADC and Rwandan contingents.

Similarly, Somalia can count on our missions to counter piracy and train the Somali armed forces. With a total of €2.3 billion, the EU has also been a reliable supporter of the AU Mission to Somalia, for more than 10 years.

With 78 security personnel, Russia contributes very little to UN peacekeeping operations in Africa compared to the 6000 coming from EU countries.

On the contrary, Russia contributes to the deterioration of the security situation in Africa with several hundred mercenaries from private military companies such as Wagner or Patriot.

This presence only aggravates crises and multiplies the violations of human rights, as we see in Mali and Central African Republic. Fourth: Africa and Europe should continue to prepare the future instead of falling back into the past.

While some try to divide us by resuscitating old patterns, this ignores the long way we have come

together during the last decades.

Colonialism is an indelible stain on the conscience of Europe, but dealing with our responsibility for the past has made us better partners for the future.

Europe is looking at Africa with fresh eyes: with optimism and confidence.

That is the reason why we want to deepen our partnership, always giving top priority to “African solutions for African problems.”

However, others seem tempted to repeat the mistakes made once by Europeans, by seeking to simply extract African raw materials, control land and agriculture, place African countries in financial dependence or try to exploit the dynamism of its youth for their own benefit.

As we in Europe are working to reinforce the EU's strategic autonomy, we are supporting Africa to do the same. We must all work with multiple partners, based on mutual respect and international law.

These are the rules of the 21st century. In that framework, Africa and Europe should further deepen their ties and cooperation because your future is also our future.

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Fear-brain pathedness self-destructiveness help similarities right footedness

Please, allow me to introduce my former high school classmate and friend, Dr Setlhapelo Seape, MD, a retired, yet still very high-performing surgeon and mentor of surgeons. He is the one who trained his left foot when we were in Form 1.

He has granted me the permission to mention him by name, and I thank him heartily. I am just taking advantage here to make it known that I hold him in very high-esteem.

Being right footed, left footed, right handed, or left-handed depends on the wiring in our brains.

We know that it can be changed intentionally when we want to change it.

The change must first happen in the brain and entrenched in the brain; and both feet can be used and their training continued.

We can all see the initial struggle as one begins to train their less dexterous foot, or hand.

Although equally possible, changing thinking and social behaviour does not show such explicit and visible struggles and, for most of us, it requires competent assistance.

The struggle is only felt by the one who is beginning on the change journey; and it is, and must be, empathised by the assisting healer, trainer, and coach who is guiding, encouraging, and supporting the essential sensitive process.

Scientists tell us that about 90 percent of society are right footed (Ocklenburg, 2020).

This has a neuropsychological parallel in our societal bias for fearfulness – the tendency to use the short fear-brain pathway more regularly – as our default mode – and hence being docile, angry, hateful, full of disgust, anxious, panicking, blameful, lazy, ignorant, narcissistic, greedy – craving insatiable instant gratification, and self-destructive – that we said is caused by long-term repression – colonialism, apartheid, etc.

Allow me to call this self-destructive tendency fear-brain pathedness, or fear-neural pathedness.

The remaining 10 percent of society are left footed. Allow me, similarly, to call the courageous and humble tendency to use the longer neural pathway regularly



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the love-brain pathedness, or love-neural pathedness.

In “Power vs Force: The hidden determinants of human behavior”, Hawkins (2002) says there are about 15 percent of people living above the critical level of consciousness – who are frequently using the longer love-neural pathway that involves higher thinking to respond to life challenges – who are love-neural pathed.

According to Hawkins (2002), the power of this 15 percent counterbalances the destructiveness of the 85 percent of us that I call fear-brain pathed. Were it not because of these counterbalances, Hawkins (2002), says mankind would self-destruct out of the sheer mass of the negativity of this 85 percent.

In the Surrey Physics Blog, Professor Richard Sear (2011), who says that he is an atheist, wrote an article titled: “There will

be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than 99 righteous persons who do not need to repent” (Luke: 15: 7).

In that article he writes about a fellow physicist, Professor Richard Muller, who he says had been critical of climate scientists, and questioned the strength of the scientific case for global warming. He also says that there are many more (non-climate) scientists denying climate change data.

However, Professor Muller actually went on to analyse the climate data. After his analysis, Professor Muller had identical conclusions to those of professional climatologists, and published his repentance (in the matter) on a BBC article.

The long growth, life-supportive, love-brain pathway is trainable like our limbs, albeit with immense personal and societal benefits, and we have the science and necessary tools and processes for that activation and training.

We can train our own long love-brain pathways and activate our dormant potential for both and high achievement. The long

love-brain pathway is the narrow gateway that Jesus refers to in (Mat. 7: 13-14).

Whereas excessive use of the fear-brain pathway is the wide gate that He says attracts fools, and is well-trodden, and leads to (self)destruction.

The long (and windy) love-brain pathway is the route to the Kingdom of God that Jesus refers to again when He says to the Pharisees that “the Kingdom of God is within you” (Luke 17: 21).

This is the ancient path and the best road that Morena Mhloni directed Lepoqo to take that leads to quality peace and resilience (Jeremiah 6: 16), away from the alluring, well-trodden, wide and short fear-brain pathway that is advised against in (2 Chronicles 7: 14).

It is the route that we are instructed to take to seek first the Kingdom of God that once found enables us to co-create and innovate everything else that we have been dreaming of that is good. It is the route about which Basotho say, “Tsela khopo ha e robaletse.”

It requires the courage and humility that Romans (12: 2) calls for: to allow God to transform us inwardly by the complete change of our minds.

Our social healing and transformation tools and processes provide the means for the inward transformation and the complete change of minds.