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Engaging in Africa: Czechia's Strategy



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1 | INTRODUCTION

Engaging in Africa: The Czech Republic's Strategy ("the Strategy") builds on national policy documents including the Foreign Policy Concept, Security Strategy, Strategic Framework Czech Republic 2030, Development Cooperation Strategy 2018-2030, Human Rights and Transition Cooperation Concept, Programme of Activities to Support Source and Transit Countries of Migration in Africa 2020-2022, and the Regional Strategy for Sub-Saharan Africa 2015-2018. It **fundamentally revises their objectives and policies in respect of Africa** in the light of the continent's current trends and growing geopolitical weight.

1.1 | Why is Africa important?

- **Africa has gained geopolitical, strategic, security and economic weight.** This enables African countries and their groups to take a more active role. On the other hand, it also makes them more interesting to state and non-state actors from third countries such as China, Russia and the Gulf countries.
- **The EU's security is tightly interwoven with Africa's.** The EU and Africa are neighbours. They share an interest in stability in the Mediterranean and beyond. Adverse security developments in Africa and their fallouts (terrorism, radicalism, drug trade, arms proliferation, forced displacement and migration) are a matter of direct concern to the EU.
- **NATO is equally alert to any signals of Africa's destabilization** and potential spillover of terrorism and radicalism into Europe. These trends pose a threat to NATO's southern wing.
- Russia's aggression against Ukraine has transformed global geopolitics. **The democratic world needs Africa's support in order to enforce the rules-based order.** Africa's 54 countries are a critical mass in the process of forming positions and promoting candidates in multilateral fora.
- **To weaken Russia's influence across the world, we must counteract its hybrid activities** (use of private paramilitary organizations, disinformation campaigns, stoking of anti-West sentiments) everywhere, including **in Africa**. Sustainability of democratic governance models is one of Africa's vulnerable points.
- Russia's attack on Ukraine has plunged many African countries into a food crisis. Grain exports dwindle and the prices go up. **The overwhelming threat to food security is likely to set off new waves of migration across the continent and into its neighbourhood including the EU.**
- **Demographic explosion: Africa has the world's fastest growing population.** According to the UN, Africa's population is expected to double from the present 1.4 billion to 2.5 billion by 2050. In 2020 alone, the increase was by 30 million. The continent's average annual population growth rate is above 2.2 per cent.
- By global standards, **Africa has the highest level of vulnerability to the effects of climate change** and the highest potential for forced environmental migration. African countries and regional arrangements are looking for international partnerships likely to contribute to their climate change adaptation.

- **The Czech Republic builds its relationship with Africa on the ties formed in the times of Czechoslovakia.** Mutual relations are friendly and open. African countries perceive us as a friend without a colonial past, and as an EU partner who understands their economic and security needs thanks to its own experience of the transition process.
- During the recent period of volatility in the **energy and raw materials markets**, African countries have emerged as **promising partners**. Some of them have yet to reap the full benefits of their raw materials wealth. Active raw materials diplomacy in Africa may help us diversify our resources and improve our raw materials security.
- Africa has a **great potential for economic growth**. National and pan-African development strategies call for a significant improvement in Africa's public infrastructure. This opens up **opportunities for the involvement of Czech companies – on a bilateral basis as well as in the context of EU financial instruments**. Africa is the region where we are making the greatest progress with our contribution to Team Europe Initiatives.
- **Economic opportunities: Czech exports to Africa have doubled over the past decade**, reaching CZK 53 billion by 2021. This is only CZK 10 billion less than our exports to China and the overall balance is much closer to an equilibrium. Our exports to Africa are considerably higher than exports to India and Latin America (by CZK 33 billion and 36 billion respectively). The turnover of our trade with Africa is higher than with the Middle East.

1.2 | How do we reflect Africa's growing importance?

- **Africa is one of the geographic priorities in the foreign policy dimension of the Czech Republic's Presidency of the Council of the EU in 2022.**
- **Africa is among the EU's foreign policy priorities. The EU and Africa are set to deepen their cooperation** as confirmed at the EU-AU summit in February 2022. The EU remains Africa's key economic, security and development partner.
- **The Czech Republic takes an active approach** to Africa's security, economic, political, social and human rights challenges. This helps us to be **recognized within the EU as a relevant, responsible and constructive partner with a sense of solidarity**.
- **The Czech Republic is becoming more active and visible in Africa.** Mutual trade is on the rise. Our increasingly strong investment presence on the continent benefits from Africa's economic opportunities and lower production costs. Czech project implementers are gaining experience with working in Africa. The Czech Republic successfully participates in EU and UN programmes for stabilization and sustainable development.
- **The Czech Republic's security engagement on the continent.** African and EU partners value highly our security activities in the Sahel (participation in EUTM Mali and the Takuba Task Force).
- The Czech Republic perceives Africa as a **new space** for bilateral and multilateral cooperation in these and **many more areas** (namely **development, science and academic cooperation**).

2 | GEOPOLITICAL POSITION OF AFRICA

Africa has gained geostrategic weight. It has also become a space where **global and regional powers compete**. African countries represent **more than a quarter of UN membership**. **Anyone who wants to form a position in a multilateral forum must secure their support.**

Russia's aggression against Ukraine has shaken the European political and security system. UN General Assembly resolution A/RES/ES-11/1 condemning the aggression (2 March 2022) was supported by more than a half of African countries while the other half mostly remained neutral. In the voting to suspend Russia from the Human Rights Council (7 April 2022), African countries mostly abstained, did not participate, or voted against. These two instances show the thin line trod by African countries: they as a rule accept that what is going on is a gross violation of international law; however, on the other hand they want to have their strategic, political, economic and security concerns recognized, and they want to preserve their existing partnerships.

Africa has become China's sphere of interest. China does help with the building of infrastructure in African countries. However, this cooperation is not tied to conditions such as good governance. China's underlying aim is to use African mineral wealth as a means to increase China's own growth and global stature. Chinese activities tend to encourage non-transparent and corrupt practices. No consideration is given to sustainable economic development. The activities have adverse environmental impacts, and they cause African countries to incur long-term debt.

Accordingly, in view of Africa's growing geopolitical importance, the democratic part of the world must, as far as possible, make a **coordinated effort to urgently persuade our African partners that we all need a world order based on the rule of law and respect for human rights, refraining from the use of force or threat of force in dispute settlement, searching for common solutions, and seeking to build international rules- and standards-based systems**. This approach and the values at its core are in stark contrast to the positions of many third country actors – Russia most of all – whose activities in respect of Africa are driven by their utilitarian economic or strategic interests, and by their need to propagate the anti-West narrative and garner political support in international fora.

Africa is also a long-standing foreign policy priority of the EU. The EU is Africa's biggest foreign investor, biggest trade partner, biggest provider of development and humanitarian aid, and biggest contributor to peace and security. The EU sees Africa as its neighbour. The security and prosperity of the two continents are interwoven. Africa's internal situation influences the EU's security, and Africa's prosperity depends (among other factors) on the EU's economic and security engagement. Accordingly, the EU is set to **promote a stable and sustainable development in Africa. Investment in Africa's peace and development is investment in the EU's own security and prosperity**. The EU wants to build genuinely equal partnerships with African countries and regional or pan-African arrangements. A dilemma facing the EU is how to work with those African countries that, by siding with Russia and China, help undermine the stability of the international system, the stability of their African partners (for example in the context of food security), and eventually the security and stability of Europe.

From the security perspective, a matter of concern to the EU is the **wide “belt of instability” (the Sahel and Horn of Africa including Libya, Europe's immediate neighbour) in the wider southern neighbourhood of Europe and along NATO's southern flank**. The belt's security and socio-economic situation is getting worse and threatens to spill over into other parts of the continent, including the Gulf of Guinea countries. Its instability gives rise to many undesirable phenomena: armed conflicts, forced displacement, irregular migration, propagation of radical forms of Islam, as well as human, arms or drug trafficking and smuggling. All of these phenomena must be effectively counteracted and prevented to minimize the impacts on the EU. Russia's aggression against

Ukraine is likely to further exacerbate the trend because many African countries (including those in the north of the continent) are critically dependent on grain imports from Ukraine and Russia.

At the EU-AU summit in Brussels (February 2022), the EU announced a **Global Gateway** investment package of EUR 150 billion in support of Africa's development in the coming years. This is an opportunity to interlink Czech solutions with Global Gateway investments. The investment package will be delivered through relevant Team Europe initiatives. The focus will be on Africa's **strategic infrastructure**: energy and digital transition, development of the private sector, and creation of jobs for the increasingly populous young generations. African economies have been severely hit by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia's aggression in Ukraine. This has brought into view their unhealthy dependence on foreign markets, and the need to foster the continent's economic integration and food self-sufficiency. Another priority task for the EU is to help strengthen the public healthcare systems in African countries, and to increase their capacity and preparedness for pandemic threats. The new post-Cotonou partnership agreement regulating the EU's relations with 79 African, Caribbean and Pacific countries will create an important legal framework for cooperation. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is also increasingly interested in deeper cooperation with Africa. To date, there is no African country among the 38 members of this wide forum of developed and democratic countries. The Czech Republic will therefore support the development of the OECD's cooperation with African partners.

3 | COOPERATION BETWEEN THE CZECH REPUBLIC AND AFRICA

3.1 | Opportunities

Africa is the EU's neighbour with a market of 1.4 billion people (2020) poised to grow rapidly as its population explodes. Its economies are steadily gaining strength, a trend to be further encouraged by the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). Africa's dynamic market is characterized by unsatisfied demand, young consumers and growing middle class.

Africa has significant natural resources: mineral wealth as well as large areas of land suitable for agricultural production. It has every opportunity to develop local value chains; however, it continues to export mainly unprocessed raw materials.

Africa is keen on technology transfers, and it has a great potential for green energy and digitization (namely in mobile networks and services). Africa's services sector accounts for an increasing portion of its GDP. The creative industry grows rapidly. Africa wants to develop its tourist industry and to step up cooperation in protecting its biodiversity.

Many African countries and regions face security challenges (conflicts, terrorism, piracy) and look for reliable partners in security and defence. The EU Member States should offer them comprehensive solutions in this area.

African countries are increasingly interested to cooperate with the Czech Republic in a number of areas. The Czech Republic and Africa have had positive ties ever since the times of Czechoslovakia. Our advantage is that the relationship is not burdened with colonial past. We are perceived as a country that understands the needs of African partners and knows how to offer practical as well as affordable solutions, a country that builds mutual relations as equal partnerships devoid of neo-colonial ambitions. African governments appreciate our existing development, economic and trade cooperation.

Czech project implementers are gaining experience with working in Africa. Czech NGOs and a number of universities already have very good local knowledge.

Czech companies and project implementers have a good name and expertise in sectors such as healthcare, agriculture, food industry, water management, transport and infrastructure, geological surveys, and in mineral extraction and processing including the building of local capacities and use of environmentally friendly technologies.

The Czech Republic's comparative advantage is that our solutions, services and products are recognized for their quality and affordability.

Czech security cooperation has a very good name in Africa. Our security activities in the Sahel have done much to raise our profile in recent years. We cooperate with African countries in combating terrorism and (most recently) also cyber-crime.

African countries are very keen to cooperate in education and science, and these sectors can mean a lot for the development of our relations. There is a demand for our experience of the transition process and our programmes for building the rule of law and the public sector.

Africa is a young people's continent and the Czech Republic sees this as an opportunity. It is the young generation who makes change happen, who demands prosperity and improvements in governance, education, security, health care, infrastructure, standards of living and public health, and mobility.

Africa has a great potential to develop its own private sector (start-ups) and create jobs for the young generation. It looks for innovations and modern and digital technologies. Its growing population urgently needs to address the questions of food self-sufficiency and resilience to climate change. This again opens up space for economic and development cooperation.

Africa's middle class is growing and so is the purchasing power of Africans. Africa is interested in modern economic trends such as circular economy.

Africa is the beneficiary of many development interventions from developed countries. This is an opportunity to interlink our national projects with the international ones and use them to advance our priorities.

The Czech Republic realizes that it needs the assistance of African partners to promote its interests in international fora.

Czech entities are able to participate in programmes funded through EU instruments (namely the NDICI-Global Europe) and the UN.

3.2 | Challenges, obstacles, risks

Africa's core security challenge is the existence of zones of persistent instability, armed conflicts and forced displacement. The armed groups operating in some of the zones (terrorist groups and groups espousing radical Islamist ideologies and aims) tend to have links to the world of trans-Saharan organized crime. This trend is increasingly visible especially in some parts of the Sahel.

Another challenge is the deficit of good governance in many African countries: autocratic tendencies, client politics, corruption, unconstitutional changes of government, weak rule of law, and human rights violations.

Africa's economic development is hampered by insufficient regional integration, protectionist policies, poor infrastructure and electrification, unskilled labour (mainly in the sub-Saharan region) and strong

shadow economy. Growing national debt is a menace to many African countries. Parts of Africa's population face chronic poverty. Many Africans have no access to basic social services. These challenges are likely to get worse because of the rapid population growth, and Africa's disadvantageous position in world trade makes them even more difficult to overcome.

Another big challenge is that Africa's economies have very little capacity to spare for dealing with public health emergencies such as the impacts of COVID-19. Coming on top of the upheaval caused by the pandemic, Russia's invasion of Ukraine destabilized African economies even more. The conflict in Ukraine makes Africa most vulnerable to a food crisis, as many of its countries are dependent on grain imports from Ukraine and Russia.

Africa is not quite prepared to deal with the impacts of the climate change. Water scarcity in some of its regions creates a strong potential for environmental migration. Deficits in nature conservation awareness in some African countries (deforestation, poor waste management, coastal waters pollution) have adverse global impacts due to the size of the continent.

To build up our relationship with Africa, another thing we urgently must do is to work with the public opinion in our own country, and overcome or counterbalance certain negative stereotyped views associating Africa with diseases, conflicts and irregular migration. It is important to raise positive awareness of Africa across all segments of our society. We must underline that Africa is a diverse continent in the economic, political and social as well as cultural sense.

In Africa, we must work harder to promote the “Czech Republic brand”. We must increase and strengthen the capacities of our embassies and CzechTrade offices. It is difficult to build a fully-fledged bilateral relationship (including economic diplomacy and development cooperation) in a country where we have had no embassy for a long time. In such cases, honorary consuls with their local knowledge should take a stronger role.

The Czech Republic's trade with African countries keeps rising and there is a potential for further growth. It is fundamentally in our interest to diversify our trade partners. It is also desirable to increase our investment on the continent. From the business and export perspective, Africa is (in some respects) a complex and demanding destination where the road to a tangible success may be a long one. The support of our government and financial institutions is the key. We also need to more effectively promote interaction and coordination between our government, business community, non-governmental organizations and the academia. We must try to make our projects in Africa more sustainable.

Breaking down the language barrier is another important step towards the development of our relationship. We need to promote the study of French and Portuguese within our civil service system.

The Czech Republic needs to encourage the rise and development of domestic capacities and expertise focusing on African affairs.

4 | THE VISION, GOALS AND GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC IN AFRICA

Vision: The Czech Republic will contribute to the development of a stable, prosperous, healthy and educated Africa. It will use its political, security, economic and development cooperation with African countries, regional organizations and institutions, as well as its EU membership, to turn its vision into action. The Czech Republic will build its image as a respected partner in African countries. It will improve the image of Africa in the eyes of the Czech public.

Goals: The Czech Republic wants to help Africa to be

- (1) stable**
- (2) prosperous**
- (3) healthy**
- (4) educated**

The Czech Republic will pursue these goals primarily by means of the activities specified below.

Strategic communication: The cross-cutting goal will be to **build the image of the Czech Republic in Africa as a respected, promising and credible partner** who wants to offer straightforward and modern approaches and solutions.

Geographic focus

The Czech Republic will focus primarily on developing its bilateral relations with the African countries where it has **embassies**, which means where it is in the **best position to achieve its foreign policy aims**. The countries include **Algeria, Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia** in North Africa, and the **Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Mali, Republic of South Africa, Senegal and Zambia** in sub-Saharan Africa. All of them are important African political, security and economic actors, and they represent the majority of the continent's regions. The activities of our embassies in sub-Saharan Africa will be supported by Czech honorary consulates. Outside the above group, the Czech Republic sees the greatest potential for the development of bilateral relations with **Côte d'Ivoire, Niger, Sudan, Rwanda and Angola**.

Many of our activities concentrate specifically on the Sahel in accordance with our strategic interests and with the EU's geographic priorities. The Sahel is among the foreign policy priorities of the Czech Republic's Presidency of the Council of the EU in 2022.

Despite having a group of geographic priorities, we must never lose sight of the fact that Africa is a **heterogeneous continent** in the social, economic as well as security sense. Its **regions and countries differ widely**. Our **opportunities and goals will also differ from region to region**. In some cases we have the foundations of longstanding cooperation to build on; however, in any event we must be ready to respond flexibly to changing situation and new opportunities.

5 | GOALS OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC'S ENGAGEMENT IN AFRICA AND THE STEPS TO ACHIEVE THEM

5.1 | Stability

Activities:

5.1.1 | Building the capacity and competence of African partners' security and defence forces

The Czech Republic will continue its efforts to build the capacities and competences of Africa's security and defence forces through armed forces cooperation, through cooperation in civilian missions, as well as on a commercial basis. Stability, security and good governance in African countries depend on the robust training and adequate capacities of their own security and defence forces. Absence of functioning security structures is one of the factors that may trigger and perpetuate conflicts, instability and poverty. Our activity in this area will also contribute to the building of Africa's overall security architecture, namely within the framework of the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). We will continue to work for closer security cooperation between the EU and the countries of North Africa within the EU's European Neighbourhood Policy. We will also promote compliance with multilateral sanctions regimes (UN, EU and ECOWAS) for arms exports to African countries and regions.

5.1.2 | Security stabilization, counter-terrorism

The Czech Republic has already established itself as a relevant partner for Africa's security stabilization, especially through its activities in the Sahel within the EU Training Mission in Mali (EUTM Mali), and the Takuba Task Force.

The EU Global Strategy (2016) and Strategic Compass (2022) note that the security problems of many African countries and regions affect and will continue to affect the EU and its Member States. Therefore, the EU and its Member States set out to promote consistent and sustainable development in Africa. Investment in peace and development in Africa is seen as investment in the EU's own security and prosperity.

A wide belt of instability (the Sahel and Horn of Africa) has formed in the EU's wider southern neighbourhood. Instability and terrorism threaten to spill over to the Gulf of Guinea countries. Libya remains a source of instability in North Africa.

In many African countries, destabilization is exacerbated by the presence of Russian state and non-state actors, such as the Wagner Group whose African operations involve serious human rights violations (torture, arbitrary killings, extrajudicial executions), or Russia's non-transparent economic activities (illegal export of minerals).

The belt is part of the EU's wider southern neighbourhood and its negative development would adversely affect the EU and its Member States. On this basis, the Czech Republic's key interest is to support the activities that will contribute to stability of the belt and its countries, and weaken the destabilizing influence of external actors. We must place an emphasis on effective fight against terrorism, including comprehensive activities preventing the radicalization of young people.

The Czech Republic has been active member of the Global Coalition to Defeat Daesh/ISIS, including the Small Group, since 2014. We take part in meetings of the Stabilisation Working Group and

Communications Working Group. We want to take an active role in the Africa Focus Group, established in 2021 in response to the growing threat of Daesh/ISIS on the African continent.

Active participation in the security activities of the EU or its Member States raises the profile of the Czech Republic as an effective security actor both in the EU and in Africa as well as in a number of multilateral fora.

The Czech Republic will engage in other (existing and future) security activities of the EU and its Member States in Africa, especially in the Sahel, on an ad hoc or bilateral basis. In any case, our engagement will reflect our strategic national interests and flexibly respond to the given region's security and political dynamics.

5.1.3 | Countering hybrid influence and disinformation

Africa is increasingly becoming a space used by some external actors, Russia most of all, to deploy hybrid tools (presence of private paramilitary organizations, spreading of disinformation and propaganda, inciting unrest and anti-EU sentiments) undermining the positions of the EU and its Member States, both on the continent and in multilateral fora. Russia conducts disinformation campaigns (typically via the social media) to coerce Africa into accepting Russia's own manipulative interpretation of the war in Ukraine. On a number of occasions, it has used disinformation campaigns in an attempt to rig elections in African countries. Russia's disinformation activities increasingly target the Sahel where they directly impede the EU's stabilization efforts.

China also spreads disinformation across Africa in a bid to present itself as a country without a colonial past, a country that understands and helps Africa, and a country that offers Africa an equal partnership.

Consequently, the Czech Republic will support activities helping to make African countries and their people more resilient to hybrid activities. To this end, it is crucial to improve the population's media literacy. Support of the independent media and journalists is equally important. We also urgently need to support community radios to ensure that the general public (including the rural population) has access to unbiased information.

The Czech Republic will also actively participate in the EU's effective strategic communication with African partners aimed at counteracting Russian disinformation. We will place an emphasis on the need to actually explain the objectives and activities of EU missions and operations in Africa. The purpose is to leave no space for the impact of disinformation and deliberate attempts to harm the EU and the West.

5.1.4 | Development of cooperation in cyber security

Africa has a serious problem with cyber security and especially with cyber-crime. Many African countries fall short of the mark in digitization and IT literacy, which makes them a frequent target of cyber criminals. The AU's Agenda 2063, a blueprint for transforming Africa, highlighted cyber security as a key priority to ensure that new technologies are used for the benefit of individuals, institutions and nation states, and to guarantee data protection and security online.

African countries generally lack the relevant legislation, and they do not have enough cyber security experts to help with a timely and adequate response to cyber-attacks. Cyber-crime knows no borders, which underlines the importance of international cooperation and coordination between all stakeholders, as well as the importance of public-private cooperation. Building cyber security

capacities in the countries concerned is the essential step towards improving their digital economies and making them more resilient to cyber threats.

The Czech Republic is prepared to support the building of cyber capacities in the target African countries, either bilaterally or through EU programmes and projects. We will focus mainly on two areas:

(a) Building and strengthening the institutional framework for cyber-security to make institutions and states more resilient to cyber-attacks, and

(b) Increasing the capacities of the competent institutions to combat cyber-crime.

The Czech Republic intends to use its communication with African countries to spread and explain the values and positions we advocate in multilateral negotiations on cyber security and cyber-crime. We specifically want to promote the application of international law in cyberspace, and the responsible conduct of states in cyberspace. We are committed to the values of liberal democracy and the preservation of a rules-based world order. We want to maintain a free, open, secure, stable and accessible cyberspace that benefits all countries and all people while providing a high level of personal data protection.

5.1.5 | Reducing the causes of forced displacement and irregular migration

The Czech Republic perceives forced displacement and irregular migration in the African context as a multi-faceted issue with security, economic, development as well as humanitarian aspects. We will therefore use a wide range of programmes and instruments to help our African partners address the related challenges.

Accordingly, our activities in each sector will help address, at the source, the root causes of forced displacement and irregular migration to the EU. However, the vast majority of forcibly displaced and irregular migrants remain in Africa. This means that we will also support the African host countries where long-term presence of refugees and migrants is a significant economic and social challenge. Addressing the issue of migration should be an integral part of our relationship with African countries.

Since 2015, the EU and African countries have developed a common approach to the management of migration. This has led to a reduction in irregular arrivals to the EU, better coordination of the fight against migrant smuggling, and more sustainable approach to refugees in host countries. Sub-Saharan countries host more than a quarter of the world's refugees. Sustainable and effective approach to migration management should be a common goal for the EU and Africa.

Accordingly, in the context of the EU's cooperation with African partners on migration issues, the Czech Republic will support policies intended to help prevent conflicts and create decent living conditions for the local population by promoting good governance, sound education systems and job creation. We will emphasize the need to prevent irregular migration, to make support available to refugees as close as possible to their countries of origin, to protect borders more effectively, to cooperate on returns and readmissions (including reintegration programmes), to fight smuggling networks and human traffickers, and to build national capacities for effective migration management. To this end, we will support relevant EU policies and instruments as well as UN programmes, and look for synergies between them. We will also support effective instruments facilitating legal mobility (primarily in the education sector, and in the context of trade and investment cooperation).

In the countries where the Czech Republic has embassies, we will use our presence to obtain first-hand information on the size and nature of migration flows.

5.2 | Prosperity and Sustainability

Activities:

5.2.1 | Strengthening trade cooperation and promoting investment, private sector development, and jobs for the younger generations

Africa does not yet play a major role in the Czech Republic's foreign trade; however, in absolute numbers, its share is growing. The number of substantial Czech investments is on the rise.

Czech investment and export promotion policy will continue to support Czech industry and services on a sector-by-sector basis. We will adjust the geographic focus flexibly to match the needs of each sector. In the context of our contribution to stabilization efforts in the Sahel, we will not lose sight of the complementary need to promote the Sahel's economic development.

Our economic diplomacy will focus on the sectors where we have substantial know-how and experience: health care, agriculture, water and sanitation, the building of infrastructure including energy infrastructure, mining, textile and food industry equipment, defence and security industry, IT and cyber-security.

Another important task will be to work with our own general public and with our private sector to raise their awareness of the trade and investment opportunities available in Africa. However, Africa has many opportunities in the business-to-government (B2G) sector, which means that government support is essential. Moreover, to identify opportunities and to assist our trade and investment, we must be present in the country concerned. In this respect, we will rely on the role of the relevant Czech embassies and (in the case of B2G business opportunities) on the local CzechTrade offices.

Our direct and permanent presence in local markets is the essential factor for a full and long-term development of our business and investment activity in Africa. Enduring presence in the African market adds value to trade relations: a company that has gained a lasting foothold in a given foreign market may grow as much as twice as quickly than a company that exports to the same market on an occasional basis.

To succeed in the African market, Czech companies need government support. This should involve the use of export and investment financing instruments (such as soft loans) as well as development assistance instruments: export financing and underwriting products of the Export Guarantee and Insurance Corporation and Czech Export Bank, and development financing products of the National Development Bank. We should therefore watch, and draw inspiration from the evolution of such financial instruments in Western European countries; however, not forgetting that many Czech exporters are small or medium-sized enterprises with limited financial capacity and limited ability to be directly present in these markets. At the same time, in countries where the participation of government-run financial institutions is counted as an advantage we should also progressively increase the role of commercial banks – the emphasis might be, for example, on the provision of club loans.

The Czech Republic will encourage companies and industry associations to offer Africa complex solutions and not just products. This is the way to build strong bilateral ties with African partners, to engage more easily in international development assistance, and possibly to help Czech companies to participate in larger projects of international organizations.

The Czech Republic will also encourage Czech companies to take part in activities under the EU instruments promoting the nexus between economic activities and the investment-development approach.

5.2.2 | Sustainable agriculture and rural development

Agriculture is the backbone of Africa's economy. In the light of the impact of the Russian aggression against Ukraine on the food security of the continent, it is clear that support of agricultural development will play a key role in Africa's economic, social and security stabilization.

In sub-Saharan Africa, the majority of the population work in agriculture. Nevertheless, the sector generates only 14 per cent of this region's GDP. This is due to several factors: heavy dependence on weather (erratic rainfall), low productivity (predominance of subsistence farming), failure to develop efficient and environmentally friendly farming methods, and unsustainable use of land leading to land degradation. As a result, Africa does not make progress in eradicating chronic malnutrition in some regions, and remains at risk of food insecurity and dependence on external food assistance.

Agricultural development is hampered by poorly functioning market and a lack of value chains, and by limited access to technologies, energy sources, skill development opportunities and financial services. Inefficient water management is a major obstacle to North Africa's agricultural development. Access to modern technologies and well-targeted investments may help overcome the challenges of the harsh climate.

The activities of the Czech Republic and other developed countries (namely the EU Member States) will build on the economic, social and environmental pillars of sustainable development and on relevant EU and UN programmes. The Czech Republic will promote comprehensive approaches designed to increase agricultural productivity and diversification, and to improve access to safe, nutritious and sufficient food for all groups of the population. The aim is to help stabilize the rural population, reduce chronic poverty and close social gaps.

The Czech Republic will focus on supporting small and middle-scale African farmers. We will promote an integrated farming approach combining crop and livestock production. Our activities will help improve the knowledge of resilient and sustainable agricultural practices, and encourage technological development (mechanization), smart farming solutions contributing to climate adaptation, and the building of local value chains for agriculture and food production.

We will also seek to increase the capacity and effectiveness of agricultural consultancy. We will promote public-private partnerships and cooperation, as well as the farmers' cooperation with other stakeholders involved in the production, processing and trade chain, in agribusiness and in financial and consultancy services.

Our efforts to help increase Africa's agricultural productivity will not omit to address the impacts of climate change. We will seek to improve access to water (irrigation technologies) and water management including wastewater treatment. We will help introduce sustainable land and landscape management principles and promote ecosystem-friendliness. We will support appropriate landscape mitigation methods (including afforestation) to protect the soil and enhance the water retention capacity of the landscape.

Our activities will aim to create livelihood opportunities for all groups of the population, and they will take into account the need for economic empowerment of women and girls.

5.2.3 | Building resilience to climate change and access to green energy

The Czech Republic looks at the impacts of climate change in Africa mainly from the security perspective. Africa has one of the world's highest levels of exposure to the impacts of climate change. Its ability to face and adjust to climate change is constrained by its poverty and by the inadequate capacities by its institutions.

The Czech Republic's activities will contribute to the implementation of Agenda 2030, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction setting out the main objectives in disaster prevention, preparedness and resilience building, and the Paris Climate Agreement to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change establishing a legally binding framework for climate protection beyond 2020.

The Czech Republic will promote initiatives helping the African partners build their resilience to climate change and natural disasters. We will also support national, regional and global mechanisms to increase the capacities for effective planning and management in this field.

Our activities in Africa will continue to promote environment-friendly approach to natural resources, and protection of the environment and biodiversity. We will encourage transfers of technologies and know-how in fields relevant to the climate resilience of our African partners.

The Czech Republic believes that strong institutions, promotion of justice, human rights and social inclusion have an essential role to play in the efforts to cope with the impacts of climate change in Africa. Well-governed states and societies are able to more effectively respond to climate change.

Sub-Saharan Africa remains least-electrified part of the world, and this is one of the major obstacles to its development. We will help our African partners to give their population better access to energy services, a fundamental step towards improving the living standards and economic development in the region. Electrification is the essential precondition for Africa's industrialization. We will support Africa's efforts to use modern, safe, sustainable, renewable and low-emission energy sources. To this end, we will offer Czech energy solutions.

5.2.4 | Supporting the development of Africa's raw materials industry, strengthening the Czech Republic's raw materials security

The impact of Russia's aggression in Ukraine has forced EU countries including the Czech Republic to revise their energy and raw materials policies and diversify suppliers with the aim to strengthen their security. This opens up prospects for stronger cooperation with African partners. Many African countries have a great raw materials potential including traditional raw materials (oil, natural gas, non-ferrous metals) and a wide range of strategic metals vital for modern high-tech industries.

The Czech Republic's active raw materials diplomacy is based on the national Raw Materials Policy document (2017). The national policy implements the principles of the EU Raw Materials Initiative responding to the growing importance of raw materials security across all EU Member States.

The good reputation of our geologists in Africa is an excellent starting point for our active raw materials diplomacy. Czech companies can offer their African partners complete value chains covering the whole raw materials cycle: from mapping, prospecting, reserve calculations, feasibility studies and environmental impact assessment (EIA), to the choice of environmentally friendly mining and processing methods, including supply of high-quality Czech mining equipment, processing lines and transfers of know-how in mining, land rehabilitation and reclamation.

Assessment of the mineral and raw materials potential of African countries (including their existing relations with the Czech Republic and the presence of big global actors) shows that the Czech Republic is well placed to cooperate in the raw materials sector with the following countries: Algeria, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Madagascar, Mozambique, Mauritania, Namibia and Togo.

5.2.5 | Promoting good governance, development of civil society and respect for human rights, with an emphasis on women's empowerment

Promotion of human rights and good governance, democratization efforts and the development of civil society is one of the longstanding core elements of the foreign policy of the Czech Republic and EU countries in general. In the light of our own political, social and economic transformation, we realize that one of the key factors in building peace and security and preventing conflicts in Africa is good governance combined with inclusive and democratic political processes facilitating the participation of all groups of the population. This should involve the development of civil society, enforceability of law, access to justice and respect for human rights (in particular political and civil rights). Good governance and respect for human rights standards is an important prerequisite for the sustainability of our development and economic activities in Africa.

The Czech Republic will also promote activities improving the political, social, economic and human rights situation of women. We believe that progress towards the empowerment of women and girls, and gender equality in general, can have a profoundly transformative effect on African societies. In our opinion, this is exactly what will improve Africa's chances to cope with the demographic challenge of rapid population growth. It is important to give women and girls access to education, and to pay special attention to this aspect in regions affected by conflicts and crises. We will also promote initiatives and activities promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights, and we will support African women's strife for the recognition of their right to free choice in family matters.

The Czech Republic is ready to share and transfer its transition experience to help African countries build and develop effective public administration, namely in the area of public finance management including the mobilization of domestic resources, one of the crucial factors that should drive the development of Africa's economies and enable them to graduate from the least developed to middle income countries category.

In the context of social cohesion and conflict prevention, the Czech Republic will promote activities encouraging interfaith dialogue and civic participation.

5.3 | Health

Activities:

5.3.1 | Strengthening the capacities of healthcare systems in African countries

The COVID-19 pandemic made it clear that Africa's prosperity, sustainable development and economic and social stability depend on the health of Africa's population. Available statistics show that Africa had lower infection rates than Europe; however, the impact on its development was profound in many important areas. Following the outbreak of the pandemic, Africa's overall economic growth dropped for the first time in 25 years. Obviously, Africa can be a stable partner and neighbour to the EU only if it makes its people and healthcare systems resilient to its health challenges.

As the pandemic began to spread in Africa, the Czech Republic, along with other developed countries, responded by helping reinforce local healthcare capacities. We delivered healthcare and medical supplies, ranging from vaccines to intensive care unit equipment, to hospitals across the continent. We

joined the Team Europe Initiative supporting public health institutes in Sub-Saharan Africa, and our engagement in this area will continue in the coming years. To help improve the health resilience of African countries, we will bring in leading Czech medical equipment manufacturers and healthcare solutions providers. We will draw on our scientific and academic expertise, as well as on our experience with development cooperation projects and the MEDEVAC programme.

Our aim is to offer our African partners comprehensive healthcare solutions and to help make quality healthcare accessible to all.

5.4 | Education

Activities:

5.4.1 | Promoting academic, scientific and technical cooperation

The education and skills of the African people, especially the young generation, are crucially important for the continent's sustainable social and economic development. The need to address this area has gained urgency in the light of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the functioning of Africa's school systems.

The Czech Republic's activities in this area will be based on the relevant national programmes (a programme to strengthen the capacities of public higher education institutions in developing countries, a scholarships programme for developing countries). We will also encourage academic mobility in the context of direct bilateral contacts as well as in the context of the appropriate European programmes.

The national programme designed to strengthen the capacities of public higher education institutions in developing countries sets out to improve quality and expertise in higher education, in science and research, as well as in the management of higher education. It is part of the overall effort to promote sustainable economic and social development and security stabilization in the beneficiary countries.

The scholarship programme, combined with bilateral teacher exchanges, enables Africans to study (or do research at) leading Czech public higher education institutions. It gives them the opportunity to develop a high level of professional expertise and skills, as well as to experience our country's institutions and social and economic system. Students benefiting from the scholarship programme are well placed to make valid contributions to the economic and social development in their home countries. The programme also helps develop bilateral relations between the Czech Republic and African countries.

We will also inform the public in the countries concerned (primarily through our embassies) about the advantages of self-paid study in the Czech Republic. Compared with other developed European countries, our advantage is that we offer quality education at affordable prices.

5.5 | Strategic Communication: Creating an image of the Czech Republic as Africa's respected partner

Activities:

5.5.1 | Developing the Czech Republic's public diplomacy in Africa

The Czech Republic will build its image as a relevant, respected, reliable and dynamic partner to African countries and regional arrangements, a partner who works for Africa increasingly hard and systematically in the areas where we have specific competences and know-how (security, economic and development cooperation, good governance), and a partner who is ready to

deepen its cooperation, whether in the context of bilateral relations or through our engagement in the EU (including military and civilian missions and operations) and the UN.

5.5.2 | Use the Czech Republic' public diplomacy to better inform our non-African partners about our activities in Africa

The Czech Republic has done much for Africa over a long time. However, we need to improve our capability to inform our partners about our intentions and achievements. To this end, **active and clear information about our activities in Africa** will become an integral element of our foreign policy. The target group will include **especially EU institutions, EU Member States, the Czech Republic's main non-European partners, international organizations and foreign think tanks.**

5.5.3 | Promoting a balanced image of Africa in the Czech Republic

Our government authorities must present to the general public and expert community a **realistic and all-encompassing picture of Africa**. Africa faces many challenges such as conflicts or inequality but, on the other hand, the life of its people is changing radically in many respects. Africa is a growing and dynamic environment with ever-increasing opportunities for mutually beneficial and enriching cooperation. Africa is a heterogeneous continent in the political, security, social, economic as well as cultural sense.

To build a balanced image of Africa, we need to **promote the development of a strong academic base for African Studies in the Czech Republic**. The field should reflect the growing importance of our relations with Africa. Academics should reach out to our public and encourage interest in what is happening in this part of the world. Government authorities, most importantly the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, must motivate the academic community to look more closely at Africa's current development, its crucial problems and its interlinkages with events worldwide and with Czech foreign policy.

We will consider ways in which Czech higher education institutions with longstanding contacts in Africa could help us bring Africa closer to our general public. Regional and municipal authorities might also play a role in raising awareness and establishing partnerships.

It is also important to make our public more alive to the richness of Africa's cultures and the creativity of its people.

5.5.4 | Promoting a debate on and coordination of activities in Africa across the Czech public administration system

The Czech Republic's policy and activities in sub-Saharan Africa can only achieve significant success if they are based on a long-term, **coordinated, comprehensive and coherent approach involving all relevant ministries and representatives of the public, private, non-profit and academic sectors in the Czech Republic.**

6 | THE CZECH REPUBLIC'S ACTIVITIES IN THE EU AND IN THE MULTILATERAL CONTEXT

6.1 | EU

The Czech Republic is convinced that the key to achieving its goals in Africa is to be active in the EU. Inevitably, our national resources and capacities can never quite meet all the needs. We are much more likely to reach tangible results if we work towards them in synergy with and within the framework of the EU's activities in Africa. We will continue to participate in EU missions and operations and to take an active role in shaping the EU Common Security and Defence Policy. The EU has the financial and human resources to sustain an extensive and effective engagement (and our financial contributions going to Africa through the EU budget are considerably higher than any funding we may provide for this purpose on a bilateral basis).

In Brussels as well as in African countries, the Czech Republic will take an active role in shaping and implementing an effective EU policy. We will use our influence to promote an approach that will consolidate and strengthen the EU's long-standing position as a key partner to northern as well as sub-Saharan Africa.

The Czech Republic will help the EU **replace the traditional donor-recipient relationships with partnerships based on mutual benefit, reciprocity, mutual accountability, and the “more for more, less for less” policy.** Africa's pro-active approach and **African ownership of joint initiatives** will remain the essential prerequisites for successful cooperation.

The Czech Republic will treat **Africa as its wider southern neighbourhood**, just as the EU does. Africa's stabilization and sustainable social and economic development are the main arguments for an active policy in this respect. Investment in Africa's peace, stability and sustainable development is investment in our own security and prosperity.

The **aggressive policy of Russia on the European continent**, directly threatening to undermine the foundations of Euro-Atlantic security architecture, must be viewed in the context of **Russia's effort to extend its influence across the EU's entire wider neighbourhood, including the southern part.** In recent years, Russia has again stepped up its engagement in Africa including the deployment of private paramilitary organizations (Wagner Group and others) or the spreading of disinformation with the intention to cause damage to the EU and its members. Against this background, active EU policy in Africa is **directly relevant to the security of Europe.**

In the context of shaping EU policies, the Czech Republic will promote, among other elements, a **comprehensive system for cooperation with the countries of northern Africa.** The region's developments directly influence the situation in European countries. Therefore, we need to strengthen trade ties and security, and to jointly regulate migration. Moreover, Russia's invasion of Ukraine has added urgency to the questions of **energy, food and raw materials security.** The wider impacts of the conflict force European countries to look for alternatives to Russian oil, natural gas and other raw materials. Some African countries are Europe's natural partners in this respect. The EU, including the Czech Republic, needs to step up its engagement in respect of these countries, and actively deepen relations in the energy sector. African countries, on their part, face immediate risks resulting from disruption of grain imports from Ukraine and Russia. A steep rise in grain prices and potential grain shortage may cause a significant destabilization (including political) across the continent.

Against the background of the conflict in Ukraine and the imminent food crisis to which Africa is so vulnerable, the EU must urgently send a clear signal to show its **commitment to addressing the**

food security of African countries, and to counteract the narrative blaming the EU for the food crisis.

The Czech Republic will support the **EU's holistic approach to external conflicts and crises** (humanitarian-development-security nexus, joint programming). We will **use** a broad range of procedures and tools to achieve our aims. **In accordance with UN priorities, we also need to place an emphasis on conflict prevention and efforts to address the root causes of conflicts, and on mediation activities**; in other words, on the implementation of SDG 16: Promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies.

The EU strives for effective implementation and further deepening of its Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) as a way to **strengthen Africa's economic development, regional integration and mutual trade**. EPAs help cultivate the trade and investment environment by promoting EU values and standards. They are also becoming important **from the strategic perspective, given the increasing presence of investors from developing economies** such as China and India. Another mechanism with a crucial role to play in increasing the trade with African countries is the EU Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP). The GSP accords preferential treatment to goods imported to the EU from developing countries, including duty-free market access for the least developed countries. The above policies benefit our interests and we promote them. The Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in cooperation with the Ministry of Industry and Trade, will continue to support workable preferential regimes as a tool of the EU's common trade policy. In addition, to foster a stable and secure trade and business environment, it may be useful to introduce a mechanism for the screening of investors. The Ministry of Industry and Trade may contribute its know-how in this respect and help Africa build its local capacities over a longer term.

The Czech Republic will **take part in the joint programming of EU development cooperation**, namely in the priority countries of our own development cooperation, with a view to our future participation in programmes funded through the NDICI-Global Europe. We will be **active** in Team Europe Initiatives, especially **in the areas of health care, water, green development and migration**.

At the same time, the Czech Republic will use its **foreign policy in respect of Africa as an important tool to increase its role in the EU and develop its cooperation with the other Member States**. Our active approach to Africa's security, economic, political, social and human rights challenges will help us to be **recognized within the EU as a relevant, responsible and constructive partner**.

To this end, we will join relevant like-minded groups with a view to pushing through our positions in the EU debate on the future direction of European policies towards Africa.

Another example of the **added value** we may bring to the EU is that African countries perceive us as an **impartial partner without the burden of colonial past**. In the longer run, this may help increase our role in conflict prevention and peaceful settlement.

The EU is Africa's key partner in the development, economic as well as security areas. This must be communicated to the African public in appropriate ways. The Czech Republic considers it desirable to **strengthen public diplomacy (strategic communication) and make the EU more visible in Africa, and to counteract the disinformation** that is being spread across the continent by outside actors. The Czech Republic will support the Team Europe approach based on the EU's joint response and its communication.

Development of relations with Africa is one of the EU's foreign policy priorities. Accordingly, we will work for **adequate representation of Czech diplomats** in the European External Action Service

(EEAS), both in Brussels and at EU delegations, **in positions where they can make a difference and help shape the EU policy towards Africa.**

6.2 | Multilateral context

To build a successful, credible and full-fledged policy towards sub-Saharan Africa, the Czech Republic needs to **interlink its bilateral activities with the multilateral sphere** (namely in the AU and UN). We have embassies in just 13 of the 54 African countries, which shows that multilateral diplomacy is indeed very important.

African countries are a critical mass whenever positions are formed and candidacies presented in multilateral fora, including the UN and its agencies. This makes Africa the key partner who can really help the EU and the Czech Republic to take forward our priorities.

Since 2013, the Czech Republic has co-sponsored together with Botswana the UN **resolution on equal political participation**. This has been our main inter-regional initiative in the UN Human Rights Council. In the future, we will make **more systematic use of our diplomatic interaction with African countries and their groups in international organizations**, namely in the UN General Assembly and its committees, the executive councils of UN agencies (for example the UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS and the WHO), and the UN agencies in Nairobi (UNEP, UN-Habitat) as well as other organizations, especially the WTO and OECD.

The Czech Republic needs the support of African countries to push through its priorities in areas such as **freedom of the internet and protection of fundamental human rights** (the freedom of speech, association and assembly), internet privacy and the principle that human rights apply online just as they do offline. The 34 members of the Freedom Online Coalition include Ghana and Kenya. The forming of coalitions to oppose the Russian and Chinese proposals that run counter to such rights and principles is of crucial importance in voting in the First Committee (cyber security) and Third Committee (fight against cyber-crime).

Without the support of African countries, it would be very hard for the EU to forge ahead with its priorities such as **preventing migration and addressing its root causes**. The Czech Republic is engaged in this area bilaterally as well as within the framework of joint EU activities and the multilateral sphere. African countries play an equally important role in **climate change** action. The EU increasingly cooperates with Africa, for example, in implementing the Paris Agreement and the results of the annual Conferences of the Parties.

The Czech Republic will support the EU's longstanding effort to increase the engagement of African countries in the **WTO reform process**, to promote mutual understanding and rule-based multilateral trading system. The Czech Republic will also support the development of cooperation between the OECD and Africa.

Africa is a priority region, likely to play the key role in the implementation of the UN's **WPS agenda (Women, Peace and Security)**, promotion of good governance, human rights and fundamental freedoms, conflict prevention and peace building. The WPS agenda should be mainstreamed across all areas of bilateral cooperation, including security and economic cooperation.

7 | THE CZECH REPUBLIC'S IMPACT IN AFRICA

GOAL 1: STABILITY		
<i>Activity</i>	<i>Current situation</i>	<i>Impact</i>
5.1.1 Build the capacity and professionalism of African partners' security and defence forces	Volatile security situation impedes development in many African regions.	The Czech Republic helps reduce the rate and intensity of conflicts, improve the protection of civilians, develop public administration and rebuild governance in destabilized areas.
5.1.2 Stabilize the security situation, combat terrorism	The African part of the EU's wider neighbourhood is overwhelmed by a wave of destabilization (in the security as well as political sense). This is likely to have adverse impacts on the EU and its Member States.	The Czech Republic becomes an important partner in the security stabilization process; the security risks to the Czech Republic and the EU are reduced.
5.1.3 Counter Russia's hybrid influence and disinformation	Africa is increasingly a target for Russia's hybrid activities directed against the interests of the EU and its Member States.	African partners become more resilient to hybrid influence (and disinformation).
5.1.4 Develop cooperation in cyber security	Africa is increasingly a target for cyber-crime.	African countries are better prepared to deal with online crime; their information systems become more resilient.
5.1.5 Reduce the root causes of forced displacement and irregular migration	Africa has a high rate of large-scale forced displacements. This causes irregular migration across Africa and into its neighbourhood.	African societies make progress towards socio-economic and security stabilization; the root causes of environmental migration are reduced.
GOAL 2: PROSPERITY		
<i>Activity</i>	<i>Current situation</i>	<i>Impact</i>
5.2.1 Strengthen economic cooperation, develop the private sector and encourage creation of jobs for the younger generations	Africa's share in the overall volume of Czech foreign trade falls short of the potential and so does Czech investment in Africa. Africa's job creation rate does not keep pace with demographic growth.	The volume of mutual trade increases and so does Czech investment in Africa; Africa's economies and individual companies improve their capacities and become more competitive.
5.2.2 Develop sustainable agriculture and food processing	Africa's great potential for agricultural production and processing remains largely untapped.	Africa's food self-sufficiency improves.
5.2.3 Build resilience to climate change and improve access to green energy	By global standards, Africa has the highest level of vulnerability to the effects of climate change; there is a significant risk of environmental migration. Africa is the least	African populations become more resilient to climate variations. The use of renewable energy sources increases.

	electrified continent.	
5.2.4 Support the development of Africa's raw materials industry, strengthen the Czech Republic's raw materials security	Africa looks for ways to derive greater benefit from its raw materials wealth. Russia's aggression in Ukraine forces the Czech Republic to diversify its suppliers of strategic raw materials.	Africa builds a modern raw materials industry; the Czech Republic improves its raw materials security.
5.2.5 Promote good governance, development of civil society and respect for human rights, with an emphasis on women's empowerment	Africa's sustainable development is hampered by a lasting deficit in the area of good governance and human rights (including gender equality) and by women's under-participation in public affairs.	Africa makes progress in promoting democratic and human rights values, women's empowerment (including women's leadership) and social cohesion.
GOAL 3: HEALTH		
<i>Activity</i>	<i>Current situation</i>	<i>Impact</i>
5.3.1 Strengthen the capacities of healthcare systems in African countries	Africa is not fully prepared to tackle multiple health challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic.	Africa strengthens its healthcare systems and improves access to healthcare services for its population.
GOAL 4: EDUCATION		
<i>Activity</i>	<i>Current status</i>	<i>Impact</i>
5.4.1 Promote academic, scientific and technical cooperation	Africa's education system does not have the necessary capacity.	Africa improves its expertise in selected fields.
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION: THE CZECH REPUBLIC AS AFRICA'S RESPECTED PARTNER		
<i>Activities</i>	<i>Current situation</i>	<i>Impact</i>
5.5.1 Develop the Czech Republic's public diplomacy in Africa	The Czech Republic does not present its achievements well enough.	The perception of the Czech Republic's brand improves (our participation in foreign missions and operations in Africa is one of the contributing factors).
5.5.2 Use the Czech Republic's public diplomacy to better inform non-African partners about Czech activities in Africa	The Czech Republic does outstanding work in Africa in many respects, but fails to put this across to the EU and its Member States, other important bilateral partners and international organizations.	The Czech Republic's activities in Africa are more visible to EU and non-EU partners; the Czech Republic identifies new opportunities for cooperation.
5.5.3 Promote a balanced image of Africa in the Czech	Africa is much too often associated with conflicts, problems and threats, despite the many opportunities for	Africa is perceived in the Czech Republic as an interesting partner. Czech expertise

Republic	mutually beneficial cooperation.	develops, and the range of stakeholders involved in the cooperation is broadened.
5.5.4 Promote a debate on and coordination of our activities in Africa across the Czech public administration system	The Czech Republic' state institutions should look for better synergies between their activities in Africa.	The Czech Republic's activities in Africa are more effective and have greater impacts.

8| Conclusions

Africa is gaining importance not only for the EU but also globally. In our changing geopolitical landscape, **active** approach to Africa **should be a permanent and integral element of Czech foreign policy**. We need to build relations on a long-term basis because the challenges Africa is facing are often so severe that they require a long-term response.

The Czech Republic's foreign policy towards Africa must be based on systematic concerted action of **government authorities and the public, private, non-profit and academic sectors**.

The **main framework** in which we will implement our policy towards Africa is the EU, **and namely its Common Foreign and Security Policy**. We will consider **Africa our southern neighbourhood**, as the EU does. Investment in Africa's peace, stability and sustainable development is investment in our own security and prosperity. We will promote an **equal EU-Africa partnership based on the “more for more, less for less” policy**.

Against the background of intensified geopolitical strife, the Czech Republic will support the EU's effort to **increase the role of multilateralism**, an international system based on international law, rules and agreements, in the context of cooperation with African partners.

To promote Africa's positive development, we will **bring into play our specific competences** in a number of areas: security, health care, agriculture and water management, disaster risk reduction, education, as well as our experience of the transition process and our tradition of human rights advocacy.

We need to gain a **direct and permanent foothold in African markets** in order to build a full-fledged trade and investment presence on the continent. We also urgently need to take steps (within our budgetary limits) to improve the capacity of our embassy network in Africa, namely to reduce the excessive number of countries covered by each embassy. We need to increase the capacity of CzechTrade offices, and we need to encourage Czech companies to join forces and coordinate their presence in Africa.

Another step that will help us gain a more lasting foothold in Africa is to actively promote the use of Czech technologies, solutions and know-how in EU development initiatives. We should try to use the **leverage effect of Czech development cooperation instruments**, to move from smaller to larger projects, from feasibility studies to implementation. Our development cooperation should lead to commercial cooperation, and it should be interlinked with relevant EU instruments and initiatives.

To succeed in Africa, Czech companies urgently require **government support, namely stronger financial instruments to promote exports**.

The Czech Republic will seek **to intensify its contacts with African countries on the top as well as expert levels**. We especially need to organize more meetings of senior government representatives.

Another integral element of Czech foreign policy towards Africa will be an **active information policy** to bring our **activities in Africa** to the attention of our general public as well as EU institutions and Member States, and African and other international partners.

A necessary step we must take to facilitate the development of our activities in Africa is to **extend the government's Programme of Activities to Support Source and Transit Countries of Migration in Africa beyond 2022**.

9 | Applicability of the Strategy

The Strategy will remain in force for an unlimited period. It may be amended from time to time in response to significant developments relevant to Africa, and in response to any revisions of government strategic documents.