

**ROUND**  
**TABLE**

**Russia  
and the African Union.  
Prospects for Inter-  
Parliamentary Cooperation**

## ROUND TABLE

## Russia and the African Union. Prospects for Inter-Parliamentary Cooperation

### New role for Africa in contemporary world order structure

#### Problems and development prospects

In the XXI century Africa is one of the most dynamically developing and promising regions in the world. The countries of the African continent are striving to strengthen their positions in the structure of the new world order, to increase their economic potential and the possibilities of political influence.

Against the background of the increase in objective economic importance in the world economy, the conditions for Africa's participation in international cooperation and exchange are still largely determined not so much by the African region itself as by its partners controlling higher segments in the value chains.

The continent, where 12% of the world's population lives, still accounts for only 1% of global GDP and 2% of global trade. Moreover, external factors (economic aid, food supplies, technology, etc.) largely determine the conditions for the internal development of Africa.

At the same time, Africa has a special niche in global economic processes due to its mineral and raw material potential<sup>2</sup> (reserves, quality, and production costs). The development of deposits of highly liquid raw materials is a reliable basis for economic development for virtually all countries in Africa.

The world's leading economies (both traditional major powers and ascending power centers<sup>3</sup>) are competing for the rights of access to African fuel and raw minerals as well as for African markets.

**According to forecasts, starting in the 2030s, Africa will become a primary and nearly exclusive, in terms of significance, global strategic reserve of sources of raw materials, including those of its types which have strategic importance and are indispensable in defense and innovative technologies of the 21st century.**

The high economic growth rates in the last decade demonstrated by Africa make it possible to predict surpassing of the continent marginal position in the share and structure of global GDP. From 2008 to 2016, the average annual increase in the total continent GDP was 4%. And a number of African countries are demonstrating record growth rates on a global scale. So, in 2017 the GDP growth in Ghana was 8.3%, in Ethiopia – 8.2%, in Côte d'Ivoire – 7.2%, in Djibouti – 7%. Sub-Saharan African countries (SSA) have become an area which is rapidly approaching the ascending powers in terms of rate of development and their increasing role and influence in global economy and politics<sup>4</sup>. According to the expert community, the average annual GDP growth rate of Sub-Saharan Africa may again rise to 5-7% in the next decades (starting from the 2020s).

In the near future, Africa's participation in the world economy will mainly come from its fuel and raw materials potential and its rapidly growing and qualitatively changing population<sup>5</sup>.

The return to the trajectory of an increase in GDP growth rates is mainly due to the growth in global prices for hydrocarbons and raw minerals. Africa has focused on actively attracting foreign investors who are creating increasingly favorable conditions.

According to forecasts, in the next decade the policy of actively attracting foreign investment will lead to a significant increase in both the GDP of the continent and the rate of its growth.

<sup>1</sup> The African region includes 55 states with a population of 1.2 billion people and occupies about one fifth of Earth's inhabited land; it is an area of profound contrasts in terms of socio-economic and political-ideological processes.

<sup>2</sup> There are deposits of almost all known types of minerals in Africa. Africa ranks first among the regions of the world in reserves of manganese, chromium, bauxite, gold, platinum, cobalt, vanadium, diamonds and second in reserves of oil, gas, mercury, iron ore. Among other regions of the world, Africa ranks first in reserves of manganese ores, chromites, bauxites, gold, platinum, cobalt, vanadium, diamonds, phosphorites, fluorite; second in reserves of copper ores, asbestos, uranium, antimony, beryllium, graphite; third in reserves of oil, gas, mercury, iron ore. There are also significant reserves of titanium, nickel, bismuth, lithium, tantalum, niobium, tin, tungsten, precious stones, etc.

<sup>3</sup> The traditional main partners of the African states (the US, Britain, France, the EU) and new leading countries (China, India, Brazil) are striving to strengthen and expand their positions in the region as well as to include African economies in global networks of capital flow and transnational economic partnership.

<sup>4</sup> In terms of the annual rate of GDP growth over the last 15 years, the subregion of Sub-Saharan Africa was inferior only to the subregion of East Asia. For twenty years, from 1995 to 2015, the countries of Sub-Saharan Africa experienced an "economic boom" when the economic growth rate was 5-7%. In 2013, the rate of GDP growth in SSA countries was 5.2%; in 2014, it was 4.7% on the back of weak housing prices for fuel and raw materials. However, in 2016 GDP growth fell to 1.4%, in 2017 slightly increased to 2.6%. At the same time, the growth rates in SSA countries remained above the global average (3.5%) and exceeded the similar indicator for developing markets (4.3%). In 2018 this figure will exceed 3.5%, according to IMF experts.

<sup>5</sup> Africa shows high rates of population growth in the world at about 2.5%. Rapid demographic growth should serve as an impetus to accelerate economic development, which, however, will occur only in the long term (2040-2050), when the coefficient of demographic load approaches the optimal value in Africa. Africa is at the stage of accumulating human potential, which is estimated as the lowest in the world today. In comparison with developed countries, the human capital of African countries is characterized by a low life expectancy, comparatively low educational level, and in many respects an outdated lifestyle. In Africa, the general unemployment rate remains high (15-20%), while among young people this figure exceeds 25%, which stimulates the migration of the African labor force (35 million migrants out of 200 million in the world are Africans).

Another aspect of the inevitable increase in influence of the African continent countries on the economic destinies of the world is the rapid growth in the number and gradual change in the qualitative composition of its population. Already in 2009, the population of Africa exceeded 1 billion people and is continuing to grow at the fastest rates on the planet.

By 2020, the working-age population of the African continent will exceed 700 million, and by 2050 this number will reach 1.5 billion. In two or three decades, Africans will largely be the ones determining the demographic and social picture of the world, and the capacity of the African consumer market will expand substantially.

In terms of the pace of development and the increase in role and influence in the world economy and politics, Sub-Saharan African countries (SSA) have begun to catch up with the "rising" countries with an emerging market economy. A number of authoritative Western analytical structures (Rand, MSCI, Economist Intelligence Unit, McKinsey, Ernst and Young) are beginning to assume that from the point of view of long-term investment appeal for the countries of the West, Africa is slowly beginning to outperform China and India. According to World Bank forecasts, the continent can be "on the verge of economic growth just like China 30 years ago and India 20 years ago."

The previously prevalent views that Africa is a synonym for backwardness and poverty do not correspond to reality.

At the same time, with all the prospects and potential investment attractiveness of Africa, the task of preserving and further increasing the indicators of economic growth is inseparably linked with the effective solution of "old" systemic problems of the continent. Their solution is possible provided that the efforts of all African countries and friends of Africa are consolidated.

The list of common interests of African states can include:

Reviewing the inequitable trade policies and agricultural subsidies of developed countries that hinder the economic development of African countries (an example of the agricultural market, which is an important source of income for most African countries). African countries are equally interested in achieving balanced trade arrangements, in particular with the EU, with a view to achieving an equivalent trade exchange that will open up opportunities for Africa's agricultural export potential.

Fight poverty and socio-economic inequality. Increase the effectiveness of financial assistance provided by international donors<sup>6</sup>. Although the percentage of poverty in Africa declined from 56% in 1990 to 43% in 2012, the number of people living below the poverty line increased by 104 million people (from 282 million in 1990 to 388 million in 2012) due to colossal population growth. Of the world's 20 poorest countries, 15 are on the African continent.

In terms of income inequality, 7 African countries are among the top 10 countries with the highest level of inequality in the world.

The absence of control mechanisms in the allocation of financial assistance remains an acute issue, which often drastically reduces its effectiveness and leads to an even greater gap in the incomes of the population.

Experts estimate that international efforts to promote Africa can only be effective if there is a systematic monitoring of the expenditure of financial resources provided to the poorest countries in Africa, as well as a balancing towards greater openness of the trade regime for African countries, especially by developed countries.

The control of communicable diseases is an important prerequisite for increasing the investment attractiveness of African countries.

Infrastructure development is one of the key factors in maintaining the economic growth. In many African countries, infrastructure constraints<sup>7</sup> hamper economic development to about the same extent as political instability, opaque regulation, and lack of access to financing.

Increasing the effectiveness of measures to counter terrorism to varying extents in all regions of the African continent<sup>8</sup>.

The strengthening of the anti-terrorism capacity of African countries could be carried out within the framework of strengthening subregional cooperation (Western, Southern, Central and Eastern Africa).

In 2013 during the 42nd session of the heads of state and government, member countries of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) adopted the "Political Declaration on a common position in the fight against terrorism," of which the Counter-Terrorism Strategy and its Implementation Plan became an integral part<sup>9</sup>.

Against the backdrop of attempts by African countries to institutionalize joint efforts to create an independent partnership in the fight against terrorism<sup>10</sup>, similar initiatives are being undertaken by Western countries in parallel<sup>11</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> Each year, OECD countries allocate USD 15 billion to the poorest countries in Africa to provide basic social services; assistance of the world's largest economies to the poorest countries increased from 0.44% of GDP in 2013 to 0.54% in 2015.

<sup>7</sup> Underdeveloped infrastructure (roads, railways, and ports) adds from 30 to 40% to the cost of goods traded between countries. The unsatisfactory state of the infrastructure annually reduces the countries' GDP by 2% and also reduces labor productivity by 40%.

<sup>8</sup> In Africa, terrorist groups such as Boko Haram, Kharakatash-Shabab, Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, and the Islamic State (all of whom are banned in the Russian Federation) are active. The West African region is most vulnerable to terrorist attacks, where Boko Haram is present (Nigeria, Cameroon, Niger, Chad). "Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb countries" operates in the north of Mali, expanding its presence in the central regions. North Africa is more subject to attacks of the Islamic state. The countries of East Africa (Somalia) have to oppose "Kharakatash-Shabab."

<sup>9</sup> ECOWAS Counterterrorism Strategy and Implementation Plan for Review, 2011. <http://news.ecowas.int/presseshow.php?nb=064&lang=en&annee=2011>

<sup>10</sup> For example, cooperation in the fight against Boko Haram at the subregional and regional levels is based on the strengthening of the military potential of the Multinational Joint Task Force, the joint efforts of the Lake Chad Basin Commission, the practical implementation of the provisions of the 2013 ECOWAS Counter-Terrorism Strategy, and the enhanced coordination of ECOWAS with the ECCAS (Economic Community of Central African States) and the specialized bodies of the African Union (the Peace and Security Council, African Research Center for Combating Terrorism).

<sup>11</sup> In 2002, the US Department of State (Pansahel Initiative) launched a program to support counter-terrorism activities in Mali, Niger, Chad, and Mauritania, which in 2005 was reformatted into the Trans-Saharan counterterrorism initiative. This eventually became a full-fledged program for 11 countries in the Maghreb and the Sahel. An Antiterrorist Partnership was created for the region of East Africa in 2009, also at the initiative of the State Department. However, neither initiative has shown visible and productive results.

## Sociocultural aspect

Modern African states face the challenges of globalization in the context of "the cultural and historical heterogeneity of African societies, the specifics of the African community societies evolution, tribalism, the growth of large-scale social conflicts in the region and their destructive influence on national statehood."

In this regard, a comprehensive effort to bring the countries of the African continent onto the trajectory of sustainable development should include an in-depth inter-African cultural and civilizational dialogue on ways to adapt the "nation-state" model to modern conditions.

## Africa in a multipolar world

In the political dimension, Africa has a special role in shaping a multipolar world order, including in the context of "South-South" cooperation.

For the progressive part of the international community and friends of Africa, it is obvious that without the participation of African states today it is impossible to ensure global security and stability. The comprehensive solution of such cross-border threats as international terrorism, drug trafficking, illegal migration, epidemics, humanitarian crises, each of which originating in the African continent, can reach a global scale.

The African region is aimed at strengthening its positions in the modern world order, mainly via an institutional format. African states make up almost a quarter of all voting members of the UN and many other international organizations. In this sense, they play an essential role in shaping common approaches to the global agenda. Their support is an important strategic reserve in the world diplomatic arena, capable of ensuring the creation of solidarity in the process of restructuring existing institutions, mechanisms and structures of global governance as well as changing the balance of power in the world.

This factor represents an important potential for strengthening the international influence of Africa and its friends who have close positions with African states on key issues on the international agenda.

In practical terms, it can be a prospect of joining forces with African countries in promoting progressive, international solutions that are in accordance with mutual interests. Thus, according to statistics, at the current stage at the sessions of the UN General Assembly, African countries vote in solidarity with Russia in 70-80% of cases.

One of the foreign policy priorities of African countries is to ensure a permanent representation in the UN Security Council at the level of permanent membership. However,

among African states there is still no consensus on the organizational form or a candidate country for providing such representation.

The prospects of progress in solving a number of systemic problems of the African continent are linked to the effectiveness of international efforts to implement the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development<sup>12</sup> (UNGA Resolution of September 25, 2015). If the previous "Millennium Development Goals" program was focused exclusively on developing countries, then the new "2030 Agenda" is extended to the entire international community.

"2030 Agenda" contains 17 sustainable development goals and aims to build a world free from poverty, hunger, disease, and need: "We see a world free from fear and violence. A world of universal literacy. A world in which everyone has equal and universal access to quality education at all levels, medical care and social protection, a world in which physical, spiritual and social well-being is guaranteed."

Among the most important principles and directions of common activity are the prosperity and well-being of countries and peoples, the continuation of economic, social, and technological progress in harmony with nature, the building of a society which is peaceful, just, and free from social barriers and in which there is no place for fear and violence.

## Cooperation between Russia and African countries: current state, key vectors and constraints, growth points. The state of inter-parliamentary relations

Russia and Africa are geographically significantly separated from each other, while Russian-African relations are actively developing in the political, economic, military-technical, cultural and humanitarian spheres, relying on the vast base laid in the Soviet period<sup>13</sup>.

After the decline of the first half of the 1990s, caused by the collapse of the USSR<sup>14</sup>, since the second half of the 1990s, Russian-African relations have moved toward reasonable pragmatism based on equality and mutual benefit.

All editions of the Russian Foreign Policy Concept (2000, 2008, 2013, 2016) pay attention to the development and diversification of ties with African countries, including the economic cooperation.

Compared to the previous decade, Russia's diplomatic activity in Africa has increased noticeably.

Today, Russia has diplomatic relations and is actively developing bilateral relations with all countries in Sub-Saharan Africa.

<sup>12</sup> In 2015, humanity summed up the achievement of the eight goals set out in the Millennium Declaration (2000). In the program of action adopted by all the countries and leading development organizations in the world under the auspices of the United Nations, a number of the areas outlined in the Declaration have made significant progress. However, this progress has been uneven, especially in Africa; some development goals have not been achieved, especially those relating to the health of mothers, infants, and children as well as reproductive health.

<sup>13</sup> The USSR extended comprehensive assistance (including military-technical) to African states during the struggle for independence and later in the process of establishing national states. For three decades (1960s, 1970s, 1980s), the USSR closely cooperated with many African states, especially those who embarked on a path of socialist development. The USSR actively assisted Africa in the implementation of industrialization through the construction of industrial enterprises, infrastructure facilities, educational, and medical institutions. In accordance with agreements and contracts, the Soviet Union rendered substantial economic assistance to the countries of Africa. The USSR had obligations to promote the construction of 600 facilities in Africa, of which 300 objects had been put into operation by the mid-1980s. About 30 power facilities were built with Soviet assistance, the largest of which is the Aswan hydropower complex in Egypt.

<sup>14</sup> In the early 1990s, in connection with the collapse of the USSR and the Russia transition to market relations, a radical transformation of the former conditions and mechanisms of cooperation with African states took place. The state monopoly in foreign trade was abolished, almost all economic assistance programs were suspended, and long-term loans to African partners were abandoned. In 1992 Russia closed 9 embassies and 4 general consulates, a number of trade missions and offices of trade advisers, as well as most of its cultural centers in Africa. This negatively affected the level of Russian-African political and trade and economic relations, the lowest point of which is considered to be 1994-1995.

In 2014, the post of special representative of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia for relations with African regional organizations was established.

As an international partner of African countries, Russia has several advantages:

- ▶ Russia does not have a colonial past, and the USSR played a decisive role in the decolonization of the continent<sup>15</sup>;
- ▶ Russia has accumulated a strong experience of cooperation with the countries of the continent in various fields<sup>16</sup>;
- ▶ Russia invests in the development and accumulation of the intellectual potential of African countries, does not stimulate "brain drain" from the African continent; students from the African countries studying in Russia return to their homeland in the vast majority of cases;
- ▶ Russia possesses a complex of technologies and technical means necessary for the deep modernization and technical re-equipment of the economies in African countries, including in the extractive industries, as well as for the development of transport infrastructure, energy complex, modern agriculture and agro-industrial complex, modernization of the armed forces;
- ▶ Russian companies are widely involved in local labor when implementing projects in African countries<sup>17</sup>.
- ▶ Russia does not determine its economic presence in Africa by the need to adjust the political course of an African country.

### Political dialogue

Russia's political dialogue and cooperation with African countries are actively developing in bilateral and multilateral formats, including at the regional level, and address a wide range of issues of global and regional policy, including ensuring international stability, strengthening the central role of the UN, combating international terrorism, searching for solutions, and preventing regional conflicts.

An important area of coincidence of mutual interests and dynamic interaction between Russia and African states is the fight against common challenges and threats: international terrorism, infectious diseases, transnational organized crime, illegal arms trade, etc.

African countries support the initiative of Russia on the formation of a global system to counter modern challenges and threats and participate in its extension<sup>18</sup>.

Russia's willingness to provide political and practical assistance for the establishment of a balanced security system on the continent offers important support for African countries in their joint efforts to ensure reliable regional security.

Russia consistently supports African partners in their striving to play a decisive role in the adoption of key decisions for the continent in such areas as the formation of collective security foundations, the resolution of conflicts, the creation of their own

peacekeeping potential, counteraction to terrorism, choice of models for economic development and etc.

Russia also stands for the more active role of African states in the formation of a new architecture for a global world order.

African states are ready for dialogue on a wide range of issues on the global and regional agenda, including strengthening mechanisms for conflict prevention and resolution.

### Peacemaking

The active interaction with Africans in the field of crisis regulation is continuing, in the interests of reducing the conflict potential on the continent.

Russia stands for the prompt and adequate response of the international community to the challenges and threats that, arising in Africa, are rapidly spreading globally, destabilizing neighboring regions.

At the same time, Russia understands that to ensure sustainable peace, the actions of the Africans to find solutions in such difficult areas as the DR Congo, Mali, and the Sahara-Sahel zone in general, the Central African Republic, Somalia, Southern Sudan are becoming more and more popular.

Among other priorities are countering illegal armed formations, strengthening good-neighborliness, expanding cooperation to ensure border security, and suppressing massive violations of international humanitarian law.

In Russia it is noted that the efforts made by African partners are becoming more active and consistent in these areas.

As a permanent member of the UN Security Council, Russia is making a significant contribution to maintaining security in Africa.

Russian observers participate in the overwhelmingly of UN peacekeeping operations on the continent. Earlier, Russian peacekeepers took part in a peacekeeping operation in Burundi, Liberia, DRC, Western Sahara, the Republic of Cote d'Ivoire, Sudan, Sierra Leone, Ethiopia, and Eritrea.

Russia's participation in peacekeeping operations is welcomed by Africans thanks to the historically formed positive perception of Russia's role in the fate of the African continent.

Russia occupies one of the leading places among suppliers of goods and services for UN peacekeeping in Africa, primarily in the field of civil aviation. We pay much attention to the training of police and military personnel from African states on the basis of Russian specialized institutions, including the organization of short-term training courses in educational institutions of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia.

### Cooperation with the integration structures of Africa

Russia pays priority attention to the development and diversification of ties with the integration structures of the

<sup>15</sup> In December 1960, at the XV session of the UN General Assembly, the "Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples" was adopted by the initiative of the USSR, and in November 1963, at the XVIII session of the UN General Assembly, the "Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination" was approved with the active participation of the Soviet Union.

<sup>16</sup> In many African states industrial, transport, and social infrastructure was created with the assistance of the USSR. Tens of thousands of African specialists have been trained. After graduating from Soviet universities 20-40 years ago African graduates are now at the peak of their professional activity, thus representing an important part of the political and business elite of their countries.

<sup>17</sup> As a rule, Russian business focuses on training local workers and future managers for their projects, thereby creating guaranteed jobs.

<sup>18</sup> In 2003, at the session of the UN General Assembly with the support of the African states, Russia adopted the resolution "Responding to Global Threats and Challenges", designed to become the main instrument in creating a system to respond to modern threats. With the active cooperation of Russia and African countries, the Peacebuilding Commission was established, in 2006 a Human Rights Council was established to replace the Commission on Human Rights, the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy was approved, and decisions were taken to revitalize the work of the UN General Assembly.

continent, primarily with the African Union<sup>19</sup>, where Russia has had the status of observer since 2006.

Subregional organizations are an important area for Russia's long-term cooperation in Africa.

Collaboration is being established with regional integration associations such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS). Of particular interest is the development of contacts with the East African Community, the Community of Sahara and Sahel states, the Association of Regional Cooperation of the Indian Ocean countries.

All regional African integration formats are seen by Russia as promising partners that can form the basis of African economic integration.

The cooperation between the Russian and African development institutions (the African Development Bank, the West African Development Bank, etc.) can bring significant practical benefits.

## Development assistance

Russia has consistently taken an active part in international efforts to promote the sustainable socio-economic development of African countries.

During the period of participation in the G8 work, while forming the agenda, Russia emphasized the need for priority assistance in resolving the acute problems of the African continent. Developed with Russian participation, the G8 Action Plan (Now G7) in Africa 2002 has become an important stage in international efforts to promote the development of African countries. Russia made a significant contribution to the implementation of agreements to address the problems of African countries, achieved at the G8 summit in Perth (Great Britain) in 2005.

Moscow is taking significant practical steps to promote the sustainable development of African states on a bilateral basis.

Russia gives the countries of Africa wide preferences in the field of trade, helps to alleviate their debt burden - the total amount of debt forgiven is over USD 20 billion. A number of states concluded agreements "debt in exchange for development" for a total of USD 552 million. The settlement of public debt<sup>20</sup> issues in this way has fundamental importance for the further progressive development of Russian-African relations.

Another area of application of efforts is the training of qualified specialists for various sectors of the economy, as well as for the health-care system of African countries.

Currently, more than 6.5 thousand Africans are studying in Russian higher educational institutions, of which about half are funded with funds from the federal budget. More than 960 Russian state scholarships for studies are made available every year to students from African countries.

Russia actively participates in the formation of the Global Fund to Fight HIV / AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and has joined the Global Initiative for the Eradication of Poliomyelitis.

In 2013, through the UN World Food Program, with the funds allocated by the Russian Federation as a voluntary contribution, urgent food aid was provided to Ethiopia, Somalia, and Kenya. The countries of the continent regularly receive humanitarian assistance in order to eliminate the consequences of natural disasters.

April 20, 2014 President Vladimir Putin approved a new Concept of the State Policy of the Russian Federation in the field of international development assistance, which is intended to be an effective tool for increasing our participation in the development assistance to Africa, mainly on a bilateral basis.

The main principles and priorities of Russia's state policy in the promoting international development at the regional and global levels are:

- improving the efficiency of public administration and improving the conditions for trade and investment;
- establishing industrial and innovative potential;
- energizing economic activity in countries receiving aid;
- developing agricultural and agro-industrial potential;
- strengthening food security;
- implementing social and economic projects;
- developing human capital via education and health care;
- creating and strengthening state measures to combat organized crime and terrorism;
- supporting efforts to restore and strengthen peace in countries that are overcoming the consequences of conflicts;

The volume of Russian official development assistance, which is being implemented both bilaterally and through multilateral channels, including through the World Bank Group, the UN system, major global initiatives and trust funds, increased from about USD 100 million in 2004 up to USD 876 million in 2014.

The following are examples of Russian Federation-sponsored trust funds of the World Bank Group to promote international development, wholly or partly targeted at African countries.

### Trust Fund for the restoration of countries affected by the Ebola Virus

Aim: providing flexible financing to African countries to overcome economic and social consequences in various areas, including support for the creation of a sustainable health care system in view of the unprecedented ebola epidemic in Africa.

Active.

USD 3,000,000.

### Debt management mechanism (Phase II)

Aim: providing flexible financing to African countries to overcome economic and social consequences in various fields, including support for the creation of a sustainable health care system in view of the unprecedented ebola epidemic in Africa.

Active.

USD 500,000 .

Of the total amount USD 3,500,000 .

<sup>19</sup> The African Union is a large intergovernmental organization that unites all countries of the African continent. The AU became the successor of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), which was severely criticized from the West in the late 1990s due to its low efficiency and exclusively political dimension. Russian representatives took part in the founding summit of the AU in July 2002 in Durban (South Africa).

<sup>20</sup> Задолженность стран Африки Советскому Союзу на 1991 г., – 21 млрд. долл., что составляло около 17% внешнего долга развивающихся стран.

### **Support for small and medium-sized enterprises in the energy sector in Sub-Saharan African countries**

Mali, Tanzania, Rwanda, Senegal, Kenya, Botswana

Aim: provide additional funding and technical assistance to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in selected countries in sub-Saharan Africa in order to strengthen their capacity to provide energy services to poor communities.

Active.

USD 30,000,000 .

### **The Russian Education Aid for Development (READ) program**

Angola, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Zambia

Aim: support measures to improve the quality of education and educational outcomes of students by developing, implementing, and using reasonable assessment systems.

Active.

USD 32,000,000 .

### **Financial Literacy and Education (FLIT)**

Namibia, Zambia, Malawi, Uganda, and South Africa

Aim: increase the financial literacy of citizens and households to increase understanding and informed participation in social insurance and social risk management programs.

Closed in accordance with legal procedures.

USD 15,000,000 .

### **An independent fund – the accelerated malaria control program**

Mozambique, Zambia

Aim: strengthening efforts for malaria control in the two Programs for the accelerated malaria control program - Mozambique, Zambia.

Closed in accordance with legal procedures.

USD 15,000,000 .

Russia cooperates with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa. Moscow welcomed the adoption of the Lagos Plan of Action, one of the key objectives of which is the formation of a Pan-African common market.

African countries receive humanitarian assistance through the Ministry of Emergencies of Russia, in particular through humanitarian demining programs in a number of African countries, the establishment of training centers in this field<sup>21</sup>.

## **Economic cooperation**

Russia attaches paramount importance to deepening cooperation with African states in the trade and investment sphere, including through the connection of Russian economists to the implementation of infrastructure projects. A growing number of domestic companies interested in working on the emerging vast market of

the continent, including in key capital-intensive industries - nuclear power, mining, metallurgy, infrastructure construction.

The concept of Russia's long-term economic cooperation with African countries is focused on meeting the needs of African partners in the deep modernization and technical re-equipment of economies, including extractive industries, as well as the development of transport infrastructure, energy complex, modern agriculture and agro-industrial complex, and modernization of the armed forces. Russia has the necessary technological and production capabilities for this.

On the agenda is the development of mechanisms for state support for business interaction between Russian companies and the African continent.

A promising channel for developing cooperation is the regional dimension of economic relations. Its demand was confirmed by the economic forum "Ural-Africa," held in Yekaterinburg in 2013, in which delegations from some 40 African countries took part.

Disclosure of the colossal potential of mutually beneficial trade and economic cooperation between Russia and Africa is a strategic task of governments, business, development institutions, and parliamentarians.

To date the indicators of Russia's foreign trade turnover with African countries are in the range of USD 10-12 billion per year (in 2015 USD 11.1 billion), which accounts for 2.2% of Russia's foreign trade turnover.

The key economic partners of Russia are the states of North Africa (trade turnover of USD 7.7 billion, or 1.5% of Russia's foreign trade turnover). At the same time Russia's exports to sub-Saharan African countries amounted to USD 2.1 billion in 2015, or 0.6% of the foreign trade turnover of the Russian Federation.

There is a need to expand the commodity structure of trade exchange, at the moment the basis of which (up to 70%) are petroleum products, chemical fertilizers, pulp and paper products, grain. In some years, there are considerable purchases of weapons and military equipment.

The prospects for the growth of Russia's exports in high-value-added commodity segments restrain the limited financial capacity of most African countries.

Approaches to solving this problem are connected with the development of flexible models of concession agreements, barter transactions, targeted linked lending.

The conceptual and technical development of such solutions is a key condition for building up comprehensive economic cooperation with African countries.

Russian business in Africa is represented by both public and private corporations. The aggregate amount of Russia's investments in Africa over the 15 years since 2003 exceeds USD 15 billion . Up to 70% of Russian investments go to exploration and production of oil, gas, uranium, bauxite, iron ore, other minerals. In this area, 30 Russian companies operate on the continent.

The greatest investment activity is shown by Russian fuel and energy companies ("Lukoil," "Gazprom,"

<sup>21</sup> The Ministry of Emergency Situations of Russia is considering a resumption of the activity of the Center for Training Personnel for Humanitarian and Rescue Operations, established earlier in Rwanda with its participation. More than 1,000 drivers and mechanics were trained at the Center, and the first professional search and rescue unit in Rwanda was formed.

"Rosneft," "Tatneft," "Zarubezhneft," "Stroytransgaz") and mining companies ("Rusal," "Norilsk Nickel," "Alrosa," "Evraz Holding," "Renova," "Metropol," and some others).

The key factor is the effective work of the intergovernmental commissions on economic, scientific and technical cooperation contributing to the systematic development of economic ties with the countries of sub-Saharan Africa. The effectiveness of such bodies is confirmed in cooperation with countries such as Angola, Guinea, Namibia, Nigeria, Ethiopia, South Africa, etc., which are successfully implementing major projects of bauxite mining, diamond mining as well as in energy, ferrous metallurgy, chemical industry, suppling of aviation and automotive equipment, trade, fishing, etc. The process for meeting new realities bilateral agreements on mutual protection of investments (with Ethiopia and South Africa), on avoiding double taxation (with Botswana, Mali, Namibia, the Republic of Seychelles, Ethiopia and South Africa), on economic cooperation (with Ethiopia, South Africa, Ghana, Angola, Namibia).

An important area of Russian-African cooperation is military-technical cooperation (MTC), which is carried out in accordance with international rules and restrictions. At present, there is a significant expansion of the Russian presence in the African arms market<sup>22</sup>.

The development of the above-mentioned models, which compensate for the lack of free liquidity in African countries, will significantly increase cooperation along military-technical lines.

At the same time, the Russian side proceeds from the responsibility of partners and follows the principle that the MTC should contribute to strengthening the defense, security and sovereignty of African states, peace on the African continent, and not be a factor in intra-African conflicts.

### Cooperation in the field of health care

The Russian side provides systemic financial, organizational, and technical assistance to African countries in the health care sector. In accordance with intergovernmental agreements and contracts, about 200 Russian doctors are employed in African countries. In this direction, through the cooperation of Russia with the African Union, public-private partnership mechanisms are developing. There is a hospital of the Russian Red Cross Society in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia). Russia's contribution to the fight against the Ebola virus exceeded USD 60 million, including vaccine development, the establishment of hospitals, medical care, and quarantine measures. In 2014 Russia has opened several hospitals in Guinea. Since 2005 Russia regularly contributes to the World Food Program (WFP) of the United Nations.

### Cooperation in the field of the education

African states have traditionally received substantial assistance in training cadres of civilian experts<sup>23</sup>,

which forms a unique aspect of Russian-African relations and is a huge reserve for their development. Currently, more than 4,500 Africans are studying in Russian universities, of which about 50% are funded by the federal budget. Annually, the countries of the continent are allocated about 800 Russian state scholarships for studies. The most successful cooperation is with Angola, Nigeria, Ghana, Zambia, and Congo. The prospect of student exchange programs of both mutual and multilateral nature arose in connection with the creation under the auspices of the African Union of the Pan African University which brings together leading universities of African countries. Leading Russian universities can be involved in such a promising format of cooperation.

One of the areas of interaction in the education were interuniversity agreements and cooperation programs<sup>24</sup>, involving teaching exchanges, organization of internships, etc. Signing of agreements on mutual recognition and equivalence of documents on education and academic degrees remains the priority direction of cooperation; this guarantees Africans studying in Russia that they will be sought after on the labor market of their countries.

### Scientific and technical cooperation

Scientific and technical cooperation, including in the sphere of high technologies, is viewed by Russia as a promising area of cooperation with African partners. Examples are Russia's cooperation with South Africa in nuclear energy, astrophysics, the exploration and development of outer space for peaceful purposes, the launching of a Nigerian satellite from the Plesetsk cosmodrome, and the flight of a citizen of South Africa into space. Since 2009, a Russian-Angolan project is being implemented to create the modern satellite Angosat.

The consolidated efforts of governments, business and scientific and expert circles, as well as parliamentarians to support the formation of an institutional infrastructure for promoting technological, industrial, energy, and information cooperation between Russia and African countries are in demand.

### Tourism, protection of citizens' rights

Tourist exchange with African countries is developing quite actively. The multi-million tourist flow from Russia is significantly stimulating the economic development of such African countries as Egypt, Tunisia, Kenya, and others.

An important aspect is ensuring the safety of tourists and protecting the rights of Russian citizens in Africa. Of paramount importance is the prompt resolution of acute humanitarian issues - the return of Russian citizens to their homeland who were abducted or captured during conflicts, the legal protection of Russian citizens detained or convicted by the courts of African states. Including Russian sailors.

<sup>22</sup> By the early 1990s, the share of Soviet arms on the continent was: 70% of tanks, 40% of aircraft, 35% of helicopters.

<sup>23</sup> В СССР было подготовлено около 100 тыс. специалистов, занимающих у себя на родине важные, а в ряде областей ключевые позиции в государственных учреждениях и деловых кругах.

## Prospects and Opportunities for Inter-Parliamentary Cooperation. Agenda

A wide range of practical issues that are currently on the agenda of cooperation between the Russian Federation and the countries of Africa may be solved through cooperation between the parliaments as one of the core channels of cross-border contacts.

Direct contacts with their Russian colleagues will help African parliamentarians (who have a detailed insight into the economic situation and opportunities offered by their countries) to make use of the highly-efficient parliamentary channel to communicate to their Russian counterparts information on promising areas of cooperation or topical issues that require joint action.

The agenda of parliamentary cooperation must cover trade, economy, and investments, as well as exchanging contacts between the business community members and also cultural, academic, educational, scientific and technical cooperation, developing relations through the channel of civil societies as well as issues to be addressed by political dialogue.

The only way to considerably extend and intensify the mutually beneficial cooperation between the Russian Federation and the African States is a comprehensive and inclusive approach going well beyond mere state-to-state relations.

Below you will find a non-exhaustive list of promising areas for practical inter-parliamentary cooperation between the Russian Federation and the African states:

### In the sphere of political dialogue

Concerted actions on all the multilateral inter-parliamentary platforms to promote the combined agenda aimed at responding to

- ▶ the common challenges and security threats,
- ▶ promoting sustainable development,
- ▶ surmounting confrontation and reducing the potential for conflicts both globally and regionally,
- ▶ forming a more balanced world order based on the principles of multipolarity and justice subject to scrupulous compliance with the basic standards of international law as well as to the guidance and coordination on the part of the UN and the UN Security Council,
- ▶ counteracting hegemony and unilateralism as well as attempts to interfere in domestic affairs of sovereign nations,
- ▶ counteracting attempts to prevent coalitions from forming by the countries that possess strategically important raw stock.

### In terms of international development assistance

- ▶ Using interparliamentary relations to communicate to the Russian counterpart the priority areas of assistance with a view to forming and promoting the position of Russia in the core structures of the UN, the World Bank,

and the other multilateral formats of global governance as well as through bilateral actions.

- ▶ Building up parliamentary skills in African countries to exert parliamentary control. One of the ways to do this is exchanging best practices with Russian counterparts.

Using parliamentary control tools to boost cost efficiency and performance of money allocated through the channels of international development assistance.

Greater transparency and integrity in using the money allocated is going to ensure both its higher practical performance and more advantageous conditions for continuous financing under such programs.

### In terms of bilateral economic cooperation

- ▶ Promoting flexible, inclusive package solutions at the national level, legally, that make it possible to develop trade relations and carry out major investment projects through tied loans, barter, concession and other tools.
- ▶ Providing a legal framework for preferential status and/or protecting joint projects and Russian investments using parliamentary control tools as well as promoting of resolutions taken by the joint commissions on trade and economic cooperation aimed at resolving problems related to fuel and raw materials industry as well as to the diversification of trade and investment cooperation by involving high-tech areas, including without limitation the nuclear power industry, satellite communications, military and technological cooperation as well as modern technologies in agribusiness.
- ▶ Promoting further development and extending practical scope of the agenda for cooperation between Russia and regional/subregional associations in Africa, including without limitation cooperation for the purposes of crisis management.

### In terms of academic cooperation

- ▶ Promoting scope and performance of cooperation in education by using, inter alia, parliamentary control tools and informal curatorship of Russian parliamentarians — over students from African countries studying in Russia as well as curatorship of African parliamentarians — at the stage of employment and effectively applying their professional competencies and professional advancement for graduates from Russian universities who have since returned home.
- ▶ Parliaments in African countries may apply both legal and control mechanisms to ensure security and protect the rights of Russian citizens visiting African countries as well as to promptly address humanitarian concerns (e.g. repatriation of Russian citizens kidnapped or captured in the course of conflicts, legal defense of Russian citizens arrested or convicted by the courts in African countries, including without limitation Russian sailors).

Addressing these essential issues is a governing factor to create an environment of trust that is necessary to boost the traffic of Russian tourists and professionals to the African continent.

<sup>24</sup> Direct contacts with African partners have been established by such leading Russian universities as MGIMO, PFUR, Moscow State University, and the A.S. Pushkin Institute of Russian Language.