



# ATLANTIC FUTURE

## ATLANTIC PERSPECTIVES INTERVIEWS REPORT

**07**

**Perspectives from Cape Verde**

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### ABSTRACT

The interviews were carried out in Cape Verde using a standardised questionnaire developed by the Atlantic Future project. The interviewee's were people (of both genders) from the public sector, private sector, academia, media and civil society and the interviews covered the thematic areas of economy and finance, security, people and institutions and resources and environment subject of study of the Atlantic Future project. Most interviewees perceived a pan-Atlantic space taking shape or at least they expressed their desire that it could emerge would be happening. They saw a movement towards cooperation especially in economics and security. Many suggestions were made on how to stimulate the creation of a pan-Atlantic space by those who did not foreseen a pan-Atlantic taking shape yet or whom believed it is still a very insignificant movement.

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## 1. Introduction

The interviews were carried out in Cape Verde using a standardised questionnaire developed by the Atlantic Future project.

The interviewees were people (of both genders) from the public sector, private sector, academia, media and civil society. We interviewed diplomats heads of units of sub-national governments, supra-national regional public officials, managers of private companies (banks and energy companies), representative of the chamber of commerce, representative of professional associations, professors at University, think tanks' researchers, analysts and editors of the media (radio and tv news) in the area of international affairs, an activist and a manager of a NGO. The interviewees were selected taking into account their expertise in the selected thematic areas in Cape Verde and in the context of the country relations with other Atlantic countries

All the thematic areas of the ATLANTIC FUTURE project (economy and finance, security, people and institutions, resources and environment) were covered in the interviews.

## 2. The importance of the Atlantic Region

In the thematic area of Economy and Finance, according to most part of the interviewees in this area, Latin America –notably Brazil- was one of the regions that became more important in the last 20 years. Concerning the other regions, opinions diverge strongly. On the one hand some interviewees mentioned Europe, the United States and Africa as regions that became important in terms of economy issues. On the other hand, these same regions were considered as have been losing importance in the last 20 years.

As for the future, for most of the interviewees, Africa and Latin America will increase their importance. One of the interviewees pointed out that it will happen because both regions are becoming more politically stable, which provides the necessary environment to transform its economic potential into something concrete, improving the quality of life of its citizens and giving greater effectiveness to their actions in the global context. The greater the growth of their GDPs is, bigger the recognition of these countries as important centers of decision in the global context. In the case of Africa, particularly, one of the interviewees cited an increase of Latin America and US interests in the continent. Some of the interviewees considered that the importance of Europe will decrease in the next years. According to one of them it will happen because of the financial crises of the last years and the negative consequences that this crisis still entails in Europe. There is also a growing concern about the possibility of a new economic recession in the region the next years. Besides that the countries of the region will face aggravation of problems such as aging of the population and restrictions on economic growth.

In the field of Security, Africa was considered, for most interviewees, the region that has become the most important in the last 20 years. Some mentioned Europe and Latin America as regions whose importance has increased, because they need to ensure their security and sustainability. Latin America and Africa have become more important because of the challenges they have been facing the last years such as: drug trafficking, terrorism, energy security and piracy. The other regions had lost importance.

Concerning the future, Africa was considered by half of the interviewees as one of the regions that will increase in importance. In particular, one of the interviewees, reported that Western Africa, for example, would enhance its security though more cooperation with Europe and the Americas. In the case of organized crime and drug trafficking these issues were seen clearly as a transnational threat, and that Africa has been essentially a transit zone of great tons of cocaine. Moreover, the local production of drugs started recently. These

recent developments mean that the region will get much more attention, which will, increase its importance.

From the point of view of African countries, some of the interviewees believed that Europe and Latin America will become more important once they will enhance its security through more cooperation within the region.

In terms of People and Institutions, according to most interviewees, Latin America and Africa were the regions that have become more important in the period considered. Europe and United States were cited as important regions by a diplomat and a professional of media.

Concerning the future, the importance of Latin America and Africa will keep rising. Both regions are making progress and becoming more relevant. Africa, in particular, will increase its importance because its initial level of development is very low and it has a huge potential of development, especially in the area of natural resources.

In the area of Resources and Environment, Africa was considered the region that gained more importance in the last 20 years by great part of the interviewees. Europe, Latin America and North America were also cited as important by some of them.

Concerning the future, Africa was credited as becoming the most important region because of its potential growth due to its raw materials availability and the development of its domestic consumer markets. It is also a continent of young people and it presents great business opportunities. For some interviewees Europe, Latin America and North America will also become more important in the next years.

### **3. SECTION ON QUESTIONS ON THEMATIC AREAS**

#### **3.1 Economy and Finance**

In this thematic area the construction of new infrastructures and growth of trade and investments flows were cited as the main challenges in the region by almost all the interviewees.

One of them pointed out the emergence and importance of financial services and terrorism as relevant changes in the region in the area of economy and finance. Another one acknowledged the importance of the alignment of the legal structures that guarantee that the free trade agreements are effectively put into practice. The importance of the recently repositioning of the financial industry in regions and countries in the Atlantic was also highlighted by a bank manager.

The forums cited by the interviewees and where these challenges are being discussed are the Portuguese-speaking African countries (PALOP) Business Confederation, the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries (CPLP) Business Confederation, the Economic Community Of West African States (ECOWAS), the United Nations - specially its division for Africa and the ECOWAS, the African Union (UA), the Macaronesia countries forum and the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA).

#### **3.2 Security**

In terms of security, half of the interviewees pointed out that all the issues are interconnected and that the issue of fragile states is the most important one because it is an obstacle to overcome other issues such as illicit trafficking of drugs, weapons and humans, maritime security and terrorism.

One of the interviewees cited the importance of environmental security related to marine resources especially because Cape Verde is located in the route of oil tankers. The interviewee added that this issue is closely related to other challenges like terrorism.

According to the interviewees these challenges are being discussed in forums as ECOWAS, UN, UNODC, and in a forum in Dakar about global governance.

### **3.3 People and Institutions**

In the thematic area of people and institutions most interviewees put forward the migration trends as of great political and social importance for their country, which is deeply marked by migration flows. The state of democracy and respect for human rights were also considered as relevant political and social changes (or challenges) in the regions covered by the interviews.

A manager of an NGO cited climate change as another important political and social challenge in the region because it affects coastal and island countries (Atlantic islands), which need to build the structures necessary for fighting the negative effects of these changes. Economic development was also mentioned as an important political and social challenge in order to insure the environment sustainability of the region.

The forums considered where these challenges are being discussed are the ECOWAS, UA, the Macaronesia countries forum, CILSS organization, South Atlantic Peace and Cooperation Zone (ZOPACAS), ACP and specialized forums in the sector of sea exploitation, United Nations- Beijing +20, CIGEF (Centre for Research and Training in Gender and Family) and ICIEG (Cape Verde Institute for Gender Equality and Gender Equity).

### **3.4 Resources and Environment**

In terms of resources and environment, more than a half of the interviewees ranked the resource depletion, climate change and transformation of the energy sector as the main challenges. They considered resource depletion important because Africa needs to safeguard and better manage its resources by creating better conditions for sustainable development, environmental protection and food security. They also believed that the resource depletion is important since Cape Verde has a national strategy to make the country less dependent on imported energy, which means less dependent on oil.

As for the transformation of the energy sector, it is considered important since Africa still has a huge deficit in terms of energy production.

One of the interviewees pointed out that all issues are important and are inducing a change of mentality in governments and populations. The interviewee mentioned that the government of Cape Verde needs to change its policy and strategy towards a more sustainable use of sea resources. The interviewee also added that the schools need classes about environment and seashore conservation and safeguarding. The new generation needs to have a new attitude towards resource depletion.

Another interviewee mentioned the exploration of marine resources, such as fishery, especially in the case of Cape Verde. Fishery connects all regions of Atlantic in a very strong and strategic way. We should rethink our views about this issue.

The forums in the sector of resources and environment cited by the interviewees and where the challenges mentioned right below are being discussed are the regional forum West African Regional Marine and Coastal Conservation Programme (PRCM), the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), UA and the Macaronesian countries forum

## 4. SECTION ON NORMS AND VALUES, COOPERATION AND REGIONALISM

### *4.1 Convergence or divergence in norms and values shared in the Atlantic*

In terms of convergence or divergence in norms and values most interviewees thought that there are more values in common in Africa, Latin America, North America and Europe, because of the shared colonization history.

Most interviewees considered that many countries of the Atlantic share values like freedom, equality, solidarity, democracy, cultural values, moral values, eating habits, political history, values in relation to human rights, gender equality, tolerance, progress and welfare, peace, rule of law for the protection of man, children and women, human progress, the concept of citizenship and best practices in business. In a few cases they also share the same ideas on how to deal with the environment –in terms of sustainability and environmental conservation– as well as with religious values because, according to an interviewee of the private sector, the Christianity has a very expressive presence in the continents of the region.

### *4.2 Interest and incentives for cooperation or conflict in region*

Despite the fact that many countries in the region share all those values, some interviewees pointed out the a lack of common understanding concerning certain values, such as respect for human rights, mainly because of the different levels of development between regions in the Atlantic space. For example, there are huge disparities between Africa and Europe and Africa and North America.

Principles, norms and values related to corruption, lack of transparency, lack of governance, conflicts of interest, moral hazard and asymmetric information were also mentioned as controversial and challenged with Africa, Latin America, North America and Europe. Another norm that was considered by the interviewees to be a challenge is the certification and quality norms imposed by European Union. One of the interviewees mentioned that for countries like hers it is very difficult to meet them.

Concerning cooperation, the great obstacles for more cooperation in the Atlantic identified by the interviewees were:

- i) Language in the sense that, for example, Cape Verde is a Portuguese speaking country and this fact restricts most of its business relationships to the Portuguese-speaking African countries (PALOP);
- ii) Limited maritime and air cargo transportation in the region, which restricts the trade between Cape Verde and Brazil or the United States. The network of transportation in Africa in general is still very deficient as well as the ports and telecommunication infrastructure;
- iii) Difficulties to share a compatible matrix in political, economic and cultural issues.
- iv) Disparity in levels of economic and social development and in the level of institutional development between the countries of the Atlantic space.
- v) Free circulation of people: there are excessive protections from the countries of the North Atlantic concerning work visa requirements that are too strict. These countries have several restrictions to foreigners wanting to enter their labour markets.
- vi) Difficulty to access funding, especially from the EU, due to bureaucratic requirements (Potential Applicant Data On-Line Registration – PADOR).
- vii) The big gaps in technological knowledge. Europe and North America have supremacy in this issue over the countries of Africa and Latin America. For example, the EU is much more

advanced in efficient fishing technology than the countries of Africa, Cape Verde in particular, and that gives Europe a competitive advantage.

viii) Hard restrictions to circulation of goods within the region and the difficult access to different markets mainly because of the low level of productivity in Africa.

Concerning the future of cooperation in the region, one interviewee envisaged greater cooperation because Europe needs to boost its markets and will seek new markets in the region. Therefore it is likely that there will be a general increase in the relationships throughout the region despite the fact that Latin America is now in a slower pace and will remain so for the next 5 years. But in fifteen years' time, Latin America's role will increase as a counter-balance to China's growing African presence due to its need to import raw materials in order to sustain its economic growth. According to another interviewee, the reforms that have been implemented in Africa, the region will probably foster more cooperative relations in the future and the main players will be US, EU and Brazil.

#### **4.3 Regional and inter-regional cooperation**

In the thematic area of economy and finance, the main actors and regional leaders mentioned by the interviewees as capable of playing a role in the Atlantic were the European Union, the United States, Germany, Nigeria, Angola, South Africa, Senegal, Morocco, Brazil, the Macaronesian countries and even Cape Verde, in a small scale, since it has great credibility in the Atlantic region. They also brought up organizations such as the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries (CPLP), the Economic Community Of West African States (ECOWAS), Mercosul and NAFTA.

In terms of security, the main actors and regional leaders cited by the interviewees capable of playing an important role in the Atlantic are political leaders from African countries, civil society, countries and organizations in the economic area such as.: United States, Brazil, Angola, Portugal, Spain, South Africa, Argentina, Mexico, Nigeria, the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries (CPLP), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Mercosul, African Union and ECOWAS. Cape Verde was also cited by one of the interviewees as capable of playing an important role in the Atlantic by becoming a platform in the region and having a key role due to its strategic position in a zone of confluence between Africa, the Americas and Europe.

In the case of People and Institutions, the main actors and regional leaders mentioned by the interviewees as capable of playing a role in the Atlantic were the United States, Brazil, European Union, South Africa, Luxemburg, Spain, and even small states like African islands – notably Cape Verde and the islands in the middle of the Atlantic as the Canary Islands, which may play a relevant role in the Atlantic basin. ECOWAS, the EU institutions, the African Union and the United Nations were also cited.

Finally, in terms of Resource and Environment the main actors and regional leaders cited by the interviewees as capable of playing a role in the Atlantic are: civil Society – once it becomes well framed, structured and with its capabilities reinforced, especially in rural areas –, ECOWAS, AU, European Union, WWF, IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature), IMF, World Bank, European Bank, African Bank, NATO and countries as Nigeria, South Africa and Angola.

#### **4.4 The role of the EU**

In the field of “Economy and Finance” and the relevance of the EU as a normative power, in the Atlantic region is seeing by most part of the interviewees as really relevant for Africa, since Europe is Africa's most important commercial partner. For another interviewee, Europe is the most developed region in the world even if they are going now through a hard economic moment with the low growth and modest prospects for a recovery. Two of the interviewees criticized the EU's role. One of them mentioned that in the case of Cape Verde,



the EU sees the population as just poor people, and instead of helping them to develop their economic potential, it prefers to give money, food, and material goods in general. In this sense it is a negative influence. The other one said that the EU gives social support to use it in commercial and economic negotiations as persuasion mechanism to its own benefit.

In terms of Security, for most interviewees the EU's role is very relevant for Africa, since the bloc has made huge contributions to development, growth and transformation of the continent. From the point of view of one of the interviewees the EU's role in Africa has produce mixed results. On the one hand, it is positively relevant in the sense that sometimes it has made great contributions to the resolution of crises in many countries in Africa, that it is a purveyor of public development and humanitarian aid, and that it helped the consolidation of African institutions as the AU and ECOWAS. But, on the other hand, the relationship has also some negative implications for African partners, for instance Europe's trade dominance. The economic partnership agreements have been the subject of controversy between Europe and Africa as it brings more benefits to the former than the latter.

In the thematic area of "People and Institutions", the relevance of the EU as a normative power, it was considered for Africa and, in some cases, for the whole Atlantic space as very relevant. One of the interviewees pointed out that the EU, specially Portugal, is much relevant to his country because it has a great influence over decisions about the nation's destiny. Another interviewee cited the financial program supported by the EU, which is helping many countries in the region. He also cited the introduction by the EU of practices of good governance, transparency and respect for human rights as a condition to grant financial aid. In terms of the whole Atlantic space, the EU's is considered to be very relevant, since it is a great promoter of approaches and consensus about universal values in the region.

Finally, in the area of "Resource and Environment" the EU was considered by all the interviewees as relevant for Africa as a normative power. For one of them the EU's role towards Africa is extremely relevant and positive because it makes things happen and provides a good environment for change of mind in the sense that it imposes conditionality and respect for human rights for the implementation of certain projects. It contributes to encourage African countries to feel obliged to implement reforms. Nevertheless, another interviewee believed that despite the relevance of EU to Africa the tendency is that it will be reduced in the future as African countries improve their relationships with countries of the South, the US and Asia.

## 5. Conclusions

The range of opinions expressed by the interviewees was so large that it would be an artificial endeavour to try to frame this diversity into a comprehensive conclusion. Most interviewees perceived a pan-Atlantic space taking shape, or at least expressed a desire that this should happen. And they see a movement towards cooperation, especially in the areas of economy and security. Some of them even considered that it is the South Atlantic countries, particularly Brazil and South Africa that are leading the process and that will call the attention of the North and generate a more balanced power relationship between North and South Atlantic.

This positive view about Atlantic integration was also present among those who do not see a pan-Atlantic space taking shape soon or still in its infancy: most made many suggestions aiming at stimulating this outcome. The first big issue to be addressed should be movement of people and goods in order to facilitate interregional flows, since there are still too many barriers imposed by Europe and North America. Another field to be explored would be a better regional cooperation in managing marine resources, which could become a pillar of economic and regional integration.

But one of the biggest obstacles mentioned to the deepening Atlantic relationships is that today, there is little dialogue between the countries of the Basin and a lack of common



institutions able to regulate the connexions between different actors. Hence, an effort should be made to institutionalize cooperation and establish a more advanced dialogue between all the parties so all the countries of the region could cope with common challenges together. And as the interviewees were conducted in Cape Verde, it is no surprise that a special cooperation between Atlantic islands – avoiding the establishment of military bases – would be an important contribution to this endeavour.

As resources-rich region, which are coveted by other countries or regions of the world – particularly those of Asia-Pacific – the Atlantic also needs a common consciousness based on common values and protection against already existent strong competition from other spaces. But the main problem mentioned is that a pan-Atlantic area is made of two very different worlds in terms of economic, social and political development. In addition, there are also deep-rooted perceptions linked to racial prejudices, creating strong tensions that complicated the building of this Atlantic space. The way forward would be to consolidate the African continent as a trade powerhouse. That would strengthen the relationship between the countries in the region, reduce mistrust, and smother the notion of EU superiority over the region – or the world as whole.

Concerning the EU's role in Africa, present and future, most interviewees acknowledge that it is a very positive and relevant one, and that Europe could take many actions in order to improve it. As an important step to create a new perspective for the bilateral relationship, there was the perception that the EU should be less arrogant in its relation with Africa, which would help it to have a more positive influence in the continent. Some went even further suggesting that the EU should clearly ditch its paternalistic attitude by firmly condemning corruption. And that development aid should be granted with conditions – good governance practices for example. It is very significant that only one interviewee considered the influence of the EU in Africa as negative, arguing that the interests of each region are too different and that most of the time it implies African submission to European directives.

In fact, we can derive from all the interviews a catalogue of specific measures the EU could take to become more influential in Africa. Most of the suggested initiatives are linked to technical cooperation and strengthening democratic processes:

- 1) Improving skills training to the civil society and strengthening its capacity to develop, especially among the most disadvantaged sections of the population;
- 2) Investing more in supporting technology development, scientific research, training, economic and strategic development, and promoting entrepreneurship capacities, governance and industry;
- 3) Supporting more cultural activities, for example, providing funding for film-makers, creating cultural centres and promoting cultural diversity in general.
- 4) Promoting development partnerships that could boost regional human resources by investing in education, and supporting the establishment of democracies in African countries;

Finally, for most interviewees, the EU/Africa technical cooperation would be much enhanced by strengthening a better coordination with international organizations in order to maximize expertise and support projects within the region. But here was also a perception that should be addressed: that gains and common benefits are unbalanced in favour of the Europeans and that the EU should tackle this inequitable relationship.