



Ministry of Foreign Affairs
of the Czech Republic



The emerging Africa and the Czech Republic: How shall we enhance our partnership?

Panel discussion

3 June 2013, Grand Hall, Czernin Palace

The 50th anniversary of the African Union (AU), which we are celebrating these days, provides a good opportunity to discuss the African successes as well as the continuing challenges and problems. The discussion panel is organised jointly by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, the African embassies in Prague and the Institute of International Relations (IIR) and held under the auspices of the Minister H.E. Karel Schwarzenberg. The panel will discuss how the European Union, and in particular the Czech Republic, and the African states (AU) can enhance the already existing economic, political and development co-operation for the benefit of all involved. Although Africa has never been the number one priority of the Czech foreign policy, the more active development co-operation and economic diplomacy between the Czech Republic and African countries, as well as the new Czech peace enforcement mission in Mali, prove the Czech Republic's increasing interest and engagement in the region.

Globally speaking, the pieces of “good news” from Africa are under-reported. Today the continent is more prosperous and developed than it has ever been since most of its countries gained independence five decades ago. Ten out of the twelve fastest growing economies of the world are African and this is not only due to high commodity prices and the high demand for their resources. Though the progress in achieving the MDGs has been uneven, many of the countries on the continent have managed to rapidly improve their education and health care systems and significantly reduce poverty. In spite of the globally increasing terrorist threat, combined with the instability and fragility of some states like Mali, the Central African Republic or the DRC, there are currently fewer armed conflicts and fewer casualties that result from such conflicts in Africa than in the past. Furthermore, some of the “failing states” like Sierra Leone or Liberia have managed to turn the tide and become more stable. Also, Africa entered the age of the internet and new communication technologies with no delay, to the significant benefit of the wider population. Last but not least, African women are increasingly assuming leadership positions in academia and business and they are even becoming heads of state.

However, African states are still faced with many serious internal and external challenges – namely they need to further improve their good governance and protection of human rights, to diversify their economies and thus minimize the impacts of the volatility of the world markets and commodity prices, to ensure that the growing state revenue is wisely invested and evenly distributed, and to adapt to the increasingly negative effects of the climate change.

PROGRAMME

9.00-9.30 **Registration**

9.30-9.45 **Opening Remarks**

Vladimír Galuška, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic

Belaid Hadjem, Ambassador, People's Democratic Republic of Algeria

9.45-11:45 **Panel discussion**

Lydie Boka, Director and Consultant, StrategiCo

Ajay Bramdeo, Permanent Representative of the AU to the EU and the ACP Group

Tomáš Dub, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic

Petr Lebeda, Director, Glopolis (a think tank)

Chair: **Petr Kratochvíl**, Director, Institute of International Relations (IIR)

Working language: English

RSVP: We kindly ask you to register via the e-mail address registrace@iir.cz
by Thursday, 30th May 2013 at the latest.

This panel discussion will be followed by the opening of the exhibition:

“WE HELP THEM TO SURVIVE - THE WAY TOWARDS THE WANDERING BUS”

The exhibition about the activities of Prague Zoo in central Africa focuses on the protection of Western Lowland Gorillas and help for the local people. The popularity of the gorillas, bred in Prague Zoo, enables to raise funds from both the visitors and general public. Thanks to them Prague Zoo could repeatedly provide equipment to ecoguards in Dja Reserve, Cameroon, thousands of children from the forest areas in Congo basin received books about gorillas and other education materials. Recently, the Wandering Bus project has been started. It enables children from the Dja area to meet gorillas in another way than just meat on a plate and provide them with unforgettable experiences.