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# Russia's Relations with the African Continent

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are grappling with a triple crisis of health and finance, trying to avoid widening social disparity and future economic distress. Aware of its historical responsibility for the formation of the modern system of international relations and its further improvement, the Russian Federation considers international development assistance as an effective mechanism to solve global and regional problems, and to respond to new challenges and threats.

Dear Mrs. Zepp-LaRouche, dear colleagues and friends from so many countries, the problems posed in today's discussion are of high importance. We welcome the highlighting of acute questions of international relations through the prism of development, building physical infrastructure, and cooperation between major powers in the interests of the poorest and most vulnerable, in accordance with the United Nations Agenda 2030. We fully share the crucial significance of industrialization, eradication of poverty, reforming of international credit-generating institutions, and ensuring food security. Those questions are in the spotlight for the whole global community. We emphasize that the right to development persists as a basic human right. Development defeats inequality, contributes to peace, and is an indispensable condition for building just, peaceful, and inclusive societies.

I would like to start my presentation citing the report by the UN Secretary General as saying, "As we are facing multidimensional and multifaceted impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, global solidarity with Africa is an imperative. Ending the pandemic in Africa is essential for ending it across the world."

In the context of this challenging crisis we all seek to re-assess the model for development with the needs of the most vulnerable at its cornerstone. I would like to address this issue with respect to how our country deploys in our relations with the African continent.

It is justified that today more than ever before, our eyes are directed to the regrettable fortunes of populations in remote corners of the world where governments

Our priorities have been the eradication of poverty and promotion of sustainable socio-economic development of partner states; influencing global processes in order to form a stable and just world order based on universally recognized rules of international law and partnership relations among states; as well as responding to natural and man-made disasters and other emergencies.

In doing so, as it can easily be seen in the ideals of Russian philosophers and artists and classical Russian literature, assisting our friends abroad has always been based on the respect of the other's dignity. It has been reflected in our national policies and priorities; technical and humanitarian assistance has always been delivered at the request of the recipient side. We have proceeded from the assumption that any approach in the spirit of colonial rule, like the General Act of the Berlin Conference of 1884, bringing about the principle of "effective occupation" prejudices the freedom of the Africans themselves; attempting to come to agreement behind one's back and acting solely from the standpoint of mercenary calculation, will most likely not be accepted by the peoples themselves.

On the contrary, we value equitable partnership in the international arena, upholding the principles of truth and justice, respect for the civilizational identity of each people, the path of development chosen by each people.

As Russian President Vladimir Putin recently emphasized, the development of relations with the countries of the African continent and their regional organizations

is one of the priorities of Russian foreign policy. Links between us are based on the friendly relations between the Russian Federation and African states and the traditions of the joint struggle for decolonization and achieving the independence of African states, as well as on the rich experience of multifaceted and mutually beneficial cooperation that meets the interests of our peoples.

Dear colleagues and friends, one of the main lessons learned from this pandemic is an urgent need for international solidarity and cooperation, without exclusions and exemptions. In line with this objective, we have committed to giving Russian-African interaction a truly systemic and integrated character. African states are confidently gaining political and economic weight, affirming themselves as one of the important pillars of the multipolar world, and are taking an increasingly active part in working out decisions of the international community on key issues of the regional and global agenda. We need to respect their right to benefit equally from globalization, whatever shape it will take after the impact of the pandemic.

In our strong opinion, the world needs Africa not just like a pantry of valuable minerals or a bread basket, but as a strong and sovereign region, developing an equal dialogue with its partners in accordance with the norms of the national legislation, based on the multilateral nature of the world order. Today, when proposals are made to reform the global governance system, we consistently uphold the need to include the role of Africa in those structures that are engaged in global governance.

Our fundamental outlook is not only to ensure the wide global participation of African states, but also to resolve conflict situations on the principle of “African solutions to African problems.” Together, we are able to counteract political dictatorship and currency blackmail in the course of international trade and economic cooperation, in order to put pressure on objectionable countries and unfair competition. Introduction of unilateral coercive measures not based on international law, also known as unilateral sanctions, is an example of such a practice. Joint efforts are needed to promote trade, investment, and sustainable development in order to make the global economic system more socially oriented, to oppose any manifestations of a unilateral approach, protectionism and discrimination, and to support world trade based on the rules of the World Trade Organization.

Under this paradigm the first Russia-Africa Summit

and Economic Forum took place in October 2019 in Sochi with 92 agreements, contracts, and memoranda of understanding worth \$12 billion signed, addressing trade, investments and banking, industry and construction, transport and logistics, energy and high-tech, and other economic matters.

We paid special attention to identifying promising areas of the economic, trade and investment partnership of the Russian Federation, as a member of the Eurasian Economic Union, with the African Union as well as with the leading regional organizations of Africa—the Arab Maghreb Union, the Sahel Five, the Southern African Development Community, the Common Market for East and Southern Africa, the East African Community, Economic Community of West African Countries, Economic Community of Central African States, and others.

In our movement towards Africa we need to be creative and promote new mechanisms for partnership, encourage active participation of business in exhibition, fair and congress events, and develop the practice of exchanging business missions.

Moving towards Africa in this new old world would be impossible without learning each other better, taking into consideration the many local customs and traditions, as well as Africa’s rich cultural and linguistic variety. In Sochi-2019 we committed to developing cooperation in the field of education, implementing vocational training and academic exchange programs to promote social stability by protecting people, especially youth, women, and persons with disabilities, and expanding their capabilities by increasing the availability of education, technical and vocational training. Participants in the Russia-Africa summit confirmed that obtaining quality education and developing skills by young men and women can become a driving force for structural economic transformation and industrialization in African countries, as well as the basis for strengthening the industrial potential necessary to diversify the economy.

It so happens that our country has already contributed to the development of the African continent in particular in industry, infrastructure, and energy security—areas promoted by the Schiller Institute as the fundamentals of the so-called physical economy—so I will focus on them briefly.

So far, Russia has been involved in the creation of the Russian Industrial Zone in Egypt. Among the key competencies of Russia for Africa, one cannot overestimate the role of rail infrastructure for the development

of Nigeria, Egypt, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Angola. Under current conditions, it is important that the use of technologies such as “medical trains” in Africa will help prevent the spread of infectious diseases and fight epidemics.

In energy, we count on the future construction of the first nuclear power plant in Egypt and the Russian Center for Nuclear Science and Technology in Rwanda, facilitating the development of integrated solutions in the field of nuclear energy in agriculture, health, education, science, and industry. Those two are not the only countries in Africa that intend to develop nuclear energy. Kenya, Uganda, Nigeria, Sudan, and Zambia are also on this growing list. Most African countries suffer from severe electricity shortages. Accordingly, in the near future they should double their generating capacity to meet current needs. The current pandemic-caused crisis, has aggravated this challenge.

In saying this we should not forget about stepping up efforts to combat climate change in Africa, transfer relevant technologies, build the capacity of African states. Meanwhile, general greening of the economy, in our approach, needs to be based on responsibility, consistency and realism. Key to that is technological progress. Serious efforts are being deployed to improve energy efficiency in industry, agriculture, housing, and transport. In our country we have launched national project “Environment” to create incentives for Russian business to implement best “green” technologies to ensure the environmentally friendly low-emission development. And we will proceed to provide assistance to developing countries, including African countries, to help them meet their own climate goals without prejudice to the objectives of ensuring inclusive and sustainable economic growth, industrialization of their economies, and leaving no one behind.

The pandemic is spreading across the world, threatening to undo the efforts applied so far to build a more resilient architecture. It is high time for humanity, responsibility, and the spirit of partnership to be demonstrated. A truly systemic issue with reference to today’s discussion is food security, which holds a special place among Russia’s priorities in its efforts to achieve sustainable development globally. First of all, we believe that it has to be addressed at the level of supplying the world with enough high-quality food to stabilize international markets and make it more accessible and affordable for a maximum number of people. At the same time, the zero-hunger goal must be addressed as a matter

of urgency for those countries that are food insecure.

To that end, over the last twenty years, Russia has been steadily and consistently increasing its own production and export of food—grain, cereals, pulses, meats, poultry, oils, milk, and dairy products, etc. Russia has become one of the world’s largest exporters of food. During the pandemic, food supplies were transferred to the Union of Comoros and Madagascar.

Apart from tackling the problem of food security, Russia donated hundreds of KAMAZ trucks, together with the necessary parts, equipment, and technical support for key World Food Program (WFP) operations in Africa, starting in 2020, with \$10 million being reserved exclusively for Africa. It is the first time that Russia assigned a geographic priority for its voluntary contribution to WFP.

In the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, East Africa is experiencing its largest invasion of desert locusts in decades, and our country is making a \$10 million contribution to support Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) operations in Ethiopia, Kenya, South Sudan, and Uganda.

In connection with the coronavirus pandemic, Russia received requests from a total of 29 African countries, as well as from the African Union, asking for assistance in combating the impacts of COVID-19. To date, units of laboratory supplies and personal protective equipment have been provided to the Democratic Republic of Congo; multi-purpose medical modules, tents, and accessories to Djibouti; and test systems to South Africa and Guinea.

At the same time, we believe that helping a sick person with a virus is paramount, but that only solves part of the problem. A fundamental factor is the availability of an effective system of prevention and education in the countries affected by the epidemic. As an example, I refer to the example of the Republic of Guinea, where Russia has deployed two mobile hospitals, and where mobile laboratories based on KAMAZ vehicles were transferred and medications delivered. With the participation of Russian experts there, more than 800 specialists have passed specialized training since 2015. Russia is making a significant contribution to the scientific research on the Ebola virus. With the support of one of the flagships of Russian business, the united RUSAL company, the Russian-Guinean Research Center for Epidemiology and Prevention of Infectious Diseases was established in the Guinean city of Kindia.

Last but not least, long and intensive discussions are ongoing concerning the unbearable debt burden of Af-

rican states. Russia actively contributes to alleviating it under the debt-for-development program intergovernmental agreements. Those between Russia and Madagascar, Mozambique, and Tanzania are being implemented. For instance, as part of these arrangements, the Government of Mozambique, in cooperation with the WFP, has launched a multi-disciplinary national school

food and nutrition program. It provides for the conversion of a part of the county's debt to Russia, amounting to \$40 million, during 2017-2021 into activities that address malnutrition among children and fosters primary education in Mozambique.

With that I thank you, and look forward to your questions.