

## THE FRIEDRICH-EBERT-STIFTUNG IN THE REGION



SUB-SAHARA AFRICA

## Promoting security, social democracy and economic development



**“Development policy is the peace policy of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.”**

Willy Brandt's affirmation has become the philosophy behind our daily work.

### Idea and mission

The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung's Division for International Development Cooperation feels a particular responsibility for contributing to development and democracy in the countries of Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East and North Africa. Looking towards the future, we regard it as our task to help

- safeguard democratic structures by involving as many social groups as possible,
- promote economic reform and a policy of social justice,
- formulate common basic values to guide socio-political development.

Our challenge as we see it is to adapt the focus and instruments of our work continuously in response to social development.

Founded in 1925 as Germany's first political foundation, the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) is a private, non-profit organisation committed to the precepts of social democracy. It bears the name of the first democratically elected president of Germany, Friedrich Ebert, preserving his legacy: the promotion of freedom, solidarity and social justice through the political process. The FES undertakes to carry out this mission in Germany and abroad through its programmes promoting political education, international cooperation, study and research.

### Sub-Sahara Africa



The African continent is undergoing a process of rapid political and economic change. Different factors have contributed to this:

- the establishment of the African Union and the initiative for a “New Partnership for Africa's Development” (NEPAD),
- the creation of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) to encourage democratic governance,
- the increasing importance of regional economic communities as building blocks for Africa's integration and cooperation,
- the development and consolidation of democratic practices and institutions in many African countries.

These elements form the basis for a new momentum on the continent. The international community is increasingly aware of this positive development and is making a stronger commitment to Africa.

### Aims and focal points

The FES contributes to stabilisation and a deepening of the process of democratisation and economic and social change in many countries of the continent. To promote democratic development, rule of law and socially balanced growth, we support the work of democratically elected parliaments and pluralistic political party systems along with important socio-political groups (e.g. trade unions, media and journalists' associations, women and youth organisations and economic interest associations).



## EXAMPLES FROM THE FIELD OF PROJECT WORK

### Political diversity: Cooperation with political parties is a must

Political parties are one of the cornerstones of liberal democracies, performing important brokerage functions and organising political competition. They can only fulfil these tasks, however, in a functioning multi-party system. Each party must moreover ascribe to democratic principles, apply them within their own party organisation, be open to political dialogue as well as to dialogue with civil society.

The FES has established a “Research Group for Political Parties” in Southern Africa whose members comprise researchers, members of commissions for programmes of progressive parties, politicians and parliamentarians. The Research Group performs analyses relating to the further development of multi-party systems and electoral law, forwards recommendations for reform of party policies, develops suggestions for party organisational structures and promotes the dialogue of political parties with civil society. The work results are channelled into internal party discussions and reform processes at the regional and national levels through forums, workshops and seminars.



### Demanding democracy: Supporting parliaments

In East Africa the FES cooperates with the national parliaments of Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania as well as with the regional parliament, the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA). Because regional delegates are not members of respective national parliaments, the exchange of information between national and regional platforms is often a tedious and difficult process. Since 2003, the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung supports the East Africa Parliamentary Liaison Committee (EAPLC), whose members come from the national parliaments and the regional parliament dealing with trade policy issues. The improved communication through this new institution allows a joint, coordinated effort in international trade negotiations, and strengthens the awareness of all the members on issues of regional integration. EALA proves that regional integration should not remain an exclusive domain of national governments.



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In Southern Africa the FES cooperates with the Parliamentary Forum of the Southern African Development Community (SADC-PF), which was founded in 1996 by the national parliaments of the SADC member states.

The aim of this regional Parliamentary Forum is to promote development and integration in the region through the inclusion of parliamentarians within a democratic framework. This takes place in the national parliaments themselves, in which the members of the Forum act as proponents of the philosophy of integration, for instance by monitoring the ratification of SADC protocols or the harmonisation of laws and regulations.

In addition, the Parliamentary Forum increasingly constitutes an autonomous nexus of integration through its own programmes, playing a pioneering role in the dissemination of democratic standards throughout the SADC region, for example in electoral processes. The FES supports the programmatic work of the Forum as well as its efforts to expand its rights and competences.



### Giving security a structure: Creating regional networks

No peace without development, no development without peace! The African states have always been aware of this interrelationship. But since the founding of the African Union (AU) and the establishment of a security architecture spanning the entire continent this relationship gets an organisational framework.

FES works together with regional networks in the area of security policy in West, Southern and East Africa. Cooperation with the networks, which involve experts from the fields of social science, government, the military and civil society, is coordinated by our offices in Abuja (Nigeria), Maputo (Mozambique) and Addis Ababa (Ethiopia). The focus is above all on the implementation of the African security agenda in the regions and the dissemination of the discussion through the involvement of civil society, political parties and parliaments.

By the same token, the FES is convinced that for the solution of African problems only African solutions can be developed and implemented.



### A lively democracy requires freedom of speech and a free press

The ability of people to get involved in societal and political processes requires free access to information. A pluralistic and free media sector is an essential precondition for democracy to function properly. The African Union also supports this view. It has agreed on principles which describe the conditions needed for freedom of speech and a free flow of information along these lines. But only very few governments on the continent really act in accordance with this precept.

The aim of the media project for Southern Africa is to foster the reform of the legal and political framework for media. One important tool to this end is the newly developed African Media Barometer. Media experts and partners from civil society analyse underlying political and legal conditions as well as the quality of media services in their own countries and provide an impetus for their improvement on the basis of the AU principles.

### Equal opportunities in the media

Media play a crucial role in the advancement of equal rights and opportunities for women and men. This requires, however, that key media players themselves are aware of gender equality. The media project for this reason promotes the implementation of gender aspects in training curricula for journalists and model projects in selected media enterprises.



### Regional integration through trade?

The expansion of regional economic exchange is a prerequisite for a deepening of regional integration in Africa. The FES has instituted a regional research and consulting programme called "Deepening Integration in SADC – Macro-Economic Policies and their Impact" in Southern Africa, involving researchers from some of the most important research institutes from 11 SADC member states. This programme is seeking to revive the discussion about the political construction of the integration process.

### Ready to meet the challenges of trade and globalisation

Globalisation has not stopped before the doors of the "forgotten continent" – Africa, either.

The conclusion of multilateral and regional trade agreements sets the stage for additional social, economic and political development. The FES supports umbrella trade unions in West Africa in creating expertise in the area of trade policy in the regional working group "International Economics and Regional Integration". National trade unions are developing joint positions on regional socio-economic developments here and coordinating their strategies in order to face challenges in West Africa in a concerted manner.

### Involving trade unions

The FES is offering summer academies for trade union leaders from West and East Africa far away from the hustle and bustle of major African cities in order to provide them with information on trade policy issues and to discuss their own positions towards trade policy and trade union activities.



### FES offices in Sub-Saharan Africa

The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung is represented in the region through its 19 offices: **Angola, Ethiopia, Benin, Botswana, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Cameroon, Kenya, Madagascar, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Zambia, Senegal, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Tanzania and Uganda.** In addition, FES works with selected partners in **Guinea, Cape Verde, Mauritius and Togo.** These activities are conducted by the respective offices in the neighbouring countries or by the headquarters themselves.

FES runs the project offices in Africa with 21 German staff members on an overseas assignment and 180 local experts and administrative personnel. 16 staff members from the Africa Department in Berlin support their work and organise the dialogue with partners in Germany.

### Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung

**Africa Department**  
Division for International Development Cooperation  
Head: Michèle Auga

Hiroshimastraße 17  
10785 Berlin  
Phone +49 30 26935 7440  
Fax: +49 30 26935 9217