

Intervention

Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs Jean Asselborn, at the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union

Addis Abeba, Ethiopia, 31 January 2010

Mr. President,
Honourable Ministers,
Excellencies,
Dear colleagues,

It is a great honour for me to take the floor in the presence of the Heads of State and Government and of my African Minister colleagues.

This is my first participation in a high level meeting of the African Union, but certainly not my last, especially because Luxembourg has just accredited its first Ambassador to the African Union, in the person of Mr. Jean-Marc Hoscheit.

In line with our longstanding partnership for development and cooperation with Africa, Luxembourg is determined to engage in strong political, diplomatic and economic relations with the African Union and its Member States,

Luxembourg is proud to be among the very few States of the « G-0,7% » Group, spending close to 1% of its GNI on official development aid (ODA). Despite the current economic crisis, Luxembourg will not relent in its efforts in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals by 2015, and encourages many other countries to do the same.

This morning, President Ping underlined the crucial importance for the economic development of Africa of the educational and cultural contents of the information and communication technologies.

I am happy to announce that my country is willing and open to associate itself in a concrete and efficient manner with this stimulating project! In the heart of Europe, Luxembourg has a longstanding reputation as a center for audiovisual technologies and related services. Over the few years, my country has developed into a competence hub for information and communication technologies, be it in the area of infrastructures for digital content or of e-commerce. Some of the main actors operating worldwide in those fields have their headquarters in Luxembourg and the presence of a number of European institutions – among which the European Investment Bank (EIB) – reinforces this development.

In complementarity with our traditional policy of development cooperation, aiming at the elimination of poverty through concrete action in the fields of health, education, water, sanitation and local development, the Luxembourg Government tries to promote synergies and to conclude partnerships in particular in the information and communication technologies, with the invaluable knowhow and input of the private sector.

Luxembourg has already committed substantial amounts to African projects, and supports the development of information and communication technologies with the Commission of the West African Economic and Monetary Union. Other projects are in the process of being identified.

Luxembourg is furthermore ready to take the lead of two projects under preparation in the framework of the strategic partnership between Africa and the European Union and that have been initiated by the EU in connection with the EU – Africa Infrastructure Trust Fund managed by the European Investment Bank to:

- a) provide e-health services via satellite to sub-Saharan Africa
- b) install internet exchange points everywhere in Africa

I thank you for your attention.