

Outcomes Document on the African Diaspora Global Conference: Caribbean Regional Consultation

A. Preamble

1. Participants from the Caribbean region and Africa met on 27-28 August 2007 in Bridgetown, Barbados, at an African Diaspora Global Conference facilitated by the Republic of South Africa on behalf of the African Union. The Conference was one of six regional consultations leading up to the African Diaspora Ministerial Conference scheduled for November 2007 and the African Union (AU) African Diaspora Summit planned for 2008. Both the Ministerial Conference and the AU African Diaspora Heads of State and Government Summit are to be held in South Africa.
2. Thus the theme of the Conference was: “Fostering Sustainable Global Dialogue with Africa and its Diaspora: The Case of the Caribbean”.
3. The Conference was jointly organized by the AU, the CARICOM and the Government of Barbados’ Commission for Pan African Affairs in the context of the Bicentennial Global Dialogue on “Slavery Trade, Reconciliation and Social Justice”.
4. The Conference was graced by the attendance particularly of the Rt. Honourable Owen Arthur, Prime Minister of Barbados; the Hon. Dr. Ralph Gonsalves, Prime Minister of St. Vincent and the Grenadines; the Hon. Samuel Hinds, Prime Minister of Guyana; the Hon. Dr. Zola Skweyiya, Minister of Social Development of South Africa; Rev. the Hon. Atherly, Minister of State in the Office of the Prime Minister of Barbados; Dr. Edwin Carrington, Secretary General of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM); Ministers and Members of Parliament; as

well as members of the Diplomatic Corps, including Ambassador Amina Ali, African Union Ambassador to the United States of America.

5. One of the foremost Pan-African icons, Ambassador Dudley Thompson from Jamaica, addressed the Conference and contributed to setting the historical framework for the deliberations.
6. The Conference gave expression to the Statement and Plan of Action of the South Africa-African Union-Caribbean Diaspora Conference held in Kingston, Jamaica, in March 2005, which, inter alia, called on participants to explore mechanisms for the institutionalization of links between Africa and the Caribbean and for follow up conferences to be held on a biennial basis.
7. In their deliberations, particularly in the Plenaries and the ten Working Groups, participants at the Conference were guided by the objectives that are to inform the African Diaspora Summit, namely:
 - To create sustainable partnerships between the African Diaspora and the African continent through a realizable programme of action
 - To create sustainable dialogue, partnerships and strengthening of Pan African solidarity for a better Africa and its Diaspora
 - To promote South-South cooperation for the betterment of the African continent and its Diaspora

Accordingly, the Conference made the following observations:

B. Observations:

8. Pursuant to the resolutions of the watershed United Nations World Conference Against Racism (WCAR) held in 2001 in Durban, South Africa, there is increased momentum towards developing a workable formula aimed at decisively addressing the legacy of the Transatlantic Slave Trade and Slavery as a crime against humanity,

as well as the issue of Reparations. Furthermore, the WCAR gave impetus to engaging the Church as one of the change agents and therefore a key player in combating the perpetuation of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade and Slavery.

9. Africa and its Diaspora in Europe, Caribbean and Americas are determined to develop concrete and integrated measures that would extricate them from the conditions of underdevelopment. Thus, through Pan-African linkages based on their common history, descent and destiny, in opposition to racial discrimination and colonialism, and the creation of a new Africa, the AU is determined to strengthen the linkages between Africa and the Diaspora. The overall understanding is that the African Diaspora should get directly involved with AU activities and vice-versa, including those regarding integrated development and the sharing of technical and financial expertise.

10. The AU has set up a consultative mechanism to strengthen the linkages between Africa and the Diaspora, admitting historical, cultural, and religious similarities. The effects of slavery and colonialism require a historical analysis to fully understand the condition of modern day marginalization that the African continues to suffer. An appraisal of the cumulative effects should lead us into jointly developed mechanisms on how to reverse such a legacy.

11. Despite the devastating effects of slavery the African Diaspora managed to develop its own creole culture of resistance.

12. Conference recognised that some social groups are more vulnerable to marginalisation, violence and oppression, *inter alia*, women, youth, children, people with special physical and mental needs, and the elderly.

13. The Conference acknowledges the challenges encountered in the production, diffusion, and utilization of existing information emanating from indigenous and scientific knowledge and agreed to promote knowledge sharing.

14. The Conference recognizes that importance of communication in mobilizing intellectual, professional, technical, business, social, and political capacities for the development of Africa and its Diaspora.
15. The consolidation of the African Agenda takes place within the context of a globalization which has divided the world into two contrasting global villages – one in which the rich of the world are getting richer and more powerful, and another in which the poor of the world are getting poorer and more marginalized.
16. Africa, and its Diaspora continue to face the challenges of eradicating impoverishment and underdevelopment, restructuring the global exercise of political, economic, military and social power, and attaining peace and stability.

C. Recommendations

The following recommendations were made:

Human Resource Development

- Strong emphasis must be placed on African-centred education particularly with a view to reclaiming African space, spirituality, history and culture. A holistic approach to repairing the damage done to the African psyche and personality must be implemented.
- Publishing more books and other educational material to refute the misinformation given to Africans throughout the Diaspora about the history and heritage of the continent of Africa.

- The writing of books for children of the Africa Caribbean Diaspora to teach them about the Maafa (African holocaust) and its effects on both African and New World societies.
- Strong emphasis in schools, colleges and universities on the history and heritage of continental Africa in order to deepen the pride of youth in Africa and the Caribbean in their African Heritage.
- Tertiary institutions in the regions need to proactively promote their programmes in both regions. To effectively do so a databank of Universities and courses on offer is proposed. This bank could further be supported by a skills data bank which could promote skills mobility and support between the two regions.
- Develop a virtual web-based skills bank with details of individual skills as a repository linked to important national and regional websites such as CARICOM.ORG.
- Promote African-centred education through standardizing and recognizing certification and qualifications and introducing structured programmes of teaching and research at regional universities.
- Promote research on the presence of Africans in the Middle East (NE Africa) with a view to identifying challenges and opportunities facing the Africans in that part of the world; and developing means for their inclusion in the 6th Region of the AU.

Science & Technology

- Explore the pros and cons of setting up a Low Earth Orbits (LEO). Such an exploration will require the bringing together of leadership of key institutions and researchers to capture the interest in research and develop collaborative efforts.

The outcomes of such collaborations should be presented to African governments, AU and CARICOM, for support and financing.

- Promote investment in ICTs that will enable greater communications access.
- Establish mechanisms for research cooperation in priority areas of agriculture, biotechnology and renewable energy technologies.
- Organize a working group to explore technological advances in the hydrocarbon exploitation and processing sector and develop a strategic agenda aimed at optimizing the benefits of such exploitation for Africa..

Tourism and Cultural Exchange

- Promotion of cultural exchange activities between Africa and its Diaspora with an integrated schedule of events.
- Execution of MOUs and cultural agreements between countries encouraging educational and cultural exchanges.
- Promotion of the teaching of Pan-African and Caribbean history, drama, dance.
- Integration of African language and linguistics into school curricula.
- Explore mechanisms and measures to facilitate the free movement of people, namely the removal of Visa restrictions.
- Development of a programme of AU- CARICOM sports and cultural exchange and tourism, particularly in the context of the upcoming FIFA 2010 World Cup. Such programmes may include inter- regional sports tournaments and cultural festivals.

- The establishment of African themed museums in CARICOM countries to commemorate the “African Story”. Similar museums may be created on the African continent. Traveling exhibitions and a virtual version of the museums could be created.

Cultural Industry Development

- Exploit media and cultural processes and products to facilitate the promotion of a common identity, exchange and integration between Africa and its Diaspora
- Promote comprehensive vertical integration of the cultural industries.
- Create mechanisms and measures to facilitate mutual market access of cultural products, especially film and music.
- Establishment of a CARICOM/ AU working group to operationalise community tourism.
- Establish a mechanism to protect indigenous African- Diasporan knowledge systems and intellectual property rights
- Recognition of the Rastafari Movement as historically integrative of the African Agenda and whose cultural philosophy, actions and assests particularly its indigenous rights form a cornerstone of African Union and should be uniquely supported.
- Promote and support a conference of Maroons in the Americas aimed at establishing protections of their intellectual property rights and economic development.
- Ensure that maroon communities are effectively involve in AU/ African Diaspora activity.
- Establishment of a CARICOM/ AU working group to operationalise community tourism.

Media and Communication

- Promote strategic African-centered investment in and indigenous ownership of media and ICT and their by- products
- Establish news and information exchange mechanisms through:
 - Compilation of credible sources of information and the coordinated exchange between media houses in Africa and the Caribbean.
 - Establishment of a jointly owned media conglomerate inclusive of television, radio and print medium

Infrastructure

- Establish direct air & sea links between African and Caribbean countries
- Identify optimal locations in the Caribbean and Africa for the establishment of inter regional transport hubs.
- Create appropriate enabling legislation to accommodate transport between Regions.

Women

- Establish mechanisms to foster working relations between Afro-Caribbean and African women
- Support the establishment of investment initiatives aimed at job creation and poverty alleviation for women at the margins.
- Share best practices aimed at improving access of women to investment capital.

Haiti

- Recognise the historical place occupied by Haiti in the liberation of African people.
- Increase support from CARICOM and the AU to play a leadership role in peace-keeping role in Haiti.

Youth

- Develop mechanisms for the inclusion of youth in the deliberations of the AU-CARICOM processes; e.g. Youth Parliament, Internships.

Health Sector

- Launch a Global Africa Fund on AIDS for research and mobilization of constituencies such as artists and sport personalities.
- Establish collaborative Research and Development projects in the following priority areas: health (with particular emphasis on HIV, malaria, TB, Cholera and chronic lifestyle diseases) and pharmacology.

Political Cooperation & Solidarity

- Leverage the collective might of the African Union and CARICOM sovereign states in multilateral fora to promote and advance issues of critical import to Africa and its Diaspora including Intellectual Property Rights, technology, debt relief, aid policy, health, education, agriculture and infrastructure.
- Harmonize positions in multilateral fora on relevant global issues and negotiate as joint regional blocks.
- Demonstrate collective commitment to initiatives undertaken and translate this commitment into effective and unified follow-up of issues (eg to monitor pledges and support arising from the G8).

- Focus on South/South cooperation and if necessary create a new inclusive forum to discuss issues relevant to Africa and the Caribbean

Reparations & Repatriation

- Call on AU and CARICOM governments to develop mechanisms to ensure that European, Canada and the United States reparations and repatriation implementation take place without further ado.
- Establish an AU-CARICOM International Reparation Commission comprising government and civil society representatives to study the issue of reparations in a scientific manner with a view to proposing credible options for reparations.

New World, De- colonization and Solidarity

- CARICOM and the AU should support the immediate termination of colonial occupation in the territories occupied by Dutch, French, British and the US.

D. Follow-up

- Develop institutional mechanisms to concretize new engagement e.g. AU-CARICOM Joint Commission to meet annually to dialogue on and determine cooperation programmers e.g. health, education, sport, culture and investment
- Establish a CARICOM desk at AU Headquarters to monitor and disseminate information on CARICOM
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- Launch an AU/ CARICOM Congress of NGOs / Civil Society to facilitate dialogue
- Urge the AU and CARICOM to act on the Plan of Action of the WCAR Durban conference by, *inter alia*, establishing a High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons to mobilize on the follow-up.
- The differential experience of women and youth should be taken into account in ensuring their inclusion in the implementation of all the following recommendations.