

Regional African Diaspora Conference North America

Jumeirah House, New York, New York
22-23 June 2007

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Table of Contents

Welcome and Introductory Session	3
Keynote Address by Minister Grace Naledi Mandisa Pandor Minister of Education, South Africa	4-6
Ambassador Mbulelo Rakwena's Presentation on the 2008 Diaspora Host Committee	7-8
Day 1 Morning Discussion Session	9-10
Regional African Diaspora Conference: North America Political Working Group	11-15
Regional African Diaspora Conference North America Social Working Group	16-23
The Regional African Diaspora Conference North America Economic Working Group	24-31
Remarks by Ambassador Amina Ali, African Union Ambassador to the United States	32
Day 1: A Report back by the Working Groups	33-39
Regional African Diaspora Conference Day 2- June 23, 2007 Plenary Session	40-42
Consultative Planning Meeting North American African Diaspora (US & Canada) Draft Preamble	43
Preliminary Action Plan	44

Welcome and Introductory Session

The Regional African Diaspora Conference for North America was held in New York on the 22nd and 23rd of June, 2007 at Jumeirah House. This conference is one of the five preparatory consultative meetings with the members of the African Diaspora. The North American Diaspora encompasses the U.S. and Canada. Besides the North American consultative meeting, other consultations were planned for Brasilia, the Bahamas, the United Kingdom and Belgium. One of the outcomes of all the conferences would be the identification of approximately six representatives from each region to participate in the AU Heads of State Summit in South Africa in 2008. Six Working groups, on Global Dialogue, Peace and Security; Regional Development and Integration; Economic Cooperation; Historical; Socio-Cultural and Religious Commonalities; Women, Youth and Children, and Knowledge Sharing were collapsed into three broad areas: Political, Economic and Social.

In her letter of June 22nd 2007 to conference delegates, Ambassador Barbara Masekela commended them for "sharing of knowledge, expertise and time" by taking part in this significant meeting, informing them that: "The African Diaspora forms ... an integral part of the future of the African Continent", and invited them to participate in an event that would "contribute to the success of the African Union's Diaspora Summit in South Africa in early 2008. The conference began with registration and breakfast from 8 to 9 am in the Grand Salon. Mr. James Early of the Smithsonian Institution, who was assisted by Professor Amii Omara-Otunnu of the University of Connecticut and UNESCO, was moderator.

Mr. James Early made a presentation that gave conference participants the Terms of Reference for the gathering. He emphasized that the fundamental purpose of the meeting was to determine how to go forward, map institutional and human resources, and devise strategies, as well as manage resources. One important question deserving of attention is to think about how the African Union would communicate with the African Diaspora. Bulletin Boards and other web-driven information are some alternatives that can be considered. Further, it is necessary to determine how to communicate within the Diaspora itself. At the closing, recommendations and suggestions are to be made, not resolutions or declarations. There is also need to consider what the categorical building blocks are and how to reach consensus without voting, and a need to track the evolving narratives from the deliberations. A fundamental objective of the deliberations is to consider how enduring linkages can be created between Africans in the continent and the Diaspora. This is important given the different cultures, backgrounds, nationalities and histories of the different communities.

Ambassador Barbara Masekela welcomed participants and introduced Minister Naledi Pandor, who gave the Keynote Address.

Keynote Address by Minister Grace Naledi Mandisa Pandor, Minister of Education, South Africa

Minister Naledi Pandor opened with a welcome to the “sons and daughters” of Africa, which connected with the idea of the African Diaspora. Deriving from both voluntary and imposed migration, Diasporas are composed of people who wish to maintain their identity, and who sometimes establish organizations to engender political, economic, and social participation as well as preserve ties to their homeland. For Minister Pandor, the derivation of Diasporas from both voluntary and forced migration meant that it was not easy to maintain an identity based on connectedness to Africa, and thus it is important not to lose sight of the struggle and to work toward sustainable development for the African continent. This may be accomplished through the establishment of organizations that would engender economic, political and social development. The proposed 2008 AU summit would also provide a key opportunity to actualize or accomplish these and other goals. Therefore, inclusion and open deliberation are crucial, recognizing that the history of division among African peoples makes working together challenging.

Minister Pandor explained that this conference continued with the exploration, in common cause with the AU, South Africa, and the rest of Africa, the economic, political, and socio-cultural modernization of the African continent. It also provided an opportunity to contribute to shaping the global program that will make the 21st Century Africa’s century, based on a belief that Africa’s time is come. The address drew upon the analysis by Frantz Fanon, who spoke eloquently about the need for African solidarity, and its accomplishment through both fight and action, to secure African freedom. She urged a comprehensive and shared vision of sustainability for Africa. To accomplish African solidarity through both struggle and action, as recommended by Fanon, it is necessary to unite people of African descent, who are divided in so many ways. Initially, the AU did not recognize the difficulties of divisions and separate historical trajectories. However, the consultations are generating useful information in this regard that should contribute to addressing this problem.

Further, Minister Pandor exhorted Africans at home and in the enduring effects of the history of division as well as the lack of opportunities to work together, leading to the lack of realization that African peoples can cooperate. Such cooperation or unity is not easy or obvious, especially since the struggle against imperialism is distracting. Much planning preceded this conference, and more is scheduled to follow it. For example, there was a consultative conference in Johannesburg in April 2007. A series of meetings was planned with civil society organizations and governments to feed into the 2008 summit. There were also regional consultation conferences in London in the U.K, and in Brasilia, Brazil. More meetings would be held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and Paris, France. Conference participants were also exhorted to be alert to the fact that this was not an easy project. It is still as difficult now to come together as in Marcus Garvey and WEB DuBois’ time. As history tells us, Marcus Garvey faced derision for daring to express a commitment to Africans taking charge of their own fate. Today,

Afro-pessimism persists. In consequence, one of the most significant parts of the struggle by peoples of African descent is the fight against racism. Part of this struggle was that against colonialism, which was one of the tools of racist ideology, and it has been so intractable that it has detracted from the struggle for unity. The anti-apartheid campaign is seminal, since it brought together Africans in the continent and those in its Diaspora in a common struggle. What role can the African Diaspora located in North America play in the struggle to create a shared platform for shared growth in Africa for Africans? President Thabo Mbeki has expressed the commitment of the government of South Africa to assist in creating a framework for the process. Many Diasporan Africans play key roles in the different institutions and organizations to which they belong. The AU agenda seeks to draw on the experience of all conference participants. Success depends on the Diaspora working together with Africans in the continent to eliminate the last vestiges of racism and its effects on peoples of African descent.

This is a bold project. It should be recognized that for all Africans around the world to be truly successful, they must act together and come together in the processes of change. There is also a need to collaborate to work for Africa's future development. The institutions of the Diaspora can help with this. Economic, religious, cultural and academic institutions can all play a role in the development of the continent. Churches played a decisive role in creating change in South Africa, for example. Today, Africa stands at a promising crossroads. Ghana has been independent for 50 years; The Democratic Republic of the Congo just conducted the first post-democratic election. South Africa is celebrating the 13th year of its independence from Apartheid. Kwame Nkrumah said: "The independence of Ghana would be meaningless unless it was tied to the total liberation of Africa." The same can be said of the entire continent, that is, without the total social, political, and economic liberation of Africa, independence is meaningless. African organizations played a crucial role in African decolonization. The Organization of African Unity is a case in point. For the AU, the condition and challenge of globalization creates a wealth of opportunity but polarization also increases. How can power be mobilized from the North American Diaspora to help Africa? In addition, each political achievement on the continent is threatened by a lack of social and economic support, and part of what should be considered is how American power can be used to help the African continent.

Vast mineral and natural resources as well as opportunities abound in Africa, and yet, the continent is mired in economic misery. There has been some growth, since the GDP averaged a 4.9% growth between 2001 and 2006, and 2007 figures stand at 6.2%. Yet, we should not be confident of success. The growth experienced is due to high commodities prices (gold, oil, platinum, e.g.), and a more supportive international environment as well as debt relief. NEPAD and other frameworks are also in place to ensure, among other things, sustained international investment. A 2000 study was titled: *Can Africa claim the 21st Century?* This is not an absurd question because Africa has enormous potential. There are hidden growth reserves in the people, including women who are more than half the labor force but suffer from the abject lack of advancement opportunities for women. Sustainable development can be engendered

in the continent if innovative policies and programs are acted upon. The international community has made lots of promise about offering assistance to Africa and Africans, but how does one begin to hold the international community to its word? The world conference against Racism and world conference on the environment are two instances when the international community came together to find common solutions. Nevertheless, there is need for a concrete agenda. Given the challenges faced, steps should be taken to advance educational opportunities on the continent. This is one part of the challenge of reforming African institutions. Another facet of the challenge is to merge agricultural research and training in a manner that responds to African needs, using African solutions for African peoples.

Ambassador Mbulelo Rakwena's Presentation on the 2008 Diaspora Host Committee

Minister Pandor's Keynote Address was followed by Ambassador Rakwena's presentation on the 2008 Diaspora Host Committee. He began by referring conference participants to the operational definition in the binder. He also reiterated that the 6th region of the continent is the African Diaspora, and asked: What are the responsibilities of the Diaspora and how do we achieve these? He recommended that the conference participants focus on defining these responsibilities and how to achieve them. The AU has taken some steps to move this process along. Senegal hosted a meeting of African intellectuals in 2004; South Africa hosted a meeting in Jamaica. Together with the AU, South Africa sought to sponsor a program that member states should celebrate world contribution to South African independence. A follow up to the Senegalese meeting was promoted by Nigeria and Brazil in Salvador. The AU's Khartoum summit decided that there should be a summit of Africa and the African Diaspora where there is a dialogue on how to move the continent ahead. South Africa is playing a facilitator role. The AU is the host.

The purpose and objectives of the consultation is to collaboratively work toward identifying the ways in which Africa will be moved forward. At the same time, participants were urged not to be assuming of problems affecting Africans, but to define these problems understanding that they are generated in large part by the legacy of the global division of power and Africa's place within it. The goal of the meeting is to have sufficient consultation on the conference themes and sub-themes as delineated in the conference agenda. The objectives are clear:

1. Create sustainable partnerships between the African Diaspora and continent through realizable and concrete programs of action.
2. Create sustainable dialogue between Africa and its Diaspora.

The object is not for the Diaspora to solve Africa's problems, but to have a dialogue to find common answers to problems. Clearly, the problem of configuration of power affects both Africa and its Diaspora. Through the process of engagement, the bar can be raised in order to achieve African development through South-South cooperation.

At the end of the conference, some recommendations and conclusions should be presented for use in conjunction with other conferences around the world. The Ministerial Conference in South Africa will consider the recommendations. The noble and good intent of this process is clear in the AU decision that it cannot initiate this discussion between Africa and the African Diaspora alone. To do things properly, it is assumed that there would be approximately 60% civil society and 40% government participation in the process. Thus, it is not by accident that the conference participants are gathered to deliberate, but by design. It is crucial to have robust criticism from civil society and as Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, South African Foreign Minister stated in London, there would be no "sacred cows" or anything too sensitive to discuss. The post-ministerial summit of Heads of State of Caribbean and African countries would be presented with a program of action to which the Ministers would have signed on, and

this would be approved. Since the conference's recommendations would feed into this process, the task before us is a serious one. It is envisaged that linkages would be made, and a repository of intellectual knowledge created. There is also a need for peoples of African descent both in the continent and Diaspora to start being creators of wealth that positively affects the continent and the Diaspora. Ambassador Rakwena ended up by introducing Ambassador Amina Ali, the first AU ambassador to the United States.

Day 1 Morning Discussion Session

Mr. James Early moderated the discussion session that followed Ambassador Rakwena's presentation. He informed the gathering that the discussions were to be focused only on clarifications, since substantive questions were to be pursued in the breakaway workshops. Some clarification was given on the process. The conclusions from the discussion here would be taken to the meeting of Ministers of the Caribbean and AU in 2008. The US cannot participate as a government but as civil society. Several questions were asked, one being what role can be played, and whether the focus should be on the development of the African Diaspora to enhance African development. Ambassador Rakwena's response was that the Diaspora should develop itself and dialogue with Africa. Africa can, and has helped the Diaspora. The objective should be to leverage the strengths of the Diaspora to move Africa's development agenda forward.

Another question was: What role can the Diaspora play in creating a platform for, and with Africa? It would be futile if we do not consider the root causes of barriers to development. The fourth question was whether the proceedings of the conferences preceding this one in Senegal, Brazil, and Jamaica would be made known to the participants so that they do not replicate already proposed agenda items. Another conference participant wondered if it would be possible to address what is discussed in working groups that one has not attended.

Ambassador Mbulelo Rakwena provided some clarifications. He explained that the Ministerial Conference was so called because Ministers from Africa and the parts of the Diaspora that control governments would gather to deliberate. Other regions of the Diaspora that do not have governmental representatives would, as done for the World Conference Against Racism, have parallel civil society in a process that feeds into the AU-CARICOM Ministerial. Ministerial discussion is necessary so that there is representation. It is very important that the North American Diaspora is included at all levels. Development is needed both in Africa and the Diaspora, but a great deal of the intellectual wealth of Africa is located in the Diaspora and does not contribute to African development. Pretending for the time being therefore, that Africa has all the intellectual resources it needs, without forcing people to return to Africa, or demanding compulsory interaction, how can dynamic interaction be engendered? This is not a back to Africa in an enforced manner, but should be geared at dynamic interaction to foster the development of all communities and people.

One of the participants urged that the root causes and barriers to interaction between Africans in the continent and the Diaspora be considered, and that the meeting should not see its role as identifying and expounding on problems. There are of course, massive problems but common definition for establishing different paths. Defining programs and solutions mean that we cannot get bogged down in the intractable problems we face or we'll draw up a long list of what is not being done well and not focus on what can be done. For access to previous meetings, the portal will be established by the Department of Foreign Affairs. South Africa and the AU will publish and give universal access. The draft will be prepared, and more clarifications can be

made to improve the quality of the final document. With the extraordinary range of talent and experience in the conference, excellent narratives can emerge. Participants were urged to offer critiques and suggestions and to make contributions principally from the North American vantage point. This is an historical process. The African Union is a continuation of the Organization of African Unity. This is the second iteration of the North American gathering. At the first, the consensus was that the North American Diaspora should be asked to focus principally but not exclusively on women, children, youth, and the disabled. The gathering was encouraged to ensure that these are addressed consistently.

The group was given the framework for the two-day meeting. First, there would be three breakaway sessions. At lunch, Ambassador Ali would give an address. Another breakaway session follows, and the day was to end with a dinner, during which another speech would be made. On Day Two, there would be an initial discussion and open plenary. Discussions on the road forward would be presented in the morning, when criteria and processes are discussed. Background papers were provided to stimulate discussion. Summaries of what was done thus far would be reproduced and circulated, but this would be a short meeting. Participants were urged to look at the documents at the AU web page. There would be a conference on the Caribbean in Washington, D.C. this week. It would be good to get this report as well, because it would be demanded.

A question was asked about the possibility of bringing friends to the meeting. The response was that this was invitation only because the small group is more effective in moving forward to indicate where the process must go to advance the cause of the project at hand. There are 150 million people of African descent in this region. There is a need to think about forming a broad, collegial community. According to the Minister, just as with church, once converted, the good word should not be kept to oneself, therefore, conference participants should spread the word as extensively as possible in the exciting possibility that we can make a difference. The initial focus was on six groups, including women, youth, children, and the disabled. A question was asked as to how these fit into the three working group structure, and whether they were all to be incorporated into the social working group. The answer was that each working group should focus on these six groups.

In conclusion to the discussion, Minister Naledi Pandor told the gathering that the greatest resources controlled by peoples of African descent lie in the African Diaspora. She pointed out that there are more African experts, for example, engineers outside the continent, than there are within it. How do we secure this and other resources? She also cautioned against focusing exclusively on problems but encouraged the determination to seek paths to the resolution of existing problems. The emphasis should be on defining solutions and interventions. She mentioned the initiative for a web portal to publish various deliberations and outcomes for universal access.

After the discussion, participants re-constituted in the three breakaway working groups focused on Political, Economic and Social issues.

Regional African Diaspora Conference: North America Political Working Group

The working group met in the Hyde Park West room on the 2nd floor. The moderators were Judge LaJune Lange and Dr. Emira Woods of the Institute for Policy Studies. Ms. Lauren Lange, Ms. Nwabisa Nzeyimana, and Mr. Machiel van Niekerk were the rapporteurs. The group began by articulating its guiding principles as follows:

To discuss ways or mechanisms through which the African Diaspora can create and maintain the political development of the African continent. Three main headings guided the discussions:

1. Structure – a key point that dominated the discussion
2. Function – what would be the role of the Diaspora?
3. Principles- set goals for the Diaspora

BUILDING BLOCKS:

Structure – This was a crucial part of the discussion. It was the primary focal point. *Suggestions for a Structure of the African Diaspora:* Participants sought to find ways to:

1. Link discussions in Diaspora with existing ones in AU: create a liaison office.
2. Strengthen ties with New York and Washington, D.C. AU offices.
3. Create database of experts within the African Diaspora.
4. Create a database of non-governmental organizations engaged with African Union. These should be both service and advocacy organizations.
5. The Diaspora should compile a database of information relevant to improvements in governance in Africa and disseminate that information through African diplomatic missions.
6. Have a series of Town Hall meetings that would bring together the Congressional Black Caucus, the National Black Caucus of State Legislators and other organizations of people of African descent. It was suggested that 25 town hall meetings be held over the next 18 months to lay the groundwork for engaging the Diaspora.
7. Set up a secretariat that would link the AU to Diaspora. The focus of the secretariat would be collaboration or partnership.
8. How can the AU structures be improved? One possibility is through voluntary assistance from relevant experts in the Diaspora.

The following challenges were identified

1. The AU being inter-governmental, and the African Diaspora in North America not being represented by any government.
2. Technical capacity and capability.
3. Staffing and funding of institutional initiatives.
4. Lack of coordination
5. Absence of authoritative communication channels

Suggested Functions for the African Diaspora:

1. Improved communications between the AU and the African Diaspora. One way to do that would be through a possible web portal.
2. Advocacy aimed at the US government, the UN and the Canadian government as well
3. Have a resource base – one suggestion was for the creation of a remittance fund that would be linked to the Western Union and other Money Transfer Organizations to use in facilitating communication between the AU and the Diaspora.

Principles for the Diaspora:

1. Preferential contract awards to people of African descent and preferential purchase of African goods and services by those in the Diaspora.
2. Curbing private military contractors – problem of land mines and militarism in Africa. End the use of private military or foreign contractors
3. Ensuring that there is gender balance in consultation and engagement with AU and the Diaspora.
4. Visionary leadership
5. Viable democracies and Democratic governance
6. Good governance
7. Protection of human rights and respect for the rule of law
8. Gender balance and gender equity.

PROGRAMS:

Financial investment

It was reiterated that a resource base should be created, principally to facilitate communication between the AU and the Diaspora. The suggestion was for a remittance fund drawn from the Diaspora and connected with Western Union and other Money Transfer Organizations.

Human investment:

1. Ensure that there is gender balance within the Diaspora.
2. Protect human rights and respect for the rule of law

3. Curbing private military contractors – problem of land mines.
4. Establish a think-tank that will harness African know how.

Productivity

1. Create database of experts within the African Diaspora
2. AU should develop guidelines to assist each country in the continent to use its skills.
3. Establish a think-tank that will harness African know how.
4. Utilize capacity of experts in U.S. and Canada.
5. Need for volunteers and lobbyists.

Infrastructure

1. Viable democracies
2. Good governance
3. More effective peacekeeping. The AU should take a concrete direction to resist private military contractors. Clear guidelines are needed on how to oppose private military contractors.
4. The Diaspora must first be operationalized before setting a political agenda.

Value Added

Policies/Politics

1. The Diaspora must begin to influence the national governments where they are citizens and residents.
2. Request effective structures for dealing with peace building and reconciliation in each African country that needs such mechanisms.
3. Determine how to influence the new AFRICOM initiative at the periphery to shape how it affects the continent.

THEMATIC ISSUES:

Communication:

1. Link discussions in Diaspora with existing ones in AU, probably through a liaison.
2. Strengthen ties with AU's New York and Washington, D.C. offices.
3. Improved communications between the AU and the African Diaspora. One way to do that would be through a web portal.
4. Advocacy
5. The Diaspora should compile a database of information and disseminate that information through diplomatic missions.

Resources:

1. Create a database of non-governmental organizations engaged with the African Union. These should be both service and advocacy organizations.
2. There is a need to consider how the structure of the Diaspora will be supported financially.
3. Create a pool of resources for funding a joint project between the African Diaspora and the AU. Tap wire transfer companies' remittances to fund pool for AU-Diaspora engagement.
4. The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) could be a vehicle through which the African Diaspora can influence opinion. It can be a means of conducting studies. Its advisory role would be quite useful in doing the aforementioned.

Institutionalization:

1. There has to be acknowledgement of the realities on the ground while developing some of these initiatives. Progressive steps can then be taken to strengthen these structures.
2. The focal point for the Diaspora should be the AU. It should be defined how we relate to the mandate of the AU. Set up a secretariat that would link the AU to Diaspora. The focus of the secretariat would be collaboration or partnership.
3. There should be joint execution of programs by the AU and the Diaspora. (Are there steps we can take to utilize and strengthen already existing structures like the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD)? The Diaspora does not necessarily need to have its own structure.
4. Build linkages between African and Diaspora NGOs.
5. Establish a standing committee for the Diaspora. Regarding the organization of the standing committee: recruit members; determine location. How can this committee be expanded, made more visible and engage the offices in Washington, D.C. and New York?
6. Ways to conceive of the Diaspora or in which the Diaspora can operate:
 - a. Setting up of a database of experts with skills and categorizing that database by profession, expertise, and skill set. The database will serve as a reference for knowing whom to contact and where to look.
 - b. Establish training programs.
7. The Diaspora should be considered when contacts are needed for expert consultation and specialized skills.
8. A series of town hall meetings should be held over the next 18 months to lay the groundwork for engaging the Diaspora.
9. The Diaspora should aim to promote the continent. The Diaspora should be seen as a vehicle for disseminating positive news about Africa, Africans and the Diaspora.
10. The Diaspora should advocate with African and North American governments on issues that relate to the development of Africa and its Diaspora.
11. The next steps for this project should be determined: the aims, objectives, goals, and expected outcomes. Also, the structure should not be too tightly

- constructed to allow for flexibility and more success, and for review, consolidation and improvements as this initiative moves forward.
12. The conference is part of an AU process to engage the Diaspora. The Diaspora should aim for sustainable collaboration, and then operationalize.
 13. What unifies the Diaspora as a whole: the desire to improve the lot of all people of African descent wherever they might be.
 14. There is a need to think continentally.
 15. Establish a think-tank that will harness African know-how throughout the Diaspora.
 16. Peacekeeping is an essential component of both domestic and international politics in many African countries. The AU should take concrete steps to resist private military contractors and mercenaries. Clear guidelines are needed on how to stop the use of private military contractors.
 17. The AU should call a meeting of Black organizations to begin a discussion about the Diaspora. This should include the Congressional Black Caucus, Black county and state legislators, and Black Parliamentarians.
 18. Under-utilized and non-utilized sectors of the Diaspora should be identified and engaged. Such engagement should be institutionalized.
 19. Viable plans needed to develop and operationalize definition, structure and functions of the United States of Africa.

Regional African Diaspora Conference

North America

Social Working Group

The Social Working Group met in the Grand Salon. The moderators were Ms. Mora McLean, President of Africa America Institute, and Mr. Howard Dodson of the Schomburg Center, New York. The rapporteurs were Ms. Aina Tebeje of AHEAD, Ms. Hema Odhav and Ms. Mpuni Sibiya.

PURPOSE

Based on AU's request for the Diaspora to assist it in its agenda which focuses on the continent, the purpose of the social work group is:

1. To develop recommendations and suggestions to the African Union on how the Diaspora can help Africa with cultural issues.
2. To address various themes such as education, human rights, social and economic empowerment, sports, human trafficking, etc.

FRAMEWORK

Working Question: What role can the African Diaspora play in African cultural relations?

Delegates agreed to divide various themes into four broad categories and decided to spend 30-40 minutes on each one in accordance with the recommendation of the moderator, Mr. Howard Dodson:

- a. Education
- b. Culture
- c. Health
- d. Reciprocity

Delegates decided to begin with the issue of education upon the recommendation of the moderator, Ms. Mora McLean.

BUILDING BLOCKS

PROGRAMS

EDUCATION

Questions/Suggestions/Recommendations:

1. Women's literacy problem should be a major discussion issue.

2. There is an education for all movement (began in Thailand). This could be the model.
3. Problem: focus becomes on numbers and not on the quality of education. Not enough teachers in secondary schools.
4. Upgrade the quality of education
5. Consider Fordham University's the Social Health method (suggests incorporating it)
6. Teacher training, primary, secondary
7. Education: two aspects
 - a. Expense
 - b. Resources: books, equipments, furniture, etc.
8. Education is primarily the responsibility of the state
9. Up to date books
10. Focus should not just be on formal education
11. Incorporate the private sector
12. Arrange for people to go to Africa so that they can have exposure, not just those who have the luxury to travel.
13. Educational reform to build a bridge between the Diaspora and Africa.
14. Suggestion of: Ten African Imperatives by U-NIA
15. Suggestion to learn from the Singapore model, etc. with precaution not to advocate the sole exportation of methods
16. The use of modern technology in educational systems
17. Suggestion that technology be used to create linkages between the Diaspora and the continent.
18. Creating workshop so they can learn about their shared history to make the curriculums.
19. Teach for Africa program to eliminate the shortage of teachers in Africa.
20. Question about the Millennium Goals: what are the difficulties in meeting those goals?
21. Clarification sought on the difference in the role governmental and non-governmental institutions in allocating finance.
22. Address adult literacy issue since parents' literacy impacts children's.
23. Two dimensions: materials (proposal on ways to deliver books) and development perspectives.
24. Take people who would like to go to Africa and build infrastructure.
25. Create, improve, and increase Satellite links
26. UNDP can pay to send those in Canada and the U.S. who would like go to Africa and help
27. Don't just give solutions but also resources
28. Vocational education
29. International service learning
30. USAID in the 1990s had initiative in the Latin American countries. Something similar could be devised for Africa.

31. Africa needs a policy statement that speaks across the board
32. Formulate a pilot model that works both ways:
33. "Eco teaching": joint development of online courses and development.
34. Social justice, math and science.
35. Address the language problem: teaching what we speak (English, Spanish, Portuguese, French as well as African languages.
36. Much of research resources about Africa reside outside Africa. Need for training in neutrality on both sides. Need also to explore the use of new information and other technologies.
 - a. Need for relevant books.
 - b. Practical Technical support
 - c. Technology: labs,
 - d. Securing teachers' pay, etc.
37. Policy recommendation: focus more holistically on education
38. Build schools: School for humanity along the lines of habitat for humanity.
39. E-education: \$12,000 school by satellite
40. UNDP should pay to build infrastructure in Africa
41. USAID and CIDA should collaborate with AU and the African Diaspora Education for leaders (presidents and ministers).

CULTURE

1. Discussion focused on tourism to observe and participate in cultural festivals, music, film, and drama.
2. How can the Diaspora help Africa in the promotion and marketing of cultural events?
3. Suggestions/Proposals:
 - a. Cultural events
 - b. Education a way to give value to African arts
 - c. Enhance cultural linkage between Africa, the Caribbean, Latin America,
 - d. Let's separate the economic aspect of culture and the social aspect of it; focus on the social aspect
 - e. Hip-hop summit on Africa somewhere in Africa to engage the artists in conversation... (Most are wealthy...)
 - f. Ownership of knowledge and product of culture
 - g. Facilitate the ability to travel from the Northern hemisphere to Africa and vice versa
 - h. The church has played a major role in destroying African culture and most are distancing themselves away due to this fact. However, religion can be a resource that can be used to promote culture
 - i. Culture is not just a commodity. It is a form of identity. A tool of survival. Example: for the first time in Venezuela there are more African embassies
 - j. Create networks between artists in the U.S. and in Africa
 - k. What is AU's agenda on the creation of cultural industry?

- l. Culture: synthesis of contradictions? The culture of conflict resolution, peace and development by harmonizing relationships among ourselves. Share experiences.
- m. Culture should play a role in building communities
- n. Cultures that create and support negative tendencies have to be challenged: Culture used to subjugate women should be challenged
- 4. Culture is tangible: building museums, libraries, writing, creating literature in children's mother tongue etc. Culture is also intangible: oral history, poetry, etc.
- 5. Build universities, cultural institutions, etc.
- 6. The issue of history and its place: Slavery for example, has a very powerful resonance in the history of the old African Diaspora. However, the focus should not be on slavery but being a part of one race. This should be the link between Africa and its Diaspora.
- 7. Slavery: a source of insecurity. It had deep and profound impact, and still affects contemporary Diaspora. The "Slave Route Project"-visited a number of countries to evaluate the impacts of slavery
 - a. Identification of slave towns in the U.S. to collect oral traditions, etc. from various parts and create a linkage
 - b. Recommend: Reports of UNESCO's Slave Routes project
- 8. State institutions can be involved in the promotion of African culture as well. An example is the Canadian museum. There are also excellent books that present African culture in good light. Examples include African Bead work: Book: Beads of Life? Promote and expose African art not taken seriously...the use of beads became fashionable. The church played a role in destroying the beads and associating them with backwardness.
- 9. There is a need for economic support for ownership of African production by Africans to avoid depiction of Africans in a negative way. Exhibitions to show what Africans are producing,
- 10. Image changing: eliminating ignorance about Africans and Africa

HEALTH

There were numerous comments from the health professionals:

- 1. Malaria is the number one killer in Africa. It kills a child every second. A continental plan that is geared at its eradication is necessary. The use of pesticides in one country and not the next does not help.
- 2. HIV-AIDS is a major problem. Many women contract HIV through forced sexual encounters, sometimes with spouses.
- 3. Health should be approached from a public health point of view. In addition, social aspects of health should be developed and emphasized. The social health industry, which views health as a collective reality, should be nurtured.

4. The Millennium Goal on Health: AU's actions and resources earmarked to respond should be inventoried.
5. Ethnicity, gender, race and health have crosscutting interactions that should be closely examined. It is also desirable to separate the responsibility of governments from citizens' responsibility.
6. Venezuela's example in public health through investment should be studied and used as a guide in Africa. Initiatives introduced include new doctors, educating ordinary people on health issues and impact on their lives. Advocacy as well as education.
7. The Cuban experience can be a model for positive change.
8. Preventable and/or curable infectious diseases should be addressed.
9. Health is a behavioral issue. Methods for fostering behavioral change should be incorporated into existing public health programs.
10. The ability to control the production of effective and affordable medicine within Africa is a key requirement for developing the capacity to increase appropriate response to public health challenges, but international structural impediments prevent such initiatives from thriving, for example, the World Bank asked Guyana to stop producing its own medicine. Strong representation of World Health Organization (WHO) and AU in World Bank is necessary.
11. Training: Cuba has one of the best medical training programs. Ask the AU to push to get more funds so that Cuban doctors and professors can go to Africa and share their expertise.
12. The Cuban medical model: the Premier model = is due to the fact the government is socialist. Therefore, there is a linkage between politics and the type of health care provided in a country.
13. A program to train public health communication and the creation of inventive media products that are appealing to appropriate groups
14. Replicate working models.
15. Health problem is linked to economics, poverty, etc. Work to stop the brain drain in Africa to apply skill of African experts to solving African problems.
16. Literacy is linked to disease. Health literacy should be taught and communicated in simple languages through the use of adult literacy volunteers
17. Many examples of public health here as well as in Africa. The best practices should be studied, documented and publicized to inspire change.
18. Churches must be used in campaigns to prevent HIV.
19. Brain drain is related to opportunities lacking in Africa and present in industrialized countries so providing those opportunities in Africa should be addressed.
20. Sun based water filter and other methods using alternative energy sources are recommended.
21. Mental health and the stigma attached to it should be explored. Trauma, the legacy of racism, etc. should be addressed as well.
22. Trauma is now being considered from the angle of historical legacy. For example, Dr. Joy DeGruy Leary, Professor at Portland State University,

- contends that Post-Traumatic Slavery Syndrome is a historical phenomenon that continues to afflict African Americans' psyche, and consequently, their physical health and well-being.
23. Trauma is not about what's wrong with one but how negative experiences impact on well-being in a manner that affects psychological health.
 24. Post slavery traumatic problems in relation to depression, obesity, and diabetes in communities should be addressed. Immigrants' rights to health hitherto ignored should be supported.
 25. Some forms of trauma are linked to politics. For example, war trauma: with reference to U.S. relations with Latin America.
 26. Dealing with mental health issues is very important for both the Diaspora and for Africans in Africa.
 27. Holistic approach: mental health, physical health and financial health all tied to spiritual health. Public health programs should draw on all these sources.
 28. Reparation is owed to peoples of African descent not only in financial terms, but also in rehabilitation.
 29. It is necessary to coordinate with the governments of various countries rather than randomly trying to resolve health issues.
 30. Traditional/Supplementary medicine such as from China should be incorporated
 31. A pool of volunteers, retirees, and students from the Diaspora should be used (in cooperation with governments).
 32. Educating women and girls. Women should learn to stand up for their rights. When they are better educated, they take care of their families' and their own health.
 33. The accountability of organizations and corporations that come to various African countries and are not responsible to anyone must be addressed.
 34. Increasing interest by the pharmaceutical industries in tropical countries has an impact on property rights. How can the property rights of indigenous people be protected? South Africa has developed legislation on protecting indigenous intellectual property. Other countries should follow suit.
 35. The role of institutions such as the World Bank and the WTO has to be carefully watched. Multilateral institutions are dishonest and not accountable to people affected by their policies and recommendations.
 36. Research, working on community level, should be encouraged to devise context specific solutions.
 37. Alcohol and tobacco companies have to be monitored and AU should embrace the tobacco policy in North America. Second hand smoking consequences should be addressed.
 38. Upcoming conference on sustainable development in Jamaica deals with health issues. There should be more cooperation between the Caribbean and Africa in the area of information exchange since the development challenges are so similar.
 39. Minority Health Foundation dealt with the same issues raised in this conference. Such efforts should be drawn upon in the effort to promote change.

40. A number of retirees would be interested in spending some time in Africa providing their expertise as volunteers. A database of such interested parties should be created and widely disseminated.
41. For groups such as the elderly and the disabled, the AU should provide a forum in which they are able to participate.

The Regional African Diaspora Conference North America Economic Working Group

The Economic Working Group met in the Hyde Park East room on the 2nd floor. The moderators were Professor Linda Hill of Harvard University and Dr. Barthwell Evans of the Barthwell Group. The Rapporteurs were Dr. Appolinaire Djikeng of NEPAD Council, Mr. Gareth Rees and Mr. Ivan Vosloo.

PURPOSE

An initial list of categories in which programs should be organized in Africa and the African Diaspora was generated as follows:

1. Areas of investment.
2. Programs on increasing productivity.
3. Programs to assist African in moving from import substitution to producing more goods for export.
4. Programs for further utilization of labor.
5. Programs for increasing capital and entrepreneurial partnership.

There was further discussion about more specific theme that should be discussed, which included agriculture, infrastructure development, direct investment from the African Diaspora to Africa and micro- financing. Questions arose as to whether a global African cooperation framework should be discussed first. It was agreed that we should not discuss the problems and challenges, but aim to define programs, which would just be one step in the process. The working group was reminded to be mindful of what brought us to the conference- to intersect the ongoing process with more organization and to infuse enthusiasm to channel our energies in practical terms.

The wider role of women, youth and the elderly was to remain the focus of all discussion.

The following suggestions were made:

1. Need for improved communications between the AU and the African Diaspora. One way to do that would be through a possible web portal.
2. Advocacy for African development.
3. Have a resource base – one suggestion was for some sort of remittance fund that would be linked to the Western Union and other wire services programs to facilitate communication between the AU and the Diaspora.
4. Preferential contract awards to people of African descent.

5. Curbing private military contractors – problem of land mines.
6. Ensuring that there is gender balance within the Diaspora.
7. Build viable democracies.
8. Encourage and promote good governance.
9. Protection of human rights and respect for the rule of law.
10. Gender balance.
11. The Diaspora should be seen as a vehicle for disseminating positive news about Africa, Africans, and people of African descent.
12. It was noted that since the conference is part of a process in engaging the Diaspora, the operationalization of the Diaspora as a 6th region should be taken seriously and addressed.

The deliberations were to be geared toward:

Focus – on Africans in the Diaspora

Function – what would be the role of the Diaspora?

Principles – set goals for the Diaspora

FRAMEWORK

The overarching question in order to come up with sustainable programs in the area of economics was then created - **What role can the African Diaspora play in the fast-track economic development of Africa?** A related question is: **How can the Diaspora begin to influence the national government?**

Ways to conceive of the Diaspora or in which the Diaspora can operate:

1. Establish a database of experts with skills that can help the homeland and categorizing that database, e.g. a database of lawyers, teachers, economists, etc. The database will therefore serve as a reference for knowing who to contact and where to look.
2. Set up training programs to build skills and capacity needed to move African development agenda forward.
3. Build linkages between African and African Diaspora NGOs.
4. Establish a think-tank that will harness African know how.
5. Create a pool of resources for funding a joint project between the African Diaspora and the AU.
6. Concerning peacekeeping, the AU should take a concrete direction to resist private military contractors and clear guidelines are needed on how to oppose private military contractors.

BUILDING BLOCKS

To address this issue, six categories were created. These are:

1. Financial investment
2. Human investment
3. Value added (creating products and services to export)
4. Hard/Soft Infrastructure
5. Productivity
6. Policy- Economic and Political

PROGRAMS:

Financial Investment:

Looking at investment and development mechanisms to increase investment within Africa.

1. Attendees at the conference for example, hold executive positions in North America; we need to identify them since they are the decision makers when it comes to business opportunities in their companies. We need to use them as a financial instrument to bring business opportunities to Africa.
2. Design a portal with packaged investment opportunities at the country and continent-level in order to attract investment to Africa.
3. Build relationships with African Chambers of Commerce, i.e. capital building; also engage business organization in Africa to focus on investing and investment opportunities within Africa.
4. Portal of communication must also be expanded to include what Africans in the Diaspora can offer as opposed to just investment opportunities in Africa.
5. The AU has not made a policy response to the fact that the Diaspora contributes at least three times as much as Africa gets from donor countries. Last year, the African Diaspora contributed 34 billion dollars to Africa. The AU has to have a policy recommending the establishment of a constituency in the Diaspora.
6. Clear communication about investment opportunities; capital and products from North America to Africans in the Diaspora specifically regarding venture capital funds and equity in the financial institutions.

Human Investment:

It was stated that the 21st century is the African century, thus investment is not just about GDP and finances but also about human capital especially in terms of housing, worker rights and equality.

The purpose of the following recommendations is to develop strategies that relate to improving the lives of Africans

1. Executives, for example those in the healthcare and pharmaceutical industries, can help focus on those programs that aim to improve the quality of life of those in Africa.
2. There must be the creation of databases/clearinghouses that show the capabilities and resources in Africa
3. Mentorship and internship programs are necessary for capacity building. Particular attention must also be paid to the growing niche of orphans and vulnerable children in Africa (human investment).
5. Existing organizations/networks must be utilized instead of creating new organizations/networks.
6. Build partnerships between educational institutions to provide training and info on human investment.
7. For the Diaspora, the focal point should be the AU.
8. There is a need to consider how the structure of the Diaspora will be supported.
9. It should be defined how we relate to the mandate of the AU.
10. The Diaspora should to compile a database of information and disseminate that information through diplomatic missions.
11. Is it possible to, and how can the AU structures be improved? One possibility is through voluntary assistance.
12. The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) could be a vehicle through which the African Diaspora can influence opinion; it can be a means of conducting studies. Its advisory role would be quite useful in doing the aforementioned.
13. Problems of staffing, funding and capacity for the Washington D.C. office
14. Utilize capacity of experts in U.S. and Canada.
15. Using the same idea applied in the instance of an airplane emergency, where you put the oxygen mask on the other person before putting it on yourself, the African Diaspora has to organize itself first before utilizing the resources of the AU.
16. The Diaspora reaffirms the principles of the AU.
17. It was announced that the Kenyan ambassador offered assistance of the ambassadors here in the U.S. to engage the Diaspora.
18. How can we influence the new AFRICOM initiative at the periphery to shape how it affects the continent?
19. Request that each country in Africa have effective structures for dealing with peace building and reconciliation.

Value Added

The purpose of the following recommendations is to develop necessary strategy so that resources can be used to benefit individual African countries and the continent.

1. Whenever African leaders meet especially in North America, there should be a business or trade fair so that leaders can about existing investment opportunities.
2. Since economic growth in Africa is fueled by resource extraction, the members of the Diaspora need to work with Africans to more effectively use their own natural resources by processing the raw materials in Africa instead of exporting them to be processed.
3. Trade policy is extremely important. Legislative framework is present in the form of the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act. The African Diaspora can organize to utilize this legislation.
4. Build on traditional activities and organizations within such a fashion where producers (mainly women) gain economic benefit and products what they create are of international standards so that they can be sold in international markets.
5. Have networks to build better communication about strategies to protect intellectual property in Africa.
6. Consider that cross border exports are just as important as global exports from Africa.
7. Develop strategies for positive consumerism (food security and market linkages).
8. Create database of products and services in Africa that can be used by businesses in the Diaspora. (There is a need to concentrate on high-end services that will not move).

Productivity

The purpose is of this part of the deliberation is to develop strategies or programs for the members of the African Diaspora to help with economic development as it pertains to productivity. The following suggestions were made:

1. Develop programs as a training mechanism for the implementation of productivity. Thus education is important.
2. Africans in the Diaspora who engage in management consulting must share info in order to help organizations and companies increase their productivity. The African Diaspora is the most educated immigrant group in the US (43.8 %). Thus Africa should utilize these educated people instead of hiring foreign consultants.
3. There must be a way to measure productivity. A system to track productivity must be put in place.
4. Since power systems fail regularly, these institutions/infrastructure must be stabilized in order for increased productivity.
5. Questions were raised however as to how we use the knowledge of engineers/scientists in the Diaspora to assist with productivity in Africa. In other words, how do we diffuse this knowledge to work in and for Africa?

Infrastructure:

Hard Infrastructure:

1. Create stable energy sources.
2. Educate policy makers to embrace more efficient, necessary intra-communication infrastructure since telecommunication infrastructure is pivotal.
3. Transportation is also pivotal. Mobilization must also be done in this area (roads, transport, energy).
4. Enhance partnerships with established organizations/institutions such as NEPAD. For example, the African Diaspora can invest in the programs sponsored by NEPAD.

Soft Infrastructure

1. Due to rampant corruption, the Diaspora has a role in developing the capability to enforce contracts and strengthen legal institutions through partnerships with national legal organizations.
2. Regulatory framework and institutions, which are lacking must be established or strengthened. Partnerships must be put in place for this to occur.
3. Intellectual property must be protected.
4. The African Diaspora must assist African companies and younger African professionals by participating in networks that would allow for the strengthening of trade relations.
5. Build partnerships across a cross section of professions and businesses in order to enhance opportunities.

Policies/Politics

The following questions guided the discussion:

- How does the African Diaspora influence African politics?
- How would the Diaspora be represented?
- How can the African Diaspora influence their own governments to be more favorable and have more favorable policies towards Africa?

Several suggestions were made in response to the questions above, as follows:

1. Lobby African parliaments/legislatures so that members of the African Diaspora for whom dual citizenship is not an option (Diaspora members originally from Africa) can once again receive voting rights/citizenship status so that they can in turn participate in electing the best possible leaders.

2. The role of the media must be taken into consideration especially their role in disseminating what is discussed today and in future meetings of this nature.
3. There should be a mechanism through which the Diaspora can impact the AU effectively, meaning that the Diaspora should consider Africa as a whole.
4. There must be exchanges of mutual education. The Diaspora, particularly those in government positions or in bureaucracies must assist in creating opportunities for their governments to assist Africa.

THEMATIC ISSUES:

Institutionalization

What suggestions would the Diaspora recommend regarding how to implement or institutionalize the above recommendations or programs?

Structure – a key point, which dominated the discussion.

1. The Diaspora must be organized so that they can have a greater, effective input in review teams of Africa.
2. Partnerships must be fostered. Mechanisms must be put in place to contact organizations.
3. There must be consistency and constant, regular communication.
4. Mechanisms must be put in place to involve the youth/future leaders in these types of discussions.
5. An umbrella organization of the Diaspora must be created. In the AU for example, there exists the Pan African Parliament. (Look at Italian Parliament). We need to approach organizations that we wish to partner with as a nucleus, as our own entity, which interacts with other entities. This nucleus or sub-committee will help to develop the criteria to interface with the AU. Membership criteria of this sub-committee which takes into consideration the individual and other organizations, includes
 - a. Demonstrated involvement with Africa
 - b. Organizations that have proven capabilities that Africa needs and which also have substantial membership.
 - c. The Diaspora must start to act as a region and in forming a Diaspora organization. Willing participants are eligible to participate. The organization will be inclusive. Members should contribute financially. The media should be used as an educational tool
 - d. Criteria for inclusion and participation should be transparent
6. Link discussions in Diaspora with existing ones in AU through a liaison.
7. Strengthen ties within New York and Washington, D.C. AU offices.
8. Create database of experts within the African Diaspora

9. Create a database of non-governmental organizations engaged with African Union. These should be both service and advocacy organizations.
10. Have a series of town hall meetings that would bring together the Congressional Black Caucus, the National Black Caucus of State Legislators and other organizations of people of African descent.
11. Set up a secretariat that would link the AU to Diaspora. The focus of the secretariat would be collaboration or partnership.
12. The AU should call a meeting of Black organizations to start a discussion about the Diaspora.
13. It should be considered whether there are sectors of the Diaspora that are not being utilized.
14. Institutionalize the engagement of the Diaspora with the AU
15. How do we define the United States of Africa?
16. There has to be acknowledgement of the realities on the ground while developing some of these issues. Steps can then be taken to strengthen these structures.
17. Are there steps we can take to utilize and strengthen already existing structures like NEPAD (New Partnership for African Development)? The Diaspora does not necessarily have to have its own structure.
18. Identification of weaknesses within the Diaspora:
 - a. Lack of coordination
 - b. Absence of institutional channels to facilitate engagement with AU
19. What unifies the Diaspora as a whole: the desire to improve the African people as a whole?
20. There is a need to think continentally.
21. The Diaspora should aim to build up the continent and advocate with governments on issues that relate to Africa and the Diaspora.
22. There's the need to establish a notion of where we want this project to go, what we aim to do. Also, the structure should not be too tightly constructed to allow for flexibility and more success, and to solidify as this initiative moves forward.
23. It was suggested that 25 town hall meetings be held over the next 18 months to lay the groundwork for engaging the Diaspora.

Resources

As members of the Diaspora engaged in organizing, what specific suggestions can be made in order to acquire resources? What recommendations can be made to the AU for resources?

1. Subscriptions
2. Cultivate financial institutions (banks, funds) that is, either form new financial institutions or partner with existing ones in order to create wealth - SELF FUNDING.

3. Fundraising
4. Approach individuals outside of the Diaspora who have a great interest in Africa and the African Diaspora.
5. Support Diaspora and African businesses that support the Diaspora and Africa (reward those who do business in/for Africa).

Communication

How can we improve communication between the Diaspora and the AU in order to form stronger ties?

1. Link up with organizations or networks or firms for example: The African Ambassadors in Washington DC as a means for communication.
2. Organize a mechanism through which the Diaspora community can participate and be present in forums/venues where there are multiple African leaders/officials in attendance.
3. Put into place a mechanism to coordinate or interact with different segments of the Diaspora. This interaction will be unique according to region or segment.
4. Put into place a mechanism to coordinate or interact as a Diaspora as a whole with the AU
5. The recommendation was made to have a standing committee for the Diaspora. Proposals should be made now and, no need to wait for AU.
6. Regarding the organization of the standing committee: recruit members; have location. How can this committee be expanded, made more visible and engage the offices in Washington, D.C. and New York?
7. The Diaspora should be considered a contact establishment.
8. It was suggested that 25 town hall meetings be held over the next 18 months to lay the groundwork for engaging the Diaspora.
9. What the Diaspora should aim for is collaboration on a sustainable basis, and then it should be determined how it can operationalize.
10. Regarding the organization of the standing committee: recruit members; have location. How can this committee be expanded, made more visible and engage the offices in Washington, D.C. and New York?
11. There should be a joint execution of programs in the AU and the Diaspora.

During the working luncheon in the Petit Salon, Ambassador Amina Ali, African Ambassador to the United States addressed conference participants.

Remarks by Ambassador Amina Ali, African Union Ambassador to the United States

Ambassador Amina Ali made the following comments and suggestions:

She urged the members of the African Diaspora not to lose sight of the conditions in Africa. How well can we educate our children when there are no educational facilities, or the facilities are so dilapidated as to be non-existent? She also informed delegates about the latest developments in Africa, including e-education, the use of satellites and other tools of information and communications technology, and the possibilities for exchange between Africans in the continent and those in the Diaspora.

Ambassador Ali also emphasized the need for specific curriculum for children to minimize dropout rates and respond to other problems. In addition, she encouraged delegates to ask questions such as: how do we link initiatives in various organizations, continents, and institutions? Health issues also impact profoundly on social structures, relations and on education. For example, a number of teachers have died of HIV-AIDS. There are also serious problems with TB and Malaria. Africa needs to train more teachers to replace those lost to fatal diseases and the HIV-AIDS pandemic and also increase the number of teachers to cope with overly high student-teacher ratio.

According to Ambassador Amina Ali, some of the priorities that should be focused upon include problems of staffing, funding and capacity for the Washington D.C. office. There is also the need to utilize the capacity of experts in the U.S. and Canada, and a need for volunteers and lobbyists.

In the discussion that followed, the suggestions made include:

1. Using the same idea applied in the instance of an airplane emergency, where you put the oxygen mask on the other person before putting it on yourself, the African Diaspora has to organize itself first before mobilizing resources for the AU. The Diaspora should reaffirm the principles of the AU.
2. The need to contact the Kenyan ambassador who offered the assistance of the African ambassadors here in the U.S. to engage the Diaspora.
3. Need to find ways of influencing the new AFRICOM initiative at the periphery to shape how it affects the continent.
4. Request that each country in Africa have effective structures for dealing with peace building and reconciliation.

After the discussions, conference participants returned to their working groups to continue deliberations.

Day 1: A Report back by the Working Groups

All working groups re-assembled in the Grand Salon to give reports on their deliberations. Discussions were directed toward identifying overarching themes that all conference participants considered in their deliberations. The consensus was that the conference sought to establish the framework for active and fruitful interaction between Africans in the continent and Diaspora. To this end, the following tasks were considered crucial:

Collective Databank of resources, skills, expertise, organization
Reciprocal capacity building, sharing best practices of organizations and countries with good models, e.g. Cuba
Channel resources to meet needs and engender success

Building blocks:

1. Strategic programs that improve the quality of lives of African peoples, and which can be institutionalized.
2. Improve the image of Africa and Diaspora among their peoples and in the media
3. Improved communication among organizations in the Diaspora and continent
4. Dissemination of information on AU in North America
5. Utilizing cross section of skilled, knowledgeable and experienced individuals

Policy Principles-suggestions/recommendations to AU:

1. Education is foundational and crucial to individual, national and collective interests of Africans.
2. All things being equal, more weight should be given to African Diaspora. Opportunities should be offered to Diaspora

Political Working Group's report

1. Diaspora as 6th Region must be operationalized
 - a. Within Existing AU structures
 - b. In new structures

All Africans in the Diaspora need to give guidance on AU engagement with 6th region.

The Diaspora must organize itself. Structures need to be institutionalized. The questions are: what exists? What are the weaknesses?

The OAU paved the way for the AU. There's need for more vigilance on the socio-economic progress thus far, and what else needs to be done. There is a review process ongoing in the AU to assess the weaknesses. The UN also should be engaged. This is best done through prior examination and analysis of the African ambassadors and their

interests within the United Nations, and then to find ways of building coalitions with them. A main goal of the AU is to encourage international cooperation. In essence, collaboration with African ambassadors in the UN is in line with AU objectives.

Overview

- Structure
- Function
- Principles

STRUCTURE

1. Strengthening ties with existing structures within the AU
2. Database of experts to build the capacity of proposed liaison office to provide support.
3. Database of nongovernmental organizations that are engaged in Africa
4. Have a series of town hall meetings to disseminate information about this process and efforts thus far.

Challenges

1. The AU being inter-governmental
2. Technical capacity and capability
3. Staffing and funding

FUNCTION

1. Improve communications between the AU and the Diaspora.
2. Advocacy aimed at the US government, the UN and the Canadian government.
3. Resource base: creation of a remittance fund that will be linked to western union or other money transfer services.

PRINCIPLES

1. Preferential purchase of African goods and services by those in the Diaspora.
2. Ending the use of private military or foreign contractors.
3. Gender balance and gender equity.
4. Democratic governance
5. Visionary leadership
6. Peace building and reconciliation

Social Working Group Report

CULTURE

The Nairobi Plan of Action for the Development of Cultural Industries in Africa should be fore-grounded in any discussions on commercial aspects of cultural production. Issues of identity are also fundamental and are derived from a people's connections with their culture. The issue of identity is deeply affected by the experiences of

colonialism. One legacy of colonialism is that we have a heightened sense of conflict, contradiction, and lack of self-confidence as people of African descent. Whether it concerns relationships or within the community, peace and development must be used to overcome these contradictions.

Decolonization is an agenda item that has been uppermost in the priorities identified by the OAU, and given the massive human and material resources devoted to accomplishing it; there is some hope that soon, all of Africa would be decolonized. However, decolonization has political, social and economic aspects, and what has been accomplished thus far is more formal political decolonization. There is now need for strong, unrelenting efforts at economic and social decolonization if Africa is to reach its full potential. Africa has immense human resources. We must find ways to use and turn them into instruments that can generate gains in the world market. Additionally, more museums and cultural institutions should be established.

Music is one of the main expressions of African culture. Today, many African or African Americans make the music but they do not own the economic resources and structures that control the music. Consequently, producers and financiers of the music industry distort the true messages of many artistes. In the long run, the system smothers their power of thought and promotes degrading and demoralizing images of not only themselves but of Black people. It is imperative that control be gained in the music industry, which exploits black artists and promotes stereotypes.

Culture is a weapon of structure. Culture was and is used primarily to unite. However, it could also be used to divide and oppress. There are numerous historical instances, most recently during South African apartheid regime and other situations in which culture is used to oppress African peoples. Culture should be used to build our self-esteem as a people. We should focus more on social dimensions of culture rather than on the economic dimension. When we talk about culture we have to be careful. We cannot see culture as a commodity. It is something that needs to be embraced and understood.

There must be a certain degree of probity with reference to culture. African culture should not only be marketed, but should be seen as a tool of survival. Africans should take pride in their culture and use it to build self-confidence and unity.

Culture should play a role in building communities. Relevant to this is the spirit of ubuntu: (I am because you are). This is a philosophy that is now (in large part) missing among Africans, and it should be revived. The large numbers of young Black men in US prisons makes it clear that something needs to be done to turn the situation around in the African Diaspora in America. However, we should not be complacent, since this sort of problem is experienced, not only in the U.S., but in other countries where people of African descent are a minority.

The subordination of women confers negative status on them. There are many cultural practices that have a negative impact and which retard development. We don't understand who we are, our background or how we came to be where we are. We are one race, and that is what unites us. Whether we came from the Caribbean or from America or England, all Black people have one common origin, and that is Africa. Culture is tangible and intangible. To reinforce the tangible elements of culture, we

need institutions and more literature in African languages, not only in English and other European languages. Children who speak a different language cannot identify with and internalize with the European languages. The intangible aspects of culture affect our self-perception, psychological condition and are affected by deep and often painful historical experiences such as the slave trade, which spawned the insecurities and stereotypes about black people that exist today. Colonialism and other manifestations of imperialism also have left a deep mark on the consciousness of people of African descent. We must struggle to regroup and rebuild so that we can move into the future stronger and more encouraged.

HEALTH

Malaria is the number one killer in Africa. It kills a child every 20 seconds in African nations. We need a continental program to fight this scourge. The development index needs to improve at a faster rate than right now. Health is a collective reality, not an individual one.

Assistance to combat Disease in Africa

1. Focus on analyzing data on social indicators particularly those concerning health.
2. Governmental planning: Need for increased awareness of what the government is doing in order to devise focused and appropriate responses.
3. Resources needed to facilitate effective response.
4. Need to map relationship between ethnicity, health, age, and gender in relation to mortality rates.
5. Child development needs to be improved so fewer children fall victim to countless curable diseases.
6. Statistics and health information should be translated to the community level so that the people within Black communities know how to improve their actions to improve their health. Health is a behavioral issue. In the Black impoverished communities within the U.S., the youth need to become better educated not only in STD prevention, but in also in the nutritional aspects of health.
7. Health is also socio-economic because it is linked to poverty. There are reportedly, 50,000 Nigerian doctors currently in the U.S. These are not just any doctors, but specialists like brain surgeons and heart surgeons etc. These doctors were mostly educated in Nigeria but yet they are in the United States as some of the best doctors. Other African countries face a similar challenge. The AU should organize a group that can send doctors to Africa to help with health care.

Mental Health

There is a stigma attached to mental health even now in the 21st century. Trauma in all its dimensions is related to violence and accidents. Also, there is a branch

of mental health known as historical trauma. This concerns historical phenomena such as slavery. Until we solve those problems, the bigger problems will not be solved. For example, studies have shown that of every 4 obese people, 3 have their obesity related to a mental health issue like depression. People who also suffered through genocides and other acts of mass trauma can also display mental health problems. African nations must expand the protection of indigenous knowledge.

Overview

- Education
- Culture
- Health

Education

Discussions focused on the areas of greatest need such as the dearth of teachers, and the need for greater skill building, sophisticated curriculum and better schools.

Health

1. Physical Health (diseases etc.)
2. Mental Health
3. Traditional medicine

Economic Working Group Report

Building blocks

1. Financial investment
2. Human investment
3. Productivity

Policies or politics

1. Diaspora should organize to eliminate barriers to African trade
2. Institutionalization
3. The need to organize information so that it is readily available.
4. Infrastructural development

Health

Health is also a vital part of economic development. There was a proposal for the eradication of malaria. The AU should organize a conference assessing health challenges while setting forth goals.

Economy/Trade

1. Impact that China and India is having on Africa's future

2. Globalization - has political and social angles but the economic angle is the most important.
3. Transportation (highways, vehicles, decent roads)
4. Productivity - How can work be made profitable enough so that more people can participate in, and gain from the economy?
5. Many African countries only have one export product, which is usually an agricultural commodity such as cotton or oil etc. These products however, only benefit the countries that control the world market and refine the commodities. A goal that we are trying to reach is to expand Africa's capacity for self-production, meaning that there is a need for African countries to build their own factories and produce products that they consume and exchange in the world market.
6. Brazil, India, China and Russia have protectionist trade policies. 90% of U.S. trade with Africa is in the extractive industries, particularly oil, gas, and mining.
7. Many participants recommended that taxation would be a great way to generate revenue.
8. Proactive and coherent Economic Planning: The civil society and the private sector need to communicate better for mutual understanding. Relationships must be built in order for Africa to be self-sustaining.
9. Brain Drain: The crisis of the loss of African professionals: Within the last 10 years, 20,000 African professionals per annum are reported as leaving the African continent for France, the U.S., and England. Many nurses have also left for English speaking countries.
10. Need to support increased land ownership and housing to build the capacity of people for self-reliance.
11. Need for overhaul, rehabilitation, increase of telecommunications technology and infrastructure.
12. Focus on deforestation and how it affects the habitat. Suggestion of a carbon dioxide/emissions tax.
13. Access to clean water and other basic human needs would radically improve the lot of all Africans.

Good governance: Crucial component of economic development

1. Increased guarantee and protection of Human Rights and Civil Liberties.
2. Need to guarantee human security and recognize that this is a primary responsibility of the government.
3. Need to eradicate corruption.
4. Need to foster good governance.
5. Strategies needed to devise means of encouraging Multinational Corporations to move in a direction in which they do not exploit Africa as a continent.
6. The arms trade and its impact on conflicts in the African continent have generated massive amounts of arms and ammunitions, particularly in the

- poorest countries and regions. The Black Market has led to high levels of corruption. We need to monitor how we look and what we consume.
7. Dr. Joyce Leary's Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome gives some explanations for the connection between psychic and physical well-being.

Finally, the Diaspora must organize itself. Structures need to be institutionalized. The questions we need to ask are: what has been done? What are the weaknesses? There is currently a debate that replicates the division between the Casablanca and Monrovia groups stemming from the 1963 Nkrumah proposal for immediate African Unity. The OAU paved the way for the AU. A close watch needs to be kept on the socio-economic progress and what else needs to be done. There is an ongoing review process within the AU to assess the weaknesses. The best way to engage the UN is to examine the African ambassadors and their interests within the United States. A main goal of the AU is to encourage international cooperation.

Regional African Diaspora Conference

Day 2- June 23, 2007

Plenary Session

Purpose:

To discuss ideas on how each attendee can go forth and diffuse the lessons and information learnt in this conference.

Framework:

How can we as members of the African Diaspora keep the process going? How can we move forward in light of the recommendations that were made at this conference?

Recommendations:

1. Become chairs and moderators in our own communities and organizations and replicate this process.
2. Start discussion in popular forums such as the upcoming Congressional Black Caucus and the Black Family event to begin dissemination and increase the pool of committed Africans in the Diaspora.
3. Work with Greek lettered organizations (fraternities and sororities) and other youth councils; for example, next year is the AKA's centenary celebration. This would provide an excellent forum for knowledge to be shared and for the processes of this conference to be continued.
4. Identify those in your area of specialty and team up with such person/s or organization/s.
5. Use the media (newspapers, radio, etc.) to diffuse information and to make others aware.
6. Place an emphasis on capacity building, concept building and competency building especially if the same framework is to be used.
7. Map abilities and capacities of individuals and organizations that are already available.

8. Create website or portal with information of conference and recommendations. Website or portal may also include or be a place where people can make suggestions and proposals and also list how and in what capacities they can participate and what organizations they represent or have partnerships/linkages with.
9. Creation of sub-regional work groups with reference points.
10. Use the church as a channel of diffusing information.
11. Since interaction between Africa and the Caribbean nations are not yet optimal, the relations between the Caribbean and Africa must be improved. Need to educate each about the other. Note also that there is a strong linkage with the Caribbean (members of the African Diaspora and political leaders or parliamentarians), and with respect to the EU, there is cooperation.
12. Be involved in writing own history.
13. Use existing organizations/networks. For example, the African American Unity Caucus (AAUC) is in the Beltway in Washington DC and has various contacts. It is one of several organizations that can engage others in policy discussions. There are numerous other organizations, some focused on scholarship and research, including the African Heritage Studies Association, African Heritage Association, and African Studies Association. There are also many business concerns and professional associations that can engage this process.
14. Incorporate the youth into discussions.
15. Develop plan of action at the following three stages.
 - c. Before the fact: to create a momentum
 - d. Video conferencing during the conference will help us to develop links with civil society.
 - e. After the fact: carrying out or executing the process.
16. Identify and promote positive images of Africa.
17. Focus on concept of seeking to unify Africa and the African Diaspora. (Never again should we have to meet to discuss working together). Thus, there must be collaboration across all communities.
18. Communication lines should be strengthened through the media and other groups. We are building on a whole range of groups that came before we did. There is continuity in what we do; thus, there are milestones in the scope of the African Diaspora.

19. Aim to be active citizens, not passive ones. Do not dwell on the past.

The second day of the Consultative Planning Meeting of the North American Diaspora Conference was devoted to developing and adopting a preliminary action plan. There was much discussion and debate, particularly concerning the perception by delegates from Canada that the proposed representational structure being discussed for adoption – moderators of each working group as representatives of the region at the 2008 AU summit – would marginalize Canada and overly favor the US. After much discussion, the proposal and plan of action were accepted and approved unanimously. The draft plan of action is reproduced below.

**Consultative Planning Meeting
North American African Diaspora
(US & Canada)
Draft Preamble**

*"Each generation out of relative obscurity must discover its mission, fulfill it, or betray it." -
Frantz Fanon*

1. Living in the context of the challenges and opportunities of globalization;
2. Deeply appreciative of the African Union's vision and foresight in designating the African Diaspora as the 6th Region of the continent and in calling for the building of partnerships between Africa and the African Diaspora ("the Diaspora");
3. Compelled by the mutual need for capacity building and the sharing of resources including capital, expertise, and best practices;
4. Determined to form networks between Africa and the African Diaspora in order to improve quality of life, governance and human rights; and
5. Committed to insuring that our efforts focus on women, youth, children and the disabled;

We, the members of the Consultative Planning Meeting of the North American African Diaspora (US and Canada), hereby commit ourselves to embark on the following strategic priorities:

Establish a framework to:

1. Compile and develop collective databases of resources, skills, expertise and organizations;
2. Promote reciprocal capacity-building, sharing best practices of organizations and countries;
3. Identify, secure and channel resources to support initiatives directed at achieving sustainable development.

Building blocks:

1. Create mechanisms for effective communication between organizations in the Diaspora and in the continent.
2. Stimulate and extend dialogue across the North American African Diaspora.
3. Clarify status of 6th region and its participation in the structures of the AU.
4. Pursue activities that build on the initiatives emanating from the AU.
5. Disseminate information on the AU in North America.
6. Strengthen existing institutions and organizations that promote development.
7. Develop partnerships amongst all sectors of society.
8. Establish strategic programs that improve the quality of life of African peoples.
9. Promote accurate images of Africa and the Diaspora.
10. Explore opportunities to engage the youth such as the establishment of a Model AU.

Preliminary Action Plan

Short-Term

- I. **Database**
 - a. Create existing contacts database of conference participants
 - b. Establish criteria and categories for database
- II. **Improved Communications**
 - a. Establish AU goals more clearly and effectively
- III. **Resource Generation & Channeling**
 - a. Make known to potential and existing resource persons in Diaspora what has been created and implemented thus far. Many potential resource persons are unaware of AU's existence. Existing resource persons need to know that progress is being made to assure contributors that their investment will be fruitful and beneficial to themselves *and* the AU.
 - b. Establish further contacts among prominent Africans in the Diaspora
- IV. **Promote Accurate Images of Africa**

Support and Host programs, which recognize accomplishments of Africans and African Diaspora

Long-Term

- I. **Database**
 - a. Distribution of information through contacts
- II. **Improved Communications**
- III. **Resource Generation & Channeling**
 - a. Incorporate newly established resources into database
 - b. Use database to locate areas of need
 - c. Implement resources where need exists
- IV. **Promote Accurate Images of Africa**
 - a. Incorporate History of Diaspora into African Curriculum
 - b. Lobby for change in North American curriculums to present Africans and African Diaspora in a more expansive and positive light.
 - c. Push for production and distribution of positive films, documentaries, books, anthologies, etc.
 - d. Distribution of new resources through volunteers within database