

OUTCOMES DOCUMENT OF THE AFRICAN UNION-AFRICAN DIASPORA IN EUROPE REGIONAL CONSULTATIVE CONFERENCE

PREAMBLE

1. African Diaspora delegates in Europe met at a Regional Consultative Conference co-organized by the African Union (AU) and the Government of South Africa in Paris, France, on 11-12 September 2007. The delegates were drawn from France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, The Netherlands, Germany, Sweden, Switzerland and Belgium, among others.
2. The Conference was one of the six regional consultative fora organized by the AU world-wide with the view to harnessing African Diaspora contributions and input towards the AU's African Diaspora Ministerial meeting to be held in South Africa in November 2007, and the Summit of Heads of State and Government scheduled for early 2008 in the same country.
3. In their deliberations in the Opening Ceremony, two Plenary Sessions, and the seven Commissions, participants at the Conference were guided by the objectives that are to inform the AU's 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

4. Accordingly, the Conference was organized under the theme: “Towards the realization of a United and Integrated Africa and its Diaspora”.
5. The Conference was opened by South Africa’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma; Ambassador Mahamat Annadif, AU’s representative to the European Union; Ambassador Raymond Lafontant Jr, representative of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) to the European Union; and Dr Jinmi Adisa, representing the Chairperson of the AU Commission, Prof. Alpha Konare.
6. In her address, Minister Dlamini Zuma interrogated the objectives of the Conference and challenged participants to reflect and engage in practical action towards the advancement of the African Agenda, including the strengthening of linkages between Africa and its Diaspora.
7. Dr Adisa, in his conveyance of the message of Prof. Konare, thanked the Government of South Africa for its commitment to carrying out the mandate bestowed on it by the AU, and gave participants an assurance of the AU’s determination to ensure that the African Diaspora becomes an intrinsic component of the Union.
8. For his part, Ambassador Lafontant emphasised the importance of self-reliance and the role that the African Diaspora can play in the development of Africa.
9. The Conference was also addressed in the Opening Ceremony by Prof Thandika Mkandawire, Director at the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD), who gave a characterization of the African Diaspora in Europe and the challenges confronting this constituency, African Governments and the AU.

10. The Conference's plenaries and commissions were organized around the following sub-themes: the African Diaspora in Europe; media and image building; global dialogue, international relations, peace and stability; economic cooperation and sustainable development; historical, socio-cultural and religious commonalities and challenges; vulnerable groups (women, youth and children); knowledge sharing; and health and well-being.

OBSERVATIONS

11. The Conference noted the enduring legacy of slavery, especially in its current manifestation in the form of human trafficking, racism, discrimination and xenophobia; and that Africa's place in the global system is largely a function of the legacy of slavery and colonialism.

Furthermore, the Conference observed that:

12. The composition of the Diaspora in Europe is defined and determined through voluntary and involuntary migration, including asylum seekers; and that new migrants, some of whom are political asylum seekers, are influenced by different factors.

13. The location and distribution of the Diaspora in Europe is influenced by historical and colonial linkages with their African countries of origin.

14. The people who leave for economic reasons are in general the most able and capable and thus this leads to Brain Drain from the African continent.

15. There is currently limited interaction, not least economic interface, between the Diaspora and the mother continent; and the AU can provide a channel of communication for the Diaspora.

16. Institutional racism and discrimination, including distortions in the media, affect the plight of the Diaspora at the work place and the broader society.
17. The Diaspora in Europe is also confronted by lack of organizational unity.
18. There is a need to create mechanisms for a sustained engagement of the media and effective communication in Europe to promote a balanced view of Africans and their continent. And it also observed that such mechanisms may include building a co-ordinated approach to monitoring and engaging the media in Europe; developing the capacity of the African media in Europe; building partnerships between the African media and media groups/organisations in the Diaspora; and building a partnership with the AU and the media in Europe to profile African challenges, initiatives, leaders and successes.
19. There is a linkage between migration and development, and, therefore, the need for Africa and its Diaspora to develop joint projects in areas of infrastructure development in Africa; small, medium and micro enterprises; and programmes to enhance entrepreneurs and entrepreneurial skills in Africa with a particular emphasis on women and the youth.
20. There is a need for the effective utilization of Remittances as a vehicle for development in Africa.
21. There is a need for collaboration between the African private sectors on the continent and the Diaspora, especially with respect to issues such as access to capital, micro finance, joint ventures, barriers to trade, and investment opportunities in Africa.

22. Because of the changing nature of global political-economic environment, civil society has an influential role to play in peacekeeping and conflict prevention.
23. The African Diaspora has the potential to play both positive and negative roles on the African Continent; and that the latter role includes financing wars on the continent or aligning themselves with certain groups which fuel the conflict.
24. In the context of the “war on terror” stereotypes, immigrants from Africa are often accused of involvement in terrorist activities; and that, consequently, some of the European Union Member States have declared solidarity with such immigrants a crime, punishable by imprisonment.
25. Some members of the African Diaspora who may want to return to Africa are often discouraged by the less favourable political and economic conditions in their home countries.
26. The Diaspora has a role to play in helping Africa address challenges of scarce skills, research and innovation, strengthening the higher education sector, and promoting technology transfer to the continent.
27. The rights of women and children, especially those in post conflict situations and those affected by domestic violence, are invariably not protected; and that in this regard, many continental and international legal instruments that have been adopted by the AU Members States have not been ratified. A gap still exists in the implementation of these legal instruments across African countries and between Africa and the world.
28. Women continue to be marginalized particularly in the decision making process; access to land, information, education and other fundamental rights in Africa.

29. There is a need to promote solidarity between the youth in Africa and that of the African Diaspora in Europe, including exploring youth exchange programmes.
30. There is a need to promote Africa-awareness and consciousness among the African youth in the Diaspora.
31. There is a need for the availability of a collective database in order to enhance effective networking through information sharing.
32. The health sector is faced with many challenges in Africa, not least of which is the absence of partnership with health practitioners in the Diaspora.
33. There is a need for incentives to retain medical professionals in Africa and to encourage those in the Diaspora to plough back the new acquired skills.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Conference recommended that the African Diaspora in Europe should:

34. Build information database on African history to promote access to and understanding of Africa's history.
35. Lobby for the promulgation of legislation in support of the plight of the African Diaspora both in Europe and countries of origin.
36. Identify representatives to participate in AU deliberations, including the Summits of Heads of State and Government.
37. Be contacted in instances where the host country intends to invest in trade or develop partnerships in their countries of origin. In addition the

Diaspora in Europe should play an active role in facilitating trade and investment in Africa.

38. Establish a Diaspora Bank to develop the collective financial capacity of the African Diaspora in Europe.
39. Campaign for a favorable regulatory system to enhance the distribution of remittances; and, in the same vein, establish a welfare fund to address the socio-economic conditions of the Diaspora in Europe.
40. Develop an alliance of Europe-based African Publishers to market and promote the image of the African continent.
41. Register a Trust Fund to support the Diaspora and Africa's development efforts.
42. Establish an African Diaspora University in Europe which, among others, will be used as a vehicle to promote a positive image of Africa.
43. Create a facility for the return of the Diaspora to the mother continent.
44. Establish an African month to showcase Africa and its offerings.
45. Help dispel media perceptions about Africa through effective communication strategies, including interfacing with the media.
46. Participate at the grassroots and establish structures designed to address globalization issues such as a Think Tank for the African Diaspora community.
46. Be involved in the construction of dialogues and relations between the AU and International Institutions such as the E.U, WTO, and the U.N.

47. Encourage the use of Diaspora experts by the international community when dealing with Africa
48. Be mobilized and sensitized on their enormous potentials for development, peace and prevention of war
49. Carry out a systematic and comprehensive research on the various Diaspora groups in order to better understand them and their roles in their respective homelands.
50. Build an awareness campaign aimed at the prevention of migration tendencies which are based on false perceptions of a better life in Europe.
51. Encourage Diaspora committees for restoration of peace to network with peace-oriented NGO's working with the UN to promote peace and the prevention of conflict on the continent.
52. Help identify and take measures against those in the Diaspora who fuel and benefit from wars on the continent.
55. Establish organisational structures such as a secretariat or a committee at host country and continental level to enhance synergies and cooperation among the different groups.
56. Campaign for the establishment of a sound financial architecture which would assist in the productive and efficient flows of capital in the form of remittances from the Diaspora.
57. Establish African chambers of commerce in the European Diaspora for the purpose of matchmaking of African and Diaspora companies, and the identification of market and other development opportunities.
58. Help align Diaspora and African financial initiatives.

59. Help ensure African ownership of the natural resources of the continent, and the beneficiation thereof, through the development of technical skills, and real partnerships between Africa and the Diaspora.
60. Help Africa take ownership of indigenous knowledge systems and thereby encourage innovation development toward the achieving of economic and commercial ends, with a special focus on encouraging women and the youth to meaningfully participate in the economy.
61. Establish lobby and interest groups in their host countries to advance the economic and political interests of Africa.
62. Help establish skills and project databases to interface the developmental needs of African countries with the existing expertise available in the Diaspora to assist with specific projects.
63. Help establish a Fund in favour of women, the elderly and children, with particular focus on war-torn countries.
64. Act as facilitator between Africa and the host country to advance the empowerment of women and youth.
65. Assist African women entrepreneurs through easier affordable access to finance, appropriate technologies as well as the establishment of empowerment partnerships.
66. Ensure that African children living outside the continent receive some form of education that reflects the realities and history of Africa from an African perspective.
67. Encourage the exposure of African youth through exchange programmes and other forms of engagement and activities from which the youth could benefit.

68. Help Africa develop its tourism potential in partnership with the Diaspora as a high-yield industry, particularly with respect to programmes that could assist in local community empowerment such as eco-cultural tourism.

69. With respect to knowledge sharing, the African Diaspora in Europe should help:

- Create a database of scarce skills.
- Institute measures for reversing Brain Drain through Brain Gain.
- Encourage Africa-Diaspora meetings of professionals in specific areas such as engineering and medicine.
- Establish Diaspora Fund to assist in training and research.
- Build an African Hall of Fame
- Establish Africa Houses in Europe to promote the objectives of the African Renaissance
- Help relaunch Africa Day of Science
- Document arts and culture, including indigenous knowledge systems, from different parts of Africa.
- Support the efforts against illiteracy on the African continent.
- Develop Africa-Diaspora student exchange programs

69. In the area of health and well-being, the African Diaspora in Europe should:

- Promote, with best practices from other Diaspora communities in mind, the development of partnerships with African medical institutions, and the establishment of centres of excellence and telemedicine programmes.
- Institute Africa-Diaspora capacity building measures in the health sector, particularly scholarships for general health education and skills development;
- Help build factories to produce plant-based medicines in Africa, as well as establish bridges between traditional and conventional medicines by managing and monitoring the intellectual property of African remedies.
- Help establish African research institutions.
- Lobby pharmaceutical companies to supply Africa with high quality drugs at affordable prices.
- Enhance networking among the European Diaspora in Europe and Africa.
- Establish an information system on ongoing basis to promote collaborations between the African Diaspora in Europe and Africa.
- Establish a research institute for traditional medicine in order to ensure African ownership.

- Educate health professionals in effective use of traditional medicine.
- Encourage active involvement of men in health care projects for women and children.
- Promote the exchange of experience and continuing education of health care professionals through exchange programmes.
- Advocate with African governments to establish incentive measures aiming at retaining health care personnel.
- Promote effective and full use of existing funding within the European Diaspora for projects on basic health in Africa.
- Help establish an African Diaspora Bank with focus on, among others, investment and healthcare.

70. With respect to historical socio-cultural and religious commonalities and challenges, the African Diaspora in Europe should:

- Establish regional centers of research for the development of African languages.
- Play an active role in the promotion of African culture, religion and values.
- Promote the use of African languages.
- Explore an indigenous African scientific approach.
- Promote the ratification by AU Member States of UNESCO Convention on cultural diversity.

- Help identify, designate and promote sites of historical significance in Africa and the Diaspora.
- Help put in place measures aimed at re-appropriating and reaffirming African history and culture.

71. Furthermore, African Diaspora women in Europe should:

- Organise themselves at a country and European continental levels.
- Develop a database of the existing women associations, competencies and constituencies.
- Establish relations with other women in Europe and other women's organisations in Africa with the aim of sharing information, exchanging expertise and best practices.
- Lobby for the full ratification of the AU Protocol on gender and on that the rights of the child.
- Create a strong lobbying group focusing particularly on debt relief of Africa, as well as the non-proliferation of small arms.
- Lobby for the adoption of legislation on the abolition of child soldiers, harmful traditional practices such as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), and forced and early marriages.
- Promote solidarity among women parliamentarians.

- Promote the voice and vote of women in national parliaments in Africa.
- Lobby for the promulgation of legislation in African countries to promote the rights of women in matters relating to divorce and inheritance.

72. For their part, African Governments Should:

- Note that good governance, sound and predictable policy frameworks with political stability are among the prerequisites for attracting and securing skills, expertise and investments from Diaspora communities in Europe.
- Realise that African countries can leverage the existing capacities in the Diaspora communities in conjunction with Africa's own capabilities to further develop infrastructure development projects in transport, energy, financial services, ICT, and human resources.
- Revisit existing immigration policies to improve access for the members of the Diaspora.
- Recognise that the empowerment of women and youth should be an essential element in all economic planning and activities by Government, civil society and the private sector.
- Promote the use of African languages, not least because Africa is the only continent in the world where the medium of instruction in schools and universities are foreign languages.

73. And, the AU should:

- Declare the colonization of Africa a crime against humanity with the view to addressing some of the shortcomings of the outcomes of the United Nation's Conference against Racism which was held in Durban, South Africa.
- Reaffirm its commitment to the implementation of the outcomes of the Durban Racism Conference, and stimulate initiatives of African Diaspora communities in Europe regarding the Durban Review 2009.
- Act on the maltreatment of Africans in the Diaspora and injustices meted out to them, such as police harassment and forced repatriations.
- Collect and disseminate data to the Diaspora women in Europe, on the sectors of women activities and organisations;
- Recognise its Diaspora and act when the integrity of its people in the Diaspora is being violated;
- Recognise and support the involvement of women in the Diaspora in both political and economic activities. Some women have become successful entrepreneurs, and others even occupy senior positions in society.
- Revive the Black Women's Network in Europe through partnership with African women in the continent.
- Institute measures to recognise African Women's Day.
- Promote dialogue in African rural areas, particularly with respect to the involvement of women in decision-making and land-related issues.

- Convene on annual basis an Africa-Diaspora consultation for health professionals.
- Institute measures to commemorate historical moments and personalities of the Diaspora.
- Facilitate the study and writing of the history of the African Diaspora.

FOLLOW-UP

The Conference recommended, as follow-up, that:

74. The African Diaspora should set up mechanisms to co-ordinate the various national Diaspora groups both at the country and global levels.

75. The Embassies of AU Member States in European countries should have a section devoted to Diaspora affairs which should be complemented by the formation of a world-wide umbrella body to coordinate the various national Diaspora organizations.

76. The AU should:

- Develop institutional frameworks and strategies that promote the positive potentials of the Diaspora, and which are also capable of reducing their propensity and capacity to generate or exacerbate conflicts in the homelands.
- Establish a permanent Secretariat for Diaspora affairs in Europe

- Establish a mechanism within the AU for the strengthening of relations between the continent and its Diaspora.
- Establish a Task Force to prepare concrete proposals on the Reparations for the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade.
- Establish a permanent mechanism for enabling the Diaspora to make concrete and strategic contribution to Africa's development.

77. African Governments should:

- Involve their nationals in the Diaspora in voting, and taking part in drafting their national constitutions.
- Develop a mechanism for dual citizenship and political representation of the Diaspora.
- Reallocate their national budgets from defence issues to meeting the basic needs of the people such as water, sanitation, health and education

QUICK WINS

Having deliberated on the recommendations and institutional follow-up measures, the Conference identified the following as steps that can be taken in the short and medium terms:

78. Establish a mechanism for effective Diaspora representation at the AU, including developing selection criteria for such representation.

79. Explore the feasibility of establishing a permanent Secretariat in Europe for African Diaspora affairs.

80. Build information database on African history.
81. Undertake a feasibility study of establishing a Trust Fund for Africa-Diaspora development.
82. Lobby for the improvement of the regulatory framework to enhance the distribution of remittances.
83. Establish an African month to show case Africa.
84. AU should organize a two- or three-day seminar or workshop for Diaspora organizations prior to the annual gathering of the AU Summit
85. Establish a Diaspora database and consolidate those already in existence.