Seminar Report
Engaging African Diaspora in Europe as Strategic Agents for Development in Africa

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Brussels
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Awil Mohamoud
Executive Director, African Diaspora Policy Centre

Some quotes come from a round table discussion on the role of the African diaspora in development, as was broadcast in the program *Bridges With Africa* from Radio Netherlands Worldwide. The program was broadcast on July 4th, 2008 and is available on demand through the following link: [http://www.radionetherlands.nl/africa/programmes/bridgeswithafrica/editions](http://www.radionetherlands.nl/africa/programmes/bridgeswithafrica/editions)

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Foreword

Diasporas are one of the contemporary global forces shaping the directions and trends in this 21st century. This makes it important to partner and join forces with them in the development efforts in their respective homelands. This policy seminar was organized to contribute to the ongoing policy dialogue regarding migration and development from the perspective of the diaspora – a point of view which has not been sufficiently heard. The objective was to stimulate the active participation of the diaspora in the dialogue and in the generation of ideas and policy insights so as to make their critical voices count in discussions related to migration and development matters at different policy levels.

This is important as the nexus between migration and development is a phenomenon which merits continued consultations and policy dialogue at different societal and policy levels. Furthermore, migration and development can be considerably more beneficial to all if it is effectively addressed through a permanent dialogue between diaspora and other stakeholders in the field both in the North and the South. Dialogue is the logical start to interaction and information exchange. It makes it possible to establish contacts and networks and to learn from each other’s experiences, unique strengths and added values. Constructive dialoguing is particularly important as it will facilitate the mainstreaming of the diaspora voices and visions in policy deliberations taking place at the local, national and international levels in a more structured and formalized manner.

Diasporas are the most important strategic stakeholders in the migration and development field. It is therefore essential that they be involved in policy discussions, since the practical implementation of any policy proposal requires migrants to play a leading role in the process. More importantly, migrants are the chief agents in the establishment of linkages between migration and development and without their strategic interventions it is not likely that initiatives on development and migration can succeed or achieve the expected results. This reality makes it impossible to design appropriate policy instruments without creatively tapping into the input and intellectual resources of the diasporas, whose wealth of knowledge and practical experiences are largely undercapitalized. It is as simple as that: the best solutions are likely to be worked out when the primary stakeholders – in this case, the migrants and target groups – are involved from the outset.

The timing of the seminar was significant. It was held before the AU-Africa Diaspora Summit in Johannesburg from 7-11 October 2008; the 2nd ministerial Euro-African meeting on Migration and Development in Paris from 20-21 October 2008; and the second Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) that will take place in Manila from 27 - 28 October 2008.
The seminar helped the diaspora to identify a set of priority issues and collectively formulate specific policy recommendations that will be presented in the forthcoming conferences noted above. This is in fact one of the chief reasons that indeed justified the organisation of this timely and urgently needed policy dialogue seminar in the field of migration and development. The seminar also offered an opportunity for policy makers in the field of migration and development to communicate and engage directly with the diasporas and their grassroots organisations for a genuine and effective policy dialogue. We hope the constructive dialogue that this seminar initiated will continue so as to generate information, knowledge and policy insights on the subject from the perspectives and the mindsets of the diasporas. This is because the diasporas occupy a vital strategic position giving them a particular kind of world view intimately framed by socio-political realities across countries and continents. Diasporas therefore entertain perspectives different from those advanced by dominant opinions in the host countries and that can add value to the policy dialogue on migration and development issues.
I. Introduction

The contemporary African diaspora from the continent now living in the EU countries alone is estimated to be around 3.3 million people of whom 1 million is from sub-Saharan Africa. The number of the African diaspora is probably more if it is added up to those living in other countries in Europe.¹ In this regard, the diaspora is the greatest offshore asset of Africa because of the potential of their considerable human and financial capital that needs to be exploited for the benefit of Africa. African diaspora now occupy an indispensable strategic position that links the developed North with Africa in a more connected manner. For example, African diaspora are now in a unique strategic position in this ever-globalizing world as being scattered in different economic and power centres around the globe. The huge presence of African diaspora in such powerful political centres such as London, Paris, New York and Washington where global policy decisions are made has an especially important strategic significance. Yet, Africa in comparison with Asia has not taken full advantage of the vast untapped potentials of its diaspora in the Overseas.

The African diaspora has left Africa physically but not emotionally. This emotional attachment is the general characteristic shared by all diaspora. And it is these emotional ties that prompt the African diaspora to maintain links with their countries of origin. Furthermore, these emotional ties are translated into obligations and thus into concrete commitments, actions and activities. Practically, this means transferring money, ideas, information, knowledge, skills and know-how back home. It also means promoting peace dialogues, supporting post-conflict reconstruction processes and helping set up local businesses as well as voluntary development projects. The promotion of private micro-development projects such as establishing hospitals and schools or donating cash, materials and equipments is a case in point. Moreover, the activities of the African diaspora promote trade and enterprise links and other social and political ties between their adopted countries and their countries of origin. This is why diaspora initiated projects are now referred to as the ‘fourth development aid’ after international organisations, governments and mainstream development organisations.² More importantly, the African diaspora frequently adopt ingenious strategies to maximise the advantages with which the contemporary globalisation process has presented them. For example, the African diaspora, like others elsewhere, forge innovative patterns of ‘globalisation from below’ in which individual and group

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¹ For more information, see the databank of Eurostat.
players rather than mega-corporations, benefit and make use of the opportunities offered by globalisation.³

The fact is that there is now a growing realisation among the African diaspora in the West that they have a responsibility to do something for the continent. They also feel that they are now in a strategic position to facilitate the process of trans-national activities and networks and act as development bridge-builders between the West and Africa. For instance, they hold the view that this strategic position is enabling them to channel information, innovative ideas, intellectual capacities, new technological skills, smart and innovative business and trade practices, peace making tools and techniques and democratic political habits and practices from the West to Africa.

More importantly, the limited results of the donor official development aid over the past 40 years to many countries in Africa compel us to widen the development constituency so as to produce better results in the future. Furthermore, the complexity of the challenges that many African countries are now undergoing requires the joining of all the available social forces, social capital, intellectual ideas, economic means, creative initiatives and activities (both domestic and international) and the redoubling of the existing efforts. This compelling urgency therefore necessitates mobilising the considerable social capital of the huge African diaspora population in the EU countries for the promotion of sustainable and large-scale development in Africa. The contribution of the African diaspora to the development efforts in Africa is now more indispensable than ever. Furthermore, African diasporas are now prepared and want to be part of and participate in the positive changes they wish to see in their respective countries in Africa.

II. Policy dialogue seminar: purpose and key objectives

The prime purpose of the seminar was to initiate a constructive dialogue between the diaspora and other stakeholders in the field of migration and development.

Principal partners would be the diaspora on the one hand and policy makers (at the EU, UNDP, AU and NEPAD) on the other. As migrants, members of the African diaspora are clearly the first and most prominent stakeholders in the field of migration and development and their participation in the policy dialogue regarding these two issues is long overdue. Second, the governments of their countries of origin. Bringing these main actors together with some of the principal actors in development was therefore timely and necessary.

This is important as the nexus between migration and development is a phenomenon which merits continued consultations and policy dialogue at different societal and policy levels. Furthermore, migration and development can be considerably more beneficial to all it is effectively addressed as a permanent dialogue between diaspora and other stakeholders in the field both in the North and in the South.

Dialogue is the logical start to interaction and information exchanges. It makes it possible to establish contacts and networks and to learn from each other’s experiences, unique strengths and added values. Constructive dialoguing is particularly important as it will facilitate the mainstreaming of diaspora voices and visions in policy deliberations taking place at the local, national and international level in a more structured and formalized manner. Diasporas are increasingly becoming recognised as the most important strategic stakeholders in the migration and development field. It is therefore essential that they be involved in policy discussions, since the practical implementation of any policy proposal requires migrants to play a leading role in the process. More importantly, migrants are the chief agents in the establishment of linkages between migration and development and without their strategic interventions it is not likely that initiatives on development and migration can succeed or achieve the expected results. This reality makes it impossible to design appropriate policy instruments without creatively tapping into the input and intellectual resources of the diaspora, whose wealth of knowledge and
practical experiences are largely undercapitalized. It is as simple as that: the best solutions are likely to be worked out when the primary stakeholders – in this case, the migrants and target groups – are involved from the outset.

This was clearly demonstrated by the High Level Dialogue organised by the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) held in Brussels from July 9-11, 2007. There was, in fact, a wide-ranging appreciation of the indispensable role that the diaspora opinion leaders can and should play in contributing to the policy dialogue in the migration and development field. More importantly, the meeting evidently illustrated the importance of an ongoing policy dialogue in order to remain appraised of the continually unfolding patterns and processes in the migration and development field. The generation of solid policy-relevant knowledge, information and insights on the subject remains a precondition for the formulation of appropriate policy proposals. These are policy instruments that can be translated into feasible strategic interventions and realisable actions.

The policy dialogue seminar which was held in Brussels on 25 and 26 June 2008 was initiated to enhance the dialogue between the African diaspora and the policy makers at the EU level. In this respect, the choice of organizing the seminar in Brussels was to inform and influence the policy-making processes at the EU level from the point of view of the African diaspora regarding migration and development related issues.

The core objectives of the seminar were as follows:

• To facilitate a constructive policy dialogue between the diaspora and policy makers at the EU, AU and NEPAD level. This is to foster the inclusion of the diaspora voices, visions and perspectives in policy deliberations taking place at different levels.

• To contribute to the forthcoming Africa Diaspora Summit that will take place in South Africa in October 2008. This is to bring out the voices, views, insights, perspectives, practical experiences, aspirations, interests, priorities, challenges and the specific needs of the African diasporas in Europe.

“I hope the seminar will facilitate the inclusion of diaspora voices and visions in European policy deliberations in this growing policy field in a more targeted and systematic manner.” Domenica Ghiedei, Chair of the Board of the African Diaspora Policy Centre.
• To present a common diaspora position to the conference organised by France during its EU presidency. The conference will be held in Paris in October 2008.

• To identify the strategic role that the African diaspora in Europe can play in the implementation of the new Africa-EU Strategic Partnership. This is to further strengthen the Africa-EU joint strategy by mobilising the considerable potential (capital, knowledge and networks) of the huge African diaspora in Europe to play a bridge-building role in the process.

• To contribute to policy input from the perspective of the African diaspora into the forthcoming Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) that will take place in Manila on October 27-30, 2008. This is with the aim of mainstreaming the diaspora voices in the discussions at the international level in a more structured and formalized manner.

III. Uniqueness of the seminar

For the first time, the seminar brought together 50 leading African diaspora organisations from 10 EU countries to Brussels. The aim was to network, establish viable contacts, learn from each other’s development related activities, exchange valuable information, share best practices and positive experiences. This was considered by the diaspora participants in the seminar to be a major accomplishment in itself. The timing of the seminar was extremely important. The seminar offered an opportunity for policy makers in the field of migration and development to communicate and engage directly with the diasporas and their grassroots organisations for a genuine and effective policy dialogue. Moreover, the seminar provided a platform for exchange which helped to identify key policy actions through which the considerable development potential of the diaspora can be maximized. In addition, the seminar helped to explore the added value and options for strategic partnerships between the diaspora and other stakeholders in the field of migration and development. The event was intended to kick start a

*“The lack of direct engagement with the diaspora prevents them from participating in the development of ideas, public debates and policy consultations in the field.”* Awil Mohamoud, Executive Director of the African Diaspora Policy Centre.
wide diaspora network-building that the African Diaspora Policy Centre (ADPC) has already initiated. The added value of the network-building programme is that it instigates to foster the formation of an EU-wide network among the African diaspora organisations in Europe. Such a network will enable the African diaspora organisations in Europe to enter strategic alliances and initiate joint development projects across countries and thereby contribute more to poverty reduction and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in their respective homelands in Africa. The formation of a network will also help facilitate the evolution of African diaspora organisations in Europe into an influential constituency that plays a valuable bridge-building role in the implementation of the new EU-Africa Strategy endorsed in Lisbon on the 8th and the 9th of December 2007. Most importantly, the development of an African diaspora constituency in Europe will automatically add value to the strengthening of the Africa-EU Strategic Partnership. The African Diaspora Policy Centre has coordinated the initiative of this EU-wide coalition of African diaspora organisations in Europe. The Centre is a strategic platform called upon to facilitate the African diaspora organisations in Europe to join forces, pool their efforts and undertaking initiatives collectively for the overall development of Africa. The ADPC is uniquely placed to act as a focal point and a representative interlocutor with other stakeholders and players in the field, as it is firmly grounded within the social setting of the African diaspora communities in Europe.

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4 The setting up of the African Diaspora Policy Centre was first proposed by several African diaspora Ministries and other higher officials dealing with diaspora and development related issues on the continent that attended a conference on Migration and Development in Africa, organised by the World Bank in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on January 26-27, 2005. As such, the African Diaspora Policy Centre is giving concrete shape to this compelling need identified by recipients and stakeholders in Africa as a policy priority at this moment. Furthermore, the AU accorded Africans in the diaspora to be ‘the sixth region’ of the African Union. For more information, see further the original document of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (Nepad), October 2001.
IV. Harnessing the development potential of the diaspora

Reflecting the objectives of the seminar, on the first day, European, African and diaspora perspectives were exchanged around the issues and potentials of a tangible diaspora input into policy formulation concerning migration and development. The main purpose was to identify key policy actions through which the considerable development potential of the diaspora can be maximized. The day was chaired by Ms. Dimitria Clayton. The opening speech was given by Mr. Klaus Rudischhauser, Director, General Affairs, European Commission. Ms. Domenica Ghidei, Chair of the Board of the ADPC, delivered a welcome address. The first session of this day was devoted to setting a context, on policy perspectives that can facilitate the inclusion of the diaspora voices and how visions in policy deliberations taking place at different levels can be targeted in a more systematic manner. Mr Khaldi Mohamed Tayeb, Senior Policy Advisor at the AU, spoke on initiatives being taken by the AU to foster closer working relationships with Africa’s diaspora. This is most evident from the formulation of the AU perspective that the diaspora are considered as a ‘sixth region’ of Africa, whose potential is yet to be harnessed. Ms. Nicola Harrington, Director a.i. of the UN Liaison Office in Brussels, showed how recent developments, such as the Joint Initiative of the UN and the EC on migration and development pay substantial focus to the contribution of the migrants and their organisations to current policy developments and EU-Africa partnerships. This tied in closely with the perspective presented by Dr. Irina Kausch, GTZ, whose experience with migration and development policies have reflected how inclusion of the diaspora input can catalyze the formulation of better policies. Dr. Kausch also addressed the issue of better integration of Africans into society, which would mobilize them to become active agents in policy formulation. The gap that exists in the formal contribution of the diaspora was addressed by Dr. Mohamoud, Executive Director of the ADPC. His perspective focused on utilizing and enhancing the intellectual capacity of the diaspora, namely through stimulation of more research on the means through which the diaspora can contribute to policy formulation. The second session focused on fostering strategic partnerships for development among diaspora organisations, as well as between the diaspora and other stakeholders in the
field. Ms. Cecilia Garcia Gasalla, head of the unit of Migration and Development at the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, addressed how linkages between governments, diasporas, organisations, local authorities and NGOs in the North and South facilitated coherent movements from policy orientations to projects. Building a structured EU-wide diaspora network would also facilitate this process, as was illustrated by Mr. Lulessa Abadura of the African Diaspora Policy Centre, as well as the creation of a strategic partnership between diaspora organisations and mainstream NGOs and civil society associations, a perspective shared by Mr. Jean-Bosco Botsho, President of the Africat.

The added value of the diaspora lies in their accumulative experience, insight and their established networks. If tapped creatively and coherent policies are put in place, the results would be phenomenal. Examples of this were given by Mr. Papa Birama Thiam, Director for Technical Assistance at the Presidency of Senegal for the co-development programme and Mr. Mehari Tadele Maru, Executive Director of African Rally for Peace and Development (please see Box 1 below). Coherent policies would have further importance in creating a link between the activities of the diaspora and the private sector, a perspective given by Mr. Chukwu-Emeka Chikezie, Executive Director of AFFORD. Coherent policies allow for the formulation of concrete plans, enabling the diaspora to contribute more efficiently to the development of their home countries. The key point in the presentation of AFFORD's director was how economic growth can be translated into job creation. This view was also shared by Mr. Rob Rozenburg, Deputy Head of Unit DG Development C2 Pan-African Issues and Organisations, European Commission. The European Commission noted that apart from remittances (which governments can tax), knowledge, skills and business acumen, the diaspora also has insights and ideas that may well change the political climate in their home countries. Given their accumulated knowledge and know-how, the diaspora as actors in development can be instrumental in building transparent and accountable institutions back home, for instance in order to facilitate business, and contribute to institutional capacities.
Box 1: How coherent policies allow for effective contribution of the diaspora

The Senegalese diaspora brings in €700 million in remittances, of which 80% goes towards consumption and 20% is put to productive use. France and Senegal decided on a joint program on migration and development, which is aimed at three core areas: economic initiatives taken by migrants from Senegal, mobilisation of the well-qualified diaspora living in France for the development of Senegal, and local development in the regions of origin. According to Mr. Thiam, 123 projects have already been put in place, touching the lives of some 200,000 people. It appears like a win-win scenario: development in Senegal, mobilization of the diaspora in France and also decreasing migration into France, which is an unequivocal French policy objective. Additional information on this section from the co-development project can be found on the website: www.codev.gouv.sn/leprojet.html (in French).

Another example is that of Ethiopia. Mr. Maru showed that the government devises creative means to stimulate the diaspora to invest and continue to invest in their country of origin, by increasing the incentives. A common obstacle for the diaspora is losses due to currency value fluctuations. For example, the Ethiopian government has put polices in place that now allow members of the diaspora to hold foreign currency in local banks, which facilitates entrepreneur ship on many levels, for instance procuring material for business. Other means of facilitation of space for the diaspora to contribute is ease with which bank accounts can be opened through embassies in the host country, and the issuing of land to the Ethiopian diaspora by the government. To date, 7,000 members of the diaspora have been given land.

Mr. Chikezie showed that besides the Supporting Entrepreneurs & Enterprise Development in Africa (SEEDA) programs’ focus on information sharing, network creation, capacity building and enhancing access to capital, a large part of the project focuses on advocacy. There are issues faced by entrepreneurs that need to be raised in various platforms (e.g. business registration, taxation, harassment, infrastructure). Although important steps forward are being made in Sierra Leone, the weakness in African state capacity is alarming. A top priority then is for African diaspora, African states & the EU to join forces to shape new and inclusive policies. The EU can play a key role here by creating an enabling space for the diaspora to move freely between Europe and Africa, and to facilitate transnational trade. For more information on SEEDA, please refer to http://www.afforduk.org/index.php?Itemid=61&id=42&option=com_content&task=view

Papa Birama Thiam, Director for technical assistance at the Presidency of Senegal for the co-development programme

Mehari Tadele Maru, Executive Director of African Rally for Peace and Development

Chukwu-Emeka Chikezie, Executive Director of AFFORD
V. The diaspora as active agents in development

A central aim of the seminar was also to facilitate and foster an environment of exchange between the diaspora organisations themselves. The second day (chaired by Dr. Titi Banjoko) was an opportunity for the diaspora to showcase and make known to a wider policy constituency the successes achieved with concrete development related activities initiated by diaspora organisations in their respective homelands, and the specific factors that have contributed to their positive outcomes.

Parallel workshops allowed for the different organisations to present their projects, followed by group discussions on what the next necessary steps should be to create a more diaspora-inclusive policy approach. First, the workshops showed that the specific experience from the host country and examples of best practices of which the diaspora organisations were active in, added valuable lessons and showcased examples to other diaspora groups. Second, the projects implemented by the diaspora are making an actual difference on the ground, despite obstacles that may be present in the homeland. Third, diaspora-led development initiatives are making important contributions to policies, and adding practical shifts to the perspectives of policymakers involved in the migration and development field in their host countries. The central aim of the plenary sessions was to showcase and make known to a wider policy constituency, the successes achieved through diaspora-led initiatives, with concrete development related activities in their respective homelands and the specific factors that have contributed to their positive outcomes (please see Box 2 for practical examples). The significance of these plenary sessions was that they brought contributions from different diaspora organisations in different EU countries together. The experiences of the diaspora in these different regions have an influence on the activities that they are involved in, and they are highly dependent on the nature of the needs of the region of origin of the diaspora. In other words, diaspora organisations were found to be involved in the design and implementation of tailored projects that directly address the needs of their countries of origin. For instance, the Netherlands based organisation Burundian Women for Peace and Development tackles peace-building and conflict resolution in Burundi. They do this by setting up ‘Multipurpose Centres’ to stimulate...
dialogue and encourage the conflict-resolution process between Tutsi and Hutu women. The key to these projects is that they are self-sustaining – as women ‘graduate’ from the program, they’re able to assist and work with others. With this community involvement and ownership of the projects their potentials for sustainability are highly increased. Modern developments in job markets that may catalyse African development are also addressed by the diaspora organisations. The Swiss based organisation DAPSI for instance focuses on the impact of increased ICT knowledge, especially among the less empowered groups such as youth, women and physically challenged people. This often catalyses their independence and allows them to become active economic actors. Initially started in Senegal, the organisation has extended its activities to Mali, DRC and Cameroon.

The UK based organisation AfricaRecruit effectively utilises the skills, knowledge, remittances and networks of the diaspora, both within and outside Africa. As a tangible way of accessing the diaspora for the benefit of Africa, the organisation launched the FindaJobinAfrica website in 1999. It was founded to provide a platform that facilitates the connection between recruitment agencies, employers and jobseekers irrespective of their geographical location. FindaJobinAfrica has changed the manner adopted by candidates looking for jobs as well as recruiters who seek access to the most suitable candidate from a larger pool of talent across African parts of the globe.

The integration of African migrants in the host countries was also found to be of indirect, albeit salient significance to the development of Africa. Better integration of migrants in Europe stretches beyond the European context because there is a linear relationship between better integration into the host society and the active contribution to the society. Given this, being active agents in European societies, the diaspora would gain a space to shape policies, including policies that link Europe and Africa. This topic is addressed by organisations such as GuineáSopra (Portugal), RAME (France) and Centro Hispano-Africano (Spain).
Box 2: How diaspora-led initiatives are contributing to Africa’s development

Created in 1992, the Federation of Associations Franco-African Development (FAFRAD) brings together nearly 212 associations - mainly associations of migrants - not only working in the fields of integration and socio-professional insertion of immigrants, but also of international solidarity and intercultural dialogue between the North and South. An example is the Community Health Centre of Madihawaya (Mali). The project reinforces the organisational capacities of the inhabitants of Madihawaya. Among other things, it ensures the geographical, economic and socio-cultural accessibility of basic health care of the population. Its core strength lies in its provision of health insurance to the community.

Another example is the Sankofa Family Poultry, implemented by Sankofa Foundation in Ghana. The project aimed to increase family income from the sale of eggs through small-holder commercial poultry production and also increase employment opportunity for the women and their family members. The impact of the project has been a remarkable 75% increase of income for the target group. In turn, the women were able to pay school fees, provide family income for settling social and cultural problems within their families such as buying new clothes and performing funeral rites. As an overall result, the women became more socially active in their communities.

The Benelux Afro Center (BAC) implemented the Reinforcement of the Capacities of the Council of Health (CNOS) project in the DRC. The project is a multi-annual project that is still ongoing. The central aim of the project was to create CNOS as a 3rd pillar of the civil society for the mobilization and the participation in the planning and the coordination of health interventions for the benefit of the Congolese local populations. The intermediate result of the projects are that it has been recognized as a credible and legitimate pillar in the Congolese health system and that it is recognized as a coordinator and formal regulator of health actors, tremendously improving the health facilities of the local population.
VI. Recommendations

The seminar ended with the formulation of a number of recommendations to be reflected upon in further policy deliberations regarding the diaspora and their added value to the development of Africa. These recommendations are based on the main issues that the participants of the seminar noted as of significant importance. These issues include: the formulation of coherent policies, catalysing further networking between the diaspora, and fostering a more viable environment for job creation and entrepreneurship.

VI.1 Policy

The need for continued consultations and policy dialogue between the diaspora and other stakeholders in the field is imperative. This entails an understanding that the development projects undertaken by the diaspora organisations are in essence complementing those implemented by the mainstream donor organisations in the homeland countries. The promotion of dialogue between the diaspora and development actors where this is currently not happening, will have mutual benefits for the different stakeholders. Better policies will aid and foster institutional cooperation between diaspora and homeland governments. To reach such goals, these specific recommendations were formulated:

a) That the EU can leverage country specific best practices and scale these up across the EU.

b) Policies need to be more coherently inclusive of the diaspora perspectives, both within the EU and between the EU and Africa.

c) A Diaspora Council, focussing on peace and stability to enable the shaping of policies in war-torn areas, and increase stability in the homeland.

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5 The African Common Position on Migration and Development (Banjul, 2006) and the Africa-EU Strategic Partnership (Lisbon, 2007) mention numerous policy areas that run parallel to the recommendations from this seminar. Some of the policy areas dovetail with activities that the seminar participants from the diaspora are already engaged in. It is useful, especially with the view of generating input to the forthcoming conferences on migration and development to highlight specifically the areas in which the diaspora has a track record of adding value.

6 The African Union is in the process of recruiting a migration officer within its Department of Social Affairs, who will be charged with - among many others - (1) following issues relating to migration and development and (2) work towards the implementation of the migration policy framework for Africa and the Joint Africa-EU Declaration on Migration and Development.
d) Support by European policymakers is needed in order to develop methodologies and strategies for institutions. These are necessary as they can then be used as a guideline by which diaspora representation for diaspora institutional engagement can take place.
e) Devise policies to harness remittances as a key component of development.

VI.II Networking

Getting to know diaspora organisations across Europe and linking them up with each other, as well as organisations outside the diaspora in areas that are relevant has been a major issue in the course of this seminar. These were the recommendations that came out of the deliberations.

a) To build diaspora networks using both online and offline resources. The former could include databases, blogs, websites and mailing lists; the latter include physical offices, seminars and forums. Regular dialogue and twinning were recommended as methods for networking, as well as the creation of an independent diaspora umbrella organisation. This includes the creation of links among diaspora groups and individuals across countries and generations.
b) To promote meetings of diaspora organisations from the same country of origin, who are working in different European countries. One can add the promotion of meetings among diasporas from different European countries that are engaged in the same area of work.
c) To create a platform whereby diaspora expertise is accessible to different actors.
d) To create a focal point of access when building diaspora networks.
e) Scale up best practices that have emerged from individual diaspora activities in EU member states.
f) To engage with other NGOs and International organisations. It was recommended that this be done in cooperation with the Africa Diaspora Policy Centre.
g) To organise meetings between diasporas and (visiting) ministers from countries of origin.
h) To increase partnerships between diaspora organisations and the private sector.
i) To develop methodologies and strategies for institutions to use as guidelines by which they can select diaspora representation for engagement both within the diaspora and between the diaspora and institutions.
VI.III Migration

Freedom of movement is vital for business, and for the survival of all manner of developing diaspora projects. One example is the engineer who lives in an EU country, and who would love to help train engineers back home and then return to Europe – and to do this, say, twice every year. This is the kind of circular migration that should be encouraged. The seminar had a few strong recommendations aimed at the EU and African nations to facilitate circular migration as well as to point out the potential pitfalls and dangers of migration.

a) Both countries of origin and host countries should put in place policies that encourage circular migration. Areas in need of special attention include the easing of migration qualifications and the management of pensions.
b) Build on commitment to tackle discrimination where it exists, across Europe.
c) The diaspora can be used as a tool to sensitisethe African youth about the negative aspects of migration.

VI.IV Jobs, entrepreneurship and the economy

There is an enormous need to create jobs in Africa. The creation of jobs (or facilitating others creating jobs) is quite possibly the most valuable and viable thing any developer, diaspora or otherwise, can contribute to the continent. The diaspora has skills, links and the various capitals already mentioned (human, social, economic) that can help in the creation of jobs. The added value of the diaspora is not only the combination of all those factors but also its high level of commitment. In another context, there has been an uphill battle to get experts from the African diaspora engaged, hired, employed as consultants, staff and advisors for the established development bureaucracies. The recommendations from the seminar addressed these and other areas.

a) Need to create support for the diaspora seeking employment opportunities in Africa by matching skills and providing practical support where a skills boost is required.
b) Need to ensure that the diaspora is engaged in job creation projects that are sustainable, using well-defined eligibility criteria.
c) To increase engagement of diaspora consultants.
d) In terms of hiring expertise and creating jobs in a given skills area, it is relevant to repeat one of the networking recommendations: make information about diaspora expertise available online, quite possibly through a database. Existing databases such as those of the AfricaRecruit and the African Diaspora Skills Database can facilitate this process.
e) Find ways of dealing with red tape and other impediments to investment in various home countries on the African continent and share the experiences with other prospective diaspora investors.

f) Create an African Diaspora Business Round Table, a think tank that can join existing networks in the European Union.

g) Develop a migration and development fund

h) Create a diaspora development bank.
VII. Conclusion

The seminar has created a dynamic momentum which we need to build on in order to benefit from the insights and perspectives of the diaspora into the development of a solid knowledge base regarding diaspora and development related issues. There is an urgent need to stimulate the active participation of the diasporas in the generation of ideas and policy insights so as to ensure that their voices are better represented in policy deliberations on migration and development related matters. The seminar galvanised diaspora organisations and helped them to perceive themselves as important players in the policy dialogue regarding migration and development, even beyond their respective host countries. In other words, the seminar has helped to widen their horizon, energised them and reinforced their strategic potential both within Europe and also between Europe and Africa.

Furthermore, the seminar helped diaspora organisations and other stakeholders to participate in the meeting to network, exchange views, contacts, information, knowledge, policy insights and practical experiences in the field of migration and development. Diaspora organisations have gained access (which has not been attempted before) to the policy makers at the EU level, and this is one of the main results from the meeting. This is indeed an achievement which we need to build on in order to improve the policy dialogue between diaspora and policy makers both at the host country and at the EU level. Therefore, we need to continue the policy dialogue in order to be consistently apprised of the continually unfolding patterns and processes in the migration and development field. We also need to continue consultations and policy dialogue between diasporas and other stakeholders in the field at different policy levels so as to generate information, knowledge and policy insights on the subject from different stakeholder perspectives. Generating a solid knowledge base on the subject is a precondition for the formulation of appropriate policy proposals that can be translated into feasible strategic interventions and realisable actions.

In order to build on the dynamic momentum that the policy seminar generated, follow up steps need to be undertaken in several fronts. One front is the need to facilitate the interaction between diaspora and policy makers in their respective host countries who are dealing with migration and development related issues. This has not yet happened although it is urgent. Active dialogue and interaction between diaspora and policy makers in the host countries will help to improve both policy and practice in the field. It will also improve the flow of information between the two stakeholders. Therefore, organizing a follow-up workshop which will bring together key diaspora figures with policy makers from different EU countries is an immediate priority. The workshop will provide a platform in which they can come together and exchange information, expertise and experiences, and enter into strategic alliances for practical
collaborations. Another front is the need to highlight through research and make known to a wider policy constituency the successes achieved with concrete development related activities initiated by diaspora organisations in their respective homelands and the specific factors that have contributed to their positive outcomes. This is an aspect on which very little has been documented and as such, much information still remains unknown. Showcasing more information on this aspect will inform the development of better policies that are geared towards enhancing the development efforts of the diaspora in their respective home countries.

Finally, there is a need to develop the knowledge in the field of migration and development from the diaspora perspectives, mindsets, experiences and expertise. This is urgently needed as the complete absence of the diaspora researchers in the world of the academia in the host countries is clearly pronounced. Most of the research in the field of migration and development is largely dominated by non-diaspora researchers and scholars. The participation of the diaspora researchers in the production of knowledge in the field can add value and enrich policy insights on the subject from the point of view of this stakeholder perspective, whose wealth of knowledge and practical experience is largely undercapitalized. The reason is that, since recently, migration and development has been a terrain in which diaspora groups and organisations have broadly operated in a quite informal and exclusive manner. However, it is an area in which diasporas have already developed knowledge, expertise, and practical experience that has not yet been tapped sufficiently. There is therefore a need to initiate an expert meeting between diaspora researchers and donor institutions in the host countries in which they could deliberate on how to stimulate the active participation of the diasporas in the generation of ideas and policy insights so as to ensure that their voices are better represented in policy deliberations on migration and development related matters. This is for the simple fact that diasporas are the most important stakeholders and the chief actors making the nexus between migration and development possible.
Annex: List of Participants

CHAIRS

Dimitria CLAYTON
Ministry for Integration of North-Rhine Westphalia
Horionplatz 1
40213 Düsseldorf
Germany
Tel. +49 211 86184472
dimitria.clayton@mgffi.nrw.de

Dr. Titi BANJOKO
Africarecruit / Findajobinafrica.com
Commonwealth Business Council
18 Pall Mall SW1Y 5LU
London
United Kingdom
Tel. + 44 2070248223
tbanjoko@africarecruit.com
www.africarecruit.com

GUEST SPEAKERS June 25th

Klaus RUDISCHHAUSER
Director General Affairs
European Commission
Rue de la Science/Wetenshapsstraat 15
1040 Brussel
Belgium

Domenica GHIDEI
Chair of the Board of the African Diaspora Policy Centre
P.O. Box 3245
1001AA, Amsterdam
The Netherlands
Tel. +31 20 70 77 851
www.diaspora-centre.org

Khaldi MOHAMED TAYEB
Senior Policy Officer in the Labour Employment and Migration Division (Social Affairs Department)
African Union
Adis Abba
Ethiopia
Mohamed-Tayeb.KHALDI@ec.europa.eu

Nicola HARRINGTON
Director, a.i, of the UN Liaison Office
Rue Montoyer 14
1000 Brussels
Belgium

Dr. Irina KAUSCH
Economic Development and Employment Project Manager “Migration and Development”
GTZ
P. O. Box 5180
65726 Eschborn
Germany
Tel. +49 (0) 6196 79-1206
Fax +49 (0) 6196 79-801206

Awil MOHAMOUD
Executive Director of the African Diaspora Policy Centre
P.O. Box 3245
1001 AA, Amsterdam
Tel./Cell: +31 20 70 77 851 / +31 6 27361582
a.mohamoud@diaspora-centre.org
www.diaspora-centre.org
Papa Birama THIAM  
Director of Technical Assistance,  
Co-development Programme Coordination Unit,  
Presidency of the Senegalese Republic  
Tel. +221 77 639 23 32  
thiampapabirama@yahoo.fr  
Senegal

Rob ROZENBURG  
Deputy Head of Unit European Commission  
DG Development  
C2 Pan-African Issues and Organizations  
Governance and Migration  
Rue de la Science/Wetenshapsstraat 15  
1040 Brussel  
Tel- 003222961831  
Belgium

Cecilia Garcia GASALLA  
Dirección General de Planificación y Evaluación de Políticas para el Desarrollo  
(DGPOLDE) SECI-MAEC  
C/ Príncipe de Vergara 43, 5ª Planta  
28006 Madrid  
Spain  
Tel. +34 91 379 17 32  
Fax +34 91 431 17 85

Lulessa ABADURA  
African Diaspora Policy Centre  
P.O. Box 32 45  
1001 AA, Amsterdam  
Netherlands  
Tel. 31 20 70 77 851  
l.abadura@diaspora-centre.org  
www.diaspora-centre.org

Jean Bosco BOTSHO  
President of the AFRICAT, Associació Africana i Catalana de Cooperació  
Provenza, 25, 1-2 08029 Barcelona  
Spain  
Tel. +3493 430 83 92 / +34 661 64 87 39  
jeanboscobotsho@hotmail.com

Mehari Taddele MARU  
Executive Director [Pro-Bono]  
African Rally for Peace and Development  
Po Box 23998 Code 1000 Addis Ababa  
Ethiopia  
Tel : +251 911 250027  
director@arpdafrica.org /  
Mehari_maru@ksg07.harvard.edu /  
Mehari.maru@stcross-oxford.com  
http://www.arpdafrica.org

Chukwu-Emeka CHIKEZIE  
Executive Director of the African Foundation for Development (AFFORD)  
31-33 Bondway Vauzhall Cross SW8 1SJ,  
London  
United Kingdom  
Tel. + 44 20 75873906  
chukwu-emeka@afford-uk.org  
www.afford-uk.org
GUEST SPEAKERS June 26th

George DUNCAN  
Chairman Sankofa Foundation  
ACACIASTRAAT 112,  
2565 KE, The Hague  
Tel. / Cell: +31 70 3463334 / +31 643048992  
info@sankofa.nl  
www.sankofa.nl

Valentin Yombo DJEMA  
Chairman of Africa Foundation Stone  
London SW1 5LU  
United Kingdom  
Tel. +447985722902/ +447949741312  
molisho@btinternet.com  
www.africafoundationstone.org

Bamadi SANOKHO  
Forum de la Jeunesse aux identités multiples (FOJIM)  
01, rue du bout du rang  
94250 Gentilly  
France  
Tel. +33 147405801 / +33 6 26 56 99 25  
bamadig@gmail.com  
http://www.fojim.org

Rahime DIALLO  
Coordinator of the Department for Migration and Development in Soligen  
Follerstr. 48, 50676 Köln  
Tel +4922129867205 / +4916099251962  
diallora@gmx.de

Joe FRANS  
Former MP Social Democratic Party, Sweden / Next Generation Africa  
Tel + 46 70 200 95 22  
E-mail joefrans@joefrans.se  
www.joefrans.se

Dr. Udunna Emmanuel ONYEWUCHI  
Project Manager NIDOE-ITALY  
VIA ANGELO BIANCHI, 96 / 00133 ROMA  
Italy  
Tel. +39 62020100 / +39 3403902129  
wamba_ify@hotmail.com

Roméo GBAGUIDI  
Intercultural Mediator CENTRO HISPANO-AFRICANO  
Comunidad de Madrid Consejería de Inmigración Gestionado por: Fundación Desarrollo Sostenido c/ Manuel Marañón nº13. 28043. Madrid, Spain  
Tel. + 34 91721698 / +34 600 20 65 68  
rmmq@yahoo.fr  
http://www.fundeso.org/centrohispanoafricano

Ali GUISSÉ  
Copresident S.O.S-Migrants  
Tel. +32 498 33 07 48  
guissaly@yahoo.com  
http://www.sosmigrants.be

Luis Tanvares DA COSTA  
President Assembly of KAMBA  
Practa Ivo Cruz Nº5,  
1º Direito Santa Marta do Pinhal  
2855-586 Corroios  
Tel. +351 96 298 32 76  
Luiscoasta35@gmail.com

Phasi NUDUI  
President Coordinator of the Benelux Afro Center  
Place de la Gare n°1 _ 1082 Brussels  
Belgium  
Tel +32 2 465 18 84 / +32 478 42 36 29  
b.afrocenter@gmail.com  
www.bacmd.net
DIASPORA ORGANISATIONS

Belgium

Phasi NDUDI
President Coordinator of the Benelux Afro Center
Place de la Gare n°1 _ 1082 Brussels Belgium
Tel +32 2 465 18 84 / +32 478 42 36 29
b.afrocenter@gmail.com
www.bacmd.net

Ali GUISSÉ
Copresident S.O.S-Migrants
Tel. +32 498 33 07 48
quissaly@yahoo.com
http://www.sosmigrants.be

Kanté GAOUSSOU
Knt & Associates
Rue de Picardie 16
1140 Ever Brussels Belgium
Tel. +32485958943

Lily Diangindula MASOLA
Assistant to the Director
Benelux Afro Center asbl Migrations et Développement
1,Place de la Gare Berchem-Saint-Agathe 1082 Bruxelles
Tel + 32(2)469.30.08 / Fax + 32(2)468.52.72
info@beneluxafro.itgo.com

Denmark

Bigman A. NKUNKUNUNU
Director of Supporting Zimbabwe
Sandvigvej 7, 4735 Mern Denmark
Tel. +45 55997989 / +45 22486829
vn05@bif.kk.dk
www.disuzo.eu

Saada Mohamad ADAN
Somaliland Womens Organization
vaere bro veJ.58,6,1.
2880 bagvaerD Denmark
Tel. +45 44449974 / +45 28666686
Saadaadan_3@hotmail.com

Germany

Eli ABEKE
President of the German- African center (Deutsch-afrikanisches Zentrum)
Venloerstrasse 777, 50827 Koeln
Tel +49-2212718950 / +49-16096909201
eli.abeke@web.de
www.dazbonn.de

Helene BATEMONA
Diakonie Koeln (Mwangaza project)
Venloerstrasse 777, 50827 Cologne
Tel +49-221- 1603887 / +49-1637117581
helene.lucie@gmx.net
www.diakonie-koeln.de

Rahime DIALLO
Follerstr. 48, 50676 Köln
Tel +4922129867205 / +4916099251962
diallora@gmx.de

Veye TATAH
Founder and Editor in Chief of Africa Positive
Klara Str. 27, 44388 Dortmund Germany
Tel +49-(0)231-7978590 / +49-(0)1626346193
info@africa-positive.de / www.africa-positive.de
United Kingdom

Dr Sharif Abbas AHMED
Somali Initiative of Dialogue and Democracy
Flat 12/37 King Henrys Walk
London N1 4Nz
United Kingdom
Tel. +44 207272 9830 / +44 7950394449
abbas30002@hotmail.com

Dr. Titi BANJOKO
Africarecruit / Findajobinafrica.com
Commonwealth Business Council
18 Pall Mall SW1Y 5LU
London
United Kingdom
Tel. + 44 2070248223
tbanjoko@africarecruit.com
www.africarecruit.com

Chukwu-Emeka CHIKEZIE
Executive Director of the African Foundation for Development (AFFORD)
31-33 Bondway Vauzhall Cross SW8 1SJ London
United Kingdom
Tel. + 44 20 75873906
afford@afford-uk.org
www.afford-uk.org

Valentin Yombo DJEMA
Chairman of Africa Foundation Stone
London SW1 5LU
United Kingdom
Tel. +447985722902/ +447949741312
molisho@btinternet.com
www.africafoundationstone.org

Italy

Anayo Valentine AKABOGU
CEO of the International Services Center SNC
Corso Giovanni xxiii, 115 47900 Rimini
Italy
Tel. +39-0541-57469 / +39-335-1265773
valson31@yahoo.co.uk

Belinda Comfort DAMOAH
SUMA Agricultural Cooperative Society and Somubi Women’s Progress
Via Bainsizza 8 23900, Lecco
Italy
Tel. +39-3463135163
comfortdamoah@interfree.it

Kyenge KASHETU
President of Associazione Internazionale Dawa Diaspora Africana In Italia
Via Del Campi 52, 41013 Castelfranco Emilia
Italy
Tel. +39 3285991970 / +39 3478854090
associazionedawa@gmail.com

Ngo Mbilla ODILE
President of Association des Femmes de l’Afrique Subsaharienne A.D.A.S.
Tel- 00237 74160706
info@adasafrica.org
www.adasafrica.org

Dr. Udunna Emmanuel ONYEWUCHI
Project Manager NIDOE-ITALY
VIA ANGELO BIANCHI, 96 / 00133 ROMA
Italy
Tel. +39 62020100 / +39 3403902129
Nwamba_ify@hotmail.com
France

Dr Jean Charles Gilles AHOMADEGBE
President of the Conseil des Béninois de France-CBF
21 Rue Babeuf 94270 LE KREMLIN-BICETRE France
Tel: +33 (1) 42 11 43 20 / +33 (6) 18 88 65 52
ahomadgb@igr.fr

Yera DEMBELE
President of the FAFRAD (Fédération des associations Franco-Africaines de Développement)
2, avenue Paul Eluard 93000 Bobigny
France
Tel: +33 1 44 24 36 27 / +33 6 75 03 74 62
E-mail yera@fafrad.org
www.fafrad.org
www.liaison-franco-africaine.org

Moussa DRAMÉ
Mauritanians Network Associations in Europe
72 rue des Entrepreneurs
75018 Paris
France
Tel. +33660412555
mouss.drame@gmail.com

Yvette JALLADE
Communauté Rwandaise de France
Communication and Treasury
24, rue de l’Archevêché, 94220 Charenton France
Tel. + 33 (0)6 65 52 61 56
yvettejallade@gmail.com
http://communaute-rwandaise-defrance.wordpress.com

Yaffa MOHAMEDY
HCMF (Haut Conseil des Maliens de France)
1 rue Emile Blémont 75018 Paris
France
Tel. +33 6 50 69 11 23 / +33 6 16 44 67 12
mams@free.fr

Isaac Bolivar René NJUPOUEN
Research Associate University Paris Dauphine
10 RUE EMILE REYNAUD - 75019 Paris
France
Tel +33 1 44 64 70 07 / +33 6 21 11 72 08
bolivar_njupouen@yahoo.com

Bamadi SANOKHO
Forum de la Jeunesse aux identités multiples (FOJIM)
01, rue du bout du rang
94250 Gentilly
France
Tel. +33 147405801 / +33 6 26 56 99 25
bamadi@gmail.com
http://www.fojim.org

The Netherlands

Abiy ASHENAFI
Chair of ENNOS
Apeldoornselaan 217
2573 LH Den Haag
Netherlands
Tel. +31 70 3220463 / +31 6 28453571
abiyashenafi@hotmail.com

Santo DENG
Chairman of Sudan Civil Society Forum
Justus van Effenstraat 14,
3027 TJ Rotterdam
Netherlands
Tel. +31108425154 / +31 6 50231891
santolewis@hotmail.com
George DUNCAN  
Chairman Sankofa Foundation  
ACACIASTRAAT 112,  
2565 KE, The Hague  
Tel. / Cell: +31 70 3463334 / +31 6 43048992  
info@sankofa.nl  
www.sankofa.nl

Redwan HAROON  
Manager of FAMIX  
Grotedijk 9  
4823 EE Breda  
Netherlands  
Tel. +31 681405152  
E-mail redwan@famix.eu  
www.famix.eu

Freddy KAREKEZI  
Chairman of Afrika Netwerk  
Kaap Hoorndreef 30  
3563 AT Utrecht  
Netherlands  
Tel. +31 315325112 / +31 640230758  
info@afrikanetwerk.org  
www.afrikanetwerk.org

Stephanie MBANZENDORE  
Founder and Director of Burundian Women for Peace and Development  
Zaagmolenkade 167  
3035 KD Rotterdam  
The Netherlands  
Te. +31 10 8486924 / +31 6 27296315  
bwpdnl@yahoo.fr  
http://bwpd.org

Mohamed MOHMOUD  
Director of Himilio Relief and Development Association (HIRDA)  
P.O. Box 9004  
1180 MA Amstelveen  
Netherlands  
Tel. +31 20 7163831 / +31 640870728  
mohmou1@xs4all.nl / info@hirda.org  
www.hirda.org

Véronique WALU  
Chair of Redeem Foundation  
Roggekamp 177  
2592 VP Den Haag  
Tel. +31 70 3479142 / +31 621839362  
redeemhope@yahoo.com  
www.redeemfoundation.org

Portugal

Mário Cabral CABRAL  
Chair of Guineáspora, Fórum de Guineenses na Diáspora  
Avenida Vieira da Silva, 47, 4º Esq. 2855 – 580 Corroios  
Portugal  
Tel. +351 968541420 / +351968542490  
cabralml@hotmail.com

Katia MENDES  
Member of Guineáspora  
Soul_sister25@hotmail.com  
sequineaspora@sapo.pt  
Tel.+351964476625
Andredina Gomes CARDOSO  
Vice-President FASCP - Fundo de Apoio Social de Caboverdianos em Portugal  
Rua Manuel Arriaga, 1342, 3ºDt Quinta do Conde II  
Portugal  
Tel. +351966717398  
andredina.cardoso@gmail.com  
www.fascp.org  

Elisa da Conceição Ferreira COELHO VAZ  
Vice-President ACIMA - Association for Coordination and Integration of Angolan Migrants  
Rua da República Peruana nº 13 – 5ºESQ nº 1500-550 Lisbon  
Portugal  
Tel. +351 217600464 / +351 966824582  
elisa.vaz@mec.pt  

Luis Tanvares DA COSTA  
President Assembly of KAMBA  
Praceta Ivo Cruz Nº5, 1º Direito Santa Marta do Pinhal  
2855-586 Corroios  
Tel. +351 96 298 32 76  
Luiscosta35@gmail.com  

Giselle Marisia Kamal JAFAR  
Vice President Council Kambas Association  
Tel. +351 968440692 / +351 933848138  
gisellekamal@hotmail.com  

Spain  

Rasheed Ibrahim AMINA  
Casas de Refugiados e Inmigrantes Menores y Jóvenes no Acompañados(Mercedarios)  
C/Castelar nº21-Bajo, 28028-Madrid  
Tel. +34917254339 / +34 627717720  
rasheedlib2001@yahoo.es  
www.lamercedrefugiados.org  

Maxwell Ese Anderson ANDERSON  
Director of Media Blackberry Spain  
C/Reyes Catolicos, 53, 2º - 2,  
CP. 28982, Parla, Madrid  
Spain  
Tel. +34 606112535  
max@mediablackberry.com  

Jean Bosco BOTSHO  
President of the AFRICAT, Associació Africana i Catalana de Cooperació  
Provenza, 25, 1-2 08029 Barcelona  
Spain  
Tel. +3493 430 83 92 / +34 661 64 87 39  
jeanboscobotsho@hotmail.com  

Roméo GBAGUIDI  
Intercultural Mediator Centro Hispano-Africano  
Sostenido c/ Manuel Marañón nº13. 28043. Madrid,  
Spain  
Tel. + 34 91721698 / +34 600 20 65 68  
romgg@yahoo.fr  
http://www.fundeso.org/centrohispanoafricano  

Mountoumnjou SAMUEL  
Social and Intercultural Mediator Fundación Insert  
C/Sagunto 6, 2º Dcha, 47005 Valladolid, Spain  
Tel. +34 983291473 / +34 654 131 704  
samount2002@yahoo.fr  
www.fundacioninsert.org
Sweden

Farah ABDULSAMED
Chairman of Union of Somali organisation in Sweden (Somalisk Riksförbundet i Sverige)
Pettersbergsgatan 43 B, Västerås
Tel. +4621 41 70 41 / +4670 410 1490
farahafey@gmail.com
http://www.somsweden.com

Joe FRANS
Former MP Social Democratic Party, Sweden / Next Generation Africa
Tel + 46 70 200 95 22
E-mail joefrans@joefrans.se
www.joefrans.se

Henok HABTESELASSIE
Project Leader of Samarbete Afrikaner i Botkyrka Kommun
Krögarvagen 4,2tr.
14552 norsborg , Stockholm
Sweden
Tel. +46 86898330 / +46 704035783
henokhabitesselassie@yahoo.se

Beatrice Kindembe ISAMPETE
Vice-President NAWES (Network for Women scientists in Sweden and Europe of African origins)
Kavallerivägen 22, 4 tr
Sweden
Tel. +46 6816155 / +46 702923280
beatrice@infra.kth.se
www.nawes.org

Switzerland

Dawit ASGEDOM
President Assistance for a Voluntary Return and Reintegration of African Migrants (AVRRAM)
Route de Sauverny 20
1290 Versoix
Switzerland
Tel. 0041 227791093
adawit@bluewin.ch

Papa Ndiaye DIOUF
Senior Lecturer The Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies
14, Rue Hoffmann
1202 Geneva
Switzerland
Tel +41229084509 / +41786984065
Pape.diouf@graduateinstitute.ch
http://graduateinstitute.ch

Awa N’DIAYE
President of Espace Afrique International
ICC, Route de Pré-Bois 20,
1215 Genève 15
Tel. +41 22 723 26 60 / +41 22 079 315 04 66
espaceafrique@hotmail.com
www.espace-afrique.ch
GENERAL PARTICIPANTS

Abdulkadir Mohamed ALINOOR
African I. Association,
48B,Rue de la Colonne
1080 Brussels
Tel. +322-4682025 / +32477336013
aib93@hotmail.com
abibu123@yahoo.fr

Anabela APPELTON
African Management Services Company
Dam 5b, Unit E
1012 JS, Amsterdam
The Netherlands
Tel. +31 20 664 1916 / Fax. +31 20 664 2959

Carlos BAEZ EVERTSZ
Policy Officer Migration and Development
Unité C/2 Questions et institutions panafricaines, gouvernance et migration
DG Developpement et relations avec les Etats ACP
Rue de la Science 15, 1040 Bruxelles
carlos.baez-evertsz@ec.europa.eu

Francisco BATALLER M.
European Commission
Deputy Head of Unit-Coordination and Analysis
Co-ordinator for International Co-operation and Migration Issues
Rue de la loi/Wetstraat 170
1040 Brussels
Tel. +32-2-29990673 / 2961318
Francisco.bataller-martin@ec.europa.eu

Blandine BOUNIOL
Policy Officer for International Cooperation
Caritas Europa
Rue de Pascale, 4
B- 1040 Bruxelles
Tel. +32 2 235 26 55 / +32 478 585 408 / Fax.
+32 2 230 16 58
bbouniol@caritas-europa.org

Marie-Laure DE BERGH
Policy Officer - Migration and Development
European Commission, DG for Development and Relations with ACP States
DEV/C2
Tel. +32 2 299 2492
marie-laure.de-bergh@ec.europa.eu

Moïse ESSOH
Spokesman of the general Assembly of Africans in Belgium
Tel. +324.74.96.77.27
essotia@yahoo.com

Félix FERNÁNDEZ-SHAW
Spanish Mission in Brussels
felix.fernandez-shaw@reper.maec.es
Tel. +322.509.8830
Marianne FREDERIKSEN
The Project Counselling Service
Klosterport 4 E Århus C - DK
Tel. +45 86 12 03 42
Fax. +4586 12 03 43
mf@pmgo.dk

Angela HAYNES
EU Representative, Belgium
Tel. + 32 495 28 91 82
angela3haynes@yahoo.com

Ajamay Astrid HELLE
Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Tel. +41 22 918-0410/0411
www.norway-geneva.org
astrid.e.helle.ajamay@mfa.no

Bernd HEMINGWAY
IOM Regional Liaison and Coordination Office to
the European Union and Belgium
Rue Montoyer 40,
BE-1000 Brussels
www.belgium.iom.int

Bethany DONITHORN
Knowledge Management Expert
Joint Migration and Development Initiative
United Nations Development Programme
14 Rue Montoyer, Brussels, 1000, Belgium
Tel. (mobile): (+32-4) 87-415.225
Fax. (+32-2) 5-034-729
bethany.donithorn@undp.org

Kenneth KARL
EuropeAid Cooperation Office
E5 - Quality Monitoring Systems and
Methodologies
Coordination of Development Policies
41 rue de la Loi - 9/47 Brussels 1040
Belgium
Tel. +32-2 2997940 / Fax. +32-2 2966014
Kenneth.Karl@ec.europa.eu

Sarah LAHMANI
Chargée de mission Population et développement
Direction de la stratégie - Division animation et
prospective
AFD - Agence Française de Développement
5 rue Roland Barthes - 75598 Paris Cedex 12
France
Tel. +33 1 53 44 42 54. / Fax. +33 1 53 44 38 69
lahmanis@afd.fr

Francesco LUCIANI
European Commission
DG Justice, Freedom and Security
Unit B2 - Immigration and Asylum
Desk Officer for financial cooperation with third
countries in the area of migration and asylum

Wies MAAS
Director of Persons Mobilisation, Migration and
Refugee Affairs
Ministry Of foreign affairs
P. O. Box 20061
2500 EB The Hague

Franziska MEIER
IOM, Regional Liaison and Coordination Office to
the European Union and Belgium
Rue Montoyer 40, BE-1000 Brussels
fmeier@iom.int
www.belgium.iom.int
Antoine MEYER  
Project Coordinator  
The Hague Process on Refugees and Migration  
Foundation P.O. Box 13 074  
NL 2501 EB Den Haag, Netherlands  
Tel. +31 70 302 60 10/11 / +316 45 18 19 27  
szmeyea@szw.denhaag.nl  
www.thehagueprocess.org

Promise MKWANANZI  
Europe External Policy Advisors (EEPA)  
115 Rue Stevin, 1000 Brussels, Belgium  
Tel.: +32 2 234 62 26  
Fax: +32 2 230 37 80  
pmkwananzi@eepa.be  
Website: http://www.eepa.be

Constance MOTTE  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
Directorate general for International Cooperation and Development  
20 rue Monsieur 75700 Paris 07 SP  
France

Bernard NJONGA  
Directeur de publication  
Quartier Elig-Essono  
B.P.11 955 Yaoundé  
Cameroon

Philip PEIRCE  
UNDP Brussels  
Programme Manager  
EC-UN Joint Migration & Development Initiative  
Tel.+32 2 213 8104 / +32 473 657376

Quitterie PINCENT  
Agence Française de Développement - AFD  
Relations with NGOs  
Quitterie Pincent  
5 rue Roland Barthes  
75598 Paris Cedex 12  
France  
Tel. +3222957196 / Fax. +3222969841

Irene PLUGGE  
Policy Officer Forward Looking studies and Policy Coherence  
European Commission Directorate-General Development Relations with African, Caribbean and Pacific States  
Rue de la Science/Wetenschapsstraat 15  
1040 Brussel  
Tel. +3222993758 / Fax. +3222992915  
http://www.afd.fr

Agata SOBIECH  
DG Justice, Freedom and Security  
Unit B2 - Immigration and Asylum  
Desk Officer for relations with the countries of sub-Saharan Africa in the area of migration and asylum

Karim ULMER  
Policy Officer, Trade and Gender  
APRODEV  
Bd Charlemagne 28  
B-1000 Brussels  
Belgium  
Tel. +3222345664/60  
k.ulmer@aprodev.net

Chansamone VORAVONG  
Chair of FORIM  
Président du Forum des Organisations de Solidarité Internationales issues des Migrations  
Tél +33 1 44 72 02 88  
forim@forum.net
Andrea WARNECKE  
Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC)  
An der Elisabethkirche 25  
53113 Bonn  
Tel. +49 228 911 96 70  
Fax +49 228 241 215

Guled YUSUF  
General Coordinator  
NEDSOM  
1ste van Kunstraat 292  
2521 AV Den Haag  
The Netherland  
Tel:+31703881571 / Tel:+31622406856  
Tel:+25290708493 Somalia  
E-mail: Guled@nedsom.com  
Website: www.nedsom.com

AFRICAN EMBASSY DELEGATES

Delegate of Mauritius

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