Diaspora Perspectives on the Joint Africa-EU Strategic Partnership
About ADPC
The African Diaspora Policy Centre (ADPC) is an independent policy research centre devoted to the study of migration and development-related issues from the under-documented perspective of the diaspora. It generates knowledge and information primarily targeted at three groups: African diaspora organisations in Europe, development practitioners and policy-makers dealing with diaspora-related issues both in Africa and in Europe.

Visiting Address: Timorplein 41, Amsterdam
Postal Address: P.O. Box 3245 1001 AA, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
Email: info@diaspora-centre.org
Website: www.diaspora-centre.org

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Lay out: M.V. (www.mv-web.nl)
The diaspora are one of the contemporary global forces shaping the directions and trends of international development in the 21st century. This reality makes it imperative for governments to partner and join forces with them in development efforts in their respective homelands. The Joint Africa-EU Strategic Partnership and Action Plan that were adopted in Lisbon in 2007 offer a window of opportunity for the African diaspora in Europe to participate in the implementation of this ambitious programme. They also present a unique opportunity for the African Union, the European Union, its member states and their subsidiary development circles to align themselves with the diaspora in the renewed efforts geared toward advancing the overall development of Africa.

The successful execution of the Partnership programme will require the mobilisation of a broad spectrum of resourceful actors and stakeholders in development cooperation circles and beyond, both in Africa and in Europe. The scale and complexity of the challenges currently confronting Africa are tremendous, and meeting these challenges successfully requires unified action and collective input of social capital, intellectual ideas, economic means, and creative initiatives and activities (both domestic and international). It will require the redoubling of existing efforts in order to achieve better results and shape a better Africa in the future. It will also necessitate the further mobilisation of the African diaspora population in Europe for this daunting endeavour.

The huge presence of the African diaspora in Europe at this particular point in time can be an asset to both continents, as they occupy a vital strategic position that links Europe with Africa in a meaningful way. The African diaspora in Europe are indeed in the right position at the right time and in the right place to effect a great amount of change. This development presents a momentum that must be seized in order to reap maximum benefits from the strategic bridge-building potential of the diaspora. For instance, the African diaspora in Europe can be considered to be at home and abroad simultaneously as a result of an increased ability to maintain homeland connections through inexpensive travel and communications via new technologies such as the Internet.

If the African diaspora in Europe are galvanised, they can play a role as valuable strategic actors in the implementation process and can strengthen the Joint Africa-EU Strategic Partnership. There are great advantages to working cooperatively with the African diaspora in the translation of the Partnership policy priorities into feasible interventions and realisable actions. The diaspora, for example, fulfil rather specific roles in the process where gaps are left by other civil society organisations in both Europe and Africa. Additionally, the systematic incorporation of the diaspora into development circles within the framework of the newly launched Africa-EU Strategic Partnership in a more structured and formal manner would help widen the development constituency in Europe with regards to Africa.

This report presents the African diaspora position in Europe on the Joint Africa-EU Strategic Partnership. In particular, the report articulates the views, aspirations and priorities of key African scholars, opinion leaders and development practitioners representing diverse institutions and organisations from various European countries. It outlines five key areas in which concrete activities and actions can be initiated for the benefit of the Partnership, and also provides feasible entry points at which diaspora organisations can actively participate in the implementation of concrete activities within the Partnership framework.
It is my hope that the issues discussed in this report will help inform policy makers at both the European and African levels on the strategic role that the African diaspora in Europe can play in policy dialogue and in the practical implementation of this new continent-to-continent Partnership framework. The Strategic Partnership offers an opportunity to build up partnerships for development between the diaspora and established development communities in Africa and Europe for the benefit of both continents. Let us seize this momentum now.

Dr. Awil Mohamoud
Director
African Diaspora Policy Centre

**Executive Summary and Recommendations**

The adoption of the Joint Africa-EU Strategic Partnership and Action Plan in Lisbon in 2007 ushered in the advent of a new era of advanced development cooperation relations between Africa and Europe. A significant feature of this new Partnership is that it formally recognises the African diaspora as an important stakeholder in the development efforts regarding Africa. Fortunately, the African diaspora in Europe are now in a position to add value to advancement of the Partnership. The African diaspora are, in fact, becoming increasingly involved in the development of their respective homelands on a larger scale and have successfully positioned themselves as critical development actors within development policy circles in Europe.

Moreover, the African diaspora in Europe currently contribute huge financial resources in excess of the level of the official development assistance (ODA) to the social welfare and economic growth of their respective homelands. In this regard, they have become the key drivers for a diaspora-led development sector that can be considered separate from the traditional development cooperation sector that is within the domain of Western donor governments.

It should be understood that the African diaspora in Europe are able to contribute to social and political development in much the same way that they currently contribute to the economic welfare and development of their home countries. They can, for instance, contribute to peace building efforts, improving human rights conditions, advancing institutional knowledge, upgrading and strengthening governance institutions, deepening democratisation processes and facilitating knowledge transfer (brain gain). Eventually, these non-financial flows from the diaspora could have a profound impact on social views regarding the perception of freedom, tolerance of differences, human rights issues, and governance and political practices in Africa. Similarly, the African diaspora can act as ambassadors who are able to mediate political dialogues and improve diplomatic relations between the host and home countries as well as between Europe and Africa.

The participation of the diaspora in the newly launched Africa-EU Strategic Partnership is indispensable. The Partnership not only offers a window of opportunity for the African diaspora in Europe to enrich the ongoing Africa-EU political dialogue with their unique perspectives, but it also provides feasible entry points at which diaspora organisations can actively participate in the realisation of concrete objectives within the partnership framework.

There are five key areas in which the African diaspora in Europe can strengthen the Africa-EU Strategic Partnership and effectively contribute to the implementation of the Action Plan. They are as follows:

- Advancing Africa-EU policy dialogue
- Diaspora building bridges
- Smart partnerships
- Strengthening cooperation between diaspora organisations and civil society institutions in Africa
- Employment

The five key areas reflect the aspirations and priorities of African diaspora organisations in Europe and they are actionable opportunities for adding value to the Partnership framework through concrete initiatives.

African diaspora organisations and associations can contribute to the concrete realisation of these five priorities both separately as well as in partnership with
other key stakeholders in the field of migration and development. While the diaspora already play an active role in some of the areas identified, their contribution has not been visible or acknowledged by policy makers in Europe or Africa. In other areas, they have the potential to play a significant role, provided their resources are efficiently channelled and activities sufficiently supported. In general, the impact and potential of the diaspora in all five areas can be significantly enhanced by the development of mechanisms that foster the systematic involvement and participation of diaspora development practitioners in the realisation of these goals.

This paper proposes the following policy considerations:

1. Advancing Africa-EU policy dialogue

- To recognise that the diaspora are carriers of ideas and knowledge whose perspectives can contribute to the advancement of the political dialogue between Africa and EU within the Partnership framework
- To facilitate channels through which the diaspora can communicate their aspirations and priorities to policy makers
- To grant the diaspora observer status in meetings convened to discuss the promotion of the Joint Africa-EU Strategic Partnership

2. Diaspora building bridges

- To encourage diaspora professional networks to work with public institutions at both the national and continental level for capacity building purposes
- To foster diaspora entrepreneurs and support them in building bridges between the private sectors of host and home countries
- To facilitate the development of innovative mechanisms through which the bridge-building potential of the diaspora can be further harnessed for the transfer of resources to the homelands

3. Smart partnerships

- To support smart partnerships between diaspora organisations and mainstream development agencies in the implementation of community development projects in the homelands
- To promote the setting up of joint ventures between diaspora owned companies with companies in the homelands, allowing local companies to gain access to financial resources, expertise, innovative trade practices and valuable business networks abroad
- To facilitate the participation of skilled diaspora in capacity building programmes implemented at both the municipal and sub-national level in the homelands

4. Strengthening cooperation between diaspora organisations and civil society institutions in Africa

- To support the building of partnerships and strategic alliances between diaspora organisations and civil society forums in Africa for the effective implementation of the Partnership
- To facilitate the setting up of a permanent monitoring team composed of representatives from diaspora and civil society forums in Africa mandated to oversee the advancement of the Partnership programme both in Europe and in Africa
- To support the establishment of an informal forum in which diaspora and civil society forums could share information, experiences and expertise

- To facilitate the development of a process which will enable diaspora and civil society forums in Africa to collectively undertake lobbying and advocacy activities aimed at pressuring the governments on both sides to meet their policy commitments regarding the implementation of the Partnership

5. Employment

- To promote job creation in Africa and place it on top of the agenda of the Africa-EU Strategic Partnership
- To support the training of considerable numbers of skilled people in vocational and technical areas and to make skills training a key priority within the framework of the Africa-EU Partnership
- To facilitate the scaling up of diaspora-initiated development projects and private enterprises that contribute to the creation of jobs in their respective home countries
The Africa-EU Strategic Partnership and Action Plan were adopted in Lisbon in 2007 in response to the need for a concrete framework for systematic, long-term development cooperation between Africa and Europe, and signaled the advent of a new era of advanced collaboration between the two continents. This new strategy, which is often referred to as a ‘people-centered partnership’, was launched with the purpose of scaling up political dialogue between the African Union (AU) and the European Union (EU) in the interest of building a solid and sustainable continent-to-continent partnership based on shared values, interests, and strategic objectives. The goal of the Africa-EU Strategic Partnership is to reinvigorate and elevate cooperation between Africa and Europe in the fight against poverty, injustice, human rights violations, lawlessness, insecurity, and political and social instability. More specifically, it is organised around eight themes: peace and security; democratic governance and human rights; trade, regional integration and infrastructure; the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); energy; climate change; migration, mobility and employment; and science, information society and space.

The priorities for the Africa-EU Strategic Partnership are meant to be implemented through “successive short-term Action Plans and enhanced political dialogue at all levels, resulting in concrete and measurable outcomes in all areas of the partnership”. Furthermore, the Joint Strategy document clearly states that the implementation of the programme will be guided by the principle of “a broad-based and a wide-ranging people-centered partnership. Africa and the EU will empower non-state actors [such as the diaspora] and create conditions to enable them to play an active role in development, democracy building, conflict prevention and post-conflict reconstruction processes”. Finally, the document explicitly stresses that both Africa and the EU will pursue and implement policies and programmes that help facilitate the active involvement of diaspora and other migrant communities in the successful implementation of the strategy ¹.

Priorities Identified for Intervention

In order to solicit the perspectives of the diaspora in the Africa-EU Strategic Partnership and Action Plan, the African Diaspora Policy Centre (ADPC) organised a consultation meeting in The Hague on July 9, 2009. The meeting was the first part of the project Participation of the African Diaspora in the Joint Africa-EU Strategic Partnership, which was initiated to mobilise the considerable human and financial resources and potential of the African diaspora in Europe so that they can play a valuable bridge-building role in the strengthening of the Partnership and the realisation of its objectives. The one-day consultation meeting provided an arena in which key African scholars, opinion leaders, experts and development practitioners from 11 EU countries could deliberate and exchange views on the strategic role that the African diaspora in Europe can play in policy dialogue and the practical implementation of the Africa-EU Strategic Partnership. The meeting was also instrumental in facilitating African diaspora organisations, groups and individuals in Europe to acquire a deeper understanding of the content and priorities of the Joint Africa-EU Strategy adopted in Lisbon in 2007. Perhaps most importantly, the meeting served as a vehicle for awareness raising and the building of connections and networks between African diaspora organisations in Europe so that they may act jointly in future development efforts and undertake initiatives collectively. The need for collective engagement was especially evident with regard to lobbying, campaigning and advocacy efforts for the realisation of policy and practice changes that foster the active participation of diaspora in the strengthening of the Africa-EU Strategic Partnership.

The participants of the consultation meeting identified five key areas in which the African diaspora in Europe can strengthen the Africa-EU Strategic Partnership and effectively contribute to the implementation of the Action Plan. They are as follows:

¹ For the full text of the Joint Africa-EU Strategic Partnership, see www.europAfrica.org.
I. Advancing Africa-EU policy dialogue

Dialogue in any forum is a process that can be enriched by diverse perspectives. The ongoing policy dialogue between Africa and the EU has the potential to reap enormous benefit from such diversity of thought, and the active participation of key civil society stakeholders, and of diaspora in particular, must be further cultivated and supported. If they are organised and engaged, the diaspora can contribute to agenda setting on the international level by identifying and advancing pressing issues of importance which are informed by their own unique perspectives and experiences. After all, the diaspora occupy a vital strategic position wherein their worldview is intimately framed by socio-political realities across both continents. The African diaspora in Europe entertain perspectives quite different from those advanced by the more established stakeholders both in Africa and in Europe, and their contributions can thus add value to the process and lead to the advancement of the dialogue.

The huge presence of the African diaspora in Europe at this particular point in time is an asset to both continents. The diaspora can mediate a healthy political dialogue that works to lessen cultural barriers and increase information sharing among people in both Europe and Africa. In fact, the diaspora are already involved in facilitating social contacts and networks—an activity that is helping to broaden the horizons and world views of people on both continents. This long-distance mediation by the diaspora is creating communities across racial and cultural lines and could potentially contribute to laying the foundation for the emergence of a transnational society between Europe and Africa. Galvanising the potential of the diaspora in this respect within the framework of the Africa-EU Strategic Partnership can strengthen support for ongoing EU development cooperation with regard to Africa. As development cooperation assistance from Europe to Africa increasingly comes under harsh criticism in policy debates in many EU countries, it is of vital importance that the advocacy messages of the diaspora can be heard. To that end, the diaspora must be proactively involved in policy debates on the subject in their respective host countries in Europe in order to help incite public support for a EU commitment to further development cooperation.

In short, African diaspora scholars, researchers, opinion leaders and practitioners are in a position to contribute intellectually to the advancement of the policy dialogue between Africa and the EU within the Partnership framework, but their stakeholder perspective has not yet been consistently provided nor sufficiently sought. This is primarily due to a lack of organisation among diaspora-led development initiatives, a lack of access to the policy making process, and the lack of a platform for formal representation at the European level. In order to advance the Africa-EU policy dialogue, the diaspora need to create a structure within which they can work together toward common development interests while still maintaining their inherent diversity that strengthens their initiatives. Additionally, communication channels by which the diaspora can transmit their ideas, perspectives and advocacy messages must be formalised and fully integrated into the process. Lastly, the diaspora must actively seek out means in which they may gain formal access into the policy making process at the EU and AU levels, be it in an advisory capacity or otherwise.

Currently, there is a great deal of support on the part of key diaspora stakeholders, European relief and development agencies, and African institutions as well as substantive political momentum for the creation of an EU-wide platform for formal diaspora engagement in migration and development initiatives. Such a platform would provide invaluable opportunities for synergy among varying organisations, a framework within which advocacy, research and policy work could be conducted, and would formally link migration with development and feature the diaspora as the bridge-building constituency. More specifically, the priorities of the platform would include the promotion of internal networking across national boundaries and sectors, increased access to other pan-European networks and organisations, the coordination of policy positions and advocacy work, joint external communication strategies, the creation of a pool of expertise among members, and capacity building efforts for increased impact on national and EU-level policy.

2 This policy seminar was a continuation of the Participation of the African Diaspora in the Joint Africa-EU Strategic Partnership project.

3 For a complete list of participants, please see the Annex.
The second way in which the diaspora can advance the Africa-EU policy dialogue is through the facilitation of channels through which they can communicate their ideas, perspectives and policy insights with African and EU policy makers. This is essential in order for the diaspora to influence policy and practice changes within the Partnership framework. The African diaspora in Europe have already constructed some pathways through which they can directly and indirectly advance the Africa-EU policy dialogue within the context of the newly formed Partnership, but these pathways are ad hoc and limited in nature. The diaspora utilise letters, telephone calls, promotional materials, video, and Internet chats, for example, to exchange information, ideas, and political mediations across both continents. These pathways facilitate the transmission of social values, knowledge and norms that have a transformative impact on prevailing notions regarding social welfare, political participation, good governance, and human rights in Africa. The diaspora also use their own networks and political affiliations to enter into face-to-face talks with key political and social figures from the homelands as those individuals visit Europe.

To increase effectiveness, communication channels must be professionalised, strengthened and enlarged. They must also be recognised, valued and formally used across both continents by institutions committed to the advancement of the political dialogue within the Partnership. Lastly, such channels must also be fully integrated into the means of communication utilised by policy makers. Possible information channels could include diaspora-run radio and television stations, newspapers, magazines and web sites that are produced in host countries in Europe. Additionally, it is imperative that the participation of the diaspora be actively sought for forum discussions and media debates in which development cooperation and Africa-EU Partnership relations are deliberated.

As a third means for advancing the Africa-EU policy dialogue, the African diaspora in Europe must have formal access into the policy process at the EU and AU levels. This, however, requires that policy makers acknowledge the added value of the diaspora perspective to the development of a consolidated political dialogue, and that opportunities are created to allow for active participation of the diaspora at various levels. Formal access also requires the diaspora to cultivate a pool of experts who could represent diaspora interests and to seek out opportunities for active involvement in the policy making process.

The diaspora can fulfil a variety of roles in policy process, not least of which is a consultative role. The intellectual capital of the diaspora must be sought in the drafting of specific policy proposals and in consultation meetings where ideas and views are exchanged. Additionally, the diaspora should be granted observer status in meetings convened to discuss the promotion of the Africa-EU Strategic Partnership and other issues of relevance where the diaspora are critical stakeholders. Having observer status would enable the diaspora to keep apprised of the development of the political dialogue, and would make it possible for the diaspora to contribute to the policy discussion from a point of view informed by first-hand experience and realistic judgment. Lastly, the diaspora must be allocated (and actively seek) seats in appropriate EU and AU assemblies and committees dealing with migration and development.

II. Diaspora building bridges

The African diaspora in Europe occupy a vital strategic position that links Europe with Africa in a meaningful way. This position allows the diaspora to make connections across continents and mediate cooperation, synergy, and the sharing of ideas, values and resources. It is in this manner that the diaspora are building bridges between the fields of migration and development on both continents, and gaining influence and political clout that can be capitalised on for the strengthening of the Africa-EU Strategic Partnership.

There are several ways in which the diaspora can harness their bridge-building capacity to enrich development efforts in Africa within the framework of the Strategic Partnership. One way is to build relations between the diaspora and public institutions at both the state and continental level. Diaspora professional networks and organisations, for example, can work with public institutions in order to boost the capacity of a particular sector, such as health or education. Diaspora health professionals, for example, can work in Ethiopia, Ghana and South Africa. And in terms of education, one need only refer to the diaspora-led programme Fundo de Apoio Social de Caboverdianos em Portugal (FASCP), which, among other projects, links primary school education efforts in Portugal and Cape Verde. The diaspora can facilitate links between the sectors within which they work in the host countries and those in their home countries to transfer needed equipment and materials, facilitate knowledge transfer and capacity building, or provide partnership and assistance. In this respect, the diaspora possess ample experience from which lessons can be learned and further participation can be guided.

Another way to boost bridge-building capacity is for diaspora entrepreneurs to network increasingly with the private sector both in host and home countries. To this end, trade links between European and African companies and business enterprises must be established and promoted, and investment seminars and trade exhibitions must be organised. The diaspora can also play an advisory role for enterprises from Africa who wish to do business professionally with companies in Europe, and vice versa. Moreover, they can transfer valuable trading know-how, knowledge economy and creative business practices from Europe to Africa. This is of particular importance, as many African businesses, be they small, medium or large, lack the professional capacity to market their products and the know-how to conduct public relations. A good example of such an advisory relationship is between the diaspora-established firm Teampro, which is based in Rotterdam in the Netherlands, and the companies they serve in Africa.

7 The bridge-building position of the diaspora can also be capitalised for the transfer of resources to the homelands. Due to a lack of data regarding the effectiveness of such transfers, the potential of this activity has yet to be fully realised and harnessed. Yet, it is a method of development assistance utilised skillfully by certain diaspora organisations that transfer resources, knowledge and expertise and practical experiences from host countries to their respective homelands. This transfer of resources accomplishes the secondary goal of facilitating valuable contacts and networks as well as links between sectors, firms and institutions across countries both in Europe and in Africa. Furthermore, some diaspora organisations have set up innovative projects and programmes in which they skilfully utilise the knowledge and practical experience they have gained in host countries, the networks they already constructed there, and resources, expertise and local partnerships to implement the project with home country partners.

For further information, visit www.fascp.org or http://www.duplaoportunidade.org/spip.php/article5
For further information, visit the website of Teampro, http://www.teampro.nl
A good example that can be noted is the ongoing projects that the DIR Foundation is currently implementing in Ethiopia. There are, therefore, on-the-ground experiences and examples from which lessons can be learned by other diaspora who wish to replicate such successes elsewhere.

A final area of opportunity for strengthening the bridge building capacities of the African diaspora is that of increased connectivity with partners in the academic sector in both Europe and Africa. Given the vital need for additional research into so many areas related to the migration-development nexus, the diaspora can play a vital role in the creation of information and data sources that would ultimately inform policy and programming. From their positions in European host countries, the diaspora can facilitate partnerships between academic institutions and in Africa to develop innovative data collection efforts, initiate qualitative studies and participatory evaluations, and advocate for the inclusion of migrant data on African censuses.

III. Smart partnerships

There are a variety of ways that the diaspora can enter into strategic partnerships for the development of the continent within the framework of the Africa-EU Strategic Partnership, and it is such partnerships that will likely prove vital in achieving the goals of the diaspora. Through such partnerships, the diaspora can play an effective role in the reduction of poverty, the growth of the economy, and the boosting of human capital in their respective home countries. The diaspora are already active in seeking partnerships. The time has come, however, to not only explore if and how to create more smart partnerships, but to look more seriously at the scale and implementation of existing partnerships.

One area of opportunity lies in the community development projects that many African diaspora organisations in Europe are already involved with in their homelands. The activities of the diaspora in this area could be bolstered if smart partnerships are initiated between diaspora organisations and mainstream development agencies at the local level. This strategic collaboration would enable both development sectors to work in partnership for development in Africa, and to complement each other’s strengths and weaknesses and work constructively towards a mutual objective. Practical collaboration between diaspora organisations and development agencies would also stimulate the exchange of knowledge, experience and expertise between the two development sectors and thereby help to gain better insights about their respective activities.

The sharing of knowledge and expertise is very important, as it can be a stimulus for undertaking further joint development projects in Africa. It could also encourage diaspora organisations and development agencies to initiate joint pilot projects in both the host and home countries in order to build up a viable working relationship through practice. More importantly, initiating joint pilot projects can bring the two development sectors together much closer than is now the case. As a final point, it is becoming more and more evident that diasporas living in the Western world are emerging as the “fourth development aid actors” after international organisations, governments, and mainstream development agencies. This is a reality that can no longer be overlooked, and is an opportunity that should be seized and exploited to the maximum. Therefore, the need for fostering smart partnerships between traditional development actors and diaspora organisations is both imperative and timely.

Another area in which smart partnerships must be initiated and effectively implemented is in that of increased connectivity with partners in the academic sector. For instance, diaspora-established companies could possibly set up joint ventures with companies in the homelands that would allow local companies to gain access to financial resources, expertise, innovative trade practices and valuable business networks abroad. In addition, Diaspora entrepreneurs can help bring together companies from Africa and Europe and can mediate the promotion of viable and sustainable trade relations between such companies. Particular examples of diaspora networks utilizing such partnerships include the Nigerian diaspora in Germany as well as the Ghanaian diaspora in the Netherlands. Diaspora entrepreneurs can also play a crucial role in marketing local products abroad in order to facilitate the creation of new markets in Europe for export products from Africa. This is an activity that most local companies in Africa cannot undertake because of the limited marketing capacity. While this is already a mid-stream trend, it needs to be a mainstream shed and widespread practice across countries in Africa and Europe.

A third area in which smart partnerships can be initiated is through the participation of the diaspora in capacity building programmes implemented in their respective home countries or at the continental level. The diaspora already transfer skills and expertise to the homelands both individually and in groups organised along professional lines, such as Ethiopian medical doctors from Canada and the US and Ghanaian medical doctors from Canada and the UK. They are also involved through institutional links such as FASCP, which formally collaborates with municipal and local government institutions in the homeland. For example, FASCP implements a skills transfer scheme that teams up highly skilled Cape Verdean diaspora with native Portuguese to collectively undertake a capacity building mission in Cape Verde for a period of few weeks or months. The design of the project enables local institutions in Cape Verde to benefit not only from the skills and expertise of the Cape Verdean diaspora in Portugal, but also those of the native Portuguese. Such a programme could be usefully redesigned or scaled up into smart programme and partnerships within the framework of the Africa-EU Partnership.

Thus, regarding the translation of the African–EU Strategic Partnership principles into practical actions, it is appropriate to experiment with the creation of smart partnerships between diaspora organisations and other development actors in both Europe and in Africa. Initiating partnerships on projects with concrete development objectives enables the diaspora and other development actors to join forces in the implementation of the Africa-EU Strategic Partnership. It also helps the systematic incorporation of the diaspora into development circles in a more structured and formal manner, thereby widening the development constituency in the Partnership. Furthermore, initiating smart partnerships and concrete joint projects will help to galvanise additional resources, expertise and networks that could have more of an impact on the well-being of local recipients. These smart partnerships should not be limited to purely material development (i.e. community development projects) but should also cover non-economic aspects that the diaspora transfer such as new technological skills, innovative business and trade practices, knowledge, capacity building training, valuable transnational networks and contacts.

6 For further information, visit www.dirnet.nl
IV. Strengthening cooperation between diaspora organisations and civil society institutions in Africa

The AU has recently created two institutions aimed at interfacing between non-political bodies and the Union itself. One is the Citizens and Diaspora Directorate (CIDO), which is mandated to deal with overarching issues in the relationship between the overseas diaspora and continental-level institutions in Africa. The other institution is the Economic Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC), which was established to promote the facilitation of effective dialogue and the development of mechanisms for civil society participation in the Africa-EU Partnership Project.8 Civil society forums were also established in both regions of the continent in order to monitor the practical implementation of the Partnership programme there. For example, both the AU and its member states in Africa have officially committed to meeting the obligations of the Partnership and thereby implement its priorities through successive short-term action plans. The African civil society forums are therefore established to monitor closely the implementation process of Partnership on the side of Africa. They are particularly mandated to ensure that the continental institutions like the AU and the governments in Africa keep their promises by translating their policy commitments into practical actions that can be realised within a foreseeable period of time.

The creation of regionally based civil society forums in Africa offers a window of opportunity for African diaspora organisations and associations in Europe to build partnerships and strategic alliances with them for the effective implementation of the Partnership. The joining of forces between diaspora organisations and the civil society forums on the continent has valuable advantages. The organisations and forums will strengthen each other’s advocacy and lobbying capacity with regard to policies and practices that enhance the participation of civic institutions in the policy dialogue between Africa and the EU. The collaboration would also help them to become a formidable power centre that is in a position to monitor collectively the implementation of the Partnership project both in Europe and in Africa. In the current AU structure, diaspora civil society organisations represent the six geopolitical regions of Africa. Therefore, close cooperation between civil society institutions in Africa and the diaspora in Europe could contribute tremendously to the development of empowered and emancipated civic bodies on the continent.

There are several ways in which the collaboration between diaspora organisations and civil society forums in Africa can be strengthened within the current Africa-EU Partnership context. Firstly, African diaspora organisations could establish formal institutional links with institutional bodies such as CIDO and ECOSOCC. These links should result in regular consultation meetings between the representatives of the diaspora and the inter-continental bodies regarding the progress of the Partnership programme both in Europe and in Africa. It should also result in the development of formal communication channels rather than ad hoc contacts. Furthermore, continental and diaspora institutions can undertake joint activities within the framework of the Partnership. Such activities, however, would have to be actionable and achieve concrete, measurable results within a relatively short period of time, from which further partnerships could gradually stem. The establishment of formal and institutional links between diaspora institutional and inter-continental bodies would also create an opportunity for the diaspora to showcase the added value of the participation of civic institutions in government efforts geared toward the promotion of the Partnership. It also would present an opportunity for the diaspora to influence the policy agenda of the AU regarding the involvement and the participation of the civil society forums on the continent for the effective implementation of the Partnership programme.

Secondly, diaspora organisations and institutions can join forces with the civil society forums in Africa also in several areas in order to promote both the deepening and advancing of the policy dialogue regarding the Partnership and the implementation of its Action Plan. They could collectively undertake such activities by setting up a permanent monitoring team composed of representatives from diaspora and civil society forums in Africa. This monitoring team would be mandated to act as a pressure group on governments and inter-continental institutions in both Africa and Europe to meet their obligations regarding the advancement of the Partnership. Moreover, diaspora organisations and civil society forums can establish an informal forum in which they could share information, experiences and expertise. The informal forum would also enable them to exchange visits and organise expert meetings, conferences and workshops so that they remain updated with each other’s activities, progress made and goals achieved. The structural cooperation between diaspora and civil society associations has so far been a missing link that has not been promoted despite all of the potential benefits that both entities could reap.

Finally, diaspora organisations and civil society forums in Africa can strengthen their cooperation by working collectively to boost their lobbying and advocacy capacities in both Europe and Africa. The lobbying and advocacy capacity of the diaspora in Europe is an area that has not yet been sufficiently or purposefully tapped, but can be skilfully and creatively harnessed for the implementation of the Partnership in Europe and Africa. Diaspora and civil society forums in Africa can also play an effective role by undertaking lobbying, campaigning and advocacy activities aimed at pressuring the governments on both sides to meet their policy commitments regarding the implementation of the Partnership. In this regard, professional diaspora associations can provide advocacy training for the civil society forums in Africa and contribute to capacity building in this regard. They can also undertake lobbying activities collectively on both continents and thereby raise their profile jointly. In short, the joining of forces between diaspora and the African civil society forums in advocacy activities would indeed make them a formidable constituency in both Europe and Africa. The African diaspora in Europe and the civil society forums in Africa must seize this opportunity collectively in order to play meaningful role in the newly formed relationship between Europe and Africa.

V. Employment

Employment and job creation is a vital area to which development cooperation relations between Europe and Africa must direct serious policy attention. Supporting livelihood projects is an important activity, but the experiences of the past decade have taught the development world that such projects rarely promote job creation. There is an urgent need to shift the attention of contemporary development cooperation policy to the realisation of employment and job creation in Africa. Practically, this means investing a significant portion of development aid money in job creation in the homelands, which will spur multiplying effects in several ways. It also means working to foster a favourable environment for

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8 For more information, visit the website of CIDO at www.africa-union.org/root/AU/Departments/BCP/CIDO/vido.htm.
employment promotion, increasing access to credit in both Europe and Africa, and examining the impact diaspora employment (and lack of employment) has on home and host countries.

Job creation is both timely and relevant in the current discussion on migration and development related issues, and is a strategy that can make an enormous impact on the domestic labour market in the homelands. For instance, the creation of jobs and employment opportunities in the homelands helps to generate income that can contribute to the reduction of poverty as well as to the achievement of the MDGs. Similarly, job creation generates domestic wealth and also prevents brain drain caused by the emigration of the best and brightest people from the homelands to other countries. The African diaspora wish to convince the development cooperation sector and its subsidiary donor organisations to support not only livelihood related projects but also job creation projects in the homelands. This effort, however, will require a change in the prevailing mindset not only among development cooperation actors in more financially stable western countries, but also in the aid recipient governments in Africa.

The diaspora believe that job creation in Africa can be promoted in several ways. The first is to put the proposal of job creation on top of the agenda of the Africa-EU Strategic Partnership. It should be one of the priority areas that the African government has to table in their dealings with their counterparts in Europe. Furthermore, job creation should go beyond current political rhetoric, and concrete agreements should be made devoted to increasing employment opportunities in Africa, particularly among the teeming youth, within a foreseeable period of time. For example, timelines should be planned with specific and measurable targets in mind. More importantly, a substantial portion of development aid assistance should be set aside to achieving such an objective. Also, diaspora organisations must receive support for the scaling up of initiatives and projects that contribute to the creation of jobs and the reduction of poverty in their respective home countries.

Secondly, it is necessary to foster a favourable environment for employment promotion by advocating for local-level policies in Africa that allow for joint ventures and partnerships with European firms. Also, the diaspora and the private sector in Europe must seek guidance from local level governments on industries and sectors that are ripe for growth and development through sustainable partnerships and investment.

In promoting job creation, it will also be essential for national level governments and the diaspora themselves to examine and fully understand how the employment of diaspora in host countries impacts development in both Europe and Africa. The diaspora tend to create their own jobs through the founding of small to medium-sized businesses, and this reality almost certainly impacts economic and social development on both continents via the generation of wealth and social status, as well as remittances, volunteerism and civic activism. It is also imperative that efforts be made to understand the phenomenon of brain waste, whereby skilled and educated African migrants are unable to pursue careers in the areas in which they have been trained in Africa because their credentials are not recognised in Europe.

Just as the employment of the diaspora likely impacts development positively, brain waste must also impact development, albeit negatively.

Another means by which governments in Europe and Africa can stimulate job creation via the diaspora is by increasing access to credit. In Europe, the small business ventures of the diaspora too often fall into the categories of being too large for microcredit or too small for traditional lines of credit, and the diaspora—due to their socio-economic status in their new societies—often lack the required capital and credit history for securing loans. Additionally, there are significant barriers to obtaining credit in Europe for direct or indirect investment in Africa. This is problematic for diaspora-led organisations wishing to undertake development projects in the homelands. In Africa, there is a lack of available information regarding obtaining credit for microenterprise or small business ventures, or a lack of that possibility entirely.

The last area identified for intervention for the purpose of job creation is the urgent need to train a considerable number of skilled people in vocational and technical areas. Particularly, the provision of basic technical skills such as carpentry and bricklaying for the large numbers of unemployed youth that congregate in cities all over Africa is urgently needed. Technical and vocational education and training have not gained much success in Africa in the past, probably because of the negative social attitudes towards skills and crafts trainings. A grave consequence has been a shortage of skilled people to perform such routine work as the maintenance of physical infrastructures like buildings and roads—a situation that has left many African countries in a deplorable state of disrepair. Worse still, this human development scarcity in Africa is further exacerbated by ongoing brain drain. Investing more in vocational and technical education is now urgently needed, particularly for the creation of skilled, mid-level (intermediate) manpower that may help the private sector (which are the engines of the systematic economic growth on the continent) to acquire sufficient capabilities and appropriate technologies that make them more competitive in the global markets. The skilled African diaspora in Europe are prepared to contribute to improving technical and vocational education and training in Africa, but there is a need for support of such initiatives from governments and mainstream donor development agencies.

The African Foundation for Development (AFFORD), for example, is currently implementing employment and job-related projects in Sierra Leone that are mainly targeted at unemployed youth such as former child soldiers.\(^8\)

\(^8\) For further information, visit the website of AFFORD at www.afford-uk.org
Annex: List of the diaspora representatives, institutions and organisations consulted

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Address</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alioune DIOP</td>
<td>Chairman of the Diaspora Forum for Development (DFD)</td>
<td><a href="mailto:aliounebi@yahoo.fr">aliounebi@yahoo.fr</a></td>
<td>+31 20 6180613</td>
<td>Puntland Aid Service (PAS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph SEH</td>
<td>Project Coordinator Migrant and Development Cooperation</td>
<td><a href="mailto:puntlandaidservice@hotmail.com">puntlandaidservice@hotmail.com</a></td>
<td>+45 22852865/45</td>
<td>Brutus van Effenstraat 14, Development (DFD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mohammed MOHMOUD</td>
<td>Financial Manager</td>
<td><a href="mailto:info@sankofa.nl">info@sankofa.nl</a></td>
<td>+31 (0)703463334</td>
<td>NEDSOM foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yera DEMBELE</td>
<td>President</td>
<td><a href="mailto:info@sankofa.nl">info@sankofa.nl</a></td>
<td>+31 (0)703463334</td>
<td>NEDSOM foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jean Paul ZOYEM</td>
<td>President</td>
<td><a href="mailto:info@sankofa.nl">info@sankofa.nl</a></td>
<td>+31 (0)703463334</td>
<td>NEDSOM foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kashetu KYENGE</td>
<td>President</td>
<td><a href="mailto:info@sankofa.nl">info@sankofa.nl</a></td>
<td>+31 (0)703463334</td>
<td>NEDSOM foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santo DENG</td>
<td>Chairman of the Diaspora Perspectives on the Joint Africa-EU Strategic Partnership</td>
<td><a href="mailto:info@sankofa.nl">info@sankofa.nl</a></td>
<td>+31 (0)703463334</td>
<td>NEDSOM foundation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Birame Diouf
Atlantik Foundation
Wilses Gate 3 B
0178 Oslo
Norway
Tel: +47 23422727
Cell: +47 45699754
bidiouf@hotmail.com
www.atlantikfoundation.org

Adesina Iluyemi
Secretary General
NEPAD Council
Suite 212 Finchley Road
Hampstead London
United Kingdom
Tel: +44 79 56026010
ailuyemi@nepadcouncil.org
www.nepadcouncil.org

Bruno Cho Fon
AfroEuro Foundation / DFD / Policy Consulting
Tel: +31(0)6 4364 3406
Fax: +31(0)70 399 3423
bruno@policyconsulting.nl
www.policyconsulting.nl

Madeleine Babinyanga
Aprodico asbl
Association Européenne pour la promotion de la diaspora Congolaise
Brussels, Belgium
madeleinebabin@yahoo.fr

Lulessa Abadura
Network Coordinator
African Diaspora Policy Centre
P.O. Box 3245
1001 AA, Amsterdam
Netherlands
Tel. +31 20 70 77 851
l.abadura@diaspora-centre.org
www.diaspora-centre.org

Ayaan Abukar
Project Officer
African Diaspora Policy Centre
P.O. Box 3245
1001 AA, Amsterdam
Netherlands
Tel. +31 20 70 77 851
ayaan@diaspora-centre.org
www.diaspora-centre.org