



Note from the Director

2013 will remain a historic year in the 21st century. The world in general and Africa in particular has lost a great leader: Nelson Mandela. He inspired many of us to contribute to the betterment of our humanity in different respects. This is how Barack Obama in his farewell speech to Mandela at Johannesburg Memorial fittingly called him "a giant of history, who moved a nation towards justice and in the process moved billions around the world". For us, the African Diaspora Policy Centre, we are motivated to respond to one of the African dilemmas that Nelson Mandela once lamented when he stated that, "to this day we continue to lose the best among ourselves because the lights in the developed world shine brighter." The problem of the 'brain drain' that Mandela highlighted has affected Africa more severely than any other region. It is impeding potential economic growth, and remains a handicap for sustainable development in many countries in Africa. The work of ADPC is devoted to tackling this brain drain problem in Africa by supporting and mobilizing the African Diaspora in Europe to contribute more effectively to the development of the continent. The African Diaspora communities in Europe possess a considerable potential (capital, knowledge and networks) that can be harnessed for the development benefits of Africa. The articles in this newsletter give you a glimpse of our efforts to contribute to the shaping of a peaceful and prosperous Africa. These are the ideals of Mandela that we will strive to translate into practical actions for the common good of the continent. I hope you will enjoy reading our newsletter.

I wish you happy holidays and a pleasant 2014

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International Conference on Diaspora, Development and Governance in the Global South

The Southern African Migration Program, the International Migration Research Centre, the International Development Research Centre, Wilfrid Laurier University, the Balsillie School of International Affairs and the Centre for International Governance Innovation have organized an International Conference on Diasporas, Development and Governance in the Global South. The conference was held at the Balsillie School of International Affairs in Waterloo, Ontario from 26-27 May 2013. The main objective of the conference was to enhance international understanding of the role of Diasporas in development, identify best practices for policy engagement of Diasporas and facilitate Canadian Diaspora engagement in development. Another related purpose of the conference was to critically examine the efforts undertaken by international organizations and governments in the South and North to facilitate development in the Global South through engagement with Diasporas. The timing of the conference was indeed very important as governments in the Global South are increasingly turning to their Diaspora communities abroad in order to boost economic development, build global trading and investment networks and increase their political leverage overseas.

The Director of the African Diaspora Policy Centre (ADPC) was invited to participate in the conference and make a presentation on the “Best Practices for Diaspora Engagement”. For about a decade, ADPC has been at the forefront of generating knowledge aimed at increasing our understanding of the appropriate methods, mechanisms and policy measures that promote the engagement of the Diaspora in the development of their respective countries of origin.¹ There are indeed a number of preconditions for successful engagement of Diaspora in homeland. A better form of engagement that is mutually beneficial is one that is conducted in a reciprocal manner.

Commitment and willingness from Diaspora members to participate in the homeland development is what, in the first instance, very much needed. Likewise, Diaspora development practitioners who could make a difference are those that have the capacity and resources to make their projects on the ground sustainable. They are also those who are better organized in the host countries, capable of using their influential networks and contacts effectively, have access to funding in the host countries, and are working with reliable local partners in the homeland.

From the side of the homeland, the creation of an enabling domestic environment is a precondition for engaging Diaspora for homeland development. This is putting in place Diaspora-friendly environment policies which are conducive to the involvement of the Diaspora in the overall development efforts of their respective countries of origin. In this regard, the effectiveness and quality of domestic institutions, both public and private, can make a difference for the success of Diaspora engagement in homeland affairs. Additionally, the development and existence of formal channels of communication between Diaspora and homeland governments is also imperative. It can

¹See Mohamoud, Awil (ed.) (2010), ‘Building Institutional Cooperation between the Diaspora and Homeland Governments in Africa: The cases of Ghana, Nigeria, Germany, the USA and the UK’. The Hague: African Diaspora Policy Centre.

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help foster the systematic integration of Diaspora-driven development into the homeland development agenda. Having a reliable channel of communication that could facilitate a constructive dialogue between the government and the Diaspora would make it possible for the Diaspora to feel a potential stakeholder in the formulation of sound Diaspora and development related policy in their respective countries of origin. Furthermore, viable Diaspora engagement can be promoted by establishing structures of formal cooperation between the Diaspora and homeland governments, which is critical in the partnership for sustainable development. Such cooperation would provide a framework within which the engagement of the Diaspora in the development of their home countries could be scaled up via official support from government institutions. It would also give the Diaspora formal recognition as credible and indispensable agents for development in the homelands in established development circles. Additionally, cooperation with homeland governments would endow the Diaspora with a voice and political clout in decision-making processes regarding migration and development related issues. It would also motivate them to participate actively in homeland development.

There are a number of examples that illustrate best practices for Diaspora engagement that certain countries in Africa have skillfully deployed. For instance the government of Senegal has established a ministry responsible for Diaspora affairs, which has instituted a 'partnership for development' between the Diaspora and key strategic sectors in the economy of the country. Similarly, the key drivers for



successful engagement of the Diaspora in the development of Ghana have been civic institutions. In this regard, traditional chiefs in particular play a crucial role in fostering the engagement of the Diaspora in the development of the country at municipality and village levels. The success of the local hometown associations (HTAs) in the development in Ghana is the result of active cooperation with the chiefs (both those in Ghana and those living overseas as members of the Diaspora) and local institutions. Another important example that needs to be highlighted here is the case of Nigeria where the private sector has played a critical role in the participation of the Diaspora in domestic development through business links.

All in all, the identification and investment of specific sectors attractive to the Diaspora in a given country reaps enormous benefits. This approach will trigger the Diasporas to involve themselves more in the development of their countries of origin by using their available resources and social capital and thereby fuelling development.

Diaspora Consultation on the AU Agenda 2063

The African Union Commission (AUC) organized a Diaspora consultation meeting on the African Union (AU) Agenda 2063 in New York which took place from 8 - 10 October 2013. The objective of the meeting was to reflect on the challenges and achievements of the past fifty years, to assess the affairs of the current state of the continent and to deliberate possible options of developing a roadmap that would guide the continent in the next fifty years. The framework of Agenda 2063 is being developed to guide the process of the consultation. The African Union Commission launched this consultation process to solicit views on Agenda 2063 from wider stakeholders such as member states, regional bodies, private sector entrepreneurs, academia, civil society organizations and Diasporas. This outreach exercise was indeed important in order to build up a wider consensus on the vision for Africa for the next fifty years.

In connection with this, the AUC approached the African Diaspora Policy Centre (ADPC) to assist with gaining the participation of key influential figures and opinion leaders among African Diasporas in Europe in the event. This is important since ADPC is a leading Diaspora think tank in Europe in the field of Diaspora and development. Since 2010, ADPC has led a network of African Diaspora development practitioners based in numerous European countries and as such is well placed strategically within the social setting of the African Diaspora. ADPC is dedicated to galvanizing the African Diaspora in order to develop the African continent in a more structured, sustainable and systematic manner.



An African Diaspora delegation from Europe led by ADPC participated in the consultation meeting. The event was a unique opportunity for the African Diaspora participants from Europe, North America, Caribbean and Latin America to meet, exchange ideas and share past experiences of their engagement in the development of Africa. The event was also important as it enabled them to engage with the AUC directly and clearly articulate the specific intellectual input they can provide in the drafting and the consolidation of the AU Agenda 2063. Generally, the quality of the consultation and the discussion on the future architecture for the development of the continent was excellent. The African Diaspora intellectuals and opinion leaders that participated in the meeting offered creative ideas and constructive proposals. However, they also raised concerns regarding the practical implementation of past proposals they contributed which the AUC has formally adopted. According to some of them, the challenge of development in Africa is not due to the lack of good ideas but it is an acute lack of result-orientated action even if it is a small step. For example, some of the Diaspora

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delegates have narrated that they have been participating Diaspora-orientated consultations organized by the AU since 2006. A policy report has been produced with recommendations for practical actions at every meeting and yet hardly anything has been realized to engage the Diaspora in the development of the continent. The delegates cited examples of how other continents such as Asia and Latin America have actively engaged their Diasporas in the development of their respective homelands through concrete projects and programs both in the public and private sector. Also noted was the key reason of why Asia and Latin America have been successful in engaging their overseas Diaspora in the development of their homelands is that they have created domestic institutions such as government bodies, knowledge institutions and other important local infrastructures. These domestic institutions have helped to facilitate the tangible involvement of the Diaspora in the development of their countries at different levels. In addition to that, the governments in Asia and Latin America have put in place Diaspora-friendly policies supported by a strong political will geared to translate their policies into practical actions.

Consequently, the African Diaspora participants in the consultation meeting advised the AUC to invest more in the creation of institutions on the continent that facilitate the engagement of the Diaspora in development in a more practical manner. They also proposed that the capacity of the government institutions tasked to reach out to the Diaspora should be upgraded. Furthermore, the Diaspora participants appealed to the AUC to take more tangible action in this area and show practical results within a short period of time. Therefore an action-orientated engagement will help the continent to benefit from the resources of the Diaspora. It will also encourage the resourceful Diaspora to commit to the development of the continent. Finally, the African Diaspora participants in the consultation meeting appreciated the opportunity provided by the AUC to bring them together and echoed their commitment to contribute to the Agenda 2063 and the efforts of shaping a better Africa in the future.

Strengthening Policy Making Capacities of African Diaspora Ministries in Migration and Development (SEDIMA)

Training Dakar, Senegal, 21-25 October 2013

From 21 to 25 October 2013, the African Diaspora Policy Centre (ADPC) in partnership with the United Nations Institute for Economic Development and Planning (UNIDEP) organized a capacity building training for African government officials working in the field of migration and



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development. The training was held at the IDEP training institute in Dakar, Senegal.

Thirteen government officials participated representing seven countries, namely, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Chad, Gambia, Ivory Coast, Senegal and Tanzania. The objectives of the training are to gain access to up-to-date information on the discourse of migration and development; to exchange best practices of successful migration policies in Africa and beyond. Other related objectives were to strengthen policymaking skills to draft and implement migration policies that are Diaspora-friendly and to gain knowledge of networks and platforms (both international and regional) that facilitate the Diaspora and government policymakers in the field to stay connected.

Throughout the training the issue of engaging Diaspora for homeland development was a critical topic. Government participants in the training recognize the importance of engaging the Diaspora in the development but have also aired and discussed various challenges. Collecting data and maintaining a Diaspora database was considered to be one of the hurdles for ministries and other institutions tasked with reaching out to the Diaspora and connect them with the development in their respective countries of origin. This was one of the aspects that has been extensively discussed during the training.

Generally speaking, the training workshop serves as an informal platform for networking among governments, something that is currently not possible due to the lack of a mechanism to facilitate such a process. The workshop was a unique platform, which stimulated participants not only to establish viable contacts, but also to freely exchange valuable information and share best practices and positive experiences on engaging the Diaspora for the development of their respective countries.

More importantly, the training workshop proved to be an effective instrument as it raised the awareness of participants on the need to engage in regular conversations with their Diaspora abroad. Initiating regular consultations between the Diaspora and homeland governments can facilitate the development of reliable channels of communication. Ultimately, this will foster the systematic integration of Diaspora-driven development into the domestic development agenda. One practical way to facilitate a direct engagement with the Diaspora is to organize annual 'homecoming summits', 'welcome back home' or 'home is the best' gatherings. There are still few African countries that have established reliable channels of communication to facilitate a constructive dialogue between the Diaspora and the homeland governments. Yet, the creation of such channels of communication would make possible the direct input of the Diaspora into the formulation of sound Diaspora and development related policy in their respective countries of origin.





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One of the suggestions that had been made by a participant from Burkina Faso at the end of the training was to set up a regional migration office serving for the West African countries. The regional office will help the countries to harmonize their migration-oriented policies, to collect regional data and to facilitate the region to create an effective labor market across countries.

More information about Capacity Training topics and a reflection on migration and development debates is available on our website: <http://www.Diaspora-centre.org/home/publications/>