

ADPC *Factsheet*

Strengthening the Joint Africa-EU Strategic Partnership



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The Joint Africa-EU Strategic Partnership provides a long-term vision of collaboration between Africa and the EU for the benefit of Africa and Europe. This is a new perspective on looking at the relations between the two continents, and relegates the classical donor-recipient relationship. In December 2007, the second Africa-EU Summit took place in Lisbon, during which the Joint Africa-EU Strategic Partnership, the Action Plan 2008-2010 and the Lisbon Declaration were adopted. This included a set of entry points within which civil society can be involved in order to push forward the objectives of the agreed upon actions. As emerging counterparts within civil society, the diaspora can play a key role in realizing the Action Plan 2008-2010.¹ This Action Plan sets out priorities around 8 thematic areas that should be implemented within the next 3 years. Given the degree of involvement of the diaspora in catalyzing the realization of the MDGs, the diaspora are in a clear position to contribute to the implementation of the strategy as non-state actors. They are also in a key position to contribute to the Third Summit that will take place in 2010. This factsheet looks at how the diaspora can contribute to the implementation of the Joint Africa-EU Strategic Partnership within the context of the Action Plan 2008-2010.

Solidifying AU-EU relations

The role of the African Union (AU) stands central in the execution of the Strategic Partnership.² The AU has recognized the African diaspora as a “sixth region”, has invited the African diaspora to act as “voting members” and has laid particular emphasis on the positive effect that the diaspora can contribute to the capacity building and

development of Africa. Diasporas are then in a key position to enhance and foster relations between the two institutions within the mapped-out frameworks. For instance, the diaspora can play a key role in strengthening African institutions³, by exchanging their expertise with ministries in Africa, and assisting in building the capacities of government bodies. Another route for the engagement of the diaspora lies in the complexities of current migration trends, a key concern for both the AU and the EU. The diaspora are indispensable in eliminating the negative effects of migration (brain drain) and enhancing the positive effects through circular migration. The diaspora play a further pivotal role in the execution of the institutional architecture and implementation of the Action Plan. For instance, the Action Plan maps out activities that should be carried out from the EU’s side, and from Africa’s side. On the one hand, the diaspora are key to link civil society groups in both continents, and on the other hand, the AU can benefit from the diaspora’s geographical location by enforcing its representation in Brussels and to play a key role in ensuring that issues of concern to the AU are addressed at the policy level. The diaspora can further help to solidify relations between the two institutions by playing a role in advocacy during negotiations regarding economic partnerships, and creating sustainable cooperation in trade and investment between Africa and Europe.

The diaspora as part of the CSO network

The Action Plan 2008-2010 stipulates clear entry points for the civil society organisations (CSO) network. In their report of the CSO meeting in

¹ To download the full Action Plan 2008-2010 visit <http://www.europafrika.org>

² The editorial by Marie-Laure De Bergh clarifies where the involvement of the AU needs further strengthening.

³ The ADPC, in collaboration with the MacArthur Foundation is currently working on a research project that aims to foster the development of networks, strategic alliances and sustained institutional cooperation between the diaspora and newly formed institutions such as ministries of diaspora affairs. Please refer to http://www.diaspora-centre.org/Better_Governance/Research/Building_Institutional_Coope for more information.

March 2008, the ECDPM⁴ identify clear ways and avenues in which CSO networks can be involved, and where there is a clear need for their participation. The report also identifies migrant organisations in Europe as a requisite part of the CSO network. Patent steps are being taken by the diaspora to mobilize diaspora skills, knowledge, linkages and expertise to contribute to the development of the continent. Of the 8 themes that the Action Plan tackles, the diaspora are already greatly contributing to at least 3 of these, namely peace and security⁵, migration, mobility and employment⁶, and the Millennium Development Goals⁷. In June 2008, the African Diaspora Policy Centre coordinated the first initiative to create an EU-wide coalition of African diaspora organisations in Europe. This was the first time that 50 African diaspora organisations from 10 EU countries came together to interact, network, dialogue, share and exchange information, new insights, specific experiences and best practices on diverse issues regarding development cooperation. This was an important step towards creating a viable and enduring network of the activities of the diaspora organisations. The event has categorized the diaspora as emerging partners in development cooperation, and has created recognition for the added value of diaspora organisations as civil society actors. For instance, one of the major objectives of the Strategic Partnership is to closely involve African civil society actors in the process. Most diaspora organisations are already working closely with civil society groups on the ground, groups that implement projects initiated by diaspora organisations. Closer cooperation with diaspora organisations will therefore forge closer links between Northern and Southern civil society networks. Furthermore, the diaspora can add valuable policy and technical expertise within the country specific agreements within the Strategic Partnership, by contributing to the development of the Country Strategy Papers.

Supporting the ‘three pillars’ of the Strategy

The Africa-EU Strategic Partnership centers on three pillars that would ultimately contribute to

the achievement of the MDGs by 2015. According to the Action Plan, these pillars would pave the way for the structured implementation of the Strategy. Due to their varied areas of expertise, diaspora organisations can function as catalysts for the reinforcement of the pillars. The first is creating an enabling environment for the work of civil society groups to facilitate the achievement of the MDGs. This consists of peace and security, and good governance. As previously mentioned, diaspora organisations are already highly active in the enforcement of peace and security in their countries of origin. In terms of achieving better governance in the homelands, it is increasingly becoming recognized that the diaspora can contribute to strengthening the capacities of local governments, although knowledge of the means and avenues through which to do this remains limited. The second pillar of strengthening the strategy focuses on the creation of a viable economic environment. Organisations such as AFFORD and Doses of Hope have demonstrated considerable leadership in this terrain, through their support of SMEs in Africa. The third and last pillar focuses directly on targeting the MDGs. Much of the work of diaspora organisations hubs directly on creating better health and education facilities and on restricting environmental degradation. Focus on building the capacities of these organisations would therefore directly benefit the overall implementation of the Africa-EU Strategic Partnership.

Key Recommendations

- Increasing consultation of diaspora actors within the various fields who can significantly add value to the implementation of the Africa-EU Strategic Partnership;
- Developing concrete methodologies and strategies for institutions to use as guidelines by which selection can be made for diaspora-institutional engagement;
- Stimulating direct and parallel engagement of diaspora organisations with other IGOs/NGO's;
- Fostering more coherent and closer partnerships between the diaspora and the private sector;

⁴ See the ECDPM report of March 10th, 2008, downloadable via <http://www.europafrika.org>

⁵ See ADPC Factsheet March 2008: http://www.diaspora-centre.org/DOCS/ADPC_Factsheet_Mar.pdf

⁶ See ADPC Factsheet June 2008: http://www.diaspora-centre.org/DOCS/ADPC_Factsheet_Jun.pdf

⁷ Refer to the website of the African Diaspora Policy Centre for the various activities of the diaspora.

Examples of current diaspora activities

Diaspora organisations are responsible for the implementation of key projects and initiatives, making them key players in several fields. Unique lessons can be drawn from these initiatives, and can be an inspirational source to others. Three examples of key and current initiatives are noted here, with specific contributions to strengthening the Africa-EU Strategic Partnership.

1 Network-building: Leading diaspora organisations in 7 EU countries are currently working on creating a network between the different diaspora organisations that are active in diverse fields, and that are having a high impact on the contribution to development in Africa. Creating this network will help to structurally include the diaspora into the development cooperation circles in order to widen the development constituency in the EU countries with regard to Africa.

The first step towards this was the EU wide diaspora seminar that was held in Brussels in June 2008. This network will enable diaspora organisations to establish viable contacts, learn from each other's development related activities and exchange valuable information, share best practices and positive experiences. It will also facilitate the diaspora organisations to initiate feasible cooperation and act jointly on certain development issues and activities such as lobbying, campaigning and advocacy for policies and practices that enhance the involvement of

the diaspora in development cooperation. An effective network will enable the diaspora organisations in Europe to enter into strategic alliances and initiate joint development projects across countries, and thereby contribute more towards poverty reduction and the achievement of the MDGs. Most importantly, the development of this network will automatically add value to the strengthening of the Africa-EU Strategic Partnership and fulfil a unique role which may not be covered by CSOs in Europe and Africa. In addition to this, the setting up of a network will also facilitate the building of institutional links between the African diaspora in Europe and the newly emerging institutions in Africa.

2 Circular migration: There remains a great need to stimulate the transfer of skills of migrants resident in Europe to Africa, in order to tackle the adverse effects of brain drain that currently plague the continent. This will entail the building of sustainable local/institutional capacity. AfricaRecruit focuses on the stimulation of this capacity, and ensures that the transnational nature of the diaspora leads to the retention of their skills in Africa. The value that circular migration presents is that an additional platform is created to build local content and capacity, adopting an international yet local perspective. AfricaRecruit's initiative fits in the greater context of the Strategic Partnership, as it directly focuses on promoting one of the most

positive effects of migration, namely pooling the expertise of diaspora experts. AfricaRecruit's work has specific implications for policy development. The organisation's activities contribute to fostering an understanding of the value of the diaspora, both for home and host countries, which automatically facilitates a process that harnesses the diaspora's capacity to effectively engage in programmes in their countries of origin. Furthermore, the diaspora are utilised to build strategic partnerships between the two continents and to work with international and multilateral organisations to address the constraints on public spending and the creation of attractive employment opportunities in sectors that are lagging behind, such as the healthcare sector. AfricaRecruit also advises African governments to adopt policies that enable the assimilation of the critical skills deployed back by the diaspora.

3 Job creation: Economic growth and the creation of jobs remain central and vital to the development of Africa. This first and foremost entails the development of cross-EU structures, networks, and initiatives that facilitate policies, practice, and public awareness surrounding African diaspora contribution to job creation and enterprise development in Africa. AFFORD's SEEDA program builds the business

capacities of entrepreneurs in Africa, and it also benefits the African diaspora by equipping them with stronger leadership skills and an increased confidence that will enable them to excel in the work force, directly benefiting Africa's job market. According to AFFORD, Africa needs to create 8 million new jobs on a yearly basis. SEEDA, therefore, focuses on SMEs in order to stimulate the growth of job availability in a number of African countries. The program thinks a step ahead, as it has recognized that offering training to SME holders without monitoring would decrease effective outcomes.

AFFORD sets up business centers in its target countries, which provide a vital service in monitoring, assisting and advising SME holders. The foundation also works with banks and micro-finance institutions to provide affordable loans, as well as trade unions, greatly assisting the business owners to become more efficient and organized. The particular strength of the program not only lies in its development of the skills of entrepreneurs and farmers, but it also plays a vital role in helping SME holders to voice their issues and concerns in the political agenda.

Further Information

Selected African diaspora organisations active in international development

AFFORD
www.afford-uk.org
 AfricaRecruit
www.africarecruit.com
 Doses of Hope Foundation
www.dosesofhope.org
 FAFRAD
www.fafrad.org
 Sankofa Foundation
www.sankofa.nl

Key websites of selected institutions in the field

European Union
http://europa.eu/index_en.htm
 European Centre for Development
 Policy Management
www.ecdpm.org
 The Joint Africa-EU Strategy
<http://europafrika.org>
 United Nations Development
 Programme
www.undp.org

Key reports and literature related to the subject

Consolidated Outcomes Report of the African Union's-African Diaspora Regional Consultative Conferences. Prepared by the Department of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of South Africa for submission to the African Union, 2007.

Diaspora Professionals in Mainstream Development. African Foundation for Development (AFFORD), 2004.

Egenhofer, C., Van Schaik, L., Kaeding, M., Hudson, A. & Nunez Ferrer, J. (2007). *Policy Coherence for Development in the EU Council: Strategies for the Way Forward.* Published by CEPS.

How to deliver on the EU-Africa Partnership's ambitions? Adapting the institutional framework for EU-Africa relations. By Marie-Laure de Bergh, ECDPM, September 2007.

European Commission Communication: *From Cairo to Lisbon – The EU-Africa Strategic Partnership.* June 27th, 2007.

Lisbon Declaration, 9 December 2007.
 The EU-Africa Action Plan, March 2008.

About ADPC

The African Diaspora Policy Centre (ADPC) is an independent platform of knowledge and expertise in the area of migration and development. The Centre generates knowledge, information and policy insights on the subject from the diaspora perspective – a point of view which has been largely overlooked.

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