

Newsletter May 2012 No 1

Note from the Director

2012 is an important year for Africa. The sixth Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) will be held in Africa for the first time. Mauritius is hosting the event in November 2012. Moreover, the continent of Africa is organizing the first Global African Diaspora Summit in South Africa in May 2012; a milestone in partnership building for the development efforts of the continent. Furthermore, since the beginning of the year, there has been an increasing network building among African diaspora organizations in Europe active in the co-development field, as well as with their counterparts in Africa. More importantly, there is a growing realisation among continental institutions such as the African Union Commission (AUC) of the need to establish a continent-wide migration and development programme that can address the development dimension of migration in relation to the specific needs of Africa. This is an aspect that, until now, has not received sufficient policy attention despite its critical significance for the development needs of the continent. The creation of such a 'Migration and Development Programme for Africa' will support African governments in acquiring the critical skills and technical capabilities that will enable them to institutionalize the engagement of the diaspora in the development of the continent. In this regard, the continent as a whole considers its diaspora population abroad to be the greatest offshore asset. It is becoming increasingly eager to harness this considerable and untapped resource that ranges from community-oriented development to science and high level technological innovation.



The articles in this newsletter provide timely updates in the field concerning Africa. They also carry concise and accessible information on a number of issues that we believe you will find interesting.

I hope you will enjoy reading our newsletter.

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1. Brainstorming meeting for non-state actors

Report of brainstorm meeting Port Louis, 19 January 2012

The Mauritian Chair-in-Office of the GFMD 2012 requested that ADPC facilitate the participation of diaspora and civil organizations in the first brainstorming meeting for non-state actors, which was held in Port Louis, Mauritius on 19 January 2012. In response, ADPC supported the participation of five diaspora and civil society representatives in the meeting. The presence of these diaspora and civil society representatives was particularly important as it enabled them to contribute proactively to the agenda setting from early on, and to discuss issues from their perspectives, practical experiences, aspirations and priorities. Their participation in the meeting was also a unique opportunity to interact informally and exchange insights and perspectives with other stakeholders in the field, thereby making the voices of diaspora and civil society count in discussions related to migration and development matters.

The brainstorming meeting lasted for two days. The first day of the meeting was devoted to deliberations among government representatives on the themes, format and the agenda of the GFMD event which will be held from 21 to 22 November 2012 in Mauritius. The second day of the meeting was devoted to the same topic, but involved non-state actors and their alternative point of view. The main objective of the brainstorming meeting was to provide input and to improve and comment on the Draft Concept Paper for the GFMD event that the government of Mauritius had prepared.

The government of Mauritius is particularly keen to solicit the contribution of African governments, civil society and African diaspora institutions to the global policy debates regarding the nexus between migration and development. They are also keen to facilitate the development of a clearly articulated African agenda, which would feed into the overall theme that will guide the programme of the GFMD event in 2012. This is an agenda intimately informed by specific issues, priorities and aspirations of Africa regarding migration and development related matters. The perception of the government of Mauritius is that each continent has its own specific migration related issues. Hence, it is now time for Africa to seize the moment and put its own priorities forward. This will considerably increase the contribution of African migrants and diasporas to the overall development of the continent in a sustainable and a systematic manner.

The contribution of diaspora and civil society representatives to the brainstorming sessions was formulated in a concrete, result-oriented and forward looking approach. It was also a very practice-oriented approach that is expected to produce achievable outcomes, which the Mauritian Chair greatly appreciated. Diaspora representatives, in particular, were very outspoken during the meeting, and they remain determined to make a significant contribution to, and also to influence the preparation of the agenda of the GFMD Civil Society Days at an early stage. The essence of their input into the discussion related to what has been achieved since the first GFMD event in Brussels in 2007. Since then, there has been significant progress in a number of areas, with the objective of highlighting the contribution of migrants to development in all of its different facets. For instance, the subsequent GFMD dialogues have contributed greatly to raising awareness regarding the link between migration and development, as well as galvanizing numerous strategic stakeholders towards that objective. Moreover, the GFMD process and its related programmes have also made a considerable contribution to the production of evidence-based knowledge and information in the field. The extensive action-oriented knowledge produced provides a catalogue of good practices

(policies and programmes) from which viable lessons can be learned. Finally, the informal consultative process of the GFMD has tangibly influenced policy changes in many countries. This, in turn, has facilitated enabling domestic environments conducive to the engagement of migrants in the development of their respective homelands.

The key proposal of diaspora and civil society representatives to the participants in the non-state sessions concerned the need to build on and consolidate the gains made in the past five years in advancing the nexus between migration and development. Furthermore, the diaspora and civil society representatives proposed that the GFMD dialogues should move onto another level, geared towards migrant-centred policy and practice, in order to achieve enhanced development outcomes in the future. In terms of policy, more needs to be done to mainstream migration-driven development into the traditional and established development cooperation policy framework in both host and home countries. Redoubling our efforts in this regard will maximize the contribution of migrants to the development of their respective home countries. It will also foster the widening of the development constituency in both host and home countries. This last aspect is crucial, since migrants have already positioned themselves as critical development actors although they have not been formally integrated into the established circles in the development cooperation sector. Formal integration of migrants in development cooperation circles will give them a voice in policy decisions and practical operations regarding development-related programmes. It will also open the way for tangible development partnerships between migrant organizations and mainstream development agencies and institutions.

In terms of practical operations, the diaspora and civil society representatives emphasized the need to promote viable development partnerships at local levels. This is imperative in order to spur on migrant-centred partnerships for enhanced development outcomes. They further argued that we have now reached the stage in which the promotion of tangible development partnerships between migrant organizations, civil society institutions, NGOs, municipalities and local government and the private sector, should be considered a key priority in the field. We have come a long way since 2007 and it is time to build partnerships for action. The potential for partnership building has been largely overlooked in recent years, despite its critical significance in boosting development and improving the well-being of migrants in Africa. Furthermore, tangible partnerships can considerably up-scale the contribution of diaspora organisations to the development of their countries of origin. It can also set in motion a process in which diaspora development practitioners can enter strategic alliances with sub-national development actors in order to contribute to the strengthening of their lobbying capacity on the ground. More importantly, such strategic collaboration will enable diaspora and non-state actors to undertake joint initiatives, specifically in the areas of lobbying, campaigning and advocacy in relation to the well-being and the protection of human rights of migrants in Africa. This is now an urgent issue. Many African countries have now become, simultaneously, a source, transit point and destination for migrants. Yet, there are few national debates on migration related matters, be it the protection of migrant rights, their integration into the host society, or their contribution to development at large. Another advantage that the effective promotion of tangible partnerships between migrant organizations and sub-national development institutions has is that their practical collaboration has the potential to make a greater contribution to poverty reduction and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). Accordingly, diaspora representatives urged other participants in the meeting (both governmental and non-governmental stakeholders) to

work with them to put migrant-centred partnership proposals on the agenda as a topic for roundtable discussion at the GFMD event this year. Partnership building for action at local levels is the flavour that Africa and the African diaspora will bring to this year's GFMD event in Africa. Partnership for action tangibly advances the GFMD dialogue from advocacy (an issue that has dominated past meetings) to practical engagement that can be realized within a feasible period of time.

2. Exploration of a strategic partnership between ADPC and IDEP

Résumé of a meeting with IDEP in Dakar, April 25, 2012

On 25 April 2012, the first formal meeting between the United Nations African Institute for Economic Development and Planning (IDEP) and the African Diaspora Policy Centre (ADPC) was held in Dakar, Senegal. The essence of the meeting was to explore appropriate modalities and viable procedures necessary for establishing a productive strategic partnership between the two institutions. The creation of a strategic partnership between IDEP and ADPC is considered to be a viable instrument for the establishing of a 'Migration and Development Programme for Africa'. The programme would serve as an African capacity building facility for the newly-formed diaspora-oriented ministries and related institutions in Africa tasked with migration and development related matters. Specifically, it will support African governments to better harness the considerable social capital of their diasporas, assisting them in developing diaspora-oriented national policy strategies and helping them to undertake measures that facilitate the integration of diaspora-driven development into the overall national development agenda.

This planned programme builds on an ongoing capacity building project (albeit one with a limited scope) set up by ADPC in 2009 for the emerging diaspora-oriented institutions in Africa. ADPC initiated this project in response to growing capacity building needs among many countries in Africa. For instance, there are currently more than 30 African countries with diaspora-oriented institutions and ministries established to deal more professionally with diaspora-led development related issues. However, since the project was launched, ADPC has been inundated with requests from diverse African governments to participate in the training workshops. This is understandable since African government officials serving in the newly-formed diaspora ministries are not in a position to gain access to useful and up-to-date information in the field, as they do not yet have access to the knowledge generated on the subject. This is because the knowledge in the field is not targeted at them even though it is urgently needed. To date, the knowledge and policy insights produced in the field of migration and development have been targeted primarily at policymakers in Western countries. This is partly because the knowledge in this emerging research and policy field is, for the most part, generated in the Western hemisphere and not in Africa.

The programme will help widen the activities, scope and research of the existing ADPC capacity building project and also support the policymaking capacity needs of all the African Union (AU) Members States. More importantly, the current ADPC project will be embedded in an already thriving and time-tested advanced capacity development and training programme, implemented by

IDEP. This will ensure its continuity and prominence among all the countries in Africa that have established diaspora-oriented institutions and are in need of capacity building support.¹

The programme gives concrete shape to a policy need, identified by the Citizens and Diaspora Directorate (CIDO) of the African Union Commission (AUC), which is to be a primary priority for the continent as a whole at this moment. This urgent policy priority stems from the need to establish a continent-wide migration and development programme that addresses the development dimension of migration in relation to the specific needs of Africa. From this perspective, the programme is a demand-driven initiative. It is also a timely and policy-relevant programme. Moreover, the programme is the first of its kind to contribute to the development of an African owned agenda regarding the nexus between migration and development.

In this regard, the programme is a response to the aspiration of the continent to engage more proactively with its diaspora population abroad, with a view to building a sustainable partnership for the future development of Africa. This is because diasporas have now strategically positioned themselves as critical development actors in development policy circles and are becoming increasingly involved in the development of their respective homelands. Accordingly, the continent as a whole is now eager to seize the momentum and to reap creatively the benefits of the resources available within its huge population residing outside of Africa.

The work of the programme will concentrate on three core areas: policy-oriented research; capacity development and training; and policy dialogue. The work of the three areas will be carried out in an interlinked manner in order to increase the cumulative effects of the programme on the targeted beneficiaries. The policy oriented research will generate a corpus of knowledge that will feed into the capacity development and training programmes, contribute to strengthening the knowledge capacity of the continent, and will also increase the contribution of the continent to the development of knowledge in the field globally.

The capacity development and training programme component will provide short courses tailored to the specific policymaking needs of mid-career, senior government officials and newly appointed personnel serving in the newly-formed diaspora-oriented institutions on the continent. The training courses will facilitate African government policymakers in gaining access to up-to-date information in the field, which will enable them to make better informed policy choices and more appropriate decisions in their practical operations.

Finally, the policy dialogue aspect of the programme will strengthen the capacity of African consultative processes on migration and development related matters at national, sub-regional, regional and continental levels. In particular, it will stimulate the regular exchange of good practices (policies and programmes) among African policymakers dealing with diaspora and development related issues. Furthermore, such policy dialogue processes will enable African governments to convene and deliberate on matters of common interest in the field of migration and development within the context of Africa.

The underlying objective of the programme is to support African governments to acquire the critical skills and technical capabilities that will enable them to institutionalize the engagement of the

¹IDEP is a pan-African institution created in 1962 by the General Assembly of the United Nations with the mandate to build the human resource capacities of African institutions. This is a necessary prerequisite for promoting socio-economic development.

diaspora in the development of the continent. This is with the understanding that without significant policymaking capability, the newly-formed diaspora-oriented institutions in Africa will not benefit adequately from the development potential of overseas diaspora.

3. Africa-Europe Platform: First African Diaspora Expert Meeting

Report meeting in Eschborn, 5th-7th March 2012

The 1st African Diaspora Expert Meeting took place at the Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) premises in Eschborn, Germany from the 5th to the 7th of March 2012. The event was organised by ADPC and its project partners ICMPD, FORIM, CGMD and AFFORD, as part of the European-wide African Diaspora Platform for Development (EADPD) Project. Logistical support was provided by GIZ, one of the project’s donor organisations. The aim of the EADPD Project is the establishment of the Africa-Europe Platform (AEP), a network of African diaspora organisations in Europe engaged in development activities in Africa. Under the title, “Establishing a well-functioning network”, the coordination and communication structure, as well as the framework for cooperation of the AEP were discussed by the participants.

In total, 40 African diaspora experts participated in the conference. They represented key diaspora organisations from 24 EU Member States plus Switzerland, as well as government institutions and civil society organisations from the five African pilot countries of the project, namely, Morocco, Senegal, Cameroon, Ethiopia and Angola.



The event was unique as it brought together for the first time a considerable number of African diaspora organisations from almost all EU Member States plus Switzerland to network, establish viable contacts, learn from each other’s development related activities, exchange valuable information and share best practices and positive experiences. The event was also unique as it provided a platform for diaspora organisations active in co-development areas to come into direct contact with their counterparts from the five pilot countries of the project. The meeting provided an opportunity for stakeholders to establish partnerships and join forces for development on the ground.

The gathering was the first of three Expert Meetings to be organized during the project period, which will be completed at the end of 2013, and it was fundamental to the framing and formation of the AEP. The key objective of the meeting was to provide a platform for African development practitioners, experts and opinion leaders to reflect on and discuss the methods, structures and processes for establishing a sustainable AEP. The Expert Meeting was also intended to solicit proposals on how to ensure that a significant number of African diaspora organisations from all EU Member States, Switzerland and Norway, are involved in the building of the network. The

involvement of experts from all target countries and African pilot countries during the implementation of the project ensures ownership of the action by the target group and a smooth continuation of the AEP after the first phase of the project ends in 2013. In addition, the meeting was held to initiate a constructive dialogue with the governments and civil societies of the five pilot countries regarding the building of a solid and viable network to increase the contribution of the diaspora to the overall development of Africa.

Other issues that were covered during the meeting included the proposal to deliberate and agree on a set of principles (the 'Rules of Engagement') that will guarantee the good functioning of the AEP. Agreeing on a set of principles will help to facilitate concrete cooperation, coordination and information exchanges between the stakeholders interested in the activities of this project. The results of an e-consultation, which was conducted prior to the meeting, were presented and served as a basis for the discussion on the Rules of Engagement. As a result, participants proactively contributed constructive ideas, expertise and suggestions on how to build a sustainable AEP with the active engagement of all African diaspora organizations across the European countries.

The meeting lasted for three days and generated many ideas for consideration in the process of building the platform. Participants presented experiences of a number of existing platforms, including FORIM in France and the EUNOMAD Network, from which viable lessons can be learned. They also highlighted possible challenges and pitfalls to be avoided. A key point made by participants was that building a platform with an EU-wide magnitude must be a bottom-up, rather than a top-down, process. The stakeholders must invest in building the platform to guarantee their ownership as well as the development of a common frame of reference. It was repeatedly emphasized that platform building is a project that cannot be realized overnight. A number of sequencing steps need to be undertaken for it to be achieved, such as laying down a solid foundation and developing the instruments, mechanisms and procedures needed in the process of building the platform. Furthermore, the participants reminded us to remain mindful of the usefulness, function and the overarching services such a platform will provide when it is established.

In short, this first Expert Meeting was extremely successful in a number of ways. First, the quality of diaspora experts and opinion leaders was exceptional and was greatly appreciated both by the participants and the sponsors of the event. It made clear that diaspora experts embody an undercapitalized wealth of knowledge, views, insights and practical experiences in the field of migration and development. Second, the event succeeded in laying a strong foundation for the platform building by bringing together the direct beneficiaries, obtaining their commitments to the project and soliciting their advice and suggestions in the process. Third, it raised awareness among stakeholders for the need, function, usefulness and the overarching services the foundation will provide that cannot be dealt with at national level. An example of such a service provided by the platform could be a collective lobby initiative by African diaspora organizations in Europe to influence policy and practice at the EU level and enhance their contribution to development in Africa.

The achievements made in this Expert Meeting will be built on during the follow-up meeting that will be held in Paris in November 2012. The focus of this upcoming event will be on the collection and publication of 'Good Practices' in order to make the development practices of diaspora organisations more visible. The demonstration of good diaspora-driven development practices will facilitate

African diaspora organizations in Europe to learn from each other and exchange positive examples in the field. Sharing information on strategies and approaches that could make an initiative a successful development practice will ultimately improve the contribution of the African diaspora to the development of Africa. In this regard, establishing a platform that enhances the wider mobilisation of diaspora resources (capital, skills and networks) to the development of Africa is both timely and policy relevant.

To access the full report of the 1st African Diaspora Expert Meeting, please click [here](#). For more information about the EADPD Project and the Africa-Europe Platform, please consult the AEP website.

4. “Towards A Unified Voice for African Civil Society”

*African Civil Society Forum on Migration, Development & Human Rights
Accra, 12 & 13 September 2012*

The African Diaspora Policy Centre (ADPC) in cooperation with the Pan-African Network in Defense of Migrants (PANiDMR) and Migrants’ Rights International (MRI) have organized a diaspora-civil society workshop in Accra from September 12-13, 2012. The event was unique as it brought together, for the first time, representatives from the Africa diaspora organizations in Europe and North America; trade unions and civil society organizations in Africa; Migrant’s Rights International (MRI), etc. ADPC has facilitated the participation of key diaspora actors representing different organizations from the Netherlands, Belgium, France and Germany. The organizations they represented are the Diaspora Forum for Development (DFD); the Dutch Consortium of Migrant Organisations (DCMO); *Le Forum des Organisations de Solidarité Internationale Issues des Migrations* (FORIM); *Centre de Formation et de Renforcement des Capacités* (CEFOREC) and the Farafina Institute (FI). The workshop would not have been possible without the support of Oxfam Novib in the Netherlands.

The meeting in Accra was unique as it was the first time that diaspora and African civil society representatives met to discuss strategies of improving the environment for lobbying, campaign and advocacy for migrant rights and their well-beings in Africa. It was also unique as it was convened to strengthen the strategic alliances and close cooperation between diaspora and the African civil society in the areas of lobbying, campaigning and advocacy regarding the well-being and the protection of rights of the migrants in Africa.

Furthermore, the workshop was organized to prepare a joint agenda and a partnership action proposal between diaspora organizations and African civil society actors that was presented at one of the roundtables during the civil society days of the GFMD event in Mauritius from 19 to 20 November 2012. The main purpose of the meeting was to spur migrant centred partnerships for improving the well-being of migrants on the continent. The participants emphasized the strategic advantage of promoting viable partnerships between the diaspora and non-state actors at sub-national and local levels in the fields of migrant rights and migration and development.

In general, the workshop helped to strengthen the strategic alliances and close cooperation between diaspora and non-states institutions in the areas of lobbying, campaigning and advocacy regarding the well-being and the protection of rights of the migrants in Africa. This is urgently needed since diaspora and non-state actors still operate separately and hardly partner in migration

related matter across the divide. Yet, if both entities join forces, they could make a difference on the migrant situation on the continent. This is particularly important as many African countries have now become simultaneously a source, transit point and destination. In this regard, the continent as a whole will need to put in place policy instruments (at different levels) addressing better migration management, protection of migrant rights, integration and migration and development at the same time in order to minimize the negative effects of migration while maximizing its benefits. Another advantage that the effective promotion of tangible partnerships between migrant organizations and sub-national development institutions has is that their practical collaboration has the potential to increasingly contribute to the poverty reduction and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG).

The main conclusions and key ideas for action which emanated from the discussion of the workshop are:

1. Supporting the establishment of an informal forum in which the diaspora and non-state institutions could share information, experiences and expertise
2. Facilitating the development of a mechanism that would contribute to fostering strategic partnerships among diaspora and non-state actors in the efforts of strengthening the development impacts and improving the wellbeing of migrants in Africa
3. Promoting the development of a culture of inclusive multi-stakeholder dialogues on migrant rights and integration at the national level that will help in raising public awareness, as well as in formulating better and informed domestic policy and practice in the field of migration and development
4. Improving the environment for lobbying, campaign and advocacy for migrant rights and their well-beings in Africa
5. Realising policy and practical changes at the national level responsive to improving the well-being and the protection of rights of the migrants in Africa

5. Conference on Africa-Europe Partnerships for Global Challenges

The African Diaspora Policy Centre (ADPC) was invited to participate in the second CAAST-NetStakeholders' Conference 'Steps to Innovation' held in Dakar, Senegal on the 24th and 25th of April 2012. The CAAST-Net is a network for the coordination and advancement of Sub-Saharan Africa-EU Science and Technology Cooperation. The aim of the conference was to support science and technology policy engagements between Europe and Africa. It was organized specifically to facilitate a dialogue between stakeholders around those policy topics of mutual interest that are considered important for the enhancement of science and technology collaboration between Africa and Europe.

ADPC was invited to participate in the conference due to its pioneering role over the years, regarding the mobilization of African diaspora in Europe for the development of Africa. Furthermore, ADPC, the only diaspora-wide institution in Europe, has been actively fostering the development of a valuable strategic link between African diaspora communities in Europe and Africa. More importantly, since 2007, ADPC has also been at the forefront of promoting collaboration between diaspora and homeland researchers. For instance, ADPC has commissioned a search assignment jointly implemented by diaspora and homeland researchers.² The aim of this collaboration was to facilitate the cross fertilization of ideas, knowledge and experience among researchers in the diaspora and in Africa and to encourage them to join forces in the production of knowledge regarding the nexus between migration and development – an emerging research and policy field. ADPC believes that such research cooperation could eventually lay the foundations for a sustainable intellectual partnership between the diaspora and homeland researchers. It is also a prerequisite in the development of an intellectual community between the diaspora and homeland researchers in Africa.

During the meeting, African scientists were forcefully calling for the need to build strategic partnerships with scientific diaspora in the field of innovation in Africa. This is understandable since the problem of 'brain drain' has affected Africa more severely than any other region. For example, it has been estimated that in countries such as Liberia, Sierra Leone, Somalia and Mozambique, more than 50 percent of trained professionals have migrated and remain abroad. This is an educated class with the skills, professional capacity and experience to help the continent devise innovative policies and systems that are the key to the translation of R&D outputs into novel and appropriate technologies and locally needed services and goods. The flight of skilled personnel from the continent is compounded by the ongoing and unethical recruitment of talented scientists from the continent by Western countries. This has damaging consequences for critical sectors such as health, education and private sector development.

The problem of brain drain is an issue of great concern in Africa today, as the institutions of higher education and research in Africa face serious shortages of qualified academics and researchers. The crisis is even more acute because Africa is losing the research and innovation capacity needed to participate in the development and exploitation of global knowledge — knowledge required to find

²See also Awil Mohamoud (ed.): 2010: Building Institutional Cooperation between the Diaspora and Homeland Governments in Africa: The cases of Ghana, Nigeria, Germany USA and the UK. The Hague: African Diaspora Policy Centre.

solutions to the most pressing challenges of our time. Some of these urgent global problems that demand immediate research relate to the eradication of hunger and abject poverty, water scarcity, disease, conflict, deforestation, the degradation of the natural environment, etc. There is a growing acknowledgment on the continent of Africa that innovation is an important prerequisite for development, smart growth of the economy, progress and social advancement. Now, more than ever, it is accepted that the acquisition, generation, and application of knowledge are critical to the success of sustainable development.

The African scientists who attended the conference echoed widely held policy considerations by many African countries aimed at offsetting the brain drain problem by tapping the resources available within the diaspora for development efforts on the continent. Their policy motto is to reverse brain drain to brain gain. This is the chief reason that many countries in Africa have initiated diaspora-friendly policies developed to create an enabling domestic environment in order that the diaspora can participate effectively in the homeland development.

The African diaspora population abroad is considered to be an important asset and critical development actor in the overall development of the continent. Likewise, large numbers of African diaspora, most of them organized along professional lines, are already involved in transferring knowledge, expertise and viable networks to the continent, all of which are vital to promoting socio-economic development. However, more needs to be done. There is no doubt that African diaspora scientists can contribute to the advancement of science and technology if they are creatively targeted and purposefully mobilized. This is because African diasporas today are in a unique strategic position to act as development bridge-builders between the West and Africa. In particular, this strategic position enables them to mobilize considerable resources (capital, knowledge and networks) from the West for the development of the continent. Unfortunately, there were no diaspora scientists present in the conference on Africa-Europe partnerships for global challenges, a missed opportunity since the diaspora can add value to policy dialogues between the two continents addressing issues of common interest.

For instance, some of the African diaspora scientists are already involved in innovation science and its practical application in the Western countries in which they are located. With their strategic mediation, this can also be transferred to Africa. There are already examples of best practices in this regard in a number of Asian countries, including India, China and South Korea, and there are appropriate lessons here that can be replicated in Africa.

Last year a meeting between diaspora and local scientists was held in London. That meeting spelled out key policy recommendations regarding the strengthening of collaboration between diaspora and local scientists in the fields of science and technology. We hope, therefore, that the upcoming Global African Diaspora Summit in South Africa in May 2012 will be a unique opportunity to translate the key proposals from the London meeting into achievable programmes within a feasible period of time. The need for strategic partnership and collaboration between diaspora and local scientists in the fields of science and technology is now more urgent than ever in order to increase the capacity of Africa to effectively address the pressing development challenges that are of global concern.

One important suggestion that emerged during the meeting is the promotion of circular migration among the African scientific diaspora from Europe to Africa. This is an aspect which can be practically addressed within the existing framework of the Diaspora Outreach Initiative under the Africa-EU

Thematic Partnership on Migration, Mobility and Employment. Indeed, it is one of the specific activities envisaged for the Action Plan 2011-2013 and beyond. The 'Diaspora Outreach Initiative' is an Africa-EU Diaspora cooperation framework, with the specific objective of engaging the diaspora in the development of Africa and to build capacity and transfer skills, knowledge and technologies from the diaspora to the African continent. It is also a cooperation framework built on the Diaspora Initiative, which is a key policy priority of the AU at this moment.

6. Building Bridges: Diaspora for Development

Conference Report, Frankfurt, 14th of April 2012

On the 14th of April 2012, in Germany's financial metropolis Frankfurt, the Conference 'Building Bridges – Diaspora for Business and Development' was organized by the Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) and the Dutch Consortium of Migrant Organizations (DCMO). On behalf of the Consortium, the African Diaspora Policy Centre (ADPC) took the lead in the organization of the conference. Around 90 people participated in the event. The conference brought together diaspora experts, diaspora entrepreneurs active in Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), representatives from banks, development organizations and government policymakers from across Europe to discuss the nexus between business, migration and development. Notable institutions that participated in the event include the Centre for International Migration and Development (CIM), the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the German Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the German African Business Association, the Norwegian Advisory Board for Immigration, the Diaspora Business Centre in the Netherlands (DBC), the German Moroccan Competence Centre, the African Foundation for Development (AFFORD) and MC-Bauchemie-Germany.

The objective of the conference was to discuss the role of the diaspora in the private sector and the promotion of business to business for co-development practice between Europe and Africa.

In addition, the meeting aimed to explore the reasons why European SMEs hesitate to invest in and partner with their counterparts active in emerging markets in the South, particularly in Africa. There was



consensus about the importance and the actuality of the topic of the conference. Building bridges for business and development can increase opportunities for harnessing the potential of diaspora entrepreneurs as facilitators and catalysts for all stakeholders. Furthermore, such a bridge-building initiative can help establish viable networks and a fruitful exchange of experiences, information and expertise among SME representatives, diaspora entrepreneurs and governmental institutions. During the conference a number of topics were discussed, such as the strategic position and bridge-building role of diaspora entrepreneurs in the promotion of South-North business relations. The attractiveness of the southern markets as investment regions for northern SMEs, the challenges and

obstacles for SMEs to invest in southern markets and the potential of the private sector for co-development were also reflected on. Furthermore, a number of SME representatives presented examples of best practices in the field, providing valuable lessons for others. More importantly, the event highlighted the central position of diaspora entrepreneurs as a bridge in the triumvirate of business, development and migration – an area that has not yet received sufficient attention within the development cooperation framework. Yet, diaspora-driven SMEs provide a catalyst regarding the nexus between migration and development.

To support this proposition, examples of the Turkish Ahilik System, the Indonesian diaspora initiatives and the Diaspora Business Centre in the Netherlands were presented and, in particular, their achievements concerning job creation, entrepreneurship and income on the ground. In addition, successful diaspora-owned multinationals were showcased. It was demonstrated how creative SMEs and entrepreneurs from Europe can invest and establish profitable business collaborations with their counterparts in developing countries. For instance, diaspora-owned multinationals have invested in construction, trade and multimedia companies, operate in several countries and employ people both in the North and the South. In this regard, they are leading the way in establishing trade partnerships between Europe and Africa, providing practical lessons for similar initiatives in the future.

Likewise, the representatives of German SMEs have affirmed that a number of businesses set up in Africa by diaspora entrepreneurs in Germany have been very successful. In part, this is due to the affinity and understanding of these diaspora entrepreneurs of the business environment in their countries of origin, their trading culture and social networks, all of which are crucial to a successful business venture. Furthermore, the intermediary role of diaspora entrepreneurs between the German SMEs and the SMEs in their countries of origin has helped not only to reduce the financial costs involved in the setting up of the businesses, but also to improve negotiations and dealings on both sides. However, it was observed during the meeting that the business success of SMEs can be scaled up if the investment is not done on an ad-hoc basis, but rather as a long term structural commitment, spread across several countries in order to avoid dependence on the economic cycle of one country. This reduces the risk of losing investment capital.

There was recognition for the importance of SMEs in the creation of wealth, employment and income and, as experiences in certain Asian countries illustrate, they can be a key motor for development. Nonetheless, the hesitation of northern SMEs to partner and invest in SMEs in the South is mainly related to the lack of reliable and well-functioning structures, weak markets and insufficient regulations. Despite this challenge, the representative of the German-African Business Association sees a potential business opportunity in Africa today for big companies active in sectors such as renewable energies, agriculture as well as innovative products. In short, the idea that Africa is the market of the future resonated with many participants at the meeting, and it was stated that European companies should not miss these emerging opportunities. This is further illustrated by the growing competition of companies from, among others, China, India and Brazil in Africa's booming economies.

During the meeting, an innovative concept developed by the Diaspora Business Centre (DBC) in the Netherlands, which facilitates business ventures in Africa in an effective and sustainable manner, was

presented. The essence of the concept is the effective harnessing of the business knowledge and practical experiences of diaspora entrepreneurs for the promotion and upgrading of the business enterprises in their respective countries of origin. Currently, this innovative DBC concept has been adopted by a number of business ventures in Kenya, Somalia, Sri Lanka and Ghana, among others. For example, a fishing venture in Somalia established by diaspora and local entrepreneurs has now become a promising business model, creating jobs and helping to reduce poverty in coastal communities. More importantly, it provides people with alternatives to piracy and other criminal activities.

In addition, the DBC concept helps to strengthen South-South transfers of knowledge and experiences in business creation. For instance, business entrepreneurs from Sri Lanka share their experience and knowledge in trade and business ventures with their counterparts in Ghana, Somalia, Kenya, etc. Over the years, Sri Lankan SMEs have been investing in shipbuilding, high seas ships and in developing sustainable fishing techniques, which they are currently transferring to the Somali fishers thanks to the mediation of the Somali diaspora entrepreneurs.

Another example cited was *TitanE*, an Indonesian diaspora organization in the Netherlands that provides support, in the form of resources, skills and networks, to nutmeg and mace farmers belonging to marginalized communities in the Central Moluccas in Indonesia. *TitanE* organized local farmers, upgrading their capacity and helping them to sell their products for fair prices on local markets, thereby improving their livelihoods and well-being. In short, the intervention of *TitanE* helped to stimulate for the first time the growth of small-scale economic development in the Moluccas, which has also empowered local subsistence farmers in their stand against the monopoly of rich landlords.

The meeting ended with a number of proposals. The first proposal called for the need to strengthen the position of diaspora entrepreneurs in their efforts to facilitate business to business links across the current North-South divide. The second proposal stressed the importance of research to explore the potential of business for development. In particular, the research should provide insights into how northern SMEs can best partner with their counterparts in the South to ensure profitable endeavours on both sides. Furthermore, the research should be conducted in a manner that compiles a catalogue of best practices so that SMEs on both sides can learn valuable lessons with the objective of increasing the transfer of resources, experience and expertise to the southern regions, specifically Africa.

The third proposal urged increased South-South partnerships in trade relations and the exchange of business experiences and expertise. The considerable investment by Turkish entrepreneurs in a number of African countries was noted as a good example of such partnerships. Furthermore, southern regions are in a better position to exchange easily adaptable technologies in critical sectors such as agriculture and food production, which the continent of Africa is in serious need of at this time. Finally, the important role of national governments in the promotion of private sector development was highlighted. Governments can remove obstacles that hinder the development of a productive private sector in their respective countries and hence, substantially contribute to employment and the growth of the economy.

This first Building Bridges conference has indeed been a success, as was evident in the perceived interest in, and great attendance of, the conference, which was supported by the current relevance of the topics discussed. To build on this success, a follow up conference will be held in The Netherlands in 2013. There is no doubt that promoting private sector development through diaspora entrepreneurs is an area with potential benefits to SMEs in both developed and developing countries. Furthermore, investing in enterprises is an appropriate way to be profitable, reduce poverty and ensure the growth of the economy in general.
