



## **Diaspora Declaration on the Joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES)**

**Brussels, 20 March 2014**

1. We, the representatives of the African diaspora development practitioners (active in the field of development both in host and home countries), meeting at the ACP House in Brussels on 20 March 2014, are committed to strengthening the new architecture of the Joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES) through the advancement of the political dialogue of the Partnership and the implementation of its envisaged Action Plan, which will be adopted by the Africa-EU Summit in April 2014. We have evaluated the implementation of the Action Plan 2011-2013, adopted by the third AU-EU Summit, held in Tripoli in November 2010, based on five strategic priorities: Peace and Security, Governance and Human Rights, Trade and Regional Integration (Private sector development) and Development issues (MDGs, Migration and Development), to be implemented by a broad-based partnership within the JAES Partnership Framework. The central theme of the Tripoli Summit was 'Investment, economic growth and job creation'.
2. We deliberated in plenary, welcoming the importance of the decision by the African Union Commission (AUC) to designate the diaspora the Sixth Region of the African Union. The AUC recognises the role of diaspora as a critical development actor, making a substantial contribution to the development of the continent, not only in terms of financial transfers (remittances), but also in terms of transferring knowledge and skills, promoting trade and foreign direct investment (FDI), creating business and spurring entrepreneurship. We regret, however, that declarations have not always being accompanied by concrete actions.
3. By recognising the lessons learnt from the previous JAES, and the meaningful actions achieved since 2007, much more can be accomplished. In the past ten years, diasporas have been marginalised in terms of participating effectively in the development of a policy dialogue process. We have also struggled to access predictable funding, earmarked for interventions by diaspora development practitioners, despite being indispensable development actors in development cooperation circles, both in the host and home countries,

4. We therefore propose the following practical measures to strengthen the role of and position of African diaspora development practitioners as effective actors in African development and as effective players in the new architecture of the Joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES):

#### **JAES institutional architecture and working arrangements:**

- ❖ **R**ecognise the role of the diaspora development practitioners as an integral part of the Partnership and provide appropriate support for their timely involvement at the levels of policy dialogue related to migration and development and to practices, decision-making, implementation and monitoring, etc.;
- ❖ **E**stablish a specific funding mechanism within the European Development Fund, Pan African Programme and other relevant funds dedicated to facilitating diaspora development practitioners in JAES policy deliberations and the implementation of the 2014-2016 Work Plan, including the working groups meetings on the themes such as Migration, Mobility and Employment (MME), etc.;
- ❖ **E**ncourage corporations, investment and financial institutions to use and supplement diaspora savings for responsible investments in Africa;
- ❖ **G**iven that most jobs are created by SMEs in successful economies, JAES should encourage European development financial institutions, such as the European Investment Bank, The African Development Bank, to provide financial support and expertise to diaspora start-ups, and facilitate, via diaspora brokerage, the creation of commercial bridges and collaboration between SMEs in Europe and in Africa;
- ❖ **E**stablish inclusive permanent working groups on the thematic priorities of the JAES in which representatives of diaspora development practitioners and organisations united and operating under the Africa-Europe Platform will formally participate;
- ❖ **S**upport African countries to develop national diaspora policies that facilitate the institutionalisation of diaspora relations and the integration of diaspora-driven development into the overall national development agenda;
- ❖ **F**acilitate the scaling up of diaspora-initiated development projects and private enterprises that contribute to the creation of jobs in their respective home countries;

- ❖ **G**rant the diaspora observer status in meetings convened to discuss the promotion of the Joint Africa-EU Strategy Partnership;
- ❖ **S**upport the establishment of a 'Migration and Development Programme' that would support the continent of Africa to develop its own agenda in the field of migration and development. Having a well-defined and clearly articulated African-owned agenda will facilitate the continent to address the development dimension of migration from the perspectives, aspirations, interests, priorities, challenges and specific needs of the governments and their overseas diaspora;
- ❖ **F**acilitate the development of formal channels of communication between the diaspora and African governments, which will foster the systematic integration of diaspora-driven development into the homeland development agenda.