

## Newsletter December 2011 No 2

### Note from the Director

This is the last ADPC newsletter in 2011. It aims to update you on some of the activities that ADPC has undertaken since the second half of this year. These have been dynamic months in different respects. Particularly, ADPC has been involved in high profile events in which the articles in the newsletter provide a brief expose. For instance, ADPC played an active role in facilitating the participation of African diaspora in Europe in the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) which was held this year in Geneva. This is important since the voices, concerns and aspirations of diasporas and migrants need to be sufficiently heard in the deliberations on migration and development related issues at the global level.



GFMD has been a yearly event since it was launched in 2006. It is the largest and most comprehensive global platform for dialogue and cooperation on international migration and development. It provides a venue for policy-makers and high-level policy practitioners to informally discuss relevant policies and practical challenges and opportunities regarding the migration-development nexus.

Next year, the GFMD event will be held in Africa for the first time. Mauritius has accepted to host the event in 2012. ADPC will continue supporting the participation of diaspora and civil society actors in this forthcoming GFMD event as well.

I hope you will enjoy reading our newsletter.

Happy Holidays and a Happy New Year!

### *Overview of newsletter articles*

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## **1, GFMD Preparatory Meeting in Abuja in October 2011**

*Report of meeting "from evidence to Action", Abuja, October 17 & 18, 2011*

The Federal Republic of Nigeria and the GFMD Switzerland Chair-in-Office invited the African Diaspora Policy Centre (ADPC) to participate in a two-day thematic meeting entitled "From Evidence to Action: Facilitating South- South Labour Migration for Development". The event which was supported by the Commission of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) among others was held in Abuja on October 17th and 18th, 2011.

The meeting was particularly initiated to provide an interactive platform of dialogue for senior experts from ECOWAS Member States as well as other regions of the world. The participants acquired the opportunity to exchange experience and deliberated the challenges and opportunities of south-south labour migration. In this regard, the meeting had helped a better grasp of the complexity of the issue at stake and guide the representatives from Governments and other stakeholders through possible practical approaches on how to translate theoretical evidence into coherent policies and subsequent implementation. More importantly, throughout the meeting, a particular attention was given to the development impact of south – south labour migration and its mainstreaming into development strategies in the homelands.

The participation of ADPC in the event was crucial. It provided a unique opportunity for ADPC to meet with the ECOWAS Commission and discuss areas of possible cooperation between the two institutions in the field of migration and development as regards with the Western African region. The discussion particularly focused on the technical assistance needs of the ECOWAS Commission in the efforts of supporting its member states to engage more effectively with their Diaspora population abroad for the development of their respective countries. Since 2009, ADPC has been implementing capacity building training of which a number of ECOWAS member states have already benefited. The Commission appreciated the work ADPC has done in the region. Subsequently, the Commission has indicated its willingness to explore possible partnership with ADPC for the setting up of a consultative platform for West Africa region on migration related matters. It is expected that the establishment of such a dialogue platform will help to strengthen the capacity of the ECOWAS Commission in the management of the migration in the West Africa region. It will also provide a forum that facilitates ECOWAS member states to convene, dialogue and consult on matters of common interest and to exchange regularly good practices (both policies and programmes) in the field of migration and development. The function of this proposed West Africa regional platform will be varied. Among others, the platform will provide direct technical assistance to the ECOWAS staff dealing with migration related issues, facilitate policy dialogues on migration issues among ECOWAS member states, and organize stakeholder workshops in which government policymakers and representatives from the civil society, diaspora, private sector and others meet to be in dialogue, share experiences and establish viable networks and partnerships in the field of migration and development.

Creating dialogue forums on migration related matters in Africa is very critical at this moment. This is for the simple fact that migration within the continent and beyond has become a complex phenomenon that should be orderly managed across countries and regions. This is imperative since

the current migration dynamics and its related issues represent huge political and institutional challenges to many countries in Africa in dealing with them effectively. Yet, Africa is the only continent without an informal regional consultation forum in the field of migration and development. Other continents, such as Asia and Latin America, have already established multiple informal consultation platforms at different levels, which facilitate regional deliberations on issues of common interest in the field and within their respective contexts. This explains why government and civil society representatives from Asia and Latin America are better informed and more vocal than their African counterparts in the deliberations on migration and development related issues at the global level. This reality makes it imperative to set up consultative platforms in different regions in Africa that help increase the knowledge in the field so that the voices, concerns and aspirations of Africa are sufficiently heard in the global debates regarding the nexus between migration and development.

This is particularly urgent since the next Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) will be held in Africa for the first time. The government of Mauritius is hosting the sixth GFMD event in 2012. This means that African stakeholders will need to consult with each other at different levels, be it regional or continental, and come up with an African agenda for the GFMD event next year. This is an agenda which clearly articulates African issues, challenges, priorities and expectations of the global forum in the short, medium and long-terms. In short, since each continent has its own specific issues as related to migration, Africa should seize the moment and put its own specific issues on the top of the agenda that will guide the discussion of the GFMD event next year.

## **2. GFMD Event in Switzerland in 2011**

*Report of GFMD event, Geneva, 29 November to 2 December 2011*

The fifth meeting of the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) was held in Geneva from 29 November to 2 December 2011. The flagship theme for the event was *“Taking action on Migration and Development – Coherence, Capacity and Cooperation”*. The Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) is a state-led, voluntary process dedicated to informal, non-binding and outcomes-oriented dialogue. Over the past four years, the GFMD has sought to contribute to more policy *coherence* on migration and development at the national, regional and global levels, strengthen the *capacity* of states to address migration and development opportunities and challenges more effectively, and promote international *cooperation* among states and between states and other actors. Through its inclusive approach, ongoing consultations and follow-on activities it has also become more than just an annual conference.

Each year, the GFMD event was organized in two phases. The first phase is the civil society days (CSD) convened for a period of two days. The second phase is a two-day meeting of governments which follows subsequently and is also held for two days. In 2011, the director of the African Diaspora Policy Centre (ADPC), Awil Mohamoud, was once again asked to be a member of a core of International Advisory Committee (IAC) tasked to support the preparation of the civil society days for the event. Mohamoud was also a member of the International Advisory Committee that oversaw the Civil Society Days of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Global Forum on Migration and Development held in Athens on 2-3 November 2009.

Furthermore, during the civil society days, ADPC participated in different workshops. More, specifically, the director of the ADPC, acted as a member of a panel for a workshop devoted to “diaspora, employment and development”. The focus of the workshop was to highlight concrete diaspora-driven projects and programmes that have been contributing to job creation and to development in home countries of origin. The meeting was successful. The panel members and the audience shared useful practical experiences and exchanged new innovative ideas that have the potential to spur the contribution of the diaspora to other sectors of the homeland domestic economy and the efforts of creating jobs locally. A good example is the innovative private sector scheme launched by the Mexican diaspora in the US. For instance, Mexican diasporas have initiated a 3x1 formula private sector programme in which diaspora entrepreneurs in the US set up businesses in Mexico or collaborate with local business people. The difference between this private sector oriented scheme and the old local development oriented programmes is that the contribution migrant entrepreneurs receive from the multiple tiers of the government is provided in the form of a loan that should be paid back after 5 years. Subsequently, the amount of the money paid back to the layers of the government administrations are then channelled to improve public good provision at the local level.

During the event, a number of diverse participants have raised concerns regarding the marginal attention paid to the critical role of the nexus between migration and development. In other words, compared with previous years, the development role of the diasporas and migrants was hardly on the agenda of the GFMD event this year. This is for the simple fact that the main focus of the GFMD event this year was largely on labour migration, migrant domestic care workers and development in general sense, etc.

Furthermore, the discussion of the GFMD event this year, particularly, during the Civil Society Days was dominated by advocacy-oriented speeches and less on sharing concrete practical actions on the ground. The argument that certain participants in the event raised was that most speakers in the workshops were activists rather than development practitioners in the field. They suggested that this is an aspect which should be kept in mind in the preparation of the GFMD event next year. The GFMD events have been rotating between countries and continents since it was launched in 2006. In the previous five years the GFMD meetings were held in Europe, Asia and Latin America. More precisely, the events were organised in Belgium, Greece, Mexico and the Philippines. In 2012, the sixth GFMD meeting will be held in Africa for the first time. Mauritius has accepted to host the event. Since the dialogue on global migration and development was initiated, the specific issues of the continent in which the GFMD event was organised have been on top of the agenda for the meeting. It is therefore expected that the particular issues of the continent of Africa (challenges, aspirations and priorities) regarding the nexus between migration and development should guide the overall flagship theme for the GFMD event in 2012. These are the issues that would considerably increase the contribution of African migrants and diasporas to the overall development of the continent in a sustainable and a systematic manner.

### **3. Africa and International Migration**

*Report round-table discussion, New York, June 28, 2011*

On 28 June 2011, the United Nations Office of the Special Adviser on Africa (UN-OSAA) and the United Nations International Organization for Migration (IOM) organised a roundtable discussion entitled 'Africa and International Migration'. The event was held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. The Director of the African Diaspora Policy Centre (ADPC), Awil Mohamoud, was invited to make a presentation on 'The impact of international migration on peace and security'. The main objective of the roundtable discussion was to provide a platform to discuss and analyse the African dimension of international migration, in line with UN-OSAA's mandate. This mandate includes, inter alia, raising awareness about critical issues of importance to Africa's sustainable development. The UN-OSAA believes it is essential that the African dimension of international migration is thoroughly discussed within the UN system. In this context, the panel discussion was organised with the objective of enriching the on-going deliberations and proposing possible ways forward, especially in light of the upcoming High-level Dialogue on International Migration to be held in 2013.

Many issues were covered during the meeting, ranging from the socio-economic implications of international migration on development to the impact of intra-African migration on peace and social stability. Migration is a cross-cutting issue. It touches on all aspects of social life in many societies in Africa as well as around the globe. This is because contemporary migrants are involved in multifarious activities in their countries of origin, ranging from community development projects to peace-building and post-conflict reconstruction efforts. As a result, migrants increasingly position themselves as critical agents of development. In this article, development broadly encompasses economic, social, and transnational networks and contacts, as well as the political and institutional dimensions in which migrants act vis-à-vis the domestic situation in their homelands.

Peace is a pre-condition for development and, as such, it is core business for ADPC. This was the reason why ADPC's Director was asked to talk about the impact of international migration on peace and security in New York. ADPC believes that African migrants can play a critical role in the promotion of peace and stability in their respective countries of origin. Contemporary international migrants are a global force, shaping directions and trends in the 21st century. It makes sense, therefore, to partner and join forces with African migrants in the promotion of peace and political stability on the African continent. There are significant advantages to be gained from actively involving transnational migrants in this way. For instance, migrant peace activists can bring new impetus to conflict resolution and fresh ideas about ways to deal with violence in their homelands. This, in turn, can widen the horizons and worldview of local protagonists. Transnational migrants (and particularly those located in western countries) are in a better position to mobilize substantial financial resources and support from powerful political networks abroad in order to empower local peace activists in their homelands. Crucially, the same contributions that migrants currently make to development can also be harnessed to build peace. Migrant participation in homeland peace processes is a chance for us to make better use of their unique strategic position and tap into the immense potential for conflict transformation in their countries of origin. Certainly, migrants can be part of the solution if they are seen as potential strategic actors and valuable bridge-builders that can be aligned with existing efforts to promote peace in their native countries. For instance, the incorporation of transnational migrants as peace-making actors in the homelands in a more

structured and formal manner would widen and greatly strengthen the capacity of peace forces active in their respective countries of origin. More importantly, migrants can play a role as capacity builders, advisors and as peace brokers.

In his presentation, the Director of ADPC stated that African migrants have great potential to be constructive in the resolution of conflicts on the continent. He noted that their exposure to democratic political cultures means that African migrants are well-positioned to contribute to conflict resolution dialogues in their home countries. Mohamoud re-emphasized the need for African migrants to contribute to capacity building and to organize themselves as peace-oriented activists. He also stressed the need for the diaspora to assist in setting up peace-building projects in their respective countries of origin. Mohamoud identified three critical areas where the African diaspora could make contributions to conflict resolution in their respective countries of origin; namely, (i) getting involved in political discourse in their homelands; (ii) participating in civic-oriented activities; and (iii) lobbying for sustainable peace. He went on to stress the importance of recognizing members of the diasporas as positive agents for peace in their homelands. Mohamoud called for African governments to develop policy instruments to mainstream long-distance peace-building activities, initiated by diasporas, into their existing peace-making frameworks and processes. He also noted the importance of mainstreaming donor related activities, UN activities and civil society activities into government processes to allow for a more harmonized and coherent approach in terms of utilizing the contributions being made by the diaspora. He further suggested that peace-building initiatives implemented by diaspora organizations must be showcased and published to inspire others to participate and contribute to development and peace initiatives. Mohamoud ended his speech by stating that the way forward requires fostering a process in which diasporas and civil society peace activists in the homelands can join forces for peace-building activities on the ground.

The panel concluded that transnational African migrants are in a better position now than ever before to transfer viable information, innovative ideas, intellectual capacities, new technological skills, smart and innovative businesses and trade practices, peace-making tools and techniques, and democratic political habits and practices from other continents to Africa. Ultimately, African governments need to develop effective policy instruments in the field, which will ensure that the contribution of migrants to the overall development of their respective home countries is maximized, sustained and implemented in a large-scale manner.

#### 4. Africa day 2011

*Report workshop African Diaspora Change Makers The Hague, October 29, 2011*

On October 29, 2011, the African Diaspora Policy Centre (ADPC) in cooperation with Cordaid and the Dutch Consortium of Migrant Organisations (DCMO) organized a workshop on: “African Diaspora Change Makers” during the Africaday2011 in The Hague. The main purpose of the workshop was to explore and discuss the role of the African diaspora in the field of development and in how far the diaspora differs from other development actors. In short, how does the African diaspora make the change.



The discussion was led by Ms. Amma Baddoo-Asante and the panel members were Howard Regusters, producer of the film ‘Obama in Ghana’, from the USA, and Gibril Faal, African Foundation for Development (AFFORD), from the UK. The workshop was very well attended by a broad audience consisting of, among others, individuals from the African diaspora, representatives from diaspora organisations and the NGO sector,

students and academia. The audience turned out to be a good mixture for the discussion since diaspora as well as non-diaspora participants were present and both showed a great interest in the topic.

The discussion focused on three consecutive questions: (1) How does the African diaspora contribute to the development of Africa? (2) What impact do the African diaspora and its initiatives have in Africa? (3) Why has the diaspora not been acknowledged yet as a development actor in Africa?

Participants in the workshop actively exchanged diverse experiences and opinions. Several best practices of African diaspora initiatives were presented before a member of the audience asked what exactly is the difference between diaspora initiatives and conventional development initiatives. The answer came promptly from the audience. The diaspora brings knowledge to the field which other actors do not have. Besides, the perspective of the diaspora differs from that of other development actors. The diaspora recognizes and understands the strengths and needs of its home countries better. Diaspora members have another perception of Africa and do not merely see its poverty but foremost its power and wealth. Tony Regusters described the diaspora as a new entity, as a social, economic and cultural force which teaches its children how to improve the living circumstances in the countries of origin. It was added that in the West, matters are measured out of a Western perspective. The African diaspora does not act based on this Western perception. And in fact, Africans should not even try to fit in these Western perceptions.

Accordingly, it was agreed that the African diaspora has an important and strong impact on Africa’s development and its added value is the knowledge and the special perspective and perception it has regarding the continent of origin. In other words, “Diaspora = We are the difference!”

Regarding the third question, key challenges and existing constraints were identified. It was mentioned that the African diaspora network is very fragmented and not enough is done for its PR. African diaspora groups work independently and are not connected well enough with each other and with their countries of origin. In addition, the African diaspora does not use the organised press well enough for its own purposes. The press would help to spread the news about diaspora initiatives and would acknowledge the diaspora's impact. Unity was considered as very important.

To conclude the workshop, the panel was requested to provide some recommendations. Tony Regusters, as an expert on news and media, stated that the African diaspora needs to control its image and its own message. PR is essential and the media needs to be used to get across the message. The diaspora needs to build up media presence and make use of new and constantly developing innovations such as the mobile phone. In short, media is the key. Gibril Faal pointed out that equal value has to be given to alternative activities. Existing methodologies and approaches should be used, *e.g.*, to evaluate the flow of remittances. How we value development organisations such as Oxfam should not be changed but diaspora initiatives need to be valued equally. He recommended that the diaspora has to be present in the host countries as a decision maker as well, *e.g.*, in parliament.

To sum it up, during the workshop an interesting debate about the role of the diaspora in development was started. The African diaspora accounts for a significant contribution to development. The question still remains how to enhance its influence and make it visible. Hence, the subject of the workshop is an area with a lot of potential for further fruitful discussions. The contributions of the panel and especially the enthusiastic audience illustrated that this debate should not stop here. It just offered a little insight into the dynamics of African Diaspora Change Makers who will surely continue their work and use their knowledge and perception about Africa to achieve their goals and inspire all of us.

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