



**CONSOLIDATED OUTCOMES REPORT OF THE
AFRICAN UNION'S – AFRICAN DIASPORA
REGIONAL CONSULTATIVE CONFERENCES**

2007

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The African Union's Executive Council meeting in Khartoum, Sudan, January 2006 endorsed South Africa as the host of the 2nd African-Caribbean Diaspora Conference (decision 269). Pursuant to the implementation of this mandate, South Africa, in consultation with the AU Commission, decided on a three-phased approach, namely the Regional Consultative Conferences (RCCs), the Ministerial Conference and the Summit. The latter being the culminating consultative Conference. The three main objectives of the Summit are:

- Create sustainable partnerships between the African Diaspora and the African Continent through a realisable Programme of Action.
- Create sustainable dialogue, partnerships and strengthen Pan African solidarity for a better Africa and its Diaspora
- Promote South-South cooperation in the betterment of the African Continent and its Diaspora

The convening of the RCCs was predicated by the need for consultation with the African Diaspora in regions where they have a relatively high presence. This process allowed the AU to galvanise their views and recommendations in preparation for the Ministerial to be held in South Africa on 16 – 18 November 2007. The Ministerial would consolidate these views and recommendations into a draft Programme of Action to be adopted by the Summit to be also held in South Africa in early 2008. The RCC discussions were guided by the following sub-themes which emanate from the first SA-AU-Caribbean Diaspora Conference held in Kingston, Jamaica in 2005: (a) Global Dialogue, Peace and Stability, (b) Regional Development and Integration, (c) Economic Co-operation, (d) Historical, Socio-Cultural and Religious Commonalities, (e) Women, Youth, Children and Vulnerable Groups, and (f) Knowledge Sharing.

The Diaspora made specific proposals towards consolidating partnerships with the African Continent. Also emerging from these RCCs is an affirmation that the Diaspora in the various regions face both overarching and regionally specific issues key among which are the following:

- Latin America:
 - Isolation of the Afro descendants
 - Revival of African culture and identity
- The Caribbean:
 - Legacy of slavery
 - Reparations
 - Right of return to the Continent
 - Fragile economic systems i.e. Small Island Developing States (SIDS)
 - Threat of climate change e.g. rising sea levels, hurricanes, etc.
 - Revival of African culture and identity
 - Implementation of WCAR outcomes
- North America:
 - Remittances
 - Strengthen relations between AU offices and the African Diaspora
 - Financially well resourced Diaspora
 - Right of the Diaspora to vote

- The United Kingdom:
 - Reparations
 - Implement the outcomes of the World Conference Against Racism (WCAR)
 - Inflexible migration laws
 - Re-branding/Imaging
 - Xenophobia

- Europe:
 - Remittances
 - Ill treatment of African immigrants
 - Inflexible migration laws
 - Xenophobia

- Africa:
 - Expansion of AU'S definition of the African Diaspora
 - Circulation of skills within the Continent
 - Engagement of the African Diaspora in Australasia, Middle East and Oceania
 - Determine feasibility of 6th region

A. INTRODUCTION

This report provides an analytical overview of key observations and recommendations made during the African Diaspora Regional Consultative Conferences (RCCs) in various regions around the globe.

The RCCs, were mainly convened and facilitated by the Government of South Africa in consultation with the African Union (AU), in the following regions:

- Latin America: Brasilia, 16 April 2007;
- United Kingdom: London, 23 – 25 April 2007;
- North America: New York, 22 – 23 June 2007;
- The Caribbean: Barbados, 27 – 28 August 2007;
- Europe: Paris, 12 – 13 September 2007; and
- Africa: Addis Ababa, 15 –16 October 2007

The Addis RCC discussed the outcomes of the afore mentioned RCCs while also articulating recommendations regarding political, economic and social challenges facing Africa and its Diaspora.

The organisation of these Diaspora Conferences was guided by the AU Executive Council definition African Diaspora that stated as follows: *“the African Diaspora consists of peoples of African origin living outside the continent, irrespective of their citizenship and nationality and who are willing to contribute to the development of the Continent and the building of the African Union”*. The following table confirms the relatively high presence of the African Diaspora in the above-mentioned regions.

Diaspora Region	Key Country	Estimated Population Number	Generations	State Actor	Status
North America	•USA •Canada	39,161,513.74	Descendents and immigrants	No	Excluded and marginalized
Latin America	•Brazil •Columbia •Venezuela	112,645,204.92	Descendents	No	Excluded and marginalized
Caribbean	Most	13,560,263.49	Descendents	Yes	Part of government and Civil Society
Europe	UK France Belgium	3,512,183.06	Immigrants	No	Excluded and marginalized

The main purpose of the RCCs was to engage in a global consultative dialogue with civil society and governments of the African Diaspora in preparation for the AU – African Diaspora Ministerial Conference in South Africa scheduled for 16 - 18 November 2007. This report, which is a consolidation of outcomes from the six RCCs would be presented at the Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) to be held in South Africa on 14-15 November 2007. Based on this report, the SOM will then develop a draft Programme of Action (PoA), for the consideration of the Ministerial Conference and

subsequent adoption by the Summit, which will also be held in South Africa in early 2008.

The Summit flows from the following AU processes and decisions:

- The 3rd AU Extra-Ordinary Session of the AU Executive Council held in Sun City South Africa in May 2003, which directed the AU to engage the African Diaspora in building the AU.
- Adoption of the *Protocol on the Amendments to the Constitutive Act of the African Union* with Article 3(q), in July 2003, which pronounced on the importance of the Diaspora as a component of the AU and its processes.
- The SA-AU-Caribbean Conference, held in Kingston, Jamaica, in March 2005, which was effectively the 1st AU-Caribbean Conference.
- The Conference of Intellectuals in Africa and the Diaspora (CIAD I) held in Senegal on October 2004, followed by CIAD II held in Brazil on July 2006.
- The 8th Extra-Ordinary Session of the AU Executive Council held in Khartoum, Sudan, in January 2006, which endorsed South Africa as the host country for the 2nd AU – Caribbean Diaspora Conference.
- The Africa-South America Summit held in Abuja, Nigeria in November 2006.

The theme for the 2008 Summit is “***Towards a United and Integrated Africa and its Diaspora***”.

In an effort to facilitate rigorous discussions during the RCCs, the following sub-themes, which cut across political, economic and social spheres served as a guide for discussions:

- Global Dialogue, Peace And Stability;
- Historical, Socio-Cultural And Religious Commonalities;
- Knowledge Sharing;
- Women, Youth, Children and Vulnerable Groups;
- Economic Cooperation; and
- Regional Development And Integration

B. OBSERVATIONS

I. Global Dialogue, Peace and Stability

There was an acknowledgement that whilst globalisation is irreversible and is biased towards the countries of the North it cannot remain unchallenged. The developing countries need to respond to this alienating and under-developing process by ensuring that its benefits extricate millions of the poor, especially those of Africa, out of poverty. Our Continent also needs to take advantage of the positive effects of this global process.

To ensure that globalisation adopts a developmental agenda, it is important to create a global environment that reinforces these progressive efforts. Key to the creation of this environment would be to democratise global institutions such as the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund, World Bank and the World Trade Organisation. The strengthening of AU institutions was also identified as an integral part of the African response to globalisation.

There was also broad acknowledgement of the link between war, conflict and underdevelopment and that the Diaspora needs to be mobilised to support peace

and stability initiatives in Africa. Pursuant to this, it was proposed that a fund be established that would ensure that underdeveloped areas in Africa and the Diaspora are subsidised. Concerns were also expressed that the United States (US) Africa Command (AFRICOM) initiative may have a negative effect on the developmental agenda of the Continent.

The RCCs also emphasised the need to deepen and strengthen the protection and promotion of human rights in Africa and argued for participation of civil society in governance matters of the Continent. In this regard, the example of the CARICOM Charter of Civil Society was highlighted as an ideal model.

Issues of democracy and good governance also featured prominently in the RCCs. There was a view that members of the African Diaspora should be granted dual citizenship and that their voting rights should be restored. Amidst concerns among the Diaspora about political developments in certain African countries, it was felt that this would be one way of giving the Diaspora a stake in ensuring that suitable and accountable leaders are elected in Africa.

II. Historical, Socio-Cultural and Religious Commonalities

Most RCCs noted with concern that African governments and their diplomatic representatives do not seem to be sensitive to the struggle and suffering of Afro-descendants and immigrants in countries that are home to these populations. In this there was a call on Africa as the 'motherland' to respond to the challenges confronting the Diaspora. RCCs noted the seemingly lack of a mutually beneficial relationship between Africa and the Diaspora. For example the Caribbean intellectuals are of the view that their region has paid its dues to Africa through participation in the struggle against apartheid and colonialism and that Africa has not reciprocated.

The RCCs also highlighted and analysed the causes of human trafficking and agreed that the Diaspora should play an important role in combating this scourge. The following mechanisms were proposed to prevent human trafficking:

- Improved data collection;
- Publicise cases that have been successfully prosecuted through representation offices;
- Disseminate information on trafficking and recruitment through media
- Combat the root causes by providing effective care; and
- Ratify international protocols such as the Palermo Protocol.

The RCCs also noted the enduring legacy of slavery, in particular its current manifestation in the form of human trafficking, racism, discrimination and xenophobia; and that Africa's place in the global system is largely a function of this legacy.

Key to the observations of RCCs is the linkage between migration and development, and the need for Africa and its Diaspora to develop joint projects to implement NEPAD in areas such as infrastructure development in Africa; small, medium and micro enterprises; and programmes to enhance entrepreneurial skills with a particular emphasis on women and the youth.

III. Knowledge Sharing

The need for modern communication infrastructure in Africa in the form of satellite networks and fibre optic submarine cables came out strongly at the RCCs. It was agreed that communication links with the Diaspora must be strengthened through broadband and underwater cables. This would improve connectivity while reducing costs and enhancing entrepreneurship opportunities amongst regions where the Diaspora is located, e.g. Africa, the Caribbean and Latin America. The RCCs proposed that the Diaspora assess NEPAD's ICT Programme and refine it to suit their own needs. Regions could develop technical cooperation in the planning and design of network links, exchange of skills, etc.

It was suggested that the pre-dominance of the countries of the North and their negative portrayal of Africa and its Diaspora should be challenged. In this regard the Diaspora should become a vehicle for disseminating positive news about the Continent. Africa and its progress must be celebrated in countries where the Diaspora is based and African and Caribbean Diplomatic Missions be requested to reach out to the Diaspora in their host countries to obtain their cooperation in promoting Africa, its history and its culture to the world.

In this context, the RCCs reflected on, amongst others, the need to find ways and means to celebrate positive imaging of Africa. For example they recommended that the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) states set up an ACP media organisation comprising a television network, a Pan-African radio network and a Pan-African magazine. Other recommendations include the development of an African media facility, backed by the necessary financial and intellectual capital resources, under the auspices of the African Development Bank.

There was a strong call for the recognition and development of Indigenous Knowledge Systems and protection of intellectual property rights through the identification of the potential trade and investment opportunities.

VI. Women, Youth, Children and Vulnerable Groups;

Gender mainstreaming and gender empowerment were identified as overarching working groups for all the RCCs. However, there was concern regarding the tendency to conflate as a catch-all rubric of "vulnerabilities".

The RCCs acknowledged the existence of the AU Protocols on Gender and that these provide an opportunity for their full implementation.

The RCCs also addressed the issue of youth within the context of the sub-theme on vulnerable groups. They pointed out that there are various issues related to cultural identity especially amongst the youth in the Diaspora which must be addressed and that the vulnerability of the youth to HIV and AIDS needs special attention. The challenge of youth offenders and their rehabilitation was also raised. In addressing these challenges, skills programmes targeted at the youth must be identified to prepare them for occupational life and the trafficking of youth must be addressed.

The marginalisation of Afro-descendants from socio-political and economic programmes came out strongly. In this regard, the RCCs proposed that special measures be adopted in order to integrate these vulnerable groups into mainstream society.

The RCCs reflected on the important role of Sport in nurturing talent as a means to promote a strong African identity, skills development and economic progression. The Commission further underlined the pivotal role that sport plays in tackling the scourge of racism and promoting a tolerant society.

With reference to the 2010 Soccer World Cup, the RCCs under-scored that football is the most popular sport in Africa and the Diaspora and that there be focus on the benefits that the World Cup will have for Africa and the Diaspora. In this regard, the RCCs recommended the organisation of soccer tournaments among African countries and the Diaspora.

The RCCs also reflected on the critical issue of people with disabilities. They recommended that all countries be encouraged to ratify the UN Convention of Persons with Disabilities and ensure that they have a legislative framework in place to deal with disability. Other important interventions include: the promotion of Sign Language and Braille, development of an integration mechanism including the creation of equal opportunities for skills and economic development.

V. *Economic Cooperation*

A variety of issues of strategic economic importance were identified by RCCs, such as the need for collaboration between private sectors in Africa and the Diaspora, especially with respect to issues such as access to capital, micro finance, joint ventures, removing barriers to trade, and investment opportunities in Africa.

Important recommendations were made for the successful implementation of the AU's Action Plan on Science and Technology, which include the exchange and sharing of knowledge and professionals, raising of sponsorships and investment for the promotion of science and technology cooperation between Africa and the Diaspora including to scientific research and innovation.

It was also recommended that a Pan-African body be established to coordinate funding for science and technology and to create effective partnerships with other supranational organisations, non state actors, the G8, etc.

There was general concern about the poaching of scarce and critical skills from Africa by the countries of the North. Pursuant to this, the impact of the brain drain on Africa and the Caribbean became a topical issue at most RCCs. It was indicated that brain drain is related to lack of opportunities in Africa which should be addressed. The RCCs also suggested that developed countries pay for the skills that they import from Africa and the Diaspora.

The RCCs considered the issue of remittances and recommended that a remittance fund be created for development purposes in the Continent and the Diaspora. In this regard the AU was urged to develop favourable regulatory frameworks for the disbursement of remittances.

The RCCs also recognised the need for partnership between Africa and the Diaspora to harness the continent's huge hydroelectric power potential for the continent's integration and development.

With respect to the current ACP-EU negotiations on the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs), the RCCs proposed that Africa's trade negotiations should be anchored in regional integration initiatives. It was noted that the ongoing current EPA

negotiations fragmented Africa into economic blocks that are out of sync with Africa's traditional economic communities.

The RCCs further indicated the interest of the African Diaspora to share expertise and experience for the benefit of the continent.

VI. Regional Development and Integration

The lack of proper telecommunications, transportation and energy infrastructure was identified as a hindrance to integration and a deterrent to potential investors from the Diaspora.

There is a need therefore, to disseminate on a regular and structured manner, information about NEPAD priority projects to Diaspora business and professional associations.

It appears that there is uncertainty about the view of the Diaspora as the 6th region and whether the AU has formally adopted a resolution in this regard.

The RCCs also emphasised the establishment of skills, health, educational and scientific databases. Coupled with this would also be the setting up of academic and business exchange programmes and establishment of Centres of Excellences.

Informed by solidarity and complimentarity, South-South cooperation could also entail regional integration and functional cooperation in certain areas of critical importance.

The impact of climate change on Africa and the Caribbean was comprehensively addressed at the RCC. It was indicated that climate change could be a causal factor or a major driver, contributing to economic, health and security threats in many sub-regions.

To facilitate air and sea transport integration in Africa, and between Africa and the Diaspora. In this regard it was suggested that relevant Agreements be entered into and implemented. Proposals were made for capacity building for international shipping markets and collaboration in search and rescue operations.

D. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were made:

Political Cooperation and Solidarity

- Revive Pan African solidarity and encourage the creation of a common platform for future engagement between African and its Diaspora.
- Leverage the collective efforts might of the AU and CARICOM sovereign states in multilateral fora to promote and advance issues of critical importance to Africa and its Diaspora, e.g. to monitor pledges and support arising from the G8 and other fora.
- Enhance South-South cooperation through regional integration measures.

- The Diaspora assist Africa in the recovery and repatriation of looted funds, particularly in the countries in which they are domiciled.

Human Resource Development

- Strong emphasis must be placed on African-centred education particularly with a view to reclaiming African space, spirituality, history and culture. A holistic approach to repairing the damage done to the African psyche and personality must be implemented:
- Publishing more books and other educational material to refute the misinformation given to Africans throughout the Diaspora about the history and heritage of the Continent of Africa.
- The writing of books for children of the Africa Diaspora to teach them about the Maafa (African holocaust) and its effects on both African and New World societies.
- Strong emphasis in schools, colleges and universities on the history and heritage of continental Africa in order to deepen the pride of youth in Africa and the African Diaspora of their African Heritage.
- Tertiary institutions in the regions need to proactively promote their programmes in both regions. To effectively do so a databank of Universities and courses on offer is proposed. This bank could further be supported by a skills data bank which could promote skills mobility and support between the two regions.
- Develop a virtual web-based skills bank with details of individual skills as a repository linked to important national and regional websites such as the AU.ORG and CARICOM.ORG.
- Promote African-centred education through standardizing and recognising certification and qualifications and introducing structured programmes of teaching and research at regional universities.

Science and Technology

- Explore the advantages of setting up Low Earth Orbits (LEO). Such an exploration will require the bringing together of leadership of key institutions and researchers to capture the interest in research and develop collaborative efforts. The outcomes of such collaborations should be presented to African governments, AU and CARICOM, for support and financing.
- Promote investment in Information, Communications and Technology that will enable greater communications access.
- Establish mechanisms for research cooperation in priority areas of agriculture, biotechnology and renewable energy technologies.
- Organise a working group to explore technological advances in the hydrocarbon processing sectors and optimizing the benefits of such exploitation for Africa.

Tourism and Cultural Development

- Promotion of cultural exchange activities between Africa and its Diaspora with an integrated schedule of events.
- Execution of MOUs and cultural agreements between countries encouraging educational and cultural exchanges.
- Promotion of the teaching of Pan-African history, drama, dances and music
- Integration of African language and linguistics into school curricula.
- Explore mechanisms and measures to facilitate the free movement of people, e.g. removal of visa restrictions.
- Develop a programme of AU- CARICOM sports and tourism particularly in the context of the upcoming FIFA 2010 World Cup.
- The establishment of African themed museums in the Diaspora to commemorate the “African Story”. Travelling exhibitions and a virtual version of the museums could be created.
- Exploit media and cultural processes and products to facilitate the promotion of a common identity, exchange and integration between Africa and its Diaspora.
- Promote comprehensive vertical integration of the cultural industries.
- Create mechanisms and measures to facilitate mutual market access of cultural products, especially film and music.
- Establish a mechanism to protect indigenous African-Diasporan knowledge systems and intellectual property rights.
- Establishment of an AU-CARICOM working group to operationalise community tourism.

Media and Communication

Promote strategic African centred investment and ownership of media institutions by establishing news and information exchange mechanisms through:

- Compilation of credible sources of information and the coordinated exchange between media houses in Africa and the Caribbean.
- Establishment of a jointly owned media conglomerate inclusive of television, radio and print medium

Infrastructure

Establish direct air and sea links between African, Caribbean and Latin American countries by:

- Identifying optimal locations in the Caribbean, Africa and Latin America for the establishment of inter regional transport hubs; and
- Creating appropriate enabling legislation to accommodate transport between regions.

Women

Establish mechanisms that would contribute to Africa's development through fostering partnerships between women in Africa and in the Diaspora in order to:

- Support the development of women's educational institutions and scholarship schemes for girls.
- Support the social sector development particularly in health care.
- Encourage women's entrepreneurship initiatives
- Support women in the Diaspora wishing to return to Africa.
- Establish database of skilled women.
- Support the establishment of investment initiatives aimed at job creation and poverty alleviation for women; and
- Share best practices aimed at improving access of women to investment capital.
- Develop mentoring programmes between women in Africa and those in the Diaspora.
- Campaign for the ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination, the United Nations Convention against All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the United Nations Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families as well as all other relevant instruments that enhance the protection of women.

Youth

- Fully implement the African Youth Charter should be fully implemented as it is a blueprint for cooperation between youth in Africa and the Diaspora.
- Develop mechanisms for the inclusion of youth in the deliberations of the AU-CARICOM processes; e.g. Youth Parliament, Internships.

Health Sector

- Launch a Global Africa Fund on AIDS for research and mobilisation of constituencies such as artists and sport personalities.
- Establish collaborative Research and Development projects in the following priority areas: health (with particular emphasis on HIV, malaria, TB, Cholera, sickle cell and chronic lifestyle diseases) and pharmacology.
- Promotion of community based approach and primary health care to treat HIV and AIDS, including counselling and more Government support to improve nutrition and good diet.
- Greater commitment to lobby governments of the North and private companies to refrain from poaching health care professionals from Africa and the Caribbean.

- Encourage countries that need health workers to provide training finance so that there would be a surplus of trained persons to meet the needs of developed countries.
- Improve conditions of service must be created domestically to ensure that health care professionals remain in their countries of origin.
- Influence Governments in the Diaspora to create an exchange programme for experts and technicians within the Diaspora.
- Health literacy be taught and communicated in simple languages.

2010 World Cup in South Africa

Utilise the 2010 World Cup in South Africa to redefine and re-brand Africa's image.

De- colonisation

- CARICOM and the AU should support the immediate termination of colonial occupation in the territories occupied by Netherlands, France, Britain and the United States of America.

WAY FORWARD

- Develop institutional mechanisms to concretise co-operation between the AU, CARICOM and the by amongst others establishing a Joint Commission to determine cooperation programmes.
- Launch an AU-African Diaspora Congress of Non-Governmental Organisations / Civil Society to facilitate dialogue.
- Urge the AU, CARICOM and other regions were the Diaspora is located to act on the Plan of Action of the World Conference Against Racism by, *inter alia*, establishing a High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons to mobilise on the follow-up.
- The peculiar experience of women and youth should be taken into account in ensuring their inclusion in the implementation of the aforementioned recommendations.
- A website where members of the Diaspora can access information about initiatives on the Continent should be established.