

From Then to Now: The Process from the September 2007, AU Afrikan Diaspora Europe Region Conference to Johannesburg/South Africa & the AU Head of States Assembly: *The Draft Declaration, Consolidated Outcomes and adopted Projects*

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During the February, 9/10 2008 AFRIKAN DIASPORA in Europe First Region Working Conference on the AU 6th Region Initiative

Introduction

Start With Libation

Ask for one minute silence and give each other a hand for a successful working conference

Words of thanks

Honourable Excellencies/deputy Ambassador of South Africa your Excellency Casoo, Professor Dr. David Horne facilitator of the USA 6th Region Afrikan Diaspora Community Council of Elders and advisor to the other Regions of the 6th Region Initiative; Professor Dr. Kazriel Ben Yehuda from Dimona Israel, Facilitator of the North/East Africa, Middle East Region of the 6th Region of the Afrikan Diaspora. Special welcome to you both for coming and share ideas with us about the Setup Process of your Regional Structure.

Thanks to the South African Governments, the ambassadors of the South African embassies in the Europe Region, The AU Officials in Charge for their excellent support to the African Diaspora since the RCC in the Europe Region. It is for me a great pleasure to be here today with you and to receive the opportunity to be also part of the Process concerning the Way Forward and with you to share Ideas regarding the Establishment of the Europe Infrastructure.

I would like to thank my Colleageas Professor Dr. Yankah, Brothers Foumbi and Charles for the space that I have received to work in harmony so that today we all can be here at this Working Conference. Special thanks to the African Diaspora France Chapter Organising and Planning Committee for the hosting of the delegates and the venue of the event.

The spirit of our Afrikan ancestors will give us the necessary strength to complete our tasks. The eyes of God are watching us and that gives HOPE

I speak here in my position of Chief Coordinator, one of the Initiators of this first African Diaspora in Europe European Working conference

About the content of my presentation

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- 2. THREE PHASE TRAJECTS OF THE AU TO THE SOUTH AFRIKAN GOVERNMENT MANDATE**
- 3. REPORT ON THE AU-DIASPORAN SENIOR OFFICIALS AND MINISTERIAL CONFERENCES, NOVEMBER 14-18, 2007-- MIDRAND, SOUTH AFRICA**
- 4. BASIC RESULTS OF THE CONFERENCES**
- 5. THE OBJECTIVES OF THESE TWO DAYS WORKING CONFERENCE**
- 6. CLOSING REMARKS OF THE PRESENTATION**

1. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE RCC's

The implementation of the 6th Region Afrikan Diaspora Initiative for the mobilizing and organizing of the Afrikan Diaspora in the 6th Regions result in the mandate to the government of South Afrika by The African Union Executive Council meeting in Khartoum, Sudan January 2006. On that meeting the AU endorsed South Africa as the host of the second Afrikan Caribbean Diaspora Conference (decision 269). Pursuant to the implementation of this mandate, South Africa, in consultation with the AU Commission, decided on a three phase trajects, namely

1. The Regional Consultative Conferences (RCC's),
2. The Ministerial Conference. Before the Ministerial Conference a Senior Official Conference took place to prepare the Draft Declaration and the Program of Action for the Ministerial Conference
3. And the African Union Head of States Assembly.

The three main objectives of the Afrikan Union are:

- To Creation of sustainable partnership between the African Diaspora and the Afrikan Continent through a realizable Programme of Action;
- The Creation of sustainable dialogue. Partnerships and strengthen Pan Afrikan solidarity;
- To Promote South-South cooperation, such as with Carricom in the betterment of the African Continent and it Diaspora.

2. The three phase trajects of the South African Government as a result of the Mandate

Follow up to the South Africa three phase trajects and as preparation for the South Africa AU Ministerial Conference that has took place in November 2007 16-18, RCC's under the umbrella of the South African Government were organized in:

- Latin America (Brazil)
- United Kingdom (London)
- North America (New York)
- The Caribbean (Barbados)
- Europe (Paris) **September 2007**

The preparation for the Paris RCC, where the Diaspora of for instance Holland, France, Germany, Italy, Spain Switzerland, UK, Austria, Sweden, and Belgium could give their opinion and deliver their input was organized on several dates before the Paris Venue in cooperation with the South Afrikan embassies, where other AU ambassadors or officials were represented. In the Netherlands we first started with a fact-finding mission on how the other Regions organized themselves and mobilized the constituencies. We find in the Strategy of the USA

Region Chapters developed & facilitate by Dr Horn a welcome methodology.

The main purpose of the RCC's as you already known was to engage in a global consultative dialogue with civil society and governments of the Afrikan Diaspora in preparation for the AU Afrikan Diaspora Ministerial Conference.

After the RCC's a follow up Afrika Addis Ababa Regional Consultative Conference (**October 2007**) took place , where the participants discussed about and analyzed the outcomes of the RCC's and also articulating recommendations regarding political, economic and social challenges facing Afrika and its Diaspora.

In **November 2007** two Conferences took place in South Africa as follow up of the RCC's in the several Regions and in Addis Ababa

1. The AU Diaspora Senior Officials Conference (14-16 Nov.2007): with the purpose to develop the Draft Program of Action;
2. The AU Ministerial Conference (16-18 Nov.2007) with the purpose to discuss the Consolidated Outcomes and the Draft Plan of Action as preparation for the AU Head of States Summit early 2008.

3. REPORT ON THE AU-DIASPORAN SENIOR OFFICIALS MEETING AND MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE, NOVEMBER 14-18, 2007--MIDRAND, SOUTH AFRICA

SITE:

Both gatherings took place at the Gallagher Estate Convention Center in Midrand, South Africa, a facility built especially for large conferences. The Gallagher is the home of the Pan African Parliament, and the location at which the AU Constitutive Act was ratified in 2001. It, along with the AU's official headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, is the regular meeting place for most large AU gatherings.

HOST:

The South African Department of Foreign Affairs, under Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, coordinated and hosted both meetings. Both were in conjunction with the South African government's mandate from the AU's heads of state meeting in Khartoum, 2006, to host a series of Regional Consultative Conferences (RCC) on and in the Diaspora.

PRIMARY OBJECTIVES OF THE GATHERINGS:

- (1) For the South African government and the AU to present for discussion, comment and debate the "Consolidated Outcomes Report of the African Diaspora RCCS"
- (2) To bring continental African officials and foreign ministers together with CARICOM officials, and other members of the Diaspora
- (3) To discuss, agree on, and present to the AU Executive Council (foreign ministers) a Diasporan Plan of Action/Implementation Programme.

Participants/delegates:

- 37 Ministers (foreign affairs, tourism, etc.) from continental Afrikan states;
- 16 official delegations from Diasporan states (primarily the Caribbean and South America, including Barbados, Brazil, Dominican Republic, Cuba, Haiti, Jamaica, Suriname, etc.);
- 13 Diasporan civil society organizations and
- 20 individual Diasporan Pan Afrikanists; the Assistant Secretary General of CARICOM (Colin Granderson);
- the AU Ambassador to America (Honorable Amina Ali);
- the head of the AU's Diasporan agency, CIDO (Dr. Jimni Adisa);
- the President of South Africa (Honorable Thabo Mbeki);
- the South African Minister of Foreign Affairs (Dr. N. Dlamini Zuma),
- The Executive Director of the AU Commission (Prof. Alpha O. Konare).
- twenty of the continental Afrikan states had representation in both gatherings,
- And virtually all of the Diasporans were around for both gatherings.
- President Mbeki was there only for the Ministers' Meeting, as was Prof. Konare. gave a truly outstanding speech, completely without notes...

CONTEXT:

South Africa had previously hosted AU-Diasporan regional conferences in Brazil, London, New York, Barbados, Europe/Paris and Addis Ababa. At those conferences, a host of speech makers and panelists had discussed major issues which affected the Diaspora, the few Diasporans invited had commented on how the rest of the world sees them and how they sees themselves, and the idea and associated information concerning the AU's new connection to the Diaspora was promoted. The back-to-back gatherings in Midrand were to approve a summary of those consultations in preparation for the AU-Diaspora Grand Summit, which is now re-scheduled for November, 2008 (the exact date to be determined at the January, 2008 Assembly (heads of state) meeting.

FORMAT:

Over 80% of both gatherings were presentations of papers and speeches built around six general themes chosen by the planners of the meetings:

- (1) Global Dialogue, Peace and Stability in the AU-Diaspora relationship
- (2) Historical, Socio-Cultural and Religious Commonalities in the AU-Diaspora
- (3) Knowledge Sharing
- (4) Women, Youth, Children and Vulnerable Groups
- (5) Economic Cooperation, and
- (6) Regional Development and Integration between the AU and the Diaspora.

The remaining 20% of the two meetings was spent in trying to agree on a coherent Plan of Action for integrating the AU and the Diaspora, from a draft document prepared before both meetings.

4. BASIC RESULTS OF THE MEETINGS

I. Results of the Senior Officials/Civil Society Meeting-- Nov. 14-15, 2007

A. Important speeches and papers (list consolidated from both gatherings)

presented by: (1) Dr. Jimni Adisa, CIDO and AU Diasporan Coordinator (2) Prof. Alpha Oumar Konare, Chair, AU Commission (3) South African President Thabo Mbeki (4) South African Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. N. Dlamini Zuma (5) Dr. Ikael Tafari, Director of the Pan African Commission in Barbados (6) Dr. Erieka Bennett, head of the Diaspora Forum Mission in Ghana (7) Colin Granderson, Assistant Secretary General, CARICOM (8) Honorable Dudley Thompson, legendary Caribbean Pan Afrikanist (9) myself in my position of Diasporan Facilitator, Panafstrag Europe, and (10) Michael Sudarkasa, Africa Business Group. Dr. David Horn representing the USA and the SRDC, made a brief dinner presentation as an invited speaker

B. Solid networking between Diasporans from Europe, Caribbean, South America, Continent and USA. Several informal meetings to clarify common strategies for the Immediate future.

C. Open discussion on the "Consolidated Outcomes Report of the AU-African Diaspora Regional Consultative Conferences" (report all six gatherings). In the end, we were told we could not change the document given it was the official rapporteur's summary of those gatherings. However, we did submit written additions we thought belonged in the report, particularly from the Paris meeting. Those latter got into the report. Good lesson in diplomacy.

D. Open discussion on and attempt to modify the draft Programme of Action/Implementation Plan which accompanies the "Consolidated Outcomes' document. The lights went off Wednesday and Thursday afternoons at the conference center, so that task was not completed. This Programme of Action document is the most important action requiring agreement at this gathering. It is supposed to be submitted to the Ministerial Conference for approval.

E. The South African government is very, very serious about its role as catalyst in helping the Diaspora get organized.

F. The AU must focus more of its immediate attention on producing a viable procedure to integrate the Diaspora into the AU. Currently, such a procedure does not exist, although the AU looks at CARICOM as the reference point for such a procedure being created.

II. The Results of the Foreign Ministers' Conference (also including Ministers of Tourism, Trade and Commerce, etc.) November 16-18, 2007

A. The article 3(q) amendment to the AU Constitutive Act (also called the Protocol on the Amendments to the Constitutive Act of the Africa Union) passed by the Assembly of heads of state in July, 2003, has not yet been ratified by the AU. This is the amendment which recognizes the Diaspora and invites that body to join the AU. The Foreign Ministers were urged to make a strong recommendation to the upcoming Assembly this year, to immediately ratify that 4-year old decision.

B. A draft Programme of Action/Implementation Plan for integrating the Diaspora into the AU was approved by the Foreign Ministers, even though the POA is incomplete. Part of the approved draft is an assignment to hold a workshop of technical experts in February, 2008, to finish a comprehensive POA document and a consolidated Implementation Plan for it, along with a Declaration of Principles concerning the Diaspora that can be re-submitted to the Foreign Ministers for adoption.

C. A sustainable partnership between the AU and CARICOM was agreed upon as the major building block of an AU-Diasporan relationship.

D. The date of the South African government-hosted General Diasporan Summit was changed from February, 2008 until April, 2008. (The exact days to be determined by the Assembly in January).

E. Particularly in the speech of Prof. Alpha O. Konare, the Chair of the AU Commission/Secretariat, the gathering reiterated that the idea of a Diasporan 6th Region had been agreed upon in principle by the AU Executive Council of Foreign Ministers, the AU was very serious about welcoming the Diaspora into the AU, more work had to go into adopting viable procedures for getting the Diaspora into the AU, and that Pan African unification was not only possible for the future, but a fundamental requirement.

The following Process

At least three up-coming conferences will take place as follow ups of the decisions from the Ministerial Conference.

In this regard we as Afrikan Diasporas thus also in the Europe Region Chapters must be prepared to fully participate in each of the Conferences. For instances to nominate and elect delegates to represent the Afrikan Diaspora. We could have choose to wait until the Bells of the AU Head of States rings or continues to organized ourselves & discuss the way forward. If we would be a part of the Process it is necessary to bind hands together to re-unite and organize our selves.

With the invitation of the African Union

Afrikan leaders of the Afrikan Union have demonstrated that they are willing to listen to us, to connect us, to create Strategically Alliances whereby Afrikans in the Diaspora-think thanks involved, as well the Afrikan Civil Society, Pan Afrikanist Leaders to deliver their “knowledge, vision and strategies” in case of the further development of Afrika for the benefit and interest of Africans all over the world.

Now that we have had the Paris RCC and the Johannesburg Senior Officials and Ministerial Conferences the follow up process is as follows.

1. In May 2008 was planned for the Assembly of the AU Heads of State. This is not a meeting for participation of the Diasporas unless the CARICOM Head o States are invited. It has come to

- my attention that the summit has been postponed until November 2008. One of the reasons is the Kenya situation.
2. Until the Assembly was planned specifically focused on the Diaspora.
 3. February, 2008 as is decided at the ministerial Conference a Technical “Experts” Workshop should be established to complete a Plan of Action Proposal to fully incorporate the Diaspora into the AU.
 4. April, 2008 the Diaspora General Summit, in Midrand, S.A. was a adopted proposal.
 5. April/May, 2008 the first permanent meeting of ECOSOCC, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The Diaspora is supposed to be represented by 20 members.

In communication with the minister of Foreign Affairs, Excellency Zuma, I personally speak to her, I have heard very clear about her vision that we as the Pan Afrikan Diaspora Community are supposed to organize our self and mobilize the constituencies. It is clear that that is what the African Union hopes for us to do.

The Western Hemisphere 6th Region Diaspora Caucus, WHSDC (Canada, USA, Caribbean, Brazil/South America, Central America, etc.) must meet with us The Region Europe Diaspora Caucus before April, 2008, in order to secure agreement on a common Diaspora Agenda to take to the AU in April /May 2008.

The WHSDC has already started with meetings to agree for a common agenda. They have completed the task in November 29-December 2, 2007 gathering of Diasporas in Panama City, Panama.

5. THE INITIATIVE OF THE AFRIKAN DIASPORA EU REGIO FEBRUARY WORKING CONFERENCE

The working conference this weekend is planned for you delegates from the various Europe Chapters. At the last day of the Conference in Johannesburg we, myself, Professor Dr Yankah, brothers Jean-Emmanuel Foumbi & Francois Ndengwe agreed according to the Consolidated Outcomes and Plan of Action to call for a Working Conference, as a first step in the Process of Exchange Ideas concerning the implementation of the Consolidated Outcomes & the Plan of Action. At this meeting I was appointed to be the Chief Coordinator.

The Objectives of this Conference

We agreed that the Objectives of this Working Conference should be the Establishment of a (interim) Communication/Consultative and Organization framework that will allow the Afrikan Diaspora Community in Europe to deliberate on issues of common interest and

to offer structural representation in Continental organization of the African Union.

Our Working Conference must focus on proposals for the establishing of an open, credible and transparent way concerning the criteria and selection of eligible persons to serve a representation role at the AU and in the Afrikan Diaspora European Caucus and the Afrikan Diaspora European Region AU Representatives to the AU bodies. This includes the Europe Region Diaspora Agenda¹.

Inherent to this aim is the providing of information and the dialogue of the several aspects of the implementation on Europe Level'. Aims until agreement by the AU Head of States are the consolidated outcomes of the AU Afrikan Diaspora Senior Officials Conference that has took place in November 2007 and the Draft Declaration/Plan of Action that has been developed and adopted during the follow up Ministerial Conference

The following we have described as the Topics of the Conference Program

- Debriefing of the November 2007 afore mentioned Conferences in South Africa and its impact for the 6th Region in general and the Europe Region Diaspora particularly;
- In this regard dialogue/discussion and agreement about how to realize and implement the Consolidated AU-Diaspora adopted Program of Action
- Dialogue/discussion and agreement about the Setup of an Europe Region AU-Afrikan Diaspora Structure towards a Europe Region (Hemisphere) 6th Region Diaspora Caucus;
- To discuss and reach agreement on the European Diaspora Executive Secretariat. This Secretariat has at least two dimensions. One on the level of an Administration Department and second on the Level of an Executive Coordination Department for the realization of Projects & implementation of the adopted Consolidated Program of Action;
- Dialogue/discussion and agreement about an Interim Coordinating Afrikan Diaspora Caucus for the implementation process including agreements of nomination criteria, tasks and responsibility towards a Europe Region (Hemisphere) 6th Region Diaspora Caucus²;
- To discuss and reach agreement about the establishing of Thematic/ Experts Commission on Europe level ;

¹ In this regards taking in consideration the consolidated outcomes of the Paris September 2007 AU-Diaspora Conference. We are not going to try to reinvent the Wheel

² In this regard selection criteria and the election process and procedures of AU Diaspora representatives Europe Region in relation to the invitation of the AU for the election of 20 members with the purpose to take their seats in the ECOSOC, This is the first AU Commission whereby the Diaspora is invited to take their seats.

- To discuss and reach agreement on the Common Projects on Europe level and Finance solutions;
- To discuss and reach agreement on Nomination Criteria & procedures of Delegates.

We proposed as structural working commissions (that we have to agree on Europe Level):

a. Political Cooperation

Capacity building and Exchange activity programs on:

- Peace building/keeping; conflict prevention (includes the integral aspects as reconstruction)
- .Governance: integration civil society; integration of the Diaspora

b. Socio-Economic Cooperation:

- Economics and infrastructural development (e.g. Investment banking and micro finances, remittances, Trust Funds)
- Entrepreneurship and Jobs creation (e.g. Investments for SME's, including communication)

c. Knowledge Sharing:

- Science, Research, development of Technology & Innovation
- Knowledge and know-how transfer to reduce poverty and create wealth: water, energy, agriculture and health)

d. Arts, Culture and Sports (also related to 2010)

e. Media and Diaspora Image

f. Women, Youth and Vulnerable Groups

g. Historical, Socio-cultural and Religious Commonalities:

- Durban review and Reparations
- Database and Research on Diaspora Ancestry

The proposed Projects until now are

- a. Diaspora Bank (Micro finance, Remittances)
- b. African Diaspora Fund
- c. Database
- d. Culture and Sports (also related to 2010)
- e. Durban review 2009
- f. Reparations

The expected Outcomes of this Working Conference in our perspectives are:

- Agreement about the AU Afrikan Diaspora 6th Region Diaspora Caucus Europe;

- Agreement concerning a Proposal for the Europe 6th Region Afrikan Diaspora Executive Secretariat existing of an Administration Department & one Coordination Department for the realization of Projects & implementation the adopted Consolidated Program of Action;
- Agreement about an Interim Coordinating Afrikan Diaspora Caucus for the implementation process including agreements of nomination criteria, tasks and responsibility towards a Europe Region (Hemisphere) 6th Region Diaspora Caucus³;
- Agreement on the Thematic/ Experts Commission as a working structure;
- Agreement on the realization of Projects including solutions on Financing;
- Agreement about a Draft proposal concerning the Procedures and Nomination Criteria of Delegates

All these activities respective subjects are in line with the consolidated outcomes of the Johannesburg Conference. In several chapters there are coordinating committees in existence. Head of states will also formulate criteria so that a body who would like to play a central role knows on what criteria it must fulfill to receive the mandate.

6. Closing Remarks of the Presentation

Dear brothers and sisters, family,

Pan Afrikans/Afrikanists/Activists

The African Union's (renewed) interest in the Afrikan Diaspora and Pan-Afrikanism should be applauded. It may not only refer to African Diaspora from the perspective of Human Capital towards the Afrika continent. Also not in terms alone of what the Diaspora can do for Afrika, but more in the sense of what the African Union and the Diaspora can do for each other. The success of the relationship is a two way street. And as a start, to integrate The Afrikan Diaspora the process of (re)building Africa and institutionalized Pan-Afrikanism in the Afrikan Union the Afrikan Diaspora worldwide in the sixth Region can be more useful to Afrika than ever. The invitation of the African Union is one that we, the Afrikan Diaspora, must take seriously. With the invitation of the African Union, Afrikan leaders of the Afrikan Union have demonstrated that they are willing to listen to us, to connect us, to create Strategically Alliances whereby Afrikans in the Diaspora-think thanks involved, as well the Afrikan Civil Society, Pan Afrikanist Leaders to deliver their "knowledge, vision and strategies" in

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case of the further development of Afrika for the benefit and interest of Afrikans all over the world.

Thank for your attention

I would like to invite Dr. Horn to co referee to my presentation