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## **REPORT OF THE AFRICAN GLOBAL DIASPORA SUMMIT**

**25 MAY 2012**

**SANDTON, SOUTH AFRICA**

The Eighteenth Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 29-30 January 2012 adopted Assembly/AU/Dec.393 (XVIII) on the Global African Diaspora Summit. That Decision, amongst others, requested the Commission and the Government of South Africa to continue their active collaboration and take all necessary measures to ensure the successful planning and conduct of the Global African Diaspora Summit. The Decision also requested all Member States and relevant AU partners and Diaspora communities worldwide to support the effective preparation and conduct of that Summit and its implementation strategies thereafter. Finally, the Decision requested the Commission to report on the outcome of the African Diaspora Summit to the next Ordinary Session of the Assembly in 2012.

In furtherance of this mandate, the Global African Diaspora Summit was held in Sandton, South Africa, on African Day of 25 May 2012. The meeting was preceded by the third African Diaspora Ministerial Conference held in Pretoria, on 23 May 2012 to finalize the Outcome Documents for the consideration and/or approval of the Heads of State and Government or their designated representatives.

### **Purpose and Objective**

The Global Diaspora Summit was the culmination of a worldwide dialogue process among Africans on the continent and the Diaspora on the content, programs and plan of action for the AU's Diaspora program. The outcome of the various consultations were consolidated by three African Diaspora Ministerial Conferences between 2007 and 2012 into a Draft Declaration to be considered by the Summit. The Declaration would establish the Magna Carta of the Diaspora Process, a fundamental law that would guide the Diaspora Process and put in place effective plans and mechanisms for facilitating its successful implementation as well as benchmarks and indicators for monitoring and evaluating its progress.

### **Attendance**

The Summit was composed as an extended version of the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government comprising leaders of Independent African States and leaders of

countries with significant African population in various parts of the world including the Caribbean community, Europe, South, Latin and North America. The Summit was attended by representatives of sixty-eight (68) countries including fifty-one (51) Members States of the African Union and 17 non-AU Member States representing the African Diaspora. Among the Member States of the Africa Union, the countries present included Algeria, Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Cong, Djibouti, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, [The](#) Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia , Libya, Malawi, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sahrawi [Arab Democratic](#) Republic, Sao Tome & Principe, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe in Africa. Non-Member States of the Union included Argentina, The Bahamas, Barbados, Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, St. Kitts & Nevis, St. Lucia, Suriname, Trinidad & Tobago, U.S.A., Uruguay and Venezuela outside Africa.

It was also attended by former Heads of State including President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria, President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa, Former Presidents [Sam](#) Nujoma of Namibia and [John](#) Kufuor of Ghana.

### **Opening Session**

The opening session began with welcome remarks by the Host, President Jacob Zuma of South Africa. This was followed by the remarks of Dr. Jean Ping, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Honorable David Dinkins, former Mayor of New York, as an Eminent person from the African Diaspora, the Right Honorable Samuel Hinds, Prime Minister of the Republic of Guyana on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), H.E. Mr. Esteban Lasto, the Vice-President of the Republic of Cuba and President [Obiang](#) Niguema [Mbasasogo](#), President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea. It then concluded with the remarks of President Boni Yayi of the Republic of Benin and Chairperson of the African Union.

President Jacob Zuma formally welcomed the distinguished participants and expressed the gratitude of his government and the people of South Africa to African leaders or their representatives who had taken time from their intensely busy schedules to attend the event. He saw the event as historic and linked it to the impetus that had led African

leaders to create the Organization of African Unity and the African Union as well as the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC), the oldest liberation movement in the continent, whose centenary celebrations coincided with the Summit. President Zuma associated the vision of the AU's Diaspora Initiative with the enduring commitment of the first generation of African leaders and their devotion to ensuring that Africa takes its rightful place, with respect and dignity in global affairs. The emphasis of the incumbent African leaders and their populations on the rebuilding of the global African family should thus be seen as a consolidation of this tradition.

In turn, the Chairperson of the AU Commission, Dr. Jean Ping, thanked the Host, President Jacob Zuma and the government and people of South Africa for the warm hospitality surrounding the Summit and acknowledged the process of active partnership with the Government of South Africa in the process of preparing the Summit. He also traced the historical Global Diaspora Summit to the vision and agenda of the first generation of African leaders. He then provided a detailed overview of the events and processes that culminated in the Draft Declaration presented to the Summit. He observed that the Declaration offers a basic law and a working document that will support the objectives of rebuilding the Global African family and concluded on the note that Member States and all other stakeholders must recommit themselves to the implementation agenda by providing necessary resources for the program and sustaining focus and interest in its consolidation and advancement. He pledged the dedication of the African Union Commission to this process and appealed to African leaders to ensure that the Declaration will be a living document that generations after us will come to applaud, respect and continue to implement.

Subsequently, the addresses of the Foreign Minister of Jamaica, the Eminent Representative of the Diaspora, the Prime Minister of Guyana and the Vice-President of Cuba reaffirmed the commitment and support of the Global African population in different parts of the world for the AU's Diaspora Initiative. They acknowledged the common historical origins of African people in the various territories and their interrelationships that were strengthened by the platform of solidarity and common purpose in the period of the struggle against colonialism and its aftermath. This historical experience was linked with common challenges confronting developing states embracing African populations and the need to reinforce our common identity as a platform for collaboration to enable us to overcome them. Each speaker recalled the triumphant experience associated with the colonial struggle for independence in their

various countries and pledged to work with the AU through the Diaspora Initiative to recreate that experience in the face of contemporary challenges.

In concluding this session, President Boni Yayi of Benin and Chairperson of the African Union noted that the processes of global consultative dialogue between the African continent and its Diaspora provided the foundation for this initiative. That process of “family conversations” developed and consolidated the unique and common perspectives of African into a Draft Declaration that has been put forward before the Assembly of African leaders on the continent and the Diaspora to evolve a fundamental law that will improve and consolidate the bonds of our common ancestry and guide the evolution and pattern of our relationship as a basis for strengthening the collective impact of African people in the global environment. He observed that the process of preparation for this event has been long and painstaking in its method and deliberations as a way of ensuring that this solidarity forum would be sustained and enduring. The Global Diaspora Summit should have been held in 2008 and was postponed but the subsequent period between then and now had been put to good use in order to refine and consolidate the framework document and fundamental law that is now before the leaders of the Global African population for consideration and/or approval. He expressed appreciation for the work of the AU Commission and its partnership with the Government of South Africa in preparing for the Summit and urged African leaders and their representatives to work effectively in the framework of the Summit to achieve laudable results. Finally, he requested African leaders to rededicate themselves towards the effective implementation of the Summit outcomes and provide necessary resources and political support that would enable the desired results.

**Presentation of by Hon. Ms. Maite Nkoana-Mabashane, Minister of International Relations and Cooperation of the Republic of South Africa**

The Draft Declaration was formally presented to the Summit by Ms. Maite Nkoana-Mabashane, Minister of International Relations and Cooperation of the Republic of South Africa. She began on the note that the Summit was indeed an event of historical significance in relations between Africa and its Diaspora and also a significant development in the development of Africa’s integration agenda. Moreover, the date chosen for the event, 25 May 2012, which marked the victory of African peoples over colonialism and its quest for Pan-African unity was a significant aspect of this symbolism.

Furthermore, she recalled the history of the AU's Diaspora Program, the related directives of various AU Council and Assembly meetings and the active collaboration between the AU Commission and the Government of South Africa to ensure their implementation. She commended the efforts of the AU Commission in this regard and observed that the Draft Declaration that s being put before the Summit was the product of extensive and rigorous consultations with all sectors of African people both on the continent and in the Diaspora. The outcome of the multi-stakeholder consultations was subsequently refined by two Technical Experts meeting in 2007 and 2011 and reviewed by three African Ministerial Conferences of September 2007 (Sandton), September 2011 (New York), May 2012 (Pretoria).

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She noted that the last Ministerial Conference was held only recently on 23 May 2012, just two days before this Summit, for a final look at the document in order to make it ready for examination by Heads of States and Government in the course of the Summit. This preceding Ministerial Conference received submissions from multiple stakeholders including civil society organizations in Africa, the world\_wide Global Diaspora communities and the Pan-African Parliament, the Science and Technology Consultative Forum amongst others, as inputs for its own final consideration. Consequently, it embarked on an intense and comprehensive re-appraisal of all aspects of the Declaration including the Program of Action, Implementation Mechanisms and Legacy Projects and made detailed amendments as considered necessary. She then recommended the final Ministerial Outcome Document to the Summit for its consideration.

### **Summit Consideration and Approval**

Following the presentation, a rich debate on the content of the Draft Declaration ensued. The discussion appreciated the efforts that had consolidated the Draft documents and commended the Ministerial Conferences, in particular for the thoroughness of their efforts. Changes and amendments were agreed in some areas. Subsequently, the Summit adopted the Declaration with the amendments.

### **Outcome Document**

The final outcome document is a Declaration with four basic components: first is a political declaration embodying intentions and statements of purpose, and second is a program of action identifying specific programs that would give practical effect to these intentions. Third is an implementation and follow-up mechanism required to implement the Program of Action, and fourth is flagship or Legacy Projects that would give urgent and practical immediate meaning to the framework of action. These priority projects are in five main areas namely: the production of a skills database of African professionals in the Diaspora, the Establishment of African Volunteer Corps, the Program for innovation and entrepreneurs through the Development Marketplace for the Diaspora, the African Diaspora Investment Fund and the African Remittance Institute.

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### **Closing Ceremony**

The Summit ended with closing remarks by the Host, President Jacob Zuma of South Africa and the Chairperson of the Union, President Boni Yayi of Benin.

President Zuma underlined the productive and meaningful nature of the Summit. He commended the “sterling work” of the AU Commission in preparing the Summit as the foundation of this process. He applauded the outcome as historic and significant and as a critical pillar of Africa’s desire for regeneration on the road to renaissance.

Finally, President Boni Yayi of Benin and Chairperson of the African Union concluded that the Global Diaspora Summit was the first of its kind in bringing together all African people and leaders from various parts of the world to establish a fundamental law that would guide and instruct the evolution of our processes of interaction globally in support of Africa’s development and integration agenda. He saw the Summit Declaration as validating this intention and highlighted the component elements that were elaborated to assist its implementation. He directed attention to five elements that must guide the implementation process. First is that the development of organizational processes must continue apace with emphasis on persisting consultations between Africans on the continent and the Diaspora. The building of regional Diaspora networks as contained in the Roadmap adopted by the AU Summit must be highlighted as a cardinal feature of this process as it is essential that the AU establishes effective interlocutors that would partner with it in this process. Second is that there is a need to develop a monitoring and evaluation mechanism for assessing progress and accelerating the pace of achievement in the various areas. Third is ensuring adequate resource support for the

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program. In order to succeed in implementing this Declaration, therefore, Member States must continue to accord it a pride of place in program implementation and budget support as was the case in the period leading up to the Summit and even much more to achieve results. Fourth, attention must be paid to the need to establish an appropriate political criteria that will facilitate increased and effective Diaspora presence and/or participation in the affairs of the Union. He supported the recommendation of the 2<sup>nd</sup> African Ministerial Conference endorsed by the previous AU Assembly that participation criteria and modalities should be governed by a global strategy through the African Union Commission rather than piecemeal efforts of individual AU organs and structures in a manner that would definitely create confusion. Such a global strategy would be based on principles endorsed by Council and Assembly of the Union. Fifth and finally, the Chairperson of the Union advised that this Global Diaspora Summit should not be a one off event. It should be part of a process through which the African family meets at its highest level once every three or four years to appraise the progress of the development of the program and make adjustments, as appropriate, to ensure that the program, remains on course.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The Global Diaspora Summit concluded with the adoption of the historic Declaration, including its Programme of Action, Implementation mechanism and flagship or legacy projects. The challenge in the aftermath as underlined by the Host President, Chairperson of the Commission and Chairperson of the Union is to ensure its adequate implementation.

In taking account of the proceedings of the Summits and efforts that were deployed to facilitate its success, we urge the Assembly to also consider the following recommendations of the Global Diaspora Summit that will assist the implementation process.

- a) The Roadmap should continue to be recognized as a vehicle for the implementation process. The previous Roadmaps adopted by the Assembly paved the way for the successful organization of the Summit. The Roadmaps also stipulated measures that should be taken at the implementation stage. The Commission could therefore be directed to review and consolidate the previous



roadmaps and align them with the outcome documents as a framework for execution of the decisions of the Global Summit.

- b) The requirement for effective implementation of these decisions emphasize that the Diaspora Program must be adequately resourced. Accordingly, the strategic plans and programs of the Commission and the Union must identify it as a priority project agreed in a global compact with the African Community in the continent and the Diaspora. The commitment should be reflected in resource and budgetary allocations of the Commission and negotiations with partners.
- c) The issue of resource support should link up with implementation of the five legacy projects. In accordance with the decisions of the Global Diaspora Summit, the legacy projects must be recognized as priority projects that would require effective political and material support. In accordance with the Roadmap, the Commission must organize a Seminar to appraise their feasibility studies and then submit appropriate project designs for appraisal by a workshop of Diaspora Ministries of all Member States of the Union in the fourth quarter of the 2012. The outcome and recommendations of the Workshop should then be presented to the next Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly in January 2013 for consideration and/or approval.
- d) Fourthly, the issue of setting criteria for increasing presence and participation in AU program and policies must be given urgent attention. However, the establishment of criteria for participation must be done in a systematic manner through the African Union Commission rather than in a piecemeal and uncoordinated fashion through various structures and organs of the African Union. The Assembly has already approved a resolution on having the Diaspora as observers” at Union Summits but the criteria for participation, requisite qualifications and modalities must be worked upon. Similarly, representational issues and formulas for participation in the work of organs must be determined and submitted by the Commission as recommendations for consideration and approval by the AU Assembly.
- e) Fifth, the Commission and its responsible department in CIDO should be strengthened in human resource and material terms to support this objective.

- f) The Commission should continue its process of active cooperation with South Africa and other regional champions that are willing and able to contribute towards the implementation of the outcomes of the Diaspora Summit.
  
- g) Finally, as the Chairperson of the Union observed in his closing address the development of organizational process must remain a cardinal pillar of efforts to implement Summit outcomes. Inter-regional consultations between African and its Diaspora should continue and be strengthened. The emphasis on the building of regional Diaspora networks must also continue apace as an important component of the process in order to ensure that the AU establishes effective interlocutors that would partner with it to achieve the desired objectives. This must be accompanied by the development of appropriate monitoring and evaluation mechanism to assess progress of efforts and accelerate the pace of achievement in various areas.