



**Mission Report on African Diaspora Volunteer Corps Project Technical Workshop, Ottawa, Canada, 11-13 May 2015**

A CIDO delegation travelled to Ottawa, Canada, from May 9-14, 2015 to attend a technical workshop in partnership with Cuso International and the World Bank in order to consolidate the project proposal on the AU Diaspora Volunteer Corps (AUDVC) project; for which Cuso International is expected to be the implementing agency.

**Background:**

The inaugural Global African Diaspora Summit was held in Johannesburg, South Africa on 25 May 2012. The summit saw the adoption of a Declaration in which the Heads of State and Government of the African Union “agree(d) to adopt five legacy projects as a way of giving practical meaning to the Diaspora programme and in order to facilitate the post-Summit implementation programme”. The legacy projects approved by the Summit included, among others, the establishment of the African Union Diaspora Volunteers Corps (AUDVC).

Following the Declaration, CIDO convened the Workshop on the Implementation Plan of Legacy Projects and the Operationalization of the Outcomes of the Global African Diaspora Summit, held in Washington D.C., 25-28 March 2013, with the specific objective of advancing the design and preparation for operationalizing the five legacy projects, including the African Union Diaspora Volunteer Corps; the implementing agency of which is Cuso International, based in Ottawa, Canada.

The Project Technical Workshop in Ottawa, in partnership with the World Bank and Cuso International, was designed to finalize the operationalization of the AUDVC project.

**I. Composition**

The CIDO team was led by Dr. Jinmi Adisa, Director; and included Mr. Ahmed El-Madani El-Basheer, Head of Diaspora Division; and Mr. Kyeretwie Akwasi Osei, Desk Officer for Americas and Caribbean.

**II. Purpose and Objective**

The related objectives of the mission were as follows:

- a. Finalize the technical design and parameters of the AUDVC project with regard to operational modalities, scale of implementation, and risk mitigation strategies.
- b. Finalize the terms of the supplementary project proposal to DFATD for a five-year, \$CAD 5 million diaspora volunteer project that will engage up to 175 short- and long-term diaspora volunteer experts from the African Diaspora in Canada to strengthen the capacity of public and private sector partners in five AU member states: Cameroon, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Kenya and Tanzania.
- c. Hold partnership development meetings with the Partnerships Branch of the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (DFATD) of the Government of Canada.
- d. Hold high-level partnership meetings with African Ambassadors and High Commissioners to Canada through the auspices of the African Diplomatic Corps in Ottawa, Canada.
- e. Participate in diaspora engagement meetings with major African diaspora professional organizations in Canada.

### **III. Structure of the Technical Workshop and Associated Meetings**

The overall mission had three separate components.

Firstly, there was a full-day technical workshop aimed at finalizing the final project description and operational plan for the AUDVC project. This workshop brought together the main project stakeholders: CIDO as the project sponsor and client; and Cuso International as the project implementing organization.

Secondly, there were separate meetings with the Government of Canada as well as key elements of the African diplomatic community in Canada; the purpose of which was to share information about the project and to seek implementation support – in a holistic and coordinated manner – from the Canadian government and the ensemble of the African diplomatic missions in Canada.

The final component involved meeting the African Diaspora community in Canada in order to begin the process of sensitization and collaboration required for the eventual mobilization of qualified diaspora experts to service the AUDVC project.

### **IV. Outcomes**

**Project Technical Workshop with Cuso International:** The signal activity of the mission was the technical workshop for African Union Diaspora Volunteer Corps project (AUDVC). The AUDVC is a pioneer diaspora-for-development project developed in

partnership with Cuso International, a global leader in volunteer-based development programming. During the all-day workshop held on May 11, 2015 at Cuso International headquarters in Ottawa, Canada, CIDO and Cuso International successfully developed the final technical framework for a 4-year, \$6million dollar project that would see technical experts recruited from the African Diaspora community in Canada to be placed with the AU Commission as well as within local partner organizations in five (5) AU member states to build capacity in organizational development and economic development. One (1) country was selected from each of Africa’s five (5) geopolitical regions. The list of countries selected is as follows.

AFRICAN UNION DIASPORA VOLUNTEER CORPS PROJECT		
Project Country	Geopolitical Region	Linguistic Zone
Egypt	North	Arabic
Nigeria	West	English
Democratic Republic of Congo	Central	French
Ethiopia	East	English
Mozambique	South	Portuguese

In addition to project funding already secured from the World Bank, CIDO and Cuso International also finalized a project proposal - aimed at securing supplementary project funding - to the Government of Canada through the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (DFATD).

**Meeting with Government of Canada:** As part of the proposal process the CIDO team held very positive meetings with Government of Canada officials led by Ms. Patricia Malikail, Director-General of the Pan-Africa Bureau of DFATD. Ms. Malikail indicated the appreciation of the Pan-Africa Bureau of the programs and activities of CIDO; and referred the team to the ongoing support of the Canadian government to the African Union through the NEPAD mechanism. CIDO and the DFATD team agreed to continue to exchange information with regard to funding for the African Diaspora Volunteering Project.

**Meeting with Dean of African Diplomatic Corps:** In addition, the CIDO team held a high level meeting with His Excellency Constant Horace, Ambassador of Mauritius to Canada and Dean of the African Diplomatic Corps in Canada. The African Diplomatic Corps is a group of 41 African Ambassadors and High Commissioners to Canada which

meets regularly to discuss matters of continental interest. The purpose of the meeting was to update the Dean on the progress of the African Diaspora Volunteer Corps project, as well as CIDO's ongoing mobilization and engagement of the African Diaspora in Canada and North America in general; and also to develop a framework for cooperation between CIDO and the diplomatic community in Canada. In his remarks to the CIDO team, the Dean welcomed the initiative of CIDO in establishing strategic diaspora partnerships in Canada; and stressed the readiness of the African Diplomatic Corps to engage with CIDO on an ongoing basis in order to ensure mutual support in matters of diaspora engagement. The Dean invited the CIDO team to make a formal presentation to the entire group of African Ambassadors as diaspora matters are currently of primary importance to all African embassies and high commissions in Canada. It was agreed that this presentation would take place within a period of a few months as part of a general meeting of the African Diplomatic Corps.

**Meeting with Ambassador of Ethiopia to Canada:** Furthermore, the CIDO team held a special meeting with the Ambassador of Ethiopia to Canada, Her Excellency Birtukan Ayano Dadi at the Ethiopian Embassy in Ottawa. The Ambassador recognized the importance of integrating the skills and resources of the African Diaspora into developmental plans and initiatives on the continent and lauded the timeliness of CIDO's efforts to channel the talent and treasure of the African Diaspora in Canada into the African Union's developmental agenda. Ambassador Dadi notified the CIDO team of the upcoming inaugural National Diaspora Festival in Ethiopia to be held in August 2015; and invited the participation and involvement of CIDO in the event. In addition, Ambassador Dadi called for the collaboration of CIDO and the Ethiopian Embassy in Canada in developing and conducting a demographic study aimed at mapping the Ethiopian diaspora community in Canada. It was agreed that the two parties, with the support of Cuso International, would conduct further discussions to determine the next steps with regard to this project.

**Meeting with Representatives of African Diaspora Community in Canada:** Finally, the CIDO team had preliminary partnership meetings with the African Union 6<sup>th</sup> Region Canada (AU6RC); a leading African diaspora organization based in Canada. The purpose of the meeting was to explore opportunities for mutual cooperation around the establishment of an African diaspora network in Canada. Mr. Macaulay O. Kalu, Chairman and CEO of AU6RC expressed his organization's appreciation for CIDO's efforts to engage the African Diaspora community in Canada, and emphasized the great potential of such cooperation given the large and organized nature of the African diaspora population in Canada. He also briefed the CIDO team of AU6RC's programs and networks in Canada and assured CIDO of his organization's readiness to support CIDO's diaspora engagement activities in Canada. In his comments, Dr. Adisa recalled the African Union's commitment to becoming a people-centred union driven by its own citizens and diaspora in the achievement of peace, prosperity and integration on the

continent. Dr. Adisa reiterated the importance of CIDO's efforts to create frameworks of engagement between the African Union and African diaspora communities around the world. The two parties agreed to maintain partnership discussions through regular electronic communications.

## **VII. Conclusion and Recommendations**

The mission resulted in very productive outcomes that established a solid platform for the ongoing engagement of strategic partners in Canada; at the national, diplomatic and diaspora civil society levels. The meetings with a cross-section of stakeholders in Canada afforded a great degree of visibility to CIDO and to the African Union's Diaspora Program, thereby helping to establish the AU in the minds of Canadian partners as an intergovernmental organization with a high level of commitment to diaspora engagement as well as institutional expertise in this area. In order to build on the gains of the mission and to advance work on the AUDVC project as well as the establishment of an African Diaspora network in Canada, the following recommendations are offered for review and consideration at the level of the AU Commission:

1. **Collaboration with African Diplomatic Corps:** the partnership of CIDO with the ensemble of African ambassadors and high commissioners offers significant opportunities for sensitization, coordination and synergetic action across the entire African diplomatic network in Canada with regard to the implementation of high-priority activities of the AU Diaspora Program. Almost all of the African missions maintain active diaspora desks, offering further opportunities for unprecedented synergies and complementary action with the AU's own diaspora agenda. Therefore, it is recommended that high-level AUC officials travelling to Canada include the diaspora on their agenda and explore the possibility of a meeting with the Dean of the African Diplomatic Corps in order to build on the current partnership, and to lend the weight of the Commission to the diaspora program. In addition, a CIDO presentation before the full body of 41 ambassadors and high commissioners, as per the express recommendation of the Dean, is a crucial next step that merits favourable consideration at the level of the Commission.
2. **Enhanced International Visibility:** Likewise, the Government of Canada, while expressing its preliminary interest in supporting the ADVC project, highlighted the deep well of untapped support that still remains to be harnessed from the international donor community for the AU's Diaspora Program. This support, in the view of the Government of Canada, is ready to be released upon receipt of relevant cues from the very top level of the AU that diaspora engagement is a top institutional priority. It is recommended, therefore, that AUC leadership – preferably at the level of the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson – continue to advocate and highlight the Union's positioning on diaspora engagement during high-level international forums such as the G7 and the G20 with a view to bringing wider international visibility and support to the Diaspora Program.

3. **Creation of an African Diaspora Network:** Preliminary discussions with the AU6RC and other dynamic African diaspora groups in Canada need to be followed with additional actions leading to the creation of an active and vibrant diaspora network. Institutional support is therefore encouraged for additional partnership consultations with eligible diaspora representative groups in Canada leading to creation of an AU-affiliated diaspora network in Canada and in North America generally.

## VII. Next Steps

CIDO, with support from the World Bank, will undertake the following activities to advance program objectives and build on this mission:

1. **Finalization of DFATD project proposal process:** CIDO will continue to work with counterparts at Cuso International to finalize the joint proposal submission to the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (DFATD). This process will involve the integration of feedback from DFATD officials received in the course of our meeting with them in Ottawa.
2. **Establishment of African Diaspora Network:** CIDO will work to convert our initial collaborations with African Diaspora associations in Canada into an official AU-affiliated diaspora network in Canada. This will involve the continuation of partnership discussions with AU6RC and other Diaspora groups as well as additional scoping for potential partners in the African diaspora community in Canada. To this end, a dedicated diaspora consultation and partnership development meeting is planned in Canada in August 2015; the focus of which will be to meet, engage, vet and select a qualified diaspora group or network of groups to serve as the basis for a North American diaspora network.
3. **Project coordination meeting with African Diplomatic Corps in Canada:** Following the invitation of the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps for CIDO to deliver a presentation to the whole membership of the African Diplomatic Corps; CIDO will schedule said meeting as part of the next mission to Canada referred to in (2.) above. This meeting will allow the entire group of African ambassadors and high commissioners to Canada to be briefed about the AUDVC project and other ongoing CIDO initiatives. Most importantly, the meeting will allow the establishment of a roadmap for coordination and partnership between CIDO technical staff and their counterparts at African diplomatic missions in Canada with respect to implementation of the AUDVC project and the creation of an African diaspora network in Canada.