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The Second Diaspora Focal Points Workshop kicked-off in Khartoum



29 November 2018, Khartoum, Sudan– The Directorate of the Citizens and Diaspora organizations (CIDO) of the African Union Commission held the 2nd Diaspora Focal Points Workshop in Khartoum, Sudan from 27-29 November 2018. The forum brought together participants from African Union Member States, Diaspora organizations from Australia, Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados, Austria, UK and China, REC's, and AU regional offices. Following the first forum, which took place in Cairo, Egypt in 2016, this forum delved further into enhancing the role of diaspora in economic political and social spheres in their countries of origin.

Following the Global Diaspora Declaration of 2012, the African Union was committed to create platforms that would connect the Diaspora, Member States, Regional Economic Communities, Civil Societies and the Commission together. The platform of the diaspora focal point workshop will encourage collaboration between all stakeholders and will have a positive impact on harnessing the African Diasporas for the continent. CIDO Director, Ahmed El-Basheer, alluded to the declaration and the first edition of the workshop by promising to 'lend a hand in achieving what was started two years ago.' He acknowledged that different nations are at different development stages and as a result have different levels of diaspora engagement. However, 'it is the AU's duty to bring together 'different national views on diaspora' concluded Ahmed El-Basheer.

The workshop had three main objectives:

- 1) To jointly create a draft legal framework on the participation of the African Diaspora in the AU; this participation was divided into three main areas Political, Social and Economic.
- 2) To develop an African Diaspora scorecard to help AU and member states enhance the capacity of member states and policy makers to assess the level

of progress in diaspora engagement; support member States to create and implement diaspora strategies consistent with the Diaspora declaration and Agenda 2063; and provide member States with an easy and quick instrument to assess their progress in effectively harnessing the power of the diaspora for development.

- 3) To elect a committee of 6+2 consisting of the six regions- the 6th region being the diaspora, while the plus two are elected from the diaspora networks. The main function of the steering committee is coordinating and harmonizing activities regarding diaspora engagement between the AU, members of the diaspora, and AU member states.

The workshop also provided a platform for experience sharing and best practices from Member States.

The Secretary General of the Secretariat of Sudanese Working Abroad (SSWA), Dr. Hassan Babiker Ahmed, shared the 'country's experience were they established a national fund for voluntary returns as well as a transfer of knowledge platform among other methods of Diaspora engagement. Algeria and Senegal remain the two countries in Africa which allocates positions within the government for the Diasporas. In Senegal, Mr. Mamadou Ndiyae, technical counselor for the directorate general for Senegalese abroad expounded that not only are the Diaspora involved in decision-making in all spheres, but they too get specific allocations such as 30% of social housing, which provides an opportunity to invest in housing and a possible chance for a subsequent return to Senegal to with their skills

The workshop concluded with the election of the committee of 6+2. The elected from the 6 regions include, Algeria for North, Mozambique for South, Central African Republic for Central, Kenya for East, Liberia for West, and Africa-Europe Diaspora development Platform for the 6th region. In addition to two networks namely the African Unity 6th region (AU6R) for Americas, and Pan African Australasia Diaspora Network (PAADN) for Asia Pacific.

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