



African Diaspora Council of Switzerland

In collaboration with

African Foundation for Migration and Development Switzerland

ADEPT

International Youth in Distress

Ajere African Heritage,

Africa Link The voice of Africa Diaspora

International decade for people of African Descent

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY IN SWITZERLAND 2021

**“Celebrating African women heroes in
development process ”**

RAPPORTEUR'S REPORT

BY

Ms OUMMI DIAWARA

SATURDAY, MARCH 6, 2021

VIRTUAL CONFERENCE

4 pm-7.30pm

MODERATOR, SPECIAL GUEST, SPEAKERS ET PANELISTS

Moderator:

- **Mr. Dozie Celeste UGOCHUKWU**, AFMD, African Diaspora Council of Switzerland

Opening of the session:

- **Ms. Pat SANTSCHI**, African Diaspora Council of Switzerland, AFMD, ‘Ajere African Heritage’

Special Guest:

- **H.E. Amb. Dr. Arikana Chihombori QUAO**, Founder & director, ‘African Diaspora Development Institute, ADDI’, USA. The Ambassador could not make her presentation due to technical problem with Zoom.

Speakers:

- **Ms. Martine DOCOURT**, Co-Chair, Socialist Party, PS Women
- **Dr. Carine NSOUDOU**, Director, ‘Africa-Europe Diaspora Development Platform, ADEPT’
- **Princess Tekhaya N. DLAMINI**, Kingdom of Eswatini (Swaziland), Youth Leader for UN Women under the traditional and cultural leaders on ending child marriage

The panelists:

- **Ms. Awa N’DIAYE**, President, Espace Afrique Internationale, Geneva, Switzerland, Conseiller, ADEPT
- **Ms. Josiane JEMMELY**, MP, Neuchâtel Cantonal Parliament, President, African Community, Montagnes Neuchâteloises , Neuchâtel, Switzerland
- **Ms. Amina KHALID**, Head of Sustainable Communities, Programme-Initiatives of Change, London, UK
- **Ms. Binouri Brice MONNOU**, Senior Expert Consultant on Migration and Development, President, FECODEV, Paris, France , Member ADEPT

Closing the session by:

- **Dr. Christine BOTCHI MOREL**, African Diaspora Council of Switzerland, Fribourg; Founder & president of International Youth in Distress
- **Ms. Fatoumata DEMBELE**, Artist

I. OPENING SESSION

By Ms. Pat SANTSCHI, African Diaspora Council of Switzerland, AFMD, 'Ajere African Heritage'

This year's theme by the United Nation for International Women's Day is **"Women in Leadership Achieving an equal future in COVID-19 World"**

1. The African Diaspora Council of Switzerland (ADCS) is honored and proud to organize this Virtual Conference to commemorate African women Heroes past and present, their struggles, and their achievements world -wide.
2. The present Conference is running into two (2) languages: English and French. Any participant can choose the language of his/her choice. Chat functions can be used to make this conference interactive.
3. Commiseration with the families of the powerful women who have lost their lives in this covid19 pandemic trying to save lives. The ADCS thanks and applauds those in the forefront battling and helping to save more lives.
4. Every woman should have the freedom to make her own choices and claim her rights.
5. The emancipation of the movement of Women's Rights and Voice gives the power to women to liberate themselves from being marginalized by the society.
6. Men continue to dominate certain sectors and the most powerful positions in society, but women today choose to change the rhetoric and be important drivers of women's political power.
7. The role of the African woman is no longer limited to the traditional kitchen responsibilities and procreation. International Women's Day gives the opportunity to reflect on the task ahead in the quest to achieve gender equality.
8. Women have accomplished the mainstream market and focus in the eradication of poverty in the world.
9. African Diaspora Women are part of the process in capacity development. They help in protecting the rights of women and children. In order for their voice to be heard they have taken positions in politics and partnerships in various well established institutions.
10. The African woman transcends the myths of the society, she is a powerhouse built with rocks. She is the strength of the family, a wife, a mother, an influencer and businesswoman.

11. We commend African women in leadership who have used their positions to facilitate projects, gender policies in the role of women development globally.
12. Despite our achievements there are still challenges we are facing in our advancement.
13. United Nations has estimated that more than one in three women in the world have been victims of gender-based violence, and this ratio is even higher in some parts of Africa or developing countries.
14. To appeal to African women in authority and to keep fighting for the rights of children against early child marriage, child labor, sex trafficking and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).
15. Congratulations presented, on behalf of the ADCS:
 - to **Her Excellency Kamala Harris**, the new Vice-President of the United States of America, and
 - to **Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala**, the new Director General of the World Trade Organization.

By Dr Carine NSOUDOU, Director of 'Africa-Europe Diaspora Development Platform, ADEPT'

Webinar "Celebrating African Women Heroes in Development Process"

16. The crisis induced by the COVID-19 pandemic is unprecedented.
17. All the countries have not been impacted the same way by COVID-19. When it comes to Europe, people of migrant backgrounds have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic and its aftereffects.
18. As regards Africa, although African countries have been spared by its health impact as compared to the USA, Latin American or European countries, this continent has been hard-hit economically.
19. COVID-19 has hindered women's access to health services, notably reproductive health services. They have been suffering from increased domestic violence and violence in public areas.
20. African women have been severely hit from an economic point of view. Measures need to be taken by African national authorities in order to address these issues that are bound to deepen already striking inequalities between men and women.
21. African women and women of African descent's agency and resilience in the face of COVID-19 is also to be put to the fore.

22. In ADEPT, the Africa-Europe Diaspora Development Platform, showcasing initiatives are carried out by women from the African diaspora in Europe and in Africa in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
23. Women have been at the forefront of the fight against the disease. From food distribution in Belgium to mask production in Nigeria, from fundraising to finance personal protective equipment for Madagascar's medical staff to the creation of a helpdesk intended for migrants of Eritrean origin in the Netherlands, the actions conducted by African diaspora women to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 have been manifold and deserve to be celebrated. Often seen as needing to be empowered, they have once again demonstrated their ability to empower others.
24. African diaspora women are slowly but surely entering the political space in Europe, walking in the footsteps of outstanding women such as **Ms. Tilo Frey** and bringing often different perspectives and experiences through their participation in political life.
25. Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala as Director-General of the World Trade Organisation. Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala epitomizes women's strength, tenacity, and commitment. All that will be highlighted during this remarkable event.

A message of support from Princess Tekhaya N. DLAMINI, Kingdom of Eswatini (Swaziland), Youth Leader for UN Women under Traditional and Cultural Leaders on Ending Child Marriage

26. A moment of silence set for all the wonderful women who died during the pandemic.
27. Women's Day is the day to recognize and lift up women across the world.
28. The women in leadership positions, teachers, role models, game changers, caregivers and forward thinkers – they are an inspiration to all. Each and every lady is a unique combination of strength, intelligence, love and beauty.
29. On Women's Day, we celebrate the all-around, magnificent beauty that makes a woman; her strength, determination, caring ways, and selfless spirit.
30. Men are invited to celebrate Women's Day by showing women love and sending the gift of flowers, with an uplifting and appreciative note.
31. To never forget women were created from the rib of man to be beside him, not from his head to top him, nor from his feet to be trampled by him, but from under his arm to be protected by him, near to his heart to be loved by him." **Genesis 2:22**

II. PRESENTATION

By Ms. Martine DOCOURT, Co-Chair, Socialist Party, PS Women

Presentation of Swiss Women's Suffrage, 50 years later¹

32. The year 2021 marks the 50th anniversary of this historic day of suffrage for women in Switzerland. It has been difficult for women in Switzerland to acquire this right.
33. Until 1971, women living in Switzerland had neither the right to vote nor the right to be elected. They could not access political office and that also meant that they could not be appointed judges.
34. They have had a voice with the help of the left movement and the socialist party which has given a certain voice to Swiss women.
35. Women of the time used the channels available to them to make themselves heard. For example, labor magazines like *die Vorkämpferin* first appeared on May 1, 1906.
36. Since 1890, the first associations of women workers were founded. 20 years later, they joined the Women Wing of Socialist Party (PSF). From that moment on, socialist women have always been the strongest voice at the political level in the struggle for women's rights.
37. In 1912, the PSF congress decided to join forces for the right to vote and to stand for office in Switzerland. A very emblematic figure of this fight is **Rosa Bloch-Bollag**², a member of the Socialist Party, she succeeded in convincing the Committee of the General Strike which was called the '*Committee of Olten*' to include the right to vote as being the 2nd demand of the general strike.
38. The right to vote appeared fairly quickly in other European countries and Switzerland was lagging.
39. In 1918, the National Councilor, Hermann Greulichet, the founder of the Socialist Party, as well as Emil Göttisheim of the PLR, proposed a motion in the Federal Parliament that called for political equality for women. But the motion was not accepted.
40. On the Bourgeois side, there was a movement that was being set up with the Swiss association for women's suffrage.
In 1929, this association presented a petition, for the introduction of the vote for women, provided with 250,000 signatures on a population of 4 million inhabitants. Despite this petition, there was no follow-up on women's suffrage.

¹ <https://droitdevotepourtoutesettous.ch>

² She was engaged in the committee of the general strike which affected the whole country in 1918.

41. In 1944, the president of the PSF, Hans Oprecht, tried to introduce a new way of a postulate, which also failed at the level of the Federal Parliament.
42. In support of opponents at the level of the Federal Parliament, a national women's suffrage was established. A vote was taken in February 1959, it was a vote at the federal level where the population could say whether or not women could have the right to vote in Switzerland.
43. On February 1, 1959, the Swiss men were able to vote for the introduction of the right to vote and the eligibility of women but they rejected the bill by a majority of 2/3 of the votes with a participation rate less than 67%³.
44. At the national level, there was no desire to introduce female suffrage but there were cantons that decided to introduce this suffrage at the cantonal level (the canton of Neuchâtel, the First political voice).
45. As early as the 1960s, women entered certain parliaments. Like **Rosa Bloch-Bollag**, the first female cantonal parliamentarian in Switzerland. Other cantons had also initiated discussions on this theme.
46. Nine years later, the women organized the march to Berne which was a march where the women were able to demonstrate with their banners and their demands to have this long-awaited demand.
47. The Federal Assembly was the one debating the procedures of decisions taken at the European Convention on Human Rights⁴.
48. In 1970, the Federal Council had to propose a formulation so that the right to vote of women could be voted on. The council thus presented a project in the same year relating to the right to vote for women.
49. Opponents refrained from speaking within the framework of the electoral campaign, and no party wanted to lose because of electoral games, which made this campaign a rather special campaign.
50. On February 7, 1971, the voting population accepted the women right to vote and to stand as a candidate at the federal level by 65.7% of YES and 34.3% of NO; participation was lower than 57.7% (a percentage of the population did not want to take part in this discussion).
51. In October, just after this vote, the first federal elections were held. 10 women were elected to the National Council (the Swiss National Parliament), 1 woman was elected to the Council of State.

³ There was a great mobilization that had been made on the part of the men of the country to just say no to this access to the right to vote for women.

⁴ It was a big discussion at the level of the federal parliament and it was for some women the opportunity to be able to discuss and finally introduced the women right to vote and to be voted for.

52. Women's suffrage was thus introduced at the federal level. Most of the cantons followed by introducing the right to vote for women at the cantonal level and even at the municipal level.
53. Some municipalities delayed the introduction of the right to vote for women until the 1980s.
54. In 1989, in the **canton of Appenzell Rhodes-extérieures**, a small majority of Landsgemeinde voted in favor of women's suffrage.
55. Appenzell Rhodes-Intérieures was the last Canton to introduce women's suffrage following a Federal Court decision in 1991.
56. Today, in the Left Party and the Socialist Party, women are well represented. However, in the Right Party, there is difficulty in having women in Parliament.
57. Today in Switzerland, women:
- earn on average 20% less salary than men
 - control 1/10 of the fortune
 - 1/3 of women who work 100% earn less than 4000 Swiss francs
 - earn 40% less in retirement
58. On June 14, 2019, the women's strike movement took place. There are still active movements about this strike which mobilized more than 500,000 people in Switzerland to demand equality between men and women. The Socialist Party continues to work to achieve equality between men and women.
59. The areas on which the Socialist Party emphasizes are:
- the question of paternity leave which was obtained after long struggles
 - parental leave
 - equal pay
 - Women are still the minority in Parliament and politics
 - Women are under-represented on boards of directors and in decision-making positions.
 - With the covid-19 crisis, there are alarming statistics regarding violence against women.
60. **A remark:** on February 7, 2021, on the day of commemoration of 50 years of right to vote for women, a statement noted lack of the right to vote of foreigners at the cantonal level (except Neuchâtel which established the right to vote for foreign migrants).
A petition has been launched so that foreigners can benefit from the right to vote since living and working in Switzerland should give foreigners the right to participate in civic life.

III. PANEL DISCUSSIONS

First theme: Pan-Africanism for Women: Tribute to the Mothers of Independence and the liberation of the African Continent, March 6, 2021

By Ms. Awa N'DIAYE, President, Espace Afrique Internationale, Geneva, Switzerland, Conseiller, ADEPT

61. This commemoration of International Women's Day is an opportunity and also a duty for all of us to remember that alongside the men and heroes of independence, there were also illustrious and courageous women who led battles against slavery first and colonization later.

62. The history of African independence and the creation of the OAU (Organization of African Unity) which subsequently became the African Union can only be fully restored and celebrated by the restitution of the history, the course, the courage, and the determination of these great female personalities.

63. In this period of commemoration, recall the decisive role played by the founding fathers of independence and the African Union, and name among others:
 - Ghanaian Kwame Nkrumah,
 - the Ethiopian Hailé Selassié,
 - Julius Nyerere from Tanzania,
 - Patrice Lumumba from Congo,
 - Gamal Abdel Nasser from Egypt,
 - Ahmed Ben Bella from Algeria,
 - Habib Bourguiba from Tunisia,
 - Léopold Sédar Senghor from Senegal,
 - Félix Houphouët Boigny from Ivory Coast,
 - Amany Diori from Niger,
 - Ahmadou Ahidjo from Cameroon etc ...

64. It is important to highlight the existence of these many great women in the shadows, often unknown or poorly known to current generations.

65. A magnificent exhibition called 'Femmes d'Afrique' produced by the Belgian association CEC (Cooperating through Education and Culture), in collaboration with the Belgian Cooperation, wanted to make known the exemplary destinies of historical figures of African women, from Africa and Maghreb, from antiquity to this time.

66. It is a didactic exhibition that is intended above all, a work of popularization to meet the need to symbolically make known to the general public (both in the North and in the South), the presence and the role of women in the world. 'African History.
67. Through this exhibition, the designers wanted to deconstruct the stereotypical image of the African woman. It is also about promoting the history of the African continent through great female figures. Finally, it is about putting into perspective the role played by women in general and Africans in particular, involved yesterday and today, alongside men, in the development of their societies.
68. A note on the great female figures of yesteryears who left women with an immense legacy in the struggle against all forms of domination and for equality between the sexes.
69. A note on the courage of contemporary women figures, such as **Madame Jeanne Martin Cissé of Guinea**, committed patriot and political activist, the first woman to have chaired the United Nations Security Council, President of the Pan-African Women's Movement, born in 1962, a year before the creation of the Organisation of African Unity, whose mission was to complete the advent of African independence.
70. A note also on African independence and the Liberation of Africa is the story and temerity of the Senegalese **Rose Basse** who at the Congress of the African Democratic Rally in 1958 in Cotonou was one of the first, in the name of African women, to demand the immediate and total independence of African countries.
71. A note on independence and African liberation. This is the story of **Aoua Keita**, one of the pioneers of the struggle for the independence of Mali, Mali's first woman deputy, progressive and feminine activist. It is also the vision and temerity of the Pan African Women's Organization (PAWO), created in 1962, which played a considerable role in the debates that led to the creation of the OAU.
72. For the history of independence and the women's emancipation movement, a note on **Gertrude Mongella of Tanzania**, this freedom fighter, activist, and advocate for equal rights for women around the world and in particular, women developing countries.
73. A strong tribute for all these forgotten women combatants whose example should serve all women in their daily commitments.

74. Recall that African women are not lagging in African history and that this history, like the formidable **Amazons of Dahomey**, has always been at the heart of critical and decisive moments in the history of Africa continent.

Second theme: The integration of diaspora women in politics, an encouraging contribution for the diaspora

By Ms. Josiane JEMMELY, MP, Neuchâtel Cantonal Parliament, President, African Community, Montagnes Neuchâteloises , Neuchâtel, Switzerland

75. In general, women are poorly represented in legislative and executive parliaments. But an improvement in the situation is observed with remarkable progress, as was the case in Neuchâtel during this legislature which ends on April 18th.

76. If women of Switzerland encounter difficulties in getting elected, a projection can be made on the enormous efforts that the women of the diaspora must make to achieve this.

77. The integration of black women in Switzerland remains weak but it should evolve over the next few years given the interest and admiration that is gradually being observed among the female electorate of Swiss communities.

78. On the Neuchâtel side, the obstacles explaining this poor representation are as follows:

- A low turnout in municipal, cantonal and federal elections due to lack of interest.
- Lack of knowledge of the electoral system and its challenges, despite explanatory and mobilization campaigns.
- Lack of motivation linked to the difficulties of professional integration.
- Ignorance of the use of voting rights and documents
- The fear created by the trauma of people from African countries that have experienced wars prevents them from achieving their civic participation.
- Lack of sponsorship within political parties for foreigners at the beginning sometimes results in less courageous, even in abandonment.

Hope remains because, since Ms. **Tilo Frei's**⁵ departure from political life, the succession has been assured, first by Ms. Carole Gehringer, followed by Ms. Josiane Jemmely, and finally for the moment by Ms. Rose Assamoi.

79. But other African women living in Switzerland had also in the past succeeded in entering the legislative bodies of their communes of residence, for example, **Phélicienne Villos Muamba** and **Mrs. Cécile Schärer Nguiamba**, both in the canton of Berne. Unfortunately, both have left us now. May their souls rest in peace! Amen
80. In the register of perspectives, there is a youth who nourishes the desire to launch out concerning the questions often asked about the functioning of the Grand Council and the issues to be dealt with. Encouragement to enter youth parliaments but also in associations which are bodies to train and speak in public but also to learn to assert their political convictions in a collective game.
81. Women involved in political organizations must continue to keep the flame alive (hold on) through effective convincing interventions to transmit this desire for commitment to female youth in the diaspora.
82. Black women are able by their potential to increase their representation in the various political bodies of the cantons, they are encouraged to get involved to participate in the decisions of the country in which they live.

Third theme: The Sustainable Communities Programme

(“Together we inspire, equip and empower people towards a common vision for a better and more just world”.)

By Ms Amina KHALID, Head of Sustainable Communities, Programme-Initiatives of Change, London, UK

83. Women should be celebrated every moment, every hour, every day through out the years.
84. It is important to highlight the reality of women’s contribution, especially the reality of African women contributions and remember the importance of men’s contribution in the process.
85. The pandemic has worsened the actual inequality in the society and across the world: inequality in health, ethnicity, education and occupations that have really threatened the fabric of the society creating more injustice.

⁵ mixed race of Cameroonian mother and Neuchâtel father, first cross-woman elected to the General Council of the city of Neuchâtel

86. The programme was initiated in 2012 as the result of a strategic planning process in Initiative of Change (IofC) after the London riot in 2011. Its objective was to address the moral and spiritual challenges facing communities and taking action to develop and mobilise communities to tackle critical issues.

87. The programme focuses on IofC's three strategic areas to create community cohesion:

- Ethical Leadership;
- Sustainable Living and
- Trust Building

88. All of which are central to IofC's outreach. Our three clear aims are to:

- Support community-led actions and create strong local vision;
- Increase the long-term sustainability of local community life;
- Influence and create policies based on needs and not fear (e.g. the situation of someone from a refugee background)

89. The Sustainable Communities Programme team is composed of:

- Local and International grassroots;
- Faith leaders;
- Local politicians;
- Ordinary people;
- Youth;
- Researchers;
- Media;
- Police officials;
- Artists;
- Civil society organizations;
- Environmentalists;
- Community influencers.

90. Current Focus of the Programme is to respond to covid-19 pandemic, a mental health and youth empowerment:

- bridging divides through music (*to avoid zoom and webinar fatigue*);
- 'Peace Begins at Home' intergenerational dialogue;
- building trust between police and youth;
- interfaith and intercultural dialogue;
- Women Leadership and Empowerment (*every woman success should be an inspiration to another. Every woman standing up for herself, stands for every woman*).

Fourth theme: Financing of development projects in Africa

By Ms Binouri Brice MONNOU, Senior Expert Consultant on Migration and

Development, President, FECODEV, Paris, France, Member ADEPT

91. To discuss about leadership and influence, we have to engage in lobbying. The network plays an important role in the development of women in the diaspora, Africans, Switzerland and around the world.
92. FECODEV is a non-profit organization, created in 2005 by women of the African diaspora who bring, as much the richness of their know-how, the diversity of their origins as the addition of their experiences, for a world more united and fairer.
93. It is a platform of around fifty development associations whose leaders are women (and a few men) from the African diaspora *residing in France and originating from Benin, Togo, Senegal, Mali, Niger, Guinea, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Central African Republic, Cameroon, Gabon, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Eritrea, Guinea Bissau, Rwanda, Comoros, Haiti, ...*
94. Its scope: Social, professional and economic integration in France, International cooperation and solidarity Southern countries, particularly in Africa.
95. Its mission: To strengthen and promote the capacities for action of people, organizations, especially those of the African diaspora, to pool skills and initiatives in order to enhance the participatory dynamics of women around the Issues and Challenges of the 2030 Agendas and 2063.
96. Its Vision: Make women an essential component of society as full players in development and social progress
97. Its values: Commitment - Working together - Continuous improvement - Transfer of knowledge - Respect - Gender equality - Social justice - Peace
98. Its motto: “Mutualize and act”. FECODEV mutualizes in the North as in the South, the skills and initiatives of women and men, to strengthen actions for sustainable development.
99. Its clusters’ interventions and programs:
 - Cluster I: Consolidation and Extension, Program Consolidation and Extension of the FECODEV Network;
 - Cluster II: Women, Leadership and Influence, Program: Leadership of women from the FECODEV network;
 - Cluster III: Outreach to the world, Program: Mobility and skills transfer;
 - Cluster IV: Action capacity building, Membership capacity building program
100. Its Actions:
 - Support to the Network

- Support for associations
- Construction of multi-stakeholder partnerships
- Support to OSIMs carrying projects
- Synergy of actions of members
- Fundraising research
- Self-financing

101. Its areas of intervention:

- Health and Food security
- Environment and Climate Change
- Education
- Art, Culture and Tourism
- Information and Communication Technologies
- Entrepreneurship
- Employability...

102. Its team: Commissions and working Groups support organizational and structural life and actions; and finally activities in France and internationally.

103. Partners associated with the PRAOSIM program: Financing Agence Française de Développement (AFD) - Forum of international solidarity organizations resulting from migration (FORIM) - Mixed Central Household Waste Processing Union (SYCTOM) - Territorial Collectivities - FECODEV - OPAP - OSIM - Associations - local NGOs...

104. Since 2019, FECODEV has been chosen as a support structure, an integral part of the France relay unit on the Mobility, Migration for Development Program (PMMD), by FORIM ensuring the missions of France Cellule within the framework of the component 1 of this Program.

105. The FECODEV support team offers technical and methodological support to OSIMs of the Malian diaspora in France for the realization of projects led by associations and / or NGOs in Mali in support of the economic development of Mali within the framework of the PMMD

106. Key figures 2019-2020. For 2 years:

- 76 Malian OSIMs in France supported, Malian associations and NGOs carrying projects; 4 Eligible projects submitted
- Partners associated with the PMMD program
- French Development Agency (AFD)
- Ministry of Malian Diaspora
- Technical Unit of Co-development
- FORIM
- FECODEV
- EU Local and regional authorities
- OSIM - Malian associations and NGOs....

➤ **A song to pay tribute to all these women who die every day**

Presented and performed by the artist Ms Pat SANTSCHI, African Diaspora Council of Switzerland, AFMD, ‘Ajere African Heritage’

107. This song is dedicated to all the children and mothers who die every day all over the world.

IV. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Question 1 (addressed to Ms Binouri Brice MONNOU):

Is there a possibility of working with the FECODEV association if it is not based in France?

108. Yes, we have partnerships with associations all over Europe and even beyond Europe. The funds France has set up as a program, and we are also working with funds from the European Commission (for example: work with people from the diaspora from 5 or 8 European countries. If we know that diaspora organizations are organized and structured to participate in these budgets and funds of most often 1 million euros or a little more, we can start in a consortium. But before starting in a consortium or saying that we are going to give in to a European budget, it's very technical).
109. In this sense, exercises are carried out in the ADEPT platform. So, this is not a problem for FECODEV setting up bridges. There is a possibility of creating an office in the Netherlands but it takes people who have the time to be able to render this office functional. The trainings are planned by FECODEV. Immersion trips can be organized to be able to bring in innovation to projects.
110. Social cohesion is hospitality that pushes us to open barriers in order to move forward better. The FECOV and ADEPT contacts are available for more information.

Question 2 (addressed to Ms Binouri Brice MONNOU):

Are you able to maintain your independence from the French State?

111. France has decided, within the framework of cooperation with third countries, to place nationals in front of its migration policy: at the High Council of Malians, at the High Council of Guineans, ...
112. Women and youth have come together from different countries (united in multi-countries). The organization realized that the part of funds given for development projects, was led by native French experts while the members who originate from these countries were also sufficiently qualified to lead the projects. Native French, Comorians, Malians, etc. should all be together to support the development of African countries.

113. The organization realized that all the funds went to the experts and nothing to the development process. The organization sensitized everyone around. A challenge was launched, African members of the organization were given a share of the funds, and this is how support operators and training workshops were created. Several trips to Africa are made to meet the grassroots communities.
114. The organization was then supported by the Netherlands in the context of migration and development. Switzerland has always been a country that supports new cooperation. There have been spaces for consultations and policy dialogues within the framework of migration and development before arriving at high-level dialogues at the United Nations. And this moved the French government, which has set up a migration and development department in its foreign ministry.

Question 3 (addressed to Ms Martine DOCOURT):

What does the Federal Constitution say about the rule of law with regard to equality among all citizens of Switzerland?

115. An Article of the 1980 Constitution explains the notion of equality between men and women, with the notion of equal pay. It took 10 years to establish a law that reflected this constitutional article. Because of the delay of 10 years, there was the first women's strike in 1991 for the application of this federal law.
116. Despite the existence of the above article, its application remains a problem. In relation to equal pay, the introduction for companies with more than 100 employees was made to conduct studies on equal pay. Yet pay inequalities are discovered and no sanction is established. It is therefore the company that decides whether it wants to adapt its salary system.
117. The women's rights were quickly established following the introduction of women's suffrage. But the application of these rights is still lagging behind. Another element not enough discussed is the question of the judges (there were no female judges before female suffrage).
118. With a policy, slow on the question of rights, there are rules put in place at the legal level, this means that there are decisions not sufficient in terms of equality between man and woman.
119. There is a need of an awareness work with male and female judges, and also a need of legal provisions. We must also provide judgments directed to the equality women are entitled to.
120. The difficulty that women have in case of unequal pay to reach to the end of the procedure, by fear of losing their job and because the employers

are still in a logic of always defending itself, showing the evidence concerning the wage inequalities.

121. Thus, it scares some women to engage in a procedure that can be long and difficult.

122. There is still a long way to go to improve women's rights.

Question 4 (addressed to Mme Martine DOCOURT):

In general, how do you analyze the deep discrimination that pervades in the society?

123. We can cite pay inequalities but also inequalities within companies for positions of responsibility. A whole system is inadequately constructed so that women stop working after, for example, the arrival of a child or a second child.

124. There is also social pressure to have a child in Switzerland that makes the woman guilty of working. In general, we see statistics of violence quite alarming. The Covid-19 crisis has shown in some cantons there was an increase in violence related to the crisis.

125. The post-crisis period with perhaps more layoffs, unemployed people, and lower incomes; this will have consequences on the precariousness of people.

126. Single-parent families are predominantly women in Switzerland. They find themselves in difficult financial situations.

127. In relationships (couples), some women do not dare to call for help because they have this economic dependence. These are situations that we must work on by all means. It is not enough to have an article at the level of the Constitution that speaks of equality but it must be applied, and above all put in sufficient resources.

128. After covid-19 pandemic, to be able to revive the economy, we need to focus on women. Women should find the fund that can be invested in a recovery project or any project related to the post-crisis period.

129. There are also all the questions of professions in which the majority of women work: in childcare, in the field of healthcare, in the field of cleaning where women have very low incomes. It is a more labor issue than political.

130. There is therefore a need to promote these professions predominantly female by increasing wages so that women can live decently in Switzerland.

- **A concern shared by Ms. Awa N'DIAYE** (in relation to this migration, a promotion in which Switzerland has always participated) to Ms. Martine DOCOURT and Ms. Josiane JEMMELY who belong to the political community of Switzerland.

131. There were visits that were cut short:

- At the cantonal level, the FGC had set up a working group on migration and development, along the way this working group disappeared.
- At the federal level, Switzerland had set up a Swiss civil society platform on migration and development. An initiative that did not succeed.
- At the international level, Switzerland had participated in all the dialogues on the 'Global Compact on Migration'. Switzerland was a facilitator in the process leading to the conclusion of the treaty, but at the time of the Marrakech Summit, Switzerland abstained and did not sign the treaty!

132. So that migration rhymes with development of the countries of origin, Switzerland participates in development projects directly in African countries. However, there is an apparent lack of understanding in cooperation with the Diaspora in development process.

V. CLOSING REMARKS

A. By Dr. Christine BOTCHI MOREL

133. The quality of the interventions was excellent.

134. Keep in mind what has been learned:

- **Ms Awa N'DIAYE**, we have retained to pay tribute to the mothers of independence and the liberation of Africa; a need for essential therapy; and to make serious research on the history of Africa.
- **Ms Josiane JEMMELY** spoke about Africa, young people, the success of politics in connection with the Diaspora, the problems that accompany the presence of the Diaspora, and the necessity to break through the barriers for women of the African Diaspora in Switzerland to invest more.
- **Ms Amina KHALID** spoke about the community development program and their objectives of being able to create opportunities and to be able to connect women from minorities who do not dare to make their voices heard, hence the need to create a space of expression for these women.

- **Ms Binouri Brice MONNOU** taught us a lot from her presentation. There is no leadership if we do not get together; there is a need for a lobby. To present the various funding opportunities to requires good preparation.

Ms Binouri. is ready to reach out to people, to show them her know-how so that the advent of development continues in countries of the South, in countries that need to be coached to achieve exemplary results.

- **Ms Martine DOCOURT** explains that women are under-represented at the political level. The problems such as wage inequalities still persist. We wonder when a solution will be found. Moreover, the female pensions are weak. Domestic violence was also discussed.
- During the panelists' discussions, all the ladies spoke about the effects of the pandemic.
- **Dr. Carine NSOUDOU** spoke of her concern about the solutions to be found during the pandemic.
- **Princess Tekhaya N. DLAMINI** has asked men to continue to show kindness and love to women.

B. By Dr. Christine BOTCHI MOREL leaves a note for the International Women's Day

135. The concept of "Woman" evolves, as does that of "Development". Both conceal cross-cutting realities. The woman is the one in her noble dimension, as a person who has roles at various levels of society.
136. Today, many active women in Africa, under precarious and demanding conditions with derisory means, fight for their well-being, braving the weight of habits and customs, the scourge of male domination and their corollaries. and so many others. Yet hunger, lack of health care, difficulties in educating children continue to threaten.
137. The women of the Diaspora lead actions for a development that is societal, and inclusive aiming at rights, justice, and peace for every human person.
138. A tribute to all these women actors in this quest for progress.
139. From human resources to means carrying the torch of the desire to progress are emerging on the African continent. Talented young women are struggling to emerge from the eternal misery that exist in the continent, by setting themselves challenges which they manage to meet in spectacular manner.

140. The emergence of female elites in the continent is essential. The strike force of women in sensitive areas is revitalizing certain key positions internationally. The arrival of the Vice President of the United States, **Ms. Kamala Harris**, arouses admiration, the first political appointment of a black woman in the history of the United States.

141. Africa's current pride is the election of **Dr. Ngozi Okonjo Iweala** as Director-General of the WTO. A big lesson is inscribed in the history of women's march in the developmental sphere, and that is the "unity" factor despite any individual prerequisites in the face of group interests.

142. In the case of the covid-19 pandemic, women have shown bravery in the field of health in Switzerland as in neighboring countries. Development is unquestionably dependent on health.

143. The woman's reality is a great factor of development.
The male population is well aware of this.
The other challenge that awaits women is their action in the management of the pandemic as far as Africa is concerned.
We will have to start thinking concretely about the future, in several areas where equality will be felt in all respects, by relying on common sense.

C. Mme Fatoumata DEMBELE, an artist from Burkina Faso and Mali, sings with her young daughter **Léa Geneva Roscant** for the women and men who support the female.

144. Pays tribute to all women around the world, especially to her mother; to all women in Switzerland, Africa, Europe and all over the world.

145. A song that encourages women to stand up and also encourages men to support women:

- Tribute to Holy Mary, Mother of the Lord Jesus-Christ,
- Tribute to the wife of the Prophet Mohammed, Khadija,
- Tribute to all the women of this panel,
- Tribute to Mr. Dozie Céleste UGOCHUKWU, the strong man present today among the women,

146. Thankful to all the women of the world.

D. The moderator and coordinator of this event, Mr Dozie Céleste UGOCHUKWU thanks all the speakers and closes the session by insisting the woman must be celebrated every day, and the fight against women discrimination and other discriminations in our society continues.



African Diaspora Council of Switzerland

Cordial Invitation

**MARCH
Sat. 6th**

4pm Swiss



SPEAKER

**AMB. ARIKANA
CHIHOMBORI-QUAO**

WOMEN

Day Conference



PRC. TEKHAYA N. DLAMINI



MARTINE DOCOURT



CARINE NSOUDOU

Panelists:

Awa N'diaye, Josiane Jemmely, Amina Khalid, Brice Monnou

Contributors:

Pat Santschi, Christine Botchi Morel, Fatoumata Dembele

Zoom ID: 824 9509 2027 / Code: 385008 / www.africancouncil.ch



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PROGRAMME OF THE DAY: 4:00 pm - 7:00 pm		
OPENING SESSION		English and French are the official languages with a simultaneous translation
Moderation: Dozie Celeste Ugochukwu, AFMD African Diaspora Council of Switzerland		Zoom ID: 824 9509 2027 / Code: 385008
4:00 - 4:10 pm	Ms Pat Santschi African Diaspora Council of Switzerland, AFMD Ajere African Heritage	Welcome Remark
4:10 - 4:25 pm	Dr Carine Nsoudou , Director Africa-Europe Diaspora Development Platform, ADEPT, Brussels-Belgium	Opening Remark
4:25 - 4:40 pm	Princess Tekhaya N. Dlamini , Kingdom of Eswatini (Swaziland) Youth Leader for UN Women under Traditional and Cultural Leaders of Ending Child Marriage	Goodwill message
PRESENTATIONS		KEYNOTE PRESENTATIONS
4.40 - 5:10 pm	H.E. Amb. Dr. Arikana Chihombori Quao Founder & CEO, African Diaspora Development Institute, ADDI, USA	Keynote Speech Diaspora as Agent of Development within the framework of ACFTA
5:10 - 5:30 pm	Ms Martine Docourt , Co-President, Swiss Socialist Party SP Women	The Right of Vote of Women in Switzerland, 50 years after
5:30 - 5:35 pm	Ms Pat Santschi , artist Ajere African Heritage / AFMD	Break out, Music Interlude
PANEL DISCUSSIONS		PANEL FOR DIASPORA WOMEN, 10 mins each
5:35 - 5:45 pm	Ms Awa N'diaye , President, Espace Afrique Internationale, Geneva, Switzerland Adviser, ADEPT	Tracing the African Women Heroes
5:45 - 5:55 pm	Ms Josiane Jemmely MP, Neuchâtel Cantonal Parliament, President, African Community, Montagnes Neuchâteloises Neuchâtel, Switzerland	Political integration of Diaspora women
5:55 - 6:05 pm	Ms Amina Khalid Head of Sustainable Communities, Programme-Initiatives of Change, London, UK	Youth and sustainable Community Development
6:05 - 6:15 pm	Ms Binouri Brice Monnou Senior Expert Consultant on Migration and Development, President, FECODEV, Paris, France Member ADEPT	Financing Development Projects in Africa
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS		
6:15 - 6:45pm Questions, Observations, Comments, Input from the audience		
CLOSING SESSION		
6:45 - 6:55 pm	Dr Christine Botchi Morel African Diaspora Council of Switzerland, Fribourg Jeunesse en Détresse Internationale	Closing Remark and Honour to African Women Heroes
6:55 - 7:00 pm	Ms Fatoumata Dembele , Artist	Closing song

In collaboration with the organizations:

