

DECLARATION OF THE 1ST DIASPORA CONFERENCE ON AFRICAN MIGRATION TO EUROPE

Converged in Bern at the first Diaspora Conference on African Migration to Europe on the 12th of September 2015 with over 100 delegates from the African Diaspora, civil society organizations, representatives of African and Swiss Governments, international organizations and Development Agencies, to reflect over the impact of European migration policies on African migration, the African Diaspora agreed to:

STATE in clear and in unequivocal terms that migration is inherent of big opportunities but also manifests some challenges that can be transformed into success stories when managed constructively devoid of hypocrisy;

REAFFIRM their conviction that there is a positive synergy between migration and socioeconomic development for migrants, in countries of transit and origin, as well as host countries and hereby restate our full commitment towards ensuring the development of migrants' capacity towards a successful integration and sustainable development;

REAFFIRM our resolve and commitment to shared obligations and responsibilities as stipulated in international instruments and conventions relating to Human rights, refugee protection, migration and development as well as the special protection accorded to People of African Descent by the UN General Assembly in its Resolution 68/237 of 23 December 2013 by which it proclaimed the International Decade for People of African Decade, commencing on 1 January 2015 and ending on 31 December 2024;

CALL on all UN member states to work towards the inauguration of the International Decade for People of African Descent in their respective states as recommended by the said UN Resolution and immediately put in place all necessary instruments towards the full implementation of the activities recommended by UN;

WELCOME the initiation and establishment of different instruments for Dialogue and migration partnership with developing countries by Swiss government especially countries in Africa: Nigeria, Tunisia, Guinea... aimed at enhancing development in African countries;

WELCOME the mobilization of military power to protect refugees on the High Sea but cautions that such should not be transformed into a wild geese chase of smugglers and a pretext to guard the European borders and thus prevent the refugees and migrants from entering Europe;

CONDEMN the continual use of the terminology "economic migrants" in Europe to describe African refugees whereas the word "refugee" is regularly used for other migrants. Such description is in itself discriminatory and unacceptable;

CONDEMN the policy of abolition of asylum requests in foreign missions and embassies which exposes the refugees and migrants more to the risk of plying the dangerous routes to seek refuge and **CALL** on all European governments to quickly reintroduce the possibility of seeking Asylum at foreign missions and embassies as well as soften the visa requirements to promote regular migration;

CONDEMN in strongest terms the plan of the EU to establish marathon refugee camps in West Africa or elsewhere on African soil for African refugees whereas refugees coming from other parts of the world will continue to troop in Europe. This is not only discriminatory and undemocratic, but a serious violation of fundamental Human rights of African refugees and migrants in their liberty of movement and choice of refuge;

it equally tends to block access to Africans and Africa to European technology and know-how thereby plunging Africa further into underdevelopment and reducing it to a mere terrain to be exploited for natural resources; Europe should take its responsibility for asylum seekers and not seek to shift the burden to African countries

VIEW with much suspicion and disdain the planned EU-AU November Summit in Valetta, Malta where the purported African refugee camp in Africa will be formally adopted, albeit without much contribution from African countries given that the invitations and process leading to the Summit are marred with discrimination and the politics of divide and rule;

REGRET that the proposed sum of about 1.8 Billion Euros promised by the EU to African countries on “migration partnership” are almost entirely tied to Return agreements instead of investing such money into human development and development of Africa to make Africa more attractive for Africans and thus encouraging South-South migration and labor mobility intra-African; **MAINTAINS** that no migration policy tied entirely to Return assistance agreements can succeed in long term;

REGRET that while refugees and migrants continue to die on their dangerous journeys, Europe is busy talking, discussing, trading words and shifting responsibilities and agreeing not to agree to accommodate just 700’000 refugees and migrants which they term refugee crises;

REGRET that migration and immigrants have been scandalously instrumentalised in the political spectrum thereby exploiting the weak situation of migrants in order to make cheap gains and **CALL** on politicians and the mass media to accord more respect and dignity to migrants in the socio-political discourse;

REGRET that whereas there are international and UN agencies that regulate and promote free circulation of capital (IMF), mobility of goods and services (WTO), there is still no such agency to regulate and promote human mobility of migrants among member states within the framework of Migration and Development and hereby **CALL** for the establishment of such an agency immediately;

APPEAL to the international community to open its borders to refugees from every part of the world;

RECALL that over 80% of the African migration is intra-African. While Ethiopia hosts over 700’000 refugees from neighboring countries, Kenya takes over 500’000 refugees, Sudan over 200’000 refugees, Cameroun takes up to 1 million refugees including the Internal Displaced Persons IDP. Lebanon with a little over 4 million inhabitants is accommodating more than 1 million Syrian refugees and Turkey with a big heart is home to over 2 million Syrian refugees. It is noteworthy to mention here that none of these countries is known to sell and supply arms to the war and conflict zones but are nonetheless willing and ready to take huge responsibility for refugees;

DEMAND for more investments on capacity building of the Diaspora community to enhance and foster economic integration which is a strong instrument for development of countries of origin and a catalyst against xenophobia, racism and other related intolerance in host countries;

CALL on all United Nations member states to regularize the legal status of undocumented migrants residing in their countries, accord citizenship to stateless persons, having been established that no human being is illegal on this planet earth;

CALL on the Diaspora community to tap inwards, strategize and engage constructively in migration and development even while appreciating the impact of Diaspora remittances in the African economies, show more solidarity to refugees, identify with them and guide them to a successful integration towards a more dignified migration policy.

INVITE the leaders of African countries to fight unrelently and tirelessly against poverty and promote good governance, solidify and equip education, healthcare and agro institutions and facilities, invest in human and youth development as a prerequisite in ensuring peace and security in Africa in line with Sustainable Millennium Goals SDG post 2015 and in collaboration with the African Diaspora.

ENCOURAGE the African Union AU, the Regional Economic Communities RECs and other African institutions to strengthen their efforts towards the implementation of intra-African migration and labor mobility and thereby making Africa more attractive.

Done today in Bern, 15 Septembre 2015

Dozie Celeste Ugochukwu
President

Nabil Ait-Mokhtar
Vice-president

African Diaspora Council of Switzerland

+41 79 476 74 83 / cugochukwu@yahoo.com

+41. 76 276.58.22 / nabiladresse@yahoo.fr