



THE CEREMONY OF THE

50th anniversary of the African Union: The Role of the Diaspora in development...

13th of December, 2013, Rathaus, Parliament of Bern, Switzerland

Background Information

Due to his long experience of the Swiss territory, the African Diaspora Council of Switzerland (ADCS), proposes to mark the 50th anniversary of the African Union, to bring together all interested parties in the political, economic, scientific, cultural and organizational world in the celebration of the **50th anniversary of Pan Africanism and the African Union**. The Gala Night will assemble representatives of African governments, public and private institutions, leaders and captains of industries, the African Diaspora in Europe as well as representatives and Swiss, European and International institutions to exchange and reflect together on triangular roles and modalities of the contributions of the African Diaspora, countries of origin and host countries towards the development of Africa and the challenges of integration of the African Diaspora in their respective host countries.

The celebration also calls for some moment of reflection, 50 years after the famous speech of **Martin Luther King** on the 28th of August 1963 titled, **"I have a dream"**, during a march to Washington before a multitude of over 250'000 people. This speech for freedom and equality for all has not only changed the foundation of the United States of America, it is still transforming and influencing the fundamental principles and values of our society today. Thank you Martin Luther King!

It is also the occasion to remember the 50th anniversary of the accession of Switzerland to the Council of Europe, which took place on the 6th of May 1963. Although Switzerland has always placed respect for the will of the people at the heart of its political system while according prime importance to the protection of the rights of individuals, its accession to the Council of Europe in 1963 has had a significant influence on the development of fundamental rights within the country. It is notably within the scope of the Council of Europe that Switzerland ratified in 1974, the European Convention for Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of November 4, 1950 at Rome. This instrument has played a prime role in guiding the practice of Swiss authorities in matters concerning the respect of fundamental Human Rights, in the fight against all forms of discrimination, racism and especially in shaping the Swiss migration law and policy.

Accession has above all enabled Switzerland to take part in debates and to have its voice heard. Through accession, Switzerland now has the opportunity to share its experience with the other countries and to participate closely in the definition of norms with regard to human rights, rule of law and democracy at the European level. Fifty years after accession, the Council of Europe remains for Switzerland an important place to meet and debate issues of relevance for the whole region. This forum provided by the Council of Europe gives Switzerland the opportunity to participate fully, and on an equal footing with other member states, in European co-operation in the field of human rights, the rule of law and democracy. Although many themes are now addressed in Brussels rather than Strasbourg, it is within the Council of Europe that European states create and monitor all the standards and laws that apply throughout the continent.



1. BRIEF HISTORY OF THE AFRICAN UNION

It was the Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie after the independence of most African countries in the early sixties who actively campaigned for the creation of the Organization of African Unity. "We must speak with one voice," said the one who presided over the proceedings of Pan-Africanism since its inception in 1963. Most of the 32 states that created the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in 1963 were divided between the Federalists, led by Kwame Nkrumah, and the "gradualists" like Senghor, who wanted first a strong Africa composed of independent States. Ultimately, it is the cooperation that prevailed on integration.

The Malian Modibo Keita actively participated in the drafting of the Charter of the OAU alongside Sylvanus Olympio from Togo. Both will later be replaced. One after the other, Haile Selassie and Kwame Nkrumah eventually lost power shortly after signing the Charter of the OAU. The Guinean Diallo Telli, first secretary of the OAU, elected at the Cairo Summit in 1964, was caught by the tragedy of sékoutourian Guinea.

The OAU could have disappeared without leading to the integration of Africa. In 1990, an extraordinary session adopted the Plan of Action and the Final Act of Lagos, followed a year later by the Treaty establishing the African Economic Community (AFEC), treaties that should lead to a common African market in 2025. Meanwhile, the economic currents are slowed by 53 borders, several trade, tax, customs, legal regimes, etc.

The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights was solemnly adopted in 1981 by the OAU. This Instrument limited by the sacrosanct rule of "non-interference" device is constrained by a commission that can only make a confidential report to the Heads of State. Entered into force in 1986, the charter was followed, twenty years later in 2006, by the establishment of the African Court of Human Rights, created in the 7th Summit of the African Union in Banjul, capital of the Gambia. Critics who saw the eleven judges as they were sworn in, remarked that it is a clone of the European Court of Human Rights, expressing hope and optimism that every African citizen could appeal directly to the highest court without passing through the State. NGOs will still bite their brakes for a while.

South Africa became the 53rd member of the OAU summit in Tunis, from 13th to 15th June 1994. The African Union succeeded the OAU at an extraordinary summit in Sirte (Libya), from 6th to 9th September 1999. The Constitutive Act of the AU will be adopted only a year later in Lome by 27 Heads of State at the end of difficult negotiations. Any reference to a timetable to complete the ramifications of the Union was abandoned. In 2010, the African Union was still working on setting a High Authority intended to replace the Commission.

Today in 2013, the Commission of the African Union is chaired by South African, Dr. Mrs Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma. The Assembly of Heads of State, the supreme organ of the AU, is currently chaired by the Prime Minister of Ethiopia, HE Hailemariam Desalegn. ([Http://www.au.int](http://www.au.int)). The African Development Bank (AfDB) founded in 1964, whose mission is to promote economic growth and durable reduction of poverty in Africa is chaired by the Rwandese, Donald Kaberuka (<http://www.afdb.org>). Our leader and mentor lives on despite health challenges. We wish you a quick and steady recovery Madiba. The exemplary life of **Nelson Mandela** will continue to influence and guide current and future African leaders.



2. AFRICA AND ITS DIASPORA

2.1 Facts

According to the Commission of the African Union, the African Diaspora means "people of African origin living outside the continent, who are willing to contribute to its development and the building of the African Union, irrespective of their citizenship and nationality. „Therefore, it is all people with African roots wherever they are in the world. Into this category are the black diaspora in Latin America, North America, the Caribbean and of course in Europe. More and more African Diaspora are settling among Asian giants of India and China. We cannot forget the black or Kahlouck of the Arabian Peninsula of Middle East with Muslim origin and Jewish Blacks in Israel also called the Falashas from Ethiopia. The human weight of the African diaspora in Europe, for example, the financial power, knowledge and expertise of these Africans scattered across the European continent is a real capital.

The African diaspora is the sixth African region and the 54th country on the continent. It is now estimated that the African diaspora in Europe is around ten million with its "gray gold mine" consisting essentially of a strong intellectual Diaspora will remain increasingly important across the whole of Europe. In terms of financial flows to Africa, the African Diaspora in Europe has transferred respectively in 2010, 2011 and 2012, 21, 22 and 24 billion USD. Moreover, it is estimated that remittances from the African Diaspora in Europe will even be more important in the years 2013 and 2014 to attain respectively about 25 and 27 billion USD.

Good political governance in investment matters and the return of this Diaspora of Europe can promote an enormous economic feedback on investment for the countries in question. Egypt, Morocco and Nigeria are the largest beneficiaries in the continent, of the transfer of funds from the African Diaspora. Moreover, this Diaspora has knowledge, expertise and know-how that can be of great use for the sustainable development of Africa. The African continent must imperatively adopt a policy of incentives to seek and attract the expertise and know-how of its "gray gold mine" scattered all over the world. It is lamentable that the African continent spends over \$ 4 billion for the use of Western experts on the continent when thousands of African experts are scattered everywhere all over the world.

Instead of using only the western know-how, through international cooperation, it would be desirable to use the expertise of its intellectual Diaspora. This policy has at least two advantages: firstly, the use of the expertise of the African Diaspora has the advantage of creating a bridge between them and Africa, but also to promote the holidays of this Diaspora Africa. This policy has the effect of promoting tourism of the Diaspora that will generate enormous financial resources in the African economy. This is exemplified in the current project of establishment of a Diaspora Vocational Training Institute in Lagos, Nigeria by Nigerians in Diaspora in Europe, Switzerland chapter (NIDOE Swiss) in collaboration and strong support of the Swiss Development Corporation SDC as well as the Nigerian government. Nigerians in Diaspora in Europe are expected to use this Institute to channel their know-how to the Nigerian youth. Also, the recognition of the know-how of the Diaspora by African political leaders will also encourage the return of some of them to Africa. Thus, instead of hoping of a technology transfer from the North to Africa, this Diaspora of gray matter will assist in the transfer of knowledge. This transfer of technology on the continent will allow the qualitative leap in Africa in the knowledge economy. It will also help to raise the level of education by facilitating access to the same expertise to engineers, researchers and professors from universities and research centers in Africa. The brain drain will be comparatively slowed compared to the massive flow that we are witnessing in the present time. In fact, an estimated 23,000 university leavers leave Africa each year and it costs about \$ 4 billion to the continent.



According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), more than 300,000 African professionals are living outside of Africa and other highly qualified Africans leave the continent each year without any guarantee of return. Generally the Diaspora in developing countries is the second largest source of foreign currency and in some countries; remittances have become the primary source of foreign exchange taking over public aid to development to these countries.

In 2004, the transfer of funds from the diaspora in developing countries, especially in Africa, amounted to \$ 126 billion. During the same period, foreign direct investment flows were around \$ 165 billion, while official development assistance in the same year was estimated at \$ 79 billion. If we add to these remittances through official channels to the remittances by unofficial means, one quickly realizes that the African diaspora in general including that of Europe is a major strategic resource for Africa and its development.

2.2 Human Capital:

The African Diaspora constitutes a human capital and a necessary resource that African leaders and those of host countries should definitely seek their expertise for serious take off for the development of Africa. Thus, they can effectively participate in the prosperity of the black continent. It is up to political leaders to have a vision of the future or a real plan of action to benefit more from the expertise of its strong diaspora scattered around the world. These Africans in Europe as the rest of the world want to make their contribution to building a rich and prosperous Africa within one or two generations. Like all Africans on the continent, the African Diaspora would like to see Africa play a significant role in the 21st century in the course of world affairs.

2.3 Educational Capital:

The educational system in many African countries is obsolete because it is modeled on the Western model of the colonial era. They no longer meet the requirements of a changing world of today and the challenges of the current States of the continent to support the population growth, political, economic and social reforms in the context of sustainable and integral human development. Yet we know that education is the foundation of freedom. This is the base of any attempt to struggle for justice and improved living conditions. As long as a people is less educated or poorly educated, it will remain difficult for them to work effectively to the harmonious development of the country. Universities and engineering schools in Africa do no longer meet their mission serving as centers of teaching and research as well as development support. Research centers that exist do not always value the results of research to enable Africa participate in the scientific and technological adventure worldwide. This is one of the reasons why the continent's share of world scientific output decline from 0.5% in mid-1980s to 0.3% in mid-1990s. The brain drain to the West digs further this imbalance because they are not asked to provide their know-how in science and technology. The financial resources available to research teams are insufficient. Finally, researchers in Africa who conducts different research works are easily found, but researchers in Africa that actually triumph in findings are not always found. Hence the importance of involving the African intellectual diaspora in the development of research centers of excellence and a quality education system. This desired education system must pass through a thorough education system reform both at primary, secondary and tertiary levels. Intellectual diaspora has the advantage of operating in an environment where education at all different levels of the education system is constantly improving.



This teaching has trained competitive graduates and skilled workers, able to support the industry by providing the public with innovative products. The exiled African know-how can therefore assist, for example, in reviewing different teaching programs in Africa to give them good content that meets the requirements of a continent that would also align with modernity playing significant roles in science and technology. Given the limited financial resources of the different countries of the continent to provide competitive universities, it would be desirable for them to unite their energies to create regional universities of science and technology. Thus, each university will have advanced equipment where the cream of the best students from the various countries of the region will converge to study. Then, for the training of these students, countries in each region will be able to tap upon the expertise of the best academics in the diaspora in their region or other parts of Africa to participate in teaching.

2.4 Scientific Capital

In terms of research, African countries can create critical mass, clusters or centers of excellence for research. Depending on the interest for research and their application to the development of African countries, African countries can work together to create centers of research, for example a center of research in mathematics and computer science in South Africa, a center for medical research and Biotechnology in Cairo, a center for research in agronomy and agroforestry in Nigeria, a center in mining and oil exploration in the DRC, or expansion of the Centre for Research on Africa and the Mediterranean (CERAM) in Morocco, an African University Hospital in Luanda that coordinates and centralizes research and work in other African countries with the Departments of Anesthesiology, Pharmacology, surgery, child and adolescent, gynecology and obstetrics, imaging and science of medical information, community medicine, genetics and laboratory medicine, clinical neuroscience etc. ..

The best African luminaries in the diaspora in different research fields will be asked to join the different research teams. Thus, the results of the research will profit all African States and assist them gradually to improve living conditions and lives of citizens. According to the scope of national wealth or gross domestic product of each country, financial resources will be mobilized for the equipment and operation of various research centers. This policy has the advantage of establishing good universities and well equipped research centers. These academic structures or research may attract intellectual diaspora to lend their expertise and know-how to the development of Africa. It is in this spirit, for example, that Europeans are determined to create near Geneva, the European Centre for Nuclear Research (CERN) where all European physicists in the field, among the brightest from all over Europe, are found to do research. Africa that is almost non-existent in the field of scientific and technical research must adopt a similar policy to provide at least research centers and universities with high reputation in the eyes of the world. Such union will enforce Africa and extend its influence in the international community.

This African research policy has the advantage of attracting its gray gold mine in the West to join these scientific and technological challenges for the continent's development. Many intellectuals of the diaspora in Europe and North America, Central and South, for example, expect such initiatives by African leaders in order to make them more useful to the progress of the continent. It also requires a real commitment in Africa to create industrial and science parks which attract intellectual diaspora to invest promoting job creation on the continent.



2.5 Socio-Economic Capital

The African Diaspora will always renew itself through the balance of nature while oil production and other natural resources are limited to a specific period. Diaspora as a resource does not whet appetite as much as natural resources. Diaspora cannot easily be a source of conflict and civil wars as does the black gold generally, with the influence of national and foreign actors. Gray gold can sustainably support the transfer of knowledge and technology in Africa. African intellectual Diaspora can help to improve on good governance and transparency in our States unlike some mineral resources that are at the center of poor governance and waste of resources with supporting outside connections. The Diaspora can also play a lobbying role for Africa in their host countries when well-equipped and supported.

The African diaspora can also help to boost the tourism industry across the continent if incentive policies are established by political leaders to attract them. These incentive policies will encourage the return to the source of the Diaspora in order to strengthen a sense of belonging and the bridge between Africans abroad and the continent of origin. Tourism of the diaspora can generate huge financial returns that will help create many direct and indirect jobs. If the black gold can easily be controlled by the powers that be in Africa, the white gold is difficult to be controlled by Politicians and can be an important relay of information of citizens living on the continent with many circles of decision in the West.

With its mastery of social networking, the African diaspora is a geo-strategic resource for the advancement of Africa and can also play an important role as geopolitical actor. The most important is to be able to use the best to get Africa out of underdevelopment. The role of the diaspora becomes increasingly a hot topic worldwide.

2.6 Implementation of the World Council of the African Diaspora

It is no longer a question for the African political class and the host countries to limit themselves to unfulfilled and often hollow speeches and promises. It is time to deliver concrete actions to make the most of the expertise and resources of its Diaspora with the hope to get out of the vicious circle of underdevelopment. It is thus not enough to create the African Diaspora as the sixth region of Africa on paper. So where is the place of the African Diaspora at the seat of the African Union in Addis Ababa in Ethiopia, in the countries of origin as well as in the host countries? By which process of consultation is the African Diaspora engaged in the process of decision making by the African Union, the African States or the host country? What political integration is there for the Diaspora both at the level of African States and that of the African Union? These are issues that will continue to give us concern because we believe that now is the right time to take concrete action. The African diaspora must unite now by creating an European platform for African Diaspora or even worldwide in order to position itself in the center of the development perspective of the African States. The Council will generally manifest its willingness to participate and contribute its quota in this challenge of the century. It is now left for the leaders of African countries and the AU to associate the Diaspora in a safe and conducive environment towards the emergence of scientific and technological research.

It is in this perspective of ideas, visions and community commitment, that the African Diaspora Council of Switzerland in collaboration with other partners, plans to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Pan Africanism and the African Union in an atmosphere of reflection and projection for the future.



Afrika Diaspora Rat Schweiz, ADRS
Conseil de la Diaspora Africaine de Suisse, CDAS
African Diaspora Council of Switzerland, ADCS

The African Diaspora Council of Switzerland, founded on November 6, 2010 as an umbrella organization of the African diaspora in Switzerland, has been working since March 2011 with the Federal Office for Migration FOM, for the identification and census of African organizations and integration of Africans in Switzerland. Since the beginning of 2013, the ADCS has been working with the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC on how best the African diaspora can participate in international cooperation and development of Africa. More information on ADCS can be accessed at the website: www.africancouncil.ch

We are pleased to express our profound gratitude to the government and people of canton Bern that offered us the state parliament for this ceremony. We appreciate indeed!

L*E*T'S C*E*L*E*B*R*A*T*E A*F*R*I*C*A



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25. Association Centre Culturel Africain de Berne/BE
26. African Link Organisation/ZH
27. African Mirror/BE
28. Soul Light Entertainment/BE
29. Delta State Diaspora Organization, BE
30. Eritreische Vereinigung Ost Schweiz/SG
31. African Diaspora Council of Switzerland

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