

Outcomes Document on the African Diaspora Global Conference: Caribbean Regional Consultation

A. Preamble

Participants from the Caribbean region and Africa met on 27-28 August 2007 in Bridgetown, Barbados, at an African Diaspora Global Conference jointly organized by the African Union (AU), the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the Government of Barbados' Commission for Pan African Affairs and facilitated by the Republic of South Africa, in the context of the Bicentennial Global Dialogue on "Slavery Trade, Reconciliation and Social Justice".

1. The theme of the Conference was: "Fostering Sustainable Global Dialogue with Africa and its Diaspora: The Case of the Caribbean".
2. The Conference was one of six regional consultations leading up to the African Diaspora Ministerial Conference scheduled for November 2007 and the African Union (AU)-African Diaspora Summit planned for 2008. Both the Ministerial Conference and the AU African Diaspora Heads of State and Government Summit are to be held in South Africa.
3. The Conference was graced by the attendance particularly of the Rt. Honourable Owen S. Arthur, Prime Minister of Barbados; the Hon. Dr. Ralph Gonsalves, Prime Minister of St. Vincent and the Grenadines; the Hon. Samuel Hinds, Prime Minister of Guyana; the Hon. Dr. Zola Skweyiya, Minister of Social Development of South Africa; Rev. the Hon. Joseph J.S. Atherley, Minister of State in the Office of the Prime Minister of Barbados; Dr. Edwin Carrington, Secretary General of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM); Ministers and Members of Parliament; as well as members of the Diplomatic Corps, including Ambassador Amina Ali, African Union Ambassador to the United States of America.

4. One of the foremost Pan-African icons, Ambassador Dudley Thompson from Jamaica, addressed the Conference and contributed to setting the historical framework for the deliberations.
5. The Conference gave expression to the Statement and Plan of Action of the South Africa-African Union-Caribbean Diaspora Conference held in Kingston, Jamaica, in March 2005, which, inter alia, called on participants to explore mechanisms for the institutionalization of links between Africa and the Caribbean and for follow up conferences to be held on a biennial basis.
6. In their deliberations, particularly in the Plenaries and the ten Working Groups, participants at the Conference were guided by the objectives that are to inform the African Diaspora Summit, namely:
 - To create sustainable partnerships between the African Diaspora and the African continent through a realizable programme of action;
 - To create and develop sustainable dialogue and partnerships and to strengthen Pan African solidarity for a better future for all in Africa and its Diaspora;
 - To promote South-South cooperation in pursuit of the same objectives and goals on the African continent and throughout its Diaspora.

Accordingly, the Conference made the following observations:

B. Observations:

7. Pursuant to the resolutions of the watershed United Nations World Conference Against Racism (WCAR) held in September 2001 in Durban, South Africa, there is increased momentum towards developing a workable formula aimed at decisively addressing the legacy of the Transatlantic Slave Trade and Slavery as a crime against humanity, as well as the issue of Reparations. Furthermore, the WCAR gave impetus

to engaging the Church as one of the strategic partners to address the historical legacy and multifaceted consequences and impact of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade and Slavery on the fate of African people and people of African descent.

8. Africa and its Diaspora in Europe, Caribbean and Americas are determined to develop concrete and integrated measures that would extricate them from the conditions of underdevelopment. Thus, through Pan-African linkages based on their common history, descent and destiny, in opposition to racial discrimination and colonialism, and the creation of a new Africa, the AU is determined to strengthen the linkages between Africa and the Diaspora. The overall understanding is that the African Diaspora should get directly involved with AU activities and vice-versa, including those regarding integrated development and the sharing of technical and financial expertise.
9. The AU has set up a consultative mechanism to strengthen the linkages between Africa and the Diaspora, admitting historical, cultural, and religious similarities. The effects of slavery and colonialism require a historical analysis to fully understand the root causes and condition of modern day marginalization that the African continent and people and people of African descent continue to suffer. An appraisal of the cumulative effects of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, Slavery, Colonialism and subsequent systems of subjugation and exploitation, should lead us to jointly develop mechanisms on how to reverse such a legacy.
10. Despite the devastating effects of Slavery, the African Diaspora managed to develop its own culture of resistance and survival across the Middle Passage and in the “New World”, including through various forms of “africanisms” and creole languages and culture.
11. The Conference recognised that some social groups are more vulnerable to marginalisation, violence and oppression, *inter alia*, women, youth, children, people with special physical and mental needs, and the elderly.

12. The Conference acknowledges the daunting challenges encountered in the production, diffusion, and utilization of existing information and knowledge that must be addressed, amongst others, through consistent policies of scientific knowledge production and sharing that include the promotion and re-engineering of indigenous knowledge.
13. The Conference recognizes the importance of communication in mobilizing intellectual, professional, technical, business, social, and political capacities for the development of Africa and its Diaspora.
14. The consolidation of the African Agenda takes place within the context of a globalization which has divided the world into two contrasting global villages – one in which the rich of the world are getting richer and more powerful, and another in which the poor of the world are getting poorer and more marginalized, despite their considerable natural, human and other resources.
15. Africa and its Diaspora continue to face the challenges of eradicating impoverishment and underdevelopment, and restructuring the global exercise of political, economic, military and social power, and attaining peace and stability.

C. Recommendations

The following recommendations were made:

Human Resource Development

- Strong emphasis must be placed on African-centred education particularly with a view to reclaiming African space, spirituality, history and culture. A holistic approach to repairing the damage done to the African psyche and personality must be implemented. That implies the need to re-engineer, repackage and disseminate an alternative, more positive image of Africa and the African people based on a

more correct assessment of their outstanding contribution to world history and Civilization as well as to the wealth of nations.

- In particular, there is a need for more books and other educational material to refute the mis-information and distorted image disseminated on the Continent and throughout the Diaspora about Africa's history and the operative value of its cultural heritage and legacy. Indeed, strong emphasis must be put in schools, colleges and universities, on the history and heritage of continental Africa in order to deepen the pride of youth in Africa and the Caribbean in their African Heritage.
- The writing of books for African children specially those of the Africa Caribbean Diaspora, to teach them about the Maafa (African holocaust) and its effects on both African and New World societies.
- Tertiary institutions in Africa and the Caribbean need to proactively promote, coordinate and integrate, their respective training and research programmes in both regions. To effectively do so, a databank of Universities and courses on offer is proposed. This bank could further be supported by a skills data bank which could promote skills mobility and support between the two regions.
- Develop a virtual web-based skills bank with details of individual skills as a repository linked to important national and regional websites such as WWW.CARICOM.ORG and WWW.AFRICA-UNION.ORG.
- Promote African-centred education through standardizing and recognizing certification and qualifications and introducing integrated programmes of teaching and research in regional centres of excellence such as universities, research centres and think-tanks to be put in place and duly resourced and empowered.
- Promote research on the presence of Africans in the Middle East (North-East Africa) with a view to identifying challenges and opportunities facing the

Africans in that part of the world; and developing means for their inclusion in the 6th Region of the AU.

Science & Technology

- Explore the pros and cons of setting up a Low Earth Orbits (LEO). Such an exploration will require the bringing together of leadership of key institutions and researchers to capture the interest in research and develop collaborative efforts. The outcomes of such collaborations should be presented to African governments, AU and CARICOM, for support and financing.
- Promote investment in ICTs that will enable greater communications access.
- Establish mechanisms for research cooperation in priority areas of agriculture, biotechnology and renewable energy technologies.
- Establish a working group to explore technological advances and opportunities in the hydrocarbon exploitation and processing sector and develop a strategic agenda aimed at optimizing the benefits of such exploitation for Africa..

Tourism and Cultural Exchange

- Promotion of cultural exchange activities between Africa and its Diaspora with an integrated schedule of events.
- Execution of MOUs and cultural agreements between countries encouraging educational and cultural exchanges.
- Promotion of the teaching of Pan-African and Caribbean history, drama, dance.

- Integration of African language and linguistics into school curricula.
- Explore mechanisms and measures to facilitate the free movement of people, namely the removal of Visa restrictions.
- Development of a programme of AU- CARICOM sports and cultural exchange and tourism, particularly in the context of the upcoming FIFA 2010 World Cup. Such programmes may include inter- regional sports tournaments and cultural festivals.
- The establishment of African themed museums in CARICOM countries to commemorate the “African Story”. Similar museums may be created on the African continent, with particular focus on the permanence of African resistance against Slavery and oppression. Traveling exhibitions and a virtual version of the museums could be created.

Cultural Industry Development

- Exploit media and cultural processes and products to facilitate the promotion of a common identity, exchange and integration between Africa and its Diaspora.
- Promote comprehensive vertical integration of the cultural industries.
- Create mechanisms and measures to facilitate mutual market access of cultural products, especially film and music.
- Establish a mechanism to protect indigenous African-Diasporan knowledge systems and intellectual property rights.
- Recognition of the Rastafari Movement as historically one of the genuine expressions of Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance and, as such, as an integral part of the African Agenda and cornerstone of African Union; and whose cultural philosophy, actions and assets, particularly with regards to the preservation and promotion of indigenous rights, should be supported accordingly.

- Promote and support a conference of Maroons and Maroon societies with their historical and cultural legacies in the Americas aimed at establishing protection mechanisms protections for their identities, intellectual property rights and economic development.
- Ensure that maroon communities are effectively involved in AU-African Diaspora activities.
- Establishment of a CARICOM-AU working group to operationalise community tourism.

Media and Communication

- Promote strategic African-centered investment in and indigenous ownership of media and ICT and their by- products.
- Establish news and information exchange mechanisms through:
 - Compilation of credible sources of information and coordinated exchange between media houses in Africa and the Caribbean;
 - Establishment of a jointly owned media conglomerate inclusive of television, radio and print medium.

Infrastructure

- Establish direct air & sea links between Africa and the Caribbean.
- Identify optimal locations in the Caribbean and Africa for the establishment of inter-regional transport hubs.
- Create appropriate enabling legislation to accommodate transport between Regions.
- Strengthen through advocacy and additional resource mobilization, starting with African internal resources including those available in the Diaspora, the newly established Pan-African Infrastructure Development Fund.

Women and Gender

- Establish mechanisms to foster working relations between Afro-Caribbean and African women.
- Support the establishment of investment initiatives aimed at job creation and poverty alleviation for women at the margins.
- Share best practices aimed at improving access of women to investment capital.

Haiti

- Recognize the historical place occupied by Haiti in the liberation of African people.
- Increase support from CARICOM and the AU to play a leadership role in peace-keeping role in Haiti.

Youth

- Develop mechanisms for the inclusion of youth in the deliberations of the AU-CARICOM processes; e.g. Youth Parliament, Internships.

Health Sector

- Launch a Global Africa Fund on AIDS for research and mobilization of constituencies such as artists and sports personalities.
- Establish collaborative Research and Development projects in the following priority areas: health (with particular emphasis on HIV, malaria, TB, Cholera and chronic lifestyle diseases) and pharmacology.

Political Cooperation & Solidarity

- Leverage the collective might of the African Union and CARICOM sovereign states in multilateral fora to promote and advance issues of critical importance to

Africa and its Diaspora including Intellectual Property Rights, technology, debt relief, aid policy, health, education, agriculture and infrastructure.

- Harmonize positions in multilateral fora on relevant global issues and negotiate as joint regional blocks.
- Demonstrate collective commitment to initiatives undertaken and translate this commitment into effective and unified follow-up of issues (e.g. to monitor pledges and support arising from the G8) in a spirit of mutual accountability.
- Focus on South-South cooperation and if necessary create a new inclusive forum to discuss issues relevant to Africa and the Caribbean.

Reparations & Repatriation

- Call on AU and CARICOM governments to develop mechanisms to ensure that European, Canada and the United States reparations and repatriation implementation take place without further ado.
- Establish an AU-CARICOM International Reparation Commission comprising government and civil society representatives to study the issue of reparations in a scientific manner with a view to proposing credible options for reparations.

New World, De- colonization and Solidarity

- CARICOM and the AU should support the immediate termination of colonial subjugation of people of African descent in the territories occupied by Dutch, French, British and the US.

D. Follow-up

- Develop institutional mechanisms to concretize new engagement e.g. AU-CARICOM Joint Commission to meet annually to pursue dialogue and determine cooperation programmes e.g. health, education, sport, culture and investment.
- Establish a CARICOM desk at AU Headquarters to monitor and disseminate information on CARICOM; and an AU desk at CARICOM Headquarters to monitor and disseminate information on the AU.
- Establish a Pan-African Agency and Caucus on Reparations as well as a working group for the creation of a Pan-African Institute for Multi-Ethnic Studies based on cooperation between the University of the West Indies, Hull University, the UNISA Centre for African Renaissance Studies, Dakar Cheikh Anta Diop University and other tertiary institutions on the Continent and in the Diaspora.
- Launch an AU-CARICOM Congress of NGOs/ Civil Society to facilitate dialogue
- Urge the AU and CARICOM to act on the Plan of Action of the WCAR Durban conference by, *inter alia*, establishing a High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons to mobilize on the follow-up.
- The differential experience of women and youth should be taken into account in ensuring their inclusion in the implementation of the aforementioned recommendations.