Welcome. The purpose of ADEPT’s monthly webinars is to enable members of the network to speak with each other and share ideas with the Director of ADEPT.

*Haja Bally, ADEPT*

**ADEPT’s RECENT ACTIVITIES**

Gibril Faal introduced himself as a founding Director of ADEPT, who has been chairing the monthly meetings over the 20+ months since ADEPT’s inception, and outlined the practical steps the AU is taking to make real the idea of the African Diaspora becoming the Sixth Region of the African Union. In 2014 ADEPT was created by AFFORD for transitioning a project to define, test and build a structure for implementation. This was in part to create a permanent platform to be based in Brussels; the permanent phase is now beginning with the formal registration of ADEPT as a legal entity (nongovernmental organisation) in Brussels; ADEPT is finalizing recruitment of a team to its new bureau in Brussels. Applications have been received from networkers wishing to be legal members of the association in addition to members of the network; membership forms are located on the website or can be requested from ADEPT by email. The handover period in which AFFORD will support ADEPT in setting up offices in Brussels will be over the next three weeks, and Gibril Faal will continue as a Special Advisor in an advisory role after handing over to ADEPT’s new non-Executive Director and Capacity Building Manager.

The first AGM will take place next week in Brussels and will take place as a part of the Diaspora and Development Dialogue (DDD), with accredited training for capacity building and dialogue being made available to stakeholders. The Topic for discussion and dialogue at the three day AGM will be Operational Excellence as a framework for implementing SDGs: i.e. how to improve diaspora participation in African Union structures. A speaker from the Senegalese Parliament, the Director General of Senegalese in the diaspora is to address the AGM; 15 members or 105 of the Senegalese Parliament represent the diaspora. ADEPT has decided to fund a representative from at least every country in the EU as well as Switzerland (total of 30) to attend the AGM. ADEPT recently partnered with the African Diaspora in the EU for Global Diaspora Week held in Brussels.

*Gibril Faal, outgoing Director of ADEPT*

In 2005 the idea of the African Diaspora being the Sixth Region of the African Union was agreed; subsequently a draft framework for representation of the African diaspora in African Union structures and processes is being reviewed which already has a legal spirit. E.g. **the AU Constitutive Act 2000**, (Art. 3 a, d, k, n) & **Protocol Relating to the Establishment of Peace and Security Council of the AU, 2002**, (Art. 18) make reference to the African Diaspora.

**Statutes of the AU’s The Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC), 2011** make reference in: (Art. 2.2) Objectives to forming partnership with the African diaspora; (Art.3.3) composition of the ECOSOCC is inclusive of social and professional groups in the African diaspora; (Art.4,5,6) membership 20 seats of the ECOSOCC are allocated to the African diaspora.

**The Charter for African Cultural Renaissance, 2006 -** Part 8 (Arts. 32 & 33) asserts “ties between the African Union and African Diaspora must be strengthened (…) seeking solutions to assist the African diaspora develop Africa.” (see also Arts 6. & 7)

**The African Youth Charter, 2009 (Art.21) -** Encourages young people to engage with their countries of origin.

**THE ROLE OF THE AFRICAN DIASPORA WITHIN AFRICAN STRUCTURES AND PROCESSES**

**The Citizens and Diaspora Directorate (CIDO)** operates within the African Union with the main role to mainstream, support and define the diaspora .E.g*. the African diaspora may be defined as people of African descent who are willing to contribute to the development of Africa, and live outside of the continent (AU CIDO aims to be as inclusive as possible)..*

In 2005 membership of the African Diaspora was agreed to be criteria for granting observer status and accreditation; in defining the African diaspora the Executive Council requested necessary steps be taken for the diaspora to engage in building the AU and ECOSOCC. Senegal presented a paper stating the importance of this; the proposal was accepted that the Commission conduct an in-depth study in diaspora engagement in African development. The first Summit was held in 2012 followed by an Assembly of African Union Presidents who agreed guiding modalities to engage the diaspora and increase their participation. The 2016 Summit focused on the importance of links which are mutually beneficial to the African Diaspora and the AU; facilitated steps to include the diaspora in the AU; initiated the draft framework with the selection of the South African applicant (AFFIRM) to review treaties; created guiding principles for the framework; promoted public consultations.

**CONTEXTUALISING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE AFRICAN UNION AND THE AFRICAN DIASPORA**

The Pan African spirit was initiated from the diaspora because whether by blood or soil a lot is shared with African peoples on the continent of Africa. Pan Africanism provided political and economic support e.g. remittances are the lifeline for many African families. Social aspects include that the World learnt about Africa, its culture, history etc. through the diaspora.

**Basic Guiding Principle**

The African Diaspora is central to a mutually beneficial relationship with the African Union; this includes grass roots organisations involvement in the Pan African Parliament and CIDO; the rights of young people should especially be promoted.

**Existing Mechanisms for Diaspora Participation**

Legacy project (process) e.g. development of a marketplace

ECOSOCC

Proposal to create a consultative membership to the AU: Consultative Act 2000 aims to facilitate common African values by promoting and developing partnerships.

***What does consultative membership mean for the African diaspora?***

* *Appointment of permanent representatives to the AU*
* *Full participation in African Diaspora Summits*
* *Selected participation in African Union Summits*
* *Access to African Union documentation relevant to the African diaspora*
* *African Diaspora Investment Fund and the funding of the AU*
* *Selected participation in meetings of organs of the African Union e.g. The Permanent Representatives Committee (PRC) & EXEC*

**Political** **Economic**  **Social**

*Intergovernmental cooperation outreach*

*Standing agenda items on the AD & ADS increased programs*

*Regional relevance economic partnership academic*

*Migration (access to AU passport) programs*

*AU Parliamentarians mobilisation of capital & employ. & vol. opps.*

*“Africa Houses” partnerships trans-justice programs*

Africa Houses are to be established in countries outside of the continent, with significant AD populations; and are proposed to be meeting places for members of the African Diaspora, e.g. to share ideas. Article 33 … states the AU should take necessary measures (…) for the promotion of positive African values etc. more than one Africa House can be established within a country but they should work together and engage in matters of dialogue of relevance to African and the 6th Region; e.g. five houses located in the UK would require a Head of Africa Houses selected on a rotational basis. It is much easier for the AU to engage with three Africa Houses and one network than with 60 diaspora organisations in one country. Africa Houses can also be a place where diaspora organisations can meet and amplify their voices in their work.

THREE MAIN (RELEVANT) CHARTERS

* Statutes of ECOSOCC
* African Youth Charter
* Charter for African Cultural Renaissance

***Eiman Kheir, AU-CIDO***

***Q & A***

What is the danger of duplication in terms of the Diaspora Investment Fund?

To have a fund that supports regional infrastructure, energy, education, etc. where the diaspora becomes the AU’s partners.

What counts as contribution?

* Sharing knowledge
* Speaking about Africa
* Being a participant in cultural festivals
* Does not have to be financial

AU/AD Citizenship

The Rastafari community were often not previously allowed citizenship in AU countries they had returned to; Ghana and Ethiopia have recently conferred citizenship to a lot of people from these communities settled in their respective countries. It is proposed AU certification could assist the process of integration until citizenship is achieved.

ECOSOCC allows 20 seats from the diaspora; currently to be a member 50% of funds must be from within the AU- therefore ECOSOCC is doing an in-depth study as to how to facilitate this process.

What help will the AU give to its 6th Region, especial those who need social protection?

CIDO takes up communications of ill-treatment of members of the African diaspora anywhere; there are mechanisms to support the communications from the diaspora, once a letter or request has been received it can be acted upon. CIDO flags up issues host countries may not be aware of, and attempts to influence policy. CIDO attempts to create networks which support development of Africa, rather than country specific networks. E.g. Diaspora Focal Point Workshops have been held why dual nationality is important, currently within the AU one can only hold one nationality. AU CIDO is therefore responsible for the safety of the African diaspora already.

Sharing Digitised Information

Local chapters can assist in dissemination information e.g. on the draft framework, and constructive criticism and other feedback welcome. Some projects already make good use of the internet and other electronic means, but AU communications could be more digitised. AU CIDO is in the process to creating a Facebook page to better engage with the diaspora. Bear in mind trust issues between diaspora organisations and member states can become sensitive once we start speaking of human rights and governance.

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