AFRICAN UNION TECHNICAL WORKSHOP ON THE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE DIASPORA
2-5 JUNE 2004
PORT OF SPAIN, TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

TW/Diaspora (I)

GENERAL REPORT

AFRICAN UNION TECHNICAL WORKSHOP ON RELATIONS WITH THE DIASPORA: TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO, 2-5 JUNE 2004

PREFACE/EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

i.   The Commission of the African Union, in collaboration with the Foundation for Democracy in Africa and the Emancipation Committee of Trinidad and Tobago, convened the AU Technical Workshop on Relations with the Diaspora, in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, from 2-5 June 2004. The choice of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago (T and T) as the venue of this meeting was a tribute to the late Sylvester Williams, a native son of T and T and organizer of the first Pan-African Conference, held under his leadership in Westminster, England, in 1900.

ii.   The Technical Workshop was convened in terms of Executive Council Decision on the Development of the Diaspora Initiative in the African Union (Ext./EX/CL/5(III), adopted in Sun City, South Africa, in May 2003, to address the following issues:

   a.   Definition of the Diaspora;
   b.   Role of the Diaspora in reversing the African braindrain in line with NEPAD recommendations;
   c.   Modalities for the creation of a Diaspora Fund for investment and development in Africa;
   d.   Modalities for the development of scientific and technical networks to channel the repatriation of scientific knowledge from the Diaspora to Africa, and the establishment of co-operation between those abroad and those at home;
   e.   Establishment of a Diaspora database to promote and facilitate networking and collaboration between experts in their respective countries of origin and those in the Diaspora.

iii.   Delegates representing Africa, the Caribbean, Central and South America, Europe, Canada and the United States attended the workshop. Recommendations and suggestions from other Diaspora initiatives, such as the IRADAC (Institute for Research into African Diaspora and the Caribbean), Africa Strategic Studies Group (AFSTRAG) Conference in New York and London, the Afro-Neth Conference in Netherlands, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), *Return of Qualified African Professional Programmes* and the Council for Development of Social Science

Research (CODESRIA)/Penn State University on the Diaspora and the Diaspora African Forum in Ghana, were also presented for discussion during the workshop. The Workshop was opened by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, Mr. Patrick Manning, who expressed his country's gratitude for having been chosen to host the technical workshop, and whose speech raised both the historical linkages between Africa and Trinidad and Tobago, as well as the future linkages which could bring tangible benefits to both parties.

iv.   Representatives of the AU Commission briefed the participants on the AU's Diaspora Initiative and other aspects of the AU, including its Vision and Mission. The AU sees the Diaspora Initiative as a partnership, which could bring benefits to both sides – i.e. to Africans living in the Diaspora as well as those living on the continent. Not all these benefits are, or should be construed as, material – they include spiritual and ideological benefits to the African Diaspora, and vice-versa. The partnership could bring about greater south-south co-operation in international fora. But it was stressed repeatedly that, unless the relationship between Africa and the Diaspora is conceived reciprocally, it would not be sustainable.

v.   The bulk of the time at the workshop was allocated to working group discussion, in which the working groups made recommendations based on the Executive Council Decision; these recommendations would later be submitted to policy-making organs.

vi.   The recommendations ranged from a definition of the Diaspora for AU operational purposes, and concrete steps that could be taken to put such a definition into operation, to the establishment of an investment fund and a Pan African Mutual Fund and a Pan Africa Bank.

vii.   One of the biggest challenges facing the AU, and which was repeatedly raised by participants at the workshop, was lack of knowledge of what the AU is and does. The AU has set for itself the goal of developing a people-centred organization, which would incorporate the views and address the needs of all its peoples, both inside Africa and in the Diaspora. However, to do this requires, as a first step, raising the awareness of ordinary African about what the AU is and what it does. Thus one of the key recommendations that emerged was that the AU should work with the Diaspora, at both government level (especially with those Black nations of the Caribbean) as well as civil society level, to develop programmes and projects that would popularize its work and increase public awareness of the AU.

viii.   A multitude of strategies is available, including encouragement of curricula reform to include courses on Africa and the Diaspora in education systems, from early education through post-graduate studies, the use of information and communication technology to both communicate and disseminate information, the use of existing institutions and structures, instead of establishing new ones, to help to popularize the AU, for example the use of existing African diplomatic missions in countries with significant Diaspora communities, as "honorary consuls" of the AU. The AU should consider inviting Diaspora representatives to its official meetings, and should consider having a standing item on the Diaspora at each ordinary summit meeting.

ix.   It was also agreed that the Technical Workshop was an important event in the further development of the AU's relations with the Diaspora, and it was recommended that the AU Commission make this a regular event, which could be rotated throughout the Diaspora.

x.   The Western Hemisphere is the most advanced region in terms of its relations with the AU. This is because of a combination of its size, and the fact that the AU's initial efforts were directed here. However, the participants constantly reminded the AU that there do exist other significant Diaspora populations, in Europe and in Asia, and that the AU should invest more effort into their organization, and the establishment of regional networks and/or secretariats in these regions.

xi.   The recommendations are included in the report, and the AU Commission has now been set the task of translating them into concrete, actionable policy recommendations and programmes.

I. OPENING SESSION

1.   The Chairman of the opening session, Dr Jinmi Adisa of the Commission of the African Union, welcomed participants to the Technical Workshop and thanked the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, Mr Patrick Manning, for taking time off his busy schedule to attend the opening session. He conveyed to Mr Manning the greetings of President Alpha Oumar Konare, the Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union, who was unable to attend due to other pressing matters that claimed his attention in Addis Ababa.

2.   Dr Adisa noted that the workshop represented a milestone in the development of the AU's Diaspora agenda because it would produce a framework policy document for the AU. He observed that African leaders are committed to the incorporation of the Diaspora into the mainstream of the AU, and the Technical Workshop had the responsibility of identifying how best to give meaning to this agenda. He then called upon Mr Fred Oladeinde, President of the Foundation for Democracy in Africa (FDA), to make some introductory remarks.

3.   Mr Oladeinde observed that the Western Hemisphere African Diaspora Network (WHADN), of which he was a founding member, was an African Union initiative launched in 2002 in Washington D.C. to harness the collective talents and resources of the African Diaspora in North America, the Caribbean and Latin America. The AU provides the institutional framework to support the African Diaspora's engagement with the African continent, but the collective commitment to the task of Africa's rediscovery and renaissance lies in the efforts of Africa and its Diaspora.

4.   Mr Patrick Manning, Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, welcomed all the participants on behalf of his Government, expressing his appreciation of the choice of Trinidad and Tobago for such an important and historic workshop.   The African Diaspora is global in character, with African descendents spread throughout the world.   The African Union's initiative to reconnect with its Diaspora is thus a way for Africa to examine its relations with people and countries all over the world. Integration and cooperation are key to development, and it is this approach that would guide the African Union's attempt to rid the continent of the remaining vestiges of slavery, colonialism and apartheid. It is through integration that Africa can address the social and economic ills that affect the continent and secure its rightful place in the global economy and the global order. The workshop

thus provided an opportunity for the African Diaspora to engage in the creation of the new kinds of linkages to meet the challenges of accelerated growth and development.

5.   H.E Mr Buba Tekuna, Acting High Commissioner of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, then made some remarks. He noted the eagerness among Africans in the Diaspora to understand more about the African Union. Fora such as this workshop play a role in confronting and dispelling the negative images of Africa portrayed in the media. Mr. Tekuna welcomed the contributions of the Emancipation Support Committee in the organization of this workshop, and paid tribute to the Government of Trinidad and Tobago for hosting it.

6.   Dr Jinmi Adisa then delivered some opening remarks on behalf of H.E. President Alpha Konare, Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union. He expressed the Chairperson's gratitude for the presence of the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago at the opening of the workshop, noting that the presence of the latter re-affirmed the "handshake across the Atlantic" between Africans on the continent and in the Diaspora. This workshop aimed at building a framework, which would help to transform the history of separation marked by the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade into a beacon of hope and promise.

7.   The AU's Diaspora Initiative urges Africans throughout the world to transform their collective legacy of colonial heritage and common suffering into bonds of spiritual kinship as well as a common reference point for combining efforts, forging a dynamic global identity and building a platform for partnerships that would assure security, stability, development and cooperation.

8.   Dr Adisa stressed that the Constitutive Act establishing the African Union was explicit in its intentions to create a people-oriented African community to foster solidarity and cohesion among African peoples wherever they may be. The ultimate goal was to promote active mobilization of all segments of African society, including the African Diaspora. The AU therefore sought to enlist the Diaspora as an integral part of its asset base, to energize the demand for development and to promote and sustain its unique, dynamic global identity.

9.   Dr Adisa then noted that the objectives of the workshop, as outlined in the Decision of the Executive Council decision adopted in May 2003, included consideration of the following issues:

a) The definition of the Diaspora;
b) The role of the Diaspora in reversing the brain-drain in line with NEPAD priorities;
c) The modalities for the creation of a Diaspora fund for investment and development in Africa;
d) The modalities for the development of scientific and technical networks to channel the repatriation of scientific and technical knowledge from the Diaspora to Africa, and the establishment of cooperation between those abroad and those on the continent;
e) The establishment of a Diaspora database to promote and facilitate networking and collaboration between experts in their respective countries of origin in Africa, and their counterparts in the Diaspora.

10.   Dr Adisa re-affirmed the importance of a spiritual bond as a support system for collaboration. He noted that the success of the Diaspora Initiative would depend, in large part, on the effort that the Diaspora was willing to invest in this enterprise. However, investment of effort would only be useful in a framework that set clear, achievable goals, well-defined paradigms, and appropriate structures and mechanisms to facilitate success in the pursuit of this common endeavor.

11.   In his vote of thanks, Mr Khafra Kambon thanked the participants and the dignitaries for attending the Workshop, noting the honour granted to the Emancipation Support Committee and for Trinidad and Tobago to host such an important and historic event. He thanked the Prime Minister and the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, for their support with the logistical preparations for the Workshop. The session was then brought to a close.

II.   PLENARY SESSION I: DEVELOPMENT OF THE AU'S DIASPORA AGENDA

12.   Deputy Minister Maria Barbosa of Brazil chaired this session. She emphasized the importance of mutual interaction between the African Union and the African Diaspora. She then introduced the speaker, Dr Jinmi Adisa, and invited him to take the floor.

13.   Dr Adisa began by outlining the evolution of the African Diaspora programme within the AU's work agenda. The experiences of Africa's linkages with the Diaspora,

from the slave trade to the civil rights movement and beyond, provide the backdrop to Africa's current engagement with the African Diaspora.

14.   The first official contact between the AU and the Diaspora occurred in December 2002, with the establishment, at a meeting in Washington D.C., of the Western Hemisphere African Diaspora Network (WHADN), as an outcome of the first African Union – African Diaspora Forum. Subsequently, in May 2003, the AU's Executive Council adopted a decision calling for the development of a structured process, and institutions, for a sustained collaboration between Africa and its Diaspora. The decision also called for the development of an agenda with measurable targets linked to the challenges of development. The relations developed should be reciprocal and should offer both material and non-material, or symbolic, forms of support. The challenge facing the AU, Dr Adisa stressed, was to develop a comprehensive and systematic architecture of collaboration between Africa and the African Diaspora.

15.   Dr Adisa then repeated the questions that the participants at this workshop need to address. How should the Diaspora be defined? What should be the associated rights and privileges of the Diaspora? How is Africa to harness the resources and skills of the Diaspora to reverse the brain-drain? What should be the role of modern technology in harnessing these skills and resources? What incentives could and should be granted to both sides in this relationship? What should be the modalities for collaboration, the partnerships and networks, between the AU and the Diaspora?

16.   He suggested that the discussions on the definition of the Diaspora should take into account the different "layers" of the Diaspora: the "continental Diaspora", who have returned to Africa to make it their home; the "external Diaspora", which lives outside the continent. The latter may be divided into the "ancient Diaspora" which traces its roots to the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, and the "modern" Diaspora that have recently migrated.

17.   The floor was then opened for discussion. A recurrent theme raised was the question of definition of the Diaspora. It was suggested that ideological concerns were important, and that there was a certain danger inherent in the adoption of an "ideologically neutral" definition of the Diaspora in the interests of inclusivity. It was suggested that certain underlying principles must underlie collaboration between Africa and the Diaspora. Others, however, felt that it was important to be inclusive as possible, to allow for a reflection of the full diversity of the Diaspora.

18. It was pointed out that a significant amount of research has already been done by intellectuals on conceptual issues related to the Diaspora, and that this research could be put at the disposal of the AU and, indeed, of this meeting.

19. Some speakers cautioned against too great a role being given to conceptual issues and stressed the importance of identifying practical programmes and projects that would further the cause of greater collaboration, starting with projects to tackle the ignorance that existed between communities in Africa and Africans in the Diaspora.

20. In his response, Dr Adisa reiterated that the issues raised were precisely the reason for convening this workshop, and that the AU could not prescribe to the participants what positions they should take.

21. The Chairperson brought the session to a close, reiterating that participants would get the opportunity to further interrogate these issues in the working group sessions.

III. PLENARY SESSION II: BRIEFINGS ON RELATED EFFORTS WITH AND BY THE DIASPORA

22. Mr. Khafra Kambon, Chairperson of the Emancipation Support Committee, chaired the session, which was devoted to briefings by various Diaspora groups on their activities.

General Williams, AFRSTRAG Conferences in New York and London

23. General Williams of AFSTRAG briefed the plenary on the workshops organized by RADAL/AFRSTRAG in New York and London between February and April 2004.

24. The AFSTRAG conferences noted the need for the representation of the Diaspora in the various organs of the African Union, and in ECOSOCC (the Economic, Social and Cultural Council of the AU) in particular. The Conferences also outlined the need for representation by different geographical areas: Oceania, Papua New Guinea and the Middle-East and the need to focus on the challenges of economic

and technological development. The presenter highlighted three key areas as follows:

a) Africa's progress and development hinged on technology for economic self-reliance.
b) Integration and participation of Africans in the Diaspora in Multilateral Organizations such as the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization was important.
c) There should be an annual Heads of State and Government Summit on Science and Technology between Africa and the Caribbean.

Mr Charles Kwenin, IOM

25. Mr. Charles Kwenin of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) noted that the IOM has not developed a definition of the Diaspora. The IOM does, however, work to promote the contribution of the African Diaspora to Africa's development. He noted that population migration had positive aspects that could be utilized for development. The IOM therefore worked with Diaspora associations with the goal of tapping into the Diaspora to promote Africa's development. The IOM has been engaged in a programme funded by USAID to identify about 2500 highly qualified African professionals to transfer their skills to Africa.

26. The "Return of Qualified African Professionals Programme" identified vacancies within the private and public sectors in Africa and then provided the financial and logistical support needed to enable the professionals to return to Africa and provide the required skills. There have also been suggestions from African governments to provide a framework for the short-term return of professionals to fill temporary gaps.

27. Mr Kwenin identified various approaches adopted by the "Return of Qualified African Professionals Programme," including:
a) Virtual Returns: Virtual transfer of skills through the use of information technologies.
b) Repeat Visits: short-term regular visits to Africa to address short-term labor needs while at the same time providing the opportunity for the Diaspora to make informed decisions of permanent return.
c) Investment: This could be through developing formal ways of channeling remittances. In addition Governments need to intensify products for investment.

Mr Hassan Jalloh, Afro-Neth

28.   Mr Hassan Jalloh, from the Afro-Neth, an NGO based in The Netherlands, reported on the Afro-Neth conference held in The Netherlands in December 2003. He observed the positive steps taken by the AU in reaching out to the Diaspora and the opening up of the political sphere in the Netherlands that provided the space for dialogue between the African Diaspora and the Netherlands Government. Dutch policy-makers participated in the conference, and discussed the role of the Dutch African Community in policy development, issues of financial remittances, the role of the Diaspora in the conflict management, and the management of human resources. The conference also considered the need for an African Diaspora Fund that could engage in the development of Africa and Africans in the Diaspora.

29.   The Conference noted the need to shift from a focus in conceptual issues, to the identification of concrete practical steps to engage the African Diaspora in Africa's Development. The Conference addressed 4 main issues:
   a) The need for collective Diaspora voice in policy discussions;
   b) Participation in the development of Netherlands Foreign Policy for Africa;
   c) Mobilization of resources; and
   d) Policy review especially of African policy documents.

30.   Afro-Neth employed various concrete approaches that included:
   a) Facilitation of an Umbrella organization to coordinate the negotiating power of Africans in the Diaspora;
   b) Development of a data base of African Professionals;
   c) Constitution of thematic and country working Groups; and
   d) Building bridges between the African Community in the Diaspora and the Netherlands Organizations and Government.

Professor Paul Zeleza, Penn State University/Codesria

31.   The Council for the Development of Social Science Research (Codesria, based in Dakar, Senegal) commissioned Prof. Zeleza to conduct research on the Diaspora. The study focused on the following areas:
   a) The meaning of the Diaspora;
   b) The Spatial and Temporal dimensions of the Diaspora;
   c) Linkages.

32.   The study, soon to be published by CODESRIA, explores the definition of the Diaspora in terms race, geography, representation and history. To define the Diaspora one needs to explore the debates of what constitutes Africa – competing definitions include the transatlantic, sub-Saharan, continental, pan-Arab and global definitions of Africa.

33.   The spatial dimensions of the Diaspora include a study of the geographical location of the Diaspora that could be categorized into:
   a) Trans-Indian Ocean Diaspora
   b) Trans-Mediterranean Diaspora
   c) Trans-Atlantic Diaspora

34.   The temporal dimensions of the Diaspora entail periodizing the various migrations of the Diaspora. There are thus two temporal dimensions of the Diaspora i.e. the prehistoric streams and the modern streams.

35.   In terms of linkage, there are overlapping Diasporas with six basic forms of linkages i.e.:
   a) Demographic movements
   b) Cultural flows
   c) Economic flows
   d) Political flows
   e) Ideological flows
   f) Flow of images

36.   The goal of the CODESRIA project is to map out the Diaspora in the past 1000 years, its formation and consciousness and the linkages outside the Americas. The specific undertakings will involve global research, publication of a series of monograms and the creation of an archival base from the Diaspora.

Mr Fred Oladeinde, Western Hemisphere African Diaspora Network

37.   Mr Oladeinde provided a broad background of the Western Hemisphere African Diaspora Network (WHADN) as an AU initiative aimed at providing a platform for the African Union to engage with the Diaspora. The choice of the Western Hemisphere was based on the large size of the African Diaspora in the Western Hemisphere.

38.   He noted that the conference, held in Washington, D.C. from 17-19 December 2002, defined the mission of WHADN as the encouragement and facilitation of the use of the collective talents and resources of the African Diaspora in North America, the Caribbean, and Latin America, to support economic development and sustained growth on the continent. WHADN was established as the coordinating network linking the Diaspora and the AU to promote social and economic growth in Africa.

39.   Mr Oladeinde observed that WHADN identified 3 basic objectives to guide its mission, including:

   a) Encouraging and facilitating the enduring cultural, social and economic ties of the Diaspora to Africa
   b) Developing and identifying funding for capacity building
   c) Working with the African Union to create representational mechanisms for the Diaspora within the AU structures.

He noted that WHADN has established regional secretariats in Latin America, the Caribbean, Brazil, the United States and Canada.

40.   The ensuing discussion elicited comprehensive contributions from the participants, and the following recommendations were agreed upon:
   a. Technology transfer, and the contribution of the Diaspora to this transfer, has a crucial role to play in development.
   b. It is important to expand research and use the Diaspora in research institutions to exploit their research for Africa's development.
   c. For the Diaspora to maintain its engagement with Africa, there is need to provide incentives and a relationship of mutual reciprocity.
   d. The Diaspora should refrain from national associations within the Diaspora as this weakened the Diaspora's bargaining power. The Diaspora was, however, encouraged to strengthen the umbrella organizations within the different countries to increase the voice of the Diaspora.
   e. The role of Cuba in supporting Africa through different exchange programmes and through its role in the liberation struggles on the continent, was underscored, and a call was made to ensure its participation in the Diaspora network.

Some participants however, expressed concern about the depth and reach of WHADN among the African-American community in the US and its organizational structure. Within this context, other participants urged the need for development

and consolidation of sub-regional or regional networks as a basis for representation and formation of hemispheric coalitions.

41.   In his response, Dr Adisa noted that the African Union's goal was to provide the mechanisms for participation of all African peoples in the Diaspora and that measures would be taken to address the concerns of the African-American Diaspora.

42.   The session was then brought to a close. Session III was not a plenary session, but merely a session convened to allow participants to break up into four working groups, as provided for in the agenda.

IV.   PLENARY SESSION IV:

43.   This session, chaired by Mr David Comissiong, Director of the Department of Pan-African Affairs of Barbados, discussed the celebration of Africa Day in the Diaspora, and Emancipation Day on the African continent.

44.   Dr Adisa gave a short briefing on the AU Commission's interest in having Africa Day, 25 May, celebrated throughout the Diaspora. He was then followed by Mr Tracey Wilson, who gave a brief summary of Emancipation Day as it is celebrated throughout the former British colonies in the Caribbean. The celebrations, which continue for two months, culminating in Emancipation Day Celebrations on 1 August, are organized in Trinidad and Tobago by the Emancipation Support Committee, and the occasion is used as an opportunity to raise consciousness and mobilize the African Diaspora community. This is done through a variety of communication strategies and cultural events, which bring together African and Diaspora cultural, business and political groups, to explore exchanges and co-operation.

45.   The chairperson then raised the issue of internationalizing Emancipation Day as a corollary to the internationalization of Africa Day. He pointed out that the government of Barbados has already instituted the celebration of Africa Day. One problem with internationalizing Emancipation day was that different countries in the Caribbean and Latin America celebrate their emancipation from slavery on different dates, given their different colonial experiences.

46.   After considerable debate, the following recommendations were adopted on Global Observance Days:

a. The workshop should convey to the Chairperson of the Commission the need to raise the profile of Africa Day within Africa as well as in the Diaspora.

b. It was important to include educational programmes in the Diaspora which would educate children about Africa.

c. The AU should consider changing "Africa Day" into "Pan-Africa Day".

d. There should be a global commemoration of Africa Day celebrations with the active support and involvement of Diaspora formations and communities worldwide. Also, as a mark of reciprocity, the AU should be effectively represented and participate actively in other observances such as the Emancipation Day celebrations in the Caribbean.

e. The Chairperson of the AU Commission should mobilize support in Africa for the celebration of Emancipation Day in Africa, since this day had important implications not only for the Diaspora and its communities, but for Africa as well.

f. The celebration of Global Observance Day do not necessitate making them public holidays. Nonetheless, celebrations could be held on these days, in which the AU and AU member states, and Diaspora states and communities, could send each other goodwill messages and other symbols of support. African diplomatic missions abroad could also hold celebrations which would bring together Diaspora communities.

47. Dr. Adisa then briefed the participants on the forthcoming AU conference on African and Diaspora Intellectuals, to be held in Dakar, Senegal, in October 2004. The AU was exploring ways in which to support African intellectuals both inside the continent and in the Diaspora. The Dakar conference would bring together African and Diaspora intellectuals to explore the ways in which intellectuals, both within Africa and abroad, could contribute to Africa's renewal.

48. After much debate, the following recommendations were adopted on the Conference of Intellectuals:

a. The conference should focus on specific thematic areas, eg. HIV/AIDS, conflict, economic resources, etc., to focus the energies and attention of intellectuals on the real challenges facing Africa in the era of globalization.

b. There exists a sharp cleavage between researchers in Africa and researchers in the Diaspora; researchers need to focus greater attention on the areas of medicine, governance, democracy and the rule of law as one way of bridging this cleavage.

c. The AU should facilitate linkages between African researchers and researchers in the Diaspora.

d. Science and technology are areas of critical importance, which African and African Diaspora intellectuals should address if we are to meet the challenges facing Africa in the 21st Century.

e. The social, political and economic system in Africa is not supportive of research and intellectual production, which is the main reason why so many intellectuals migrate. The AU therefore needs to address these conditions to effect a meaningful return of intellectual production to the continent.

V. REPORTS OF WORKING GROUPS

Working Group 1: Definition of the African Diaspora

Preamble

49.   The African Union has committed itself to providing representation to the African Diaspora in its policy process.

Definition

50.   For this purpose, we recommend that the definition of **AFRICAN DIASPORA** refer to the geographic dispersal of peoples whose ancestors, within historical memory, originally came from Africa, but who are currently domiciled, or claim residence or citizenship, outside the continent of Africa.

51.   This definition recognizes both dispersal and subsequent *reconstitution* of African Diaspora identities in new locations as equally important elements. Therefore, such peoples are committed to the advancement of continental African and Diaspora communities' worldwide.

Recommendations

52.   To these ends, the working group recommends that the African Union consider:

i. That the operationalization of the secretariat for the Western Hemisphere and the establishment of networks in other Diaspora regions (in Europe and Asia-Pacific,

etc) be immediately undertaken, and the creation of their secretariats be facilitated.

This would enable the AU and the African Diaspora to capitalize on the momentum being created, given the overwhelmingly positive responses from African Diaspora communities and institutions to the possibilities of building and strengthening linkages between Africa and the African Diaspora.

ii. That the African Diaspora in their respective regions organize, in cooperation with their regional secretariats, conferences, workshops, and other modes of interaction.

This would enable the development of concrete strategies for projects, programmes and policy proposals.

iii. That encouragement, promotion and support be provided for continued multidisciplinary, focused research on the topics of African Diaspora and its linkages to Africa.

This would enhance our understanding of both Africa and the African Diaspora and enable us to rekindle the psychological, economic, political and cultural framework of kinship that could be harnessed for the tasks ahead.

iv. That the African Diaspora be a standing item on the agenda of the African Union Summit.

This would allow the African Diaspora to feel that its issues and concerns are at the heart of the decision-making process, and would serve as a channel for the AU to disseminate new Diaspora initiatives.

v. That priority be given to the dissemination of information on Africa in the Diaspora and the Diaspora in Africa as they relate to all areas of human existence to its member states, and all African Diaspora regions, including though other formal and informal educational structures and media outlets.

This would contribute to the erosion of the often artificial and antagonistic barriers that exist among these communities, fostered by media distortions and mis-education of Africans on the continent and in the Diaspora.

vi. That a particular effort be made for the popularization of Africa and the African Diaspora through education, arts and culture.

This would strengthen the unity of Africa and the Diaspora, as art and cultural practices play a critical role in the construction of identities.

vii. That African Diaspora Legal scholars, who are experts in international law as it relates to the African Diaspora, should be included in the process of translating this policy document into legal text.

This would allow the new scholarship on critical law theory pertaining to Africa and its Diaspora to be embedded in the formulation of legislation and policy.

Working Group 2:
Role of the Diaspora in Human Resource Development

Recommendations

53.   The Group put forward recommendations on the role of the Diaspora in human resource development in three key areas:

- Resources (Skills Bank)
- Reversing the Brain Drain
- Development of Scientific and Technical Networks

54.   The Group also agreed that whatever initiative are taken, they must be anchored on the following key considerations:

- Creation of a strong and positive identity for Africa for Africans and for peoples of African descent
- Recognition of the Diaspora as a Broad and Strategic Constituent
- Utilization of Diaspora resources to strengthen and sustain existing local institutions
- Development of new institutions to give guidance and support as needed to this venture.
- Positive marketing of Africa as an investment opportunity destination.

55.   For the Diaspora to meaningfully contribute to the attainment of the goals of human development in Africa the following policy recommendations were suggested:

a) Resources/ Skills Bank:

56.   The Resource Bank should serve as the integrating platform upon which all other aspects of the Diaspora development and mobilization of its resources, both organic and virtual knowledge, could be shared and expanded.

<u>Recommendations:</u>

i.   The AU should facilitate the development of a template for identifying resource needs at both regional and national levels. Such an initiative would allow for effective organization of data, and make the database user-friendly. The AU may consider using consultants or experts in developing this.

ii.   The AU should conduct an inventory of existing human resource databases of the Diaspora. The AU should consider using existing organizations both within and outside Africa. The AU should encourage Member States to commission country-specific inventories of existing databases as these relate to Member States. Results of the inventories should be made publicly available, via the Internet, print media, and other electronic means.

iii.   The AU should organize the data thus collected into a Central Diaspora Skills Resource Bank. This database should support information for both individuals and corporations. The AU may consider adopting an existing database platform within the Diaspora.

iv.   In considering the magnitude of establishing and managing the database, the AU should consider it as a separate entity with a separate group to govern it. The AU may consider creating a new entity or strengthening any one of its existing organizational structures to support it.

v.   The AU should ensure that information in the database is publicly accessible.

vi.   Long-term sustainability of the Resource Database should be evaluated in recognition of the cost of hosting, ongoing maintenance and other support services. AU may consider an affordable fee based access for certain retrieval services users.

vii. Information within the database should be protected and secure.

b) Brain-drain:

Recommendations:

i. Brain Drain reversal should not be reduced to the physical return of people who have migrated from the continent, but should include access and effective utilization of their skills and knowledge regardless of geographical location.

ii. The AU should facilitate the development of a range of policies, at national and regional levels, to encourage the relocation (both temporarily and permanently) of skilled people from the historical Diaspora. The AU may wish to consider a continent-wide entry card for the Diaspora.

iii. The AU should promote, among Member States, a commitment to creating an enabling environment to stem the continuous outflow of people. (AU should encourage Member States to formulate policies to address root causes of migration.)

iv. The AU should encourage Member States to design programmes, including a range of incentives to attract skilled persons who have migrated, to return to their country of birth or to any other country on the continent on varying lengths of contracts, depending on needs and availability, or to return permanently. (Ongoing contact with the migrants, utilizing existing associations in their countries of residence, could strengthen attachment to the continent and create the basis for the incentives to work in Africa, or for persons with skills to consider retirement in Africa through existing programmes such as MIDA, TOUKTON, short-term teaching-via-Partnership through institutional exchange programmes, internship programmes for the youth /students, the establishment of an AU Volunteer Corps.)

v. The AU should design programmes to effectively utilize the skills and knowledge of Africans in the Diaspora.

vi. The AU may consider encouraging the use of existing programme such as: distance learning programmes, sharing of research and knowledge of the

Diaspora, building knowledge networks, using the skills in the Diaspora to monitor international trends at the global level, and identifying the training needs to meet current and future challenges.

vii. The AU should take the lead in a campaign to extend the concept of the Brain Drain Compensation Fund, recently been adopted in the area of health professionals (and which was led by the AU), to other professional fields such as IT, engineering, teaching, etc.

viii. The AU should facilitate the creation of linkages between African universities and universities in the Diaspora, to further encourage the exchange of information, knowledge and research, including student exchanges and joint publications.

ix. The AU should encourage Member States to utilize the skills of the Diaspora in the formulation of development programmes.

c) Science and Technology:

57. There is an urgent need for a Science and Technology (S&T) policy in Africa that would integrate Diaspora knowledge assets with indigenous continental S&T knowledge. The outcome of this policy would be to strengthen existing capabilities where appropriate, and to create new institutions and mechanisms to enable S&T to play its pivotal role in development process.

Recommendations

i. The AU should facilitate the assessment of the current Science & Technology Policy to encourage the transfer of Diaspora knowledge assets. The role of the Member States should be to develop national policies that would enable them to be a catalytic role in developing partnerships with the non-government S&T sector.

ii. The AU should develop a template for Science & Technology that would promote and protect the exchange of information. The template would be designed to foster closer cooperation between Diaspora and continental scientists and institutions, and place greater value on research and development and partnerships between research institutions and the private sector)

iii. The AU should determine a suitable institutional structure for the S&T framework. An example of this is the creation of a Center of Excellence and an S&T Advisory Committee.

iv. The AU should recommend suitable strategies for implementation of this S&T policy. The key would be an overall implementation framework, which would determine the role of the key institutions in attaining these goals.

v. The AU should develop a suitable monitoring and evaluation process to allow for the protection of intellectual property.

vi. The AU should encourage development of a framework that will promote ethical research standards.

Working Group 3:
Modalities and resource support including the creation of a Diaspora Trust Fund for investment in Africa

58.	The group reviewed the four assets of the Diaspora: land, labour, capital and entrepreneurship, in defining the modalities for resource support for institutions whose establishment and operations would benefit both the African continent and the African Diaspora.

In support of the Diaspora Outreach Project, the following recommendations were made:

Recommendations

a) Support for Diaspora Projects

60.	The Diaspora should establish organisational networks to execute its projects and programmes through:

i. Membership dues;
ii. Fundraising activities such as concerts, seminars, congresses, Heads of State and celebrity dinners, corporate and philanthropic sponsorships and government grants;
iii. Publications: magazines, books, newsletters and web sites;

iv. Service fees: match-making, trade missions, event management;

b)   Diaspora Charitable Trust Fund

61.   It is recommended that the initial trust fund be established under the auspices of WHADN based in the USA. Over time, additional trust funds would be established in the other jurisdictions. The Trust Fund is conceptualised as a series of endowments beginning with health, education, housing and orphans.

The endowments would be funded in the following ways:

i.   Each African adult both within the Diaspora and on the continent to contribute a minimum of 1 US $ or its equivalent per year.
ii.   African governments, corporate citizens and NGOs both within the continent and in the Diaspora be encouraged to contribute generously to the fund.

Other recommendations

62.   The working group encourages the AU to convey to its Member States the need to create an enabling environment and policy framework to facilitate investment vehicles which support investments in the Diaspora and in Africa. We recommend the following investment vehicles:

- **Pan African Mutual Fund**

Investment in the mutual fund should be encouraged across the board of public and private sector participation with the requisite legislation to prevent control by any one group.

- **Pan African Bank**

This institution is to be established in strategic locations in the Diaspora to facilitate remittances
   - as a depository of assets of Africans in the Diaspora
   - as a lending agency

- **Pan African Venture Capital**

This vehicle would make equity capital available in Africa and in the Diaspora for investment in a range of viable businesses. It would be funded by private sectors, institutions and governments.

Governments are to be encouraged to launch a campaign to educate their communities within Africa and in the Diaspora with respect to the several financial instruments available.

Working Group 4

Modalities for enhancing effective partnerships between the African Union and the African Diaspora and Diaspora participation in ECOSOCC

Recommendations

i.   The AU should be flexible in its African Diaspora partnership structures, goals, and objectives— AU-Regional Community Relations (e.g. Caricom), AU-State Relations (Canada, United States, Brazil, Great Britain, etc.— depending upon the designated region and its demographic characteristics and political climate), and AU-relations with Diaspora communities, populations, organizations, movements, networks, and institutional sectors within states (e.g. NGOs, professional associations, private industries, civil rights movements, media, and educational institutions.

ii.   To promote information-sharing, cultural awareness, intercultural competence, resource sharing and project collaboration between Diaspora regions and the African continent and AU Member States, it is recommended that the AU establish exchange programmes through Professional Associations and Institutional Sectors.

iii.   In coordination with regional Diaspora networks and their secretariats, the AUC should promote faculty and student exchanges through primary, secondary, and university educational systems and professional associations across Diaspora sub-regions, Diaspora regions, and across Diaspora sub-regions/regions and AU member nations

iv.   In coordination with regional Diaspora networks and their secretariats and through respective national, regional, and international professional associations and institutional sectors, the AUC should promote the exchange of business persons, journalists, social workers, lawyers, health specialists, and artists across Diaspora sub-regions, Diaspora regions, and across Diaspora sub-regions, regions, and AU member nations.

v.   In coordination with regional Diaspora Secretariats, the AUC should promote the organization of summits, conferences, workshops, and other public of the which bring together NGOs and/or professional associations and networks, civil rights movements, and state ministries, representing specific major public policy issues which cut across one or more Diaspora Regions and/or Diaspora communities or populations and the continent of Africa or one or more AU member nations. The purpose of these meetings would be to advance recommendations to address policy needs in areas such as HIV-AIDS, literacy and poverty, which disproportionately affect African Diaspora and continental African communities.

vi.   The AUC should develop policies allowing the heads of state of Black nations outside the continent of Africa (in particular the Caribbean) to be included in the deliberations of AU Heads of State Summits and that, in turn, AU Heads of State representatives be invited to Summits of Black nations Heads of State outside of the continent of Africa. The same can be said for reciprocal invitations between African and African Diaspora meetings of professionals, trade associations, and trade unions. For instance, the AU would facilitate and coordinate the appointment of representatives of African professional associations to the executive councils of counterpart professional associations in Black nations and in nations with counterpart national and regional professional associations (both African descent associations and dominant professional associations with African descent caucuses) in areas such as law, medicine, the sciences (social and natural), engineering, the arts and humanities, media, urban planning, rural development, and education, etc.

vii.   We recommend that the AU encourage representation policies for summits, conferences, workshops, and key meetings, which would allow for the coming together of government ministers within specified Diaspora Regions in areas of responsibility such as culture, labor, education, and trade to collaborate with AU

counterpart ministers to address public policy matters of pressing concern in Diaspora regions and sub-regions (as has happened with the recent WTO meeting in Cancún). When and where appropriate, these meetings could include representatives from NGOs, private industries, professional associations, and civil rights movements.

viii.   As in Barbados, the AU should encourage its Member States, as well as African Diaspora nations and non-Diaspora nations with demographically significant African Diaspora populations, to establish governmental offices which design, advocate for, implement, and evaluate polices impacting on the quality of life of African descendent populations within their sovereign borders. Such offices in Diaspora nations and in nations with significant African descent populations should also promote, advocate, implement, and evaluate policies which are in place, to encourage relations between the state in question and AU Member States such as in trade, education, science and technology, health, and social services. Brazil's experience in this regard deserves careful study and, where possible, replication. The starting point should be an AU survey of such offices, their functions, and effectiveness in AU Member States and in African Diaspora states and other states with significant African Diaspora populations.

ix.   The AU Diaspora Initiative should establish criteria for selecting NGOs, private industries, universities, professional associations, and primary and secondary educational systems for partnership in the AU Diaspora Initiative. Regarding NGOs, this refers to the development of selection and evaluation criteria for the twenty NGO positions allotted in ECOSOCC NGOs. Coalitions of NGOs interested in ECOSOCC representation, and which are recommended by regional secretariats to the AUC, must demonstrate capacity to design, implement, and evaluate services, projects, and programmes which (a) improve the quality of life of African and African Diaspora nations, communities, populations, and institutional sectors; or/and (b) promote education and awareness about African and African Diaspora history and other issues; and (c) establish collaborative partnerships with other NGOs, private industries, cultural organizations, Black social movements, and educational institutions. It is recommended that African Diaspora NGOs and coalitions of NGOs interested in being regional consultative partners with the African Union register with their respective regional secretariats; all NGOs and coalitions of NGOs in the Western Hemisphere desiring to participate in the African Union Development of the Diaspora Initiative should register with WHADN as the first step of membership in this movement. The AU should set other selection criteria reflecting its organizational

needs and determine policy on issues such as length of tenure of ECOSOCC NGOs and NGO coalitions and criteria for renewal of tenure as set by formal performance evaluation procedures and standards.

x.   To enable the most effective internet communication in the AU Diaspora Initiative such as the AU/ECOSOCC and other partnership arrangements, the AU should work with WHADN and other partnership regional secretariats to establish an independent, secure, and autonomous internet node in Africa, e.g. in Addis Ababa at AU Headquarters. This entails a financial and technical feasibility study examining issues such as routing, common carrier, billing, and security concerns.

xi.   In order for the AU to develop effectively Africa/Diaspora networks and partnerships in a variety of areas, especially in the Western Hemisphere, it would be necessary to develop a more efficient Africa/Diaspora air transportation capacity in order to provide regular and reliable direct air linkages between Africa and Diaspora areas. This would involve the AU promoting airline transportation-related partnerships with nations, African and African Diaspora businesspersons to develop such airline transportation capacity.

xii.   The AU should mandate Regional Diaspora Secretariats to coordinate and mobilize when needed Diaspora regional associations, organizations, and institutional sectors and to develop programmes to ensure their capacity to engage in partnerships with each other and with associations, organizations, and institutional sectors on the African continent.

xiii. The AU actively should promote the elimination of negative images about Africa, and general ignorance about the continent in Diaspora Regions, through actively partnering with media, educational systems, cultural institutions and sectors such as film, museums, and government cultural ministries, book publishing companies, and other public education venues to develop more positive and constructive public awareness about Africa and Africans. These partnerships could include collaborating with cultural studies programmes of universities with community outreach programmes, developing programmes with major print and electronic media, and working with national teacher associations and associations of universities and colleges to impact the curriculum of public and private primary and

secondary schools and developing collaborative African cultures and histories projects with Black denominations and denominations with significant numbers of people of African descent.

xiv.   The AU should invite the Association of African Universities to sponsor collaborative summits, conferences, and workshops with Diaspora higher education associations and higher education associations with African descent and cultural diversity caucuses to explore educational and academic leadership policy issues of common interest on the continent of Africa and in Diaspora regions and sub-regions. These meetings should lead to the organization of a Diaspora/African universities association, which would be a brain trust that the AU could draw upon to address policy issues on the continent and in Diaspora regions and sub-regions. This association would also develop and mobilize resources for Diaspora/African university collaborative research projects and for designing and implementing projects, which prepare African and African Diaspora youth for high school and college and identify and mentor future generations of professionals and researchers.

xv.   The AU should revisit past OAU concerns about reparations, and explore other similar measures such as compensation funds for lost skills and for historical exclusion from educational opportunities. We recommend this be done through a task force comprised of distinguished continental African and Diaspora African scholars, legal experts, and government policy-makers which would conduct a comprehensive examination of this most critical issue with the goal of generating policy recommendation options for the AU.

xvi. The AU should consider offering Diaspora federal citizenship options and recommend that the AU establish a task force of distinguished scholars and policy makers to comprehensively study this question and offer policy recommendations to the AU Assembly.

VI.   PLENARY SESSION V: VISION, MISSION AND STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK OF THE AU

63.   The session was chaired by Prof. Carol Boyce-Davies of Florida International University. Mr. Mohammed Mustoofa of the AU Commission made a presentation on the Vision and Mission of the AU.

64. Mr Mustoofa began his presentation by explaining the difference between the OAU and the AU.

65. With the establishment of the AU, there was renewed hope that Africa would play an effective role in the global economy and end conflict on the continent. Unlike the OAU Secretariat, which had limited autonomy, the AU Commission is a decision-making organ of the Union.

66. Mr. Mustoofa informed the meeting of the series of consultative meetings that took place at the AU Headquarters involving Member States, staff members of the Commission, and partners of the AU, and which led to the development of the Vision of the AU and Mission of the AU Commission. The AU Commission also developed a Strategic Plan to facilitate the implementation of this vision and mission. To ensure full participation and gain support from the African people, the draft mission and vision statements and Strategic Plan of the AU were placed on the AU website for comments.

67. The main thrust of the AU is to accelerate the political and socio-economic integration of the continent and achieve greater unity and solidarity between African countries. The overall goal is to work towards an integrated, peaceful and prosperous Africa. The vision of the AU is people-centered, and the role of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and Civil Society Organization (CSO) participation is critical.

68. Mr Mustoofa noted that the plan of action of the AU would be implemented at four (4) levels, namely:

- Continental level,
- Regional level,
- Country (AU's Member States) level, and
- Grassroots level, where communities have to play their role in economic and political development.

69. The AU would be expected to act as a think-tank and to play a major role in coordinating and harmonizing the activities between the AU, Member States and RECs.

70.   Mr Mustoofa informed the meeting that one of the important programmes of the AU is NEPAD (The New Partnership for Africa's Development), which promotes the continent's economic growth, political and social governance. The Peer Review Mechanism of NEPAD monitors Member States' performance in the areas of economic, financial and political governance, and promotes accountability and transparency in the implementation of programmes by the AU Member States. The AU, unlike its predecessor, has multiple sources of authority including the Pan African Parliament, the Peace and Security Council, the Assembly of Heads of State and Government, the African Court of Justice and the African Court of Human and Peoples Rights, all of which would also support and monitor the effective implementation of the AU's vision and mission. The AU, unlike the OAU, respects national sovereignty, but reserves the right to intervene in grave circumstances, namely war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity.

71.   He informed the meeting that the AU is in the process of establishing its peace and security architecture, which would include the African Standby Force (ASF) and Military Staff Committee (MSC), both of which would enhance the capacity of the AU to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts. There are other instruments, such as the Lomé Declaration, which provides a mechanism to address unconstitutional changes of government (and which provided the basis for the AU's condemnation of the recent coup d'état in Haiti).

72.   Mr Mustoofa stated that in order for the AU to achieve goals and objectives, it had identified five (5) roles it would need to fulfill. These are:

- Leadership role,
- Advocacy role,
- Change agent,
- Coordination role,
- Harmonization –providing policy framework for Member States.

73.   The following suggestions came out of the ensuing discussion:

a. Transformation is a long-term process, and there is a need to balance demands for immediate action, particularly with regard to conflict mediation (the case of the Sudan, Darfur was discussed in this regard), and the need for institutional transformation.
b. Since there is a negative perception of a lack of commitment by the AU to implement its adopted policies, the AU should put in place mechanisms that

would ensure sincerity and commitment of the AU in achieving its Mission and Vision and to monitor the implementation of decisions adopted by Heads of State.

c. The AU needs to strengthen its outreach strategy. The AU now has an active website and it has a vision of a future African radio station and Television network to sensitize African on the activities, achievements and challenges of the AU. This initiative is also aimed at ensuring that Africa's voice is heard, and that the AU serve as an interface between Africa and the rest of the world. A note of caution was raised: the AU need not necessarily develop its own radio or TV stations; it could use the existing independent media and news agencies, such as SABC, Africa no. 1, Pan African News Agency (PANA), etc. Moreover, there is a risk that an AU radio/TV station would become, or be perceived as, a propaganda tool with little credibility.

d. There is need to develop a coherent communication strategy, which would be responsible for sensitizing the public and disseminating information on AU's activities, to Africans within the continent and in the Diaspora.

e. There is need to challenge RECs and CSOs and other African institutions to effectively market, amongst Africans within and outside Africa, the vision, mission and activities of the AU.

f. There is need to reduce unnecessary bureaucratic processes that delay and affect the effective implementation of the AU decisions.

g. The AU should have representation in the Diaspora; where this is not feasible, it should request that embassies of AU Member States in those countries perform such functions and provide an Officer who would represent the AU.

h. The AU should develop and maintain its own database on trade.

i. There was a long discussion on the AU's activities in the Diaspora and its position toward events in the Diaspora. The very fact that this technical workshop was convened, was viewed as a positive development, for which the AU needs to be commended, and which should continue. In response to questions as to what the AU was doing with regard to the current crisis in Haiti, it was noted that the AU had made unequivocal statements regarding the on-going crisis in that country. However, the AU's activities in this regard were not known by many people, and consequently it was stressed that the AU should take greater steps to popularize its work.

VII. CLOSING SESSION

74.   The closing session was chaired by Mr. Fred Oladeinde, who gave the floor to Ms. Fiona Lortan of the AU Commission, to present the recommendations made by

the four working groups. Ms. Lortan presented all recommendations as outlined in this report.

75.   Following her presentation, the floor was then opened for discussion and the following decisions were made:

i) Based on the recommendations made by the Working Groups, the AU should prepare two documents, namely, a conference report of the deliberations of the Technical Workshop (this present document); and a policy document, which would be presented to the Chairperson of the AUC, and subsequently to the policy organs of the union.

ii) The establishment of an African Investment Fund (AIF) should be given prominence as one of the key recommendations in the policy document to be presented to the Chairperson of the AUC.

iii) The AU and the Caribbean regional secretariat should develop a proposal on the establishment of an AIF, and copies of the document should be sent to the Caribbean businessmen.

iv) In implementing the decisions that would be made by the Chairperson of the AUC, it was proposed that, due to AU's limited capacity and resources, the Diaspora should share the responsibility of implementing them. The AU should also use existing structures and organs to implement these decisions, thereby avoiding the need to duplicate structures.

v) The AU should consider the development of a Research Institute on HIV, to support HIV victims in and outside the continent.

vi) The AU should issue a call to Africans in the Diaspora to celebrate Africa Day, and the AU should consider remaining it Pan-African Day.

vii) The Caribbean states that have not yet started to celebrate Africa Day should be encouraged to do so.

viii)   AU-Diaspora meetings should be institutionalized as a regular item on the AU's calendar of meetings.

76.   In his closing remarks, Mr. Fred Oladeinde thanked all the organizers, particularly the AU and the Trinidad Emancipation Support Committee, for making the workshop a success. He thanked all participants for their contributions and recommendations, which would undoubtedly promote the incorporation of the Diaspora into the mainstream of the AU. He noted that the workshop had succeeded in meeting its purpose and that the deliberations and their outcomes had taken AU relations with the Diaspora to another level.

77.   Dr. Jinmi Adisa delivered some closing remarks on behalf of the Chairperson of the AUC. He expressed the Chairperson's gratitude for the contributions made by all participants and noted that the AU would continue to harness the collective talents and resources of the African Diaspora in Europe, the Caribbean, North America, South and Central America, Oceania and elsewhere. He stated that it was the goal of the AU to provide the institutional framework to support the Diaspora's engagement with Africa. He thanked the organizers and the participants for contributing to the success of the workshop.