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THE AFRICAN DIASPORA CONSULTATIVE PROCESS

(Item proposed by the Republic of South Africa)

The African Diaspora Consultative Process
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1. Pursuant to the postponement of the African Diaspora Summit, South Africa crafted a new roadmap for the hosting of the Summit in 2012. In this regard, and in line with its continued commitment to the hosting of the Summit, South Africa elaborated on the Summit roadmap during the July 2010 AU Summit. The roadmap is predicated on the hosting of Technical Meeting which was to be hosted in November 2010, but however rescheduled for 17 and 18 January 2011. The Technical Meeting will be followed by the Ministerial Meeting to be held back to back with the Summit in the first half of 2012.

2. In this regard, work has commenced, in consultation with the AU Commission, to prepare for the January 2011 Technical Meeting, part of which is the revitalisation of the RCC momentum. The revitalisation process is a mechanism for enhancing the African Diaspora Regional Networks as key pillars of the Diaspora consultative process, and further serve as catalyst towards the Summit and beyond.

Proposed way forward

3. It is against this background that South Africa proposes that the African Diaspora remains the standing Agenda of the AU Summit meetings. This will afford the country, in consultation with the AU Commission to give an update reports in the implementation of Summit roadmap. It is also imperative that, once the roadmap has been fully implemented and the Summit hosted, the AU remains seized with the implementation of the Summit outcomes. The proposed item should be in the Agenda of the Union starting from January 2011 and beyond.

**DRAFT REPORT ON THE DIASPORA INITIATIVE AND
THE PREPARATIONS FOR THE GLOBAL
AFRICAN DIASPORA SUMMIT**

DRAFT REPORT ON THE DIASPORA INITIATIVE AND THE PREPARATIONS FOR THE GLOBAL AFRICAN DIASPORA SUMMIT

Council will recall the discussions of the Assembly of Heads of State and Governments in the course of its 15th Ordinary Session held in Kampala, Uganda, in July 2010 on the Diaspora Initiative. The discussions were supported by the active participation of a delegation of Caribbean leaders from CARICOM countries who presented concrete proposals for cooperation in this regard and the update provided by the Southern African delegation on the status of its preparations towards hosting the African Diaspora Summit.

Consequently, the Assembly adopted Assembly/AU/Dec.319(XV) on the African Diaspora Summit which, inter-alia, took note of the information provided by South Africa on the status of its preparations towards hosting the African Diaspora Summit, commended the efforts made by the Republic of South Africa and the Commission to continue to work closely on the initiative in order to develop an appropriate roadmap and timeline for this exercise. The Decision further requested the Commission to work together with Member States to ensure the successful preparation and conduct of the Diaspora Summit and the advancement of the Diaspora Initiative in this regard.

Since that Decision was taken by the Assembly, the Government of South Africa has continued to work closely with the Commission to determine essential elements of the desired roadmap and appropriate timelines that will enable an effective build up towards the realization of a landmark African Diaspora Summit. These efforts and collaboration remain work in progress as we revive and build up the momentum for the Summit. This report is designed to highlight measures and steps that have been taken to implement the Summit Decision, elicit views and contributions of Member States that can further advance these processes and consolidate plans and programmes of events towards the African Diaspora Summit. It is our expectation that views and contributions provided in the course of Summit processes will enable the finalization of the roadmap and mobilize Member States, the Diaspora and all organs of the African Union to work constructively to fulfil them.

ELEMENTS OF THE ROADMAP

Following consultations with the Commission, we propose a roadmap consisting of the following elements:

a) Preparatory Meeting – 1st half of February 2011

Further to outcome of this Summit, we envisage an urgent preparatory meeting in Pretoria, South Africa between the Government and the Commission to consolidate and finalize the roadmap, and re-energize preparations and momentum for the build-up towards the Diaspora Summit. The preparatory meeting will feed the inputs and decisions of the Summit into the finalization process.

b) Technical Experts Workshop – 2nd half of February 2011

This workshop will set the pace for the revival and acceleration of the momentum for the African Diaspora Summit. It will prepare and review Ministerial and Summit documents of 2007 such as the Programme of Action, Draft Summit Declaration and Implementation Plan, with critical emphasis on bracketed areas and additional elements that could be considered in view of inputs received from Caribbean leaders and developments that have arisen in the context of the development of AU's Diaspora Initiative since the Ministerial meeting. It will also initiate a review of what the upcoming Ministerial and Summit meetings ought to achieve and take stock of issues that have arisen since the last Ministerial meeting in South Africa in 2007, given the impact that these might have on the Global African Diaspora Summit. Finally, the Experts meeting will consider and discuss the programme agenda for the Summit.

c) Establishment and Consolidation of Regional Consultative Networks – March – December 2011

Regional Consultative Conferences took place in various regions of the world in the lead up to the Diaspora Ministerial Conference held in South Africa in 2007. These Conferences were sponsored by the Government of South Africa and were carried out in active collaboration with the AU Commission in Brazilia on April 16, 2007, London, April 23 – 25, 2007, New York on June 22 – 23, 2007, Barbados on August 27 – 28, 2007, Paris on September 12 – 13, 2007. Subsequently a regional consultative meeting was held in Addis Ababa on October 15 – 17, 2007 to marry continental and Diaspora perspectives into a consolidated and integrated framework. The conferences succeeded in mobilizing the African Diaspora behind the AU agenda in general and the Ministerial Conference in particular. There is now a need to institutionalize this process of consultation and mobilization by

strengthening and consolidating the base created by Regional Consultative Conferences through the creation of regional Diaspora networks that would serve as interlocutors for the AU. A truly functional network aggregating 27 States of the Caribbean Community, the Pan-African Caribbean Network has been created on this basis. In the course of this year efforts will be made to consolidate this network and build on this effort by creating new regional networks in Europe, the Middle-East and the Gulf and possibly, the United States via a bridge over the Atlantic Initiative. The process will be supplemented by annual contact and/or consultative meetings with Diaspora Groups where AU has regional offices in New York and Washington. A Washington Pre-Summit meeting in the US is also envisaged as the Summit approaches in late 2011 or early 2012.

d) Developing a Legal framework for Diaspora Participation in the AU – July-October 2011

As the Diaspora programme develops there is need to support the acceleration of AU's work with Diaspora organizations by developing an inclusive mechanism through which the Diaspora can effectively engage and partner with the formal regional structures of the AU. As part of this process, the need also arises to establish the process that would place the relationship between the African Union and the African Diaspora within a legal framework. To this end, a consultative workshop will be held within July to October 2011. The workshop will react to a technical paper presented by the AU and will involve both elements of the Diaspora and state experts and desk officers of African Member States. The outcome of the Workshop will then be submitted for refinement at a retreat of major policy makers, mainly the Permanent Representative Committee of African Ambassadors in Addis Ababa and passed on for consideration of executive policy organ in Council and Assembly as appropriate.

e) Pilot Project of the African Diaspora Volunteer Corps – July-December 2011

There are also plans to initiate an African Union Diaspora Volunteer programme with five cardinal objectives as follows:

- a) Strengthening the true meaning of African Integration by bridging the cultural divide between Africans living on the continent and the Diaspora:

- b) Harnessing the competencies, skills, energies of Africans in the continent and the Diaspora;
- c) Promoting the integrating volunteering as a capacity building measure;
- d) Helping States to build volunteering capacity and define relations with extra-African volunteering programmes and
- e) Facilitating and supporting existing national and regional volunteering initiatives.

The thematic focus areas for AU/VP would reflect the priorities of the AU, Member States and African Communities in need as reflected in a consolidated project document drawn up with support of partners in the UN, IOM, World Bank. A test run for the project will be an initial pilot project in the period leading up to the Diaspora Summit. The priority focus areas will be the health sector and will require recruitment of medium and high level professionals conceived in closed cooperation with the Caribbean Community in line with representations made by Caribbean leaders at the last AU Summit in Kampala, Uganda. The volunteers would be deployed in areas where immediate assistance is required to support processes of post-conflict reconstruction. The volunteers would be in two categories, i.e. specialist who are professionals with technical skills (physicians & nurses, etc.) and community field worker volunteers with general skills needed to address particular needs of the community in which they are deployed. The outcome of this pilot project would guide the launching of a wider African Diaspora volunteer Programme.

f) Emancipation Day Celebrations of 1st August 2011

In furtherance of Decision EX.CL/Dec.277 of the Eight Ordinary Session of the Executive Council of the Union that decided to mark 1st August of every year as Emancipation Day in solidarity with the African Diaspora, arrangements will be made with our brothers and sisters in the Caribbean Community for visible, concrete, effective and high profile celebration of Emancipation Day of 2011. In this context, particular attention will be made to develop a programme for its continuation and sustainability.

g) Follow-up Regional Consultation in the Middle-East and Gulf Regional – October/November 2011

Decision EX.CL/Dec.483 of the Executive Council on the African Diaspora Summit requested the Commission to ensure that the process of organizing Regional Consultative Conferences (RCCs) continues as part of the Implementation Plan to include the African Diaspora in the Gulf, Middle-East, Oceania and other parts of the World where they have not been held. As part of this process, the build up to the African Diaspora Summit envisages a regional Consultative Conference for the Middle-East and Gulf regions between October – November 2011.

h) Building Synergies and Complementarities with National Diaspora Programmes

There is also a need to build symmetries and synergies between the Diaspora programme at the regional and national levels. To this end, the Diaspora Programme will institute a process of consultation between the AU and Diaspora Ministries and desks in the various Member States of the Union to enable inter-operability and mutual self-reinforcements.

i) Outreach Programme – February – December 2011 and after

One pillar of these various efforts would be a continuous and sustained outreach programme for the diverse group of Diaspora communities all over the world.

j) Diaspora Summit – 4th Quarter 2011 or 1st Quarter 2012

All of these programmes would culminate in the Global African Diaspora Summit in late 2011 or early 2012. The proposed dates are designed to enable an adequate foundation and preparatory platform that would establish and revive the momentum that had previously been established and allow for an episodic and successful Summit.

CONCLUSION

The success of this programme would require the strengthening of the relevant arm of the Commission in terms of personnel and adequate budgetary support. It would also require the active support, collaboration and contribution of all Member States of the Union. These processes will gain the required momentum from a decision of this Summit.

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