



CfD

Connections for Development

**Joint EU-Africa Strategy Consultation:
*Responses from a Collection of UK African Diaspora
Stakeholders***

Report by
Connections for Development (CfD)

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Background

At the end of 2005 the European Union (EU) launched a strategy for Africa entitled ‘*The EU Strategy for Africa*’. This was intended to guide the EU’s future relationship with the continent. However, the 2005 EU Strategy¹ for Africa did not consult with African governments, civil society groups and relevant stakeholders.

Other organisation responded to the EU Africa Strategy and commented on the weaknesses in the initial EU Strategy for Africa. These responses appear to suggest that the emerging trends and changes in Africa’s bargaining² position, mainly due to Africa’s new relations with China and India etc and the high demand for Africa’s resources, may have influenced this favourable move for a EU-Africa Joint Strategy to be endorsed in November/December 2007 in Lisbon.

It is the view among some Diaspora stakeholders that this Joint EU-Africa Strategy is also a response to a changed world where globalisation and new security threats mean cooperation between the EU and Africa has to transform in order to meet these challenges. Hence, the need for “*a new strategic partnership and a Joint EU-Africa Strategy (to serve) as a political vision and roadmap for the future cooperation between the two continents in existing and new areas.*”³

The objectives of the new strategy include:

- Strengthening institutional ties and addressing common challenges such as peace and security, migration and the environment;
- Promoting peace, security, sustainable development, human rights, and regional and continental integration in Africa, and to ensure that all the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are met in all African countries by 2015;
- Seeking to jointly promote and sustain a system of effective multilateralism and strong and legitimate multilateral institutions and the reform of the UN system;

¹ See the EU Strategy for Africa (2005) for more information.

² The BOND 2007 Response pointed out this aspect very strongly. The African Diaspora Organisations and individuals who attended the CfD & ADVAD consultation meeting on 29th May 2007 expressed the scientism about EU policies or engagement with Africa.

³ For more information see: Outline for the Joint EU-Africa Strategy, as endorsed by the Ministerial Troika Meeting of 15th May 2007, p.1.

- To facilitate and promote a broad based and wide-ranging people centred partnership such as; empowering non-state actors to play an active role in development and conflict prevention and post conflict reconstruction; and
- Including promoting holistic approaches to development processes, involving all stakeholders in democracy building, and to make this joint strategy a permanent platform for information, participation and mobilization of a broad spectrum of civil society.⁴

African Diaspora & Civil Society Responses

Upon the EU's recognition of the need to involve the civil society in this consultation process, particularly with regards to development issues, Connections for Development (CfD) and African Diaspora Voices for Africa's Development (ADVAD) in collaboration with the British Overseas NGOs for Development (BOND) EU Policy Team held a consultation meeting on Tuesday 29th May 2007 with UK African Diaspora civil society, individuals and interested parties to gather their views on how these stakeholders could influence the Joint EU-African Strategy.

Participants noted that it was essential for UK-based African Diaspora to make their voices heard by preparing a concrete submission and clear a standpoint for the November 2007 Lisbon meeting. The meeting observed that this process has lasting policy implications for Africa and its Diasporas, all over the world. The recommendations to the EU ranged from the demands for host countries offering tax relief on remittances, need for more jobs in Africa and better commitment to the fight against poverty and diseases like HIV/AIDS, malaria⁵ and other diseases.

For example, it was expressed that Africa could be better supported to fight malaria through practical and sustainable means. This could be facilitated by sharing examples of good practice with regions that seem to have malaria under control.

Those whose views informed this paper argued that policy coherence on remittances would help the Diaspora increase its development value because they have become a major source of external development, finance and in some cases

⁴ See footnote 3.

⁵ See <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/eid/vol3no3/roberts.htm> for information on DDT and other malaria control measures. Also view 'When Politics Kills: Malaria and the DDT Story' by Kendra Okonski and Roger Bate Reprinted from the Competitive Enterprise Institute's Environmental Policy Program http://www.igreens.org.uk/malaria_and_ddt.htm and <http://www.fightingmalaria.org>

remittances surpass official development assistance. Participants expressed the need to work with relevant bodies in the interest of fostering stronger EU African networks to get wider perspectives on issues affecting the Diaspora and Africa.

It also emerged from this meeting that, recently, African issues have gained a higher significance in the political agenda as well as a higher profile both with the media and the general public, particularly through the “*Make Poverty History*” campaign, the 200-year anniversary of the Abolition of Slavery⁶ etc. However, participants observed that despite this presence and most especially the promises made by the G8 Summit at Gleneagles it is apparent that these promises in many case have been largely unmet.

It was pointed out that both the US and EU had pledged that they would open up their markets to agricultural and industrial products from developing countries. However, this simply has not happened and there appears to be a lack of political will to make the necessary changes to open G8 market African exports. This exemplified by Oxfam: “The US and EU promised they would open their markets to agriculture and industrial goods from developing countries, but have created so many loopholes they are actually offering very little. In return, G8 countries are demanding that developing countries make radical cuts in all industrial tariffs, an unprecedented step likely to preclude further industrialisation⁷.” The meeting also suggested that there should be more transparent policies on how Africans could trade beyond the continent.

The African Diasporas, like Africans (at home) are interested in meaningful and open dialogue with the EU on future relationships between the two continents because the future of Africa to some degree depends on what the strategy might prescribe. It is important that this consultation be taken from a multi-stakeholder approach and one that acknowledges Africans and their Diasporas as party to this Joint Strategy.

⁶ For more info please see (annex) contributions from Mike Sansom of African Initiatives

⁷ http://www.oxfam.org.uk/what_we_do/issues/debt_aid/downloads/g8_gleneagles_oneyear.pdf

Conclusion

In the concluding discussions participants posed the question: What should be Different in the EU-Africa Relations? In spite of scepticism about the ability of the UK Diaspora to help shape this new EU-Africa relationship, participants' felt that consultation does not necessarily mean influencing or even participating in the policy-making processes. However, there was willingness and an eagerness to contribute in the discourse in the hope that their input would have an impact on the complexion of the final Joint EU-Africa Strategy.

Additionally, it was concluded with optimism that despite the past difficulties and weight of expectations from those who contributed to this paper, the forthcoming EU-Africa Strategy would indeed address the issues outlined in this paper and respond to Africa's needs. It was stressed during the consultation that there was a need for continual engagement with the African Diaspora to ensure the success of this and other policies that affect Africa. Furthermore it was suggested that the EU should also engage with existing Diaspora representative bodies like CfD and ADVAD who supported this consultation process.

The meeting also maintained that the EU, the African Union (AU) and the African Diaspora should adopt new partnerships for Africa's development, and that the Joint Strategy has the potential to work for both Europe and Africa.

Recommendations for the EU

The EU should:

- Recognise, support (including technical support) and meaningfully engage with existing frameworks for Diaspora engagement, such as CfD and ADVAD, to increase their effectiveness in development;
- Ensure that there is accountability for aid sent to Africa – with tangible and transparent end results;
- Provide funds to build the capacity of EU African Diaspora civil society, groups/ organisations to enhance their participation and contributions to development;
- Help develop and foster strong EU African networks to get wider perspectives on issues affecting the Diaspora and Africa;
- Focus on job creation and enterprise in Africa as a way of reducing poverty;

- Aim for an equal partnership with Africa and their Diasporas;
- Play a more supportive role for African Diaspora grassroots development efforts;
- Focus on top line Health Issues in Africa, especially HIV/AIDS, Sickle Cell, and Malaria⁸ because they have direct implications on underdevelopment and poverty. Also Diaspora groups involved in the area of health should be supported and prioritised;
- Economic well-being should be put on the same level as political, civil and human rights issues;
- Give Tax relief on Remittances as these have become a major source of external development finance and in some cases are even bigger than the official development assistance;
- Engage and support the Diaspora in transferring skills (or skill circulation) to Africa for the benefit of Africa's development;
- Reinforce the economic and developmental impact of migration by allowing legal access of skilled and economic migrants from Africa into the EU and protecting the rights of migrants;
- Make the EU strategy more transparent;
- Put "Africa on the Curriculum" in schools and colleges so as to challenge the negative stereotyping as well as increase the understanding and profile of Africa and African contributions to the EU; and
- Seek to understand and acknowledge the links between slavery, colonialism and current trade policies (*See annex 2 from African Initiatives*).

Recommendations for the AU

The AU should:

- Develop and sustain a continuous engagement with the 6th African Region or constituency (African Diaspora groups);
- Develop and own their agenda for Africa;
- Recognise the importance of the AU working closely with African Diasporas because of the Diaspora understanding and experiences of both worlds (Europe and Africa);

⁸ How did Europe and America eradicate malaria-carrying mosquitoes?

- The AU and African Diaspora groups to effectively use the media to challenge the negative image of Africa;
- Recognise that industrialisation and job creation are the key roots out of poverty; and
- The AU should encourage the perception of Africa as one continent plus it's Diaspora.

Recommendations for the EU African Diaspora

The UK Diaspora should therefore:

- Work closely with Diaspora umbrella organisations like CfD and ADVAD to support your development initiatives;
- Work to build a more coherent and stronger voice to bolster our effectiveness in development;
- Build a common voice and action for development so that we are recognised and taken seriously;
- Develop ways to fund projects for Africa's development for example the RemitAid identify for a collective fund to support Africa's development⁹;
- Challenge negative perspectives on African Diasporas and their civil society organisations; and
- African Diaspora groups should actively engage with the EU and the African Union.

⁹ See www.afford-uk.org for more information on the RemitAid idea.

Annex 1: List of Participants Contributors

Connections for Development (CfD)
African Foundation for Development (AFFORD)
African Diaspora Voices for Africa's Development (ADVAD)
AfricaRecruit
British Overseas NGOs for Development (BOND)
Equinox Consulting
Iteso Welfare Association
African Community Development Foundation (ACDF)
Development Impact for Nigeria (DIFN)
Somali Carers Trust
Praxis
Newham Refuge, & Migrant Forum
MASAAHI Solutions Network
Cenfacs
INASLA
Students' Partnerships Worldwide (SPW)
African Initiatives
Norfolk African Community Association (NACA)
And other individual participants that were not named

CfD and ADVAD thank them all for their participation.

Annex 2: The African Voices Project

By Mike Sansom

Recently African issues have climbed the political agenda with a higher media profile and are more in the consciousness of the general public. Make Poverty History in 2005 was one example and the current focus on Abolition 200 would be another. However the evidence is that this has had a limited impact on policy makers or, most importantly, communities in Africa. In the key area of trade relations western policy towards Africa is failed and, at best, discriminatory and at worst aggressively exploitative of the continent's people and its resources. The EU's current Economic Partnership Agreements and Global Compact are worrying examples of this.

Few African communities amongst the Diaspora in the UK were given the opportunity to be actively involved, had a voice, set agendas and determined policy directions in campaigns like Make Poverty History. Some of the messaging and images seemed to reinforce the negative stereotypes of Africa and did not reflect the political, economic and cultural diversity and strength that exists. Apart from the occasional use of an African face or musician for publicity purposes, articulate, progressive Africans were generally ignored, only to be replaced by representatives of BINGOs - Big International NGOs and their celebrity friends. Corruption in Africa became the development equivalent of the "race card", played by politicians and left unchallenged by NGOs. Then when NGOS moved on from Make Poverty History to other campaigns, for example climate change, the African profile and contribution went back down again.

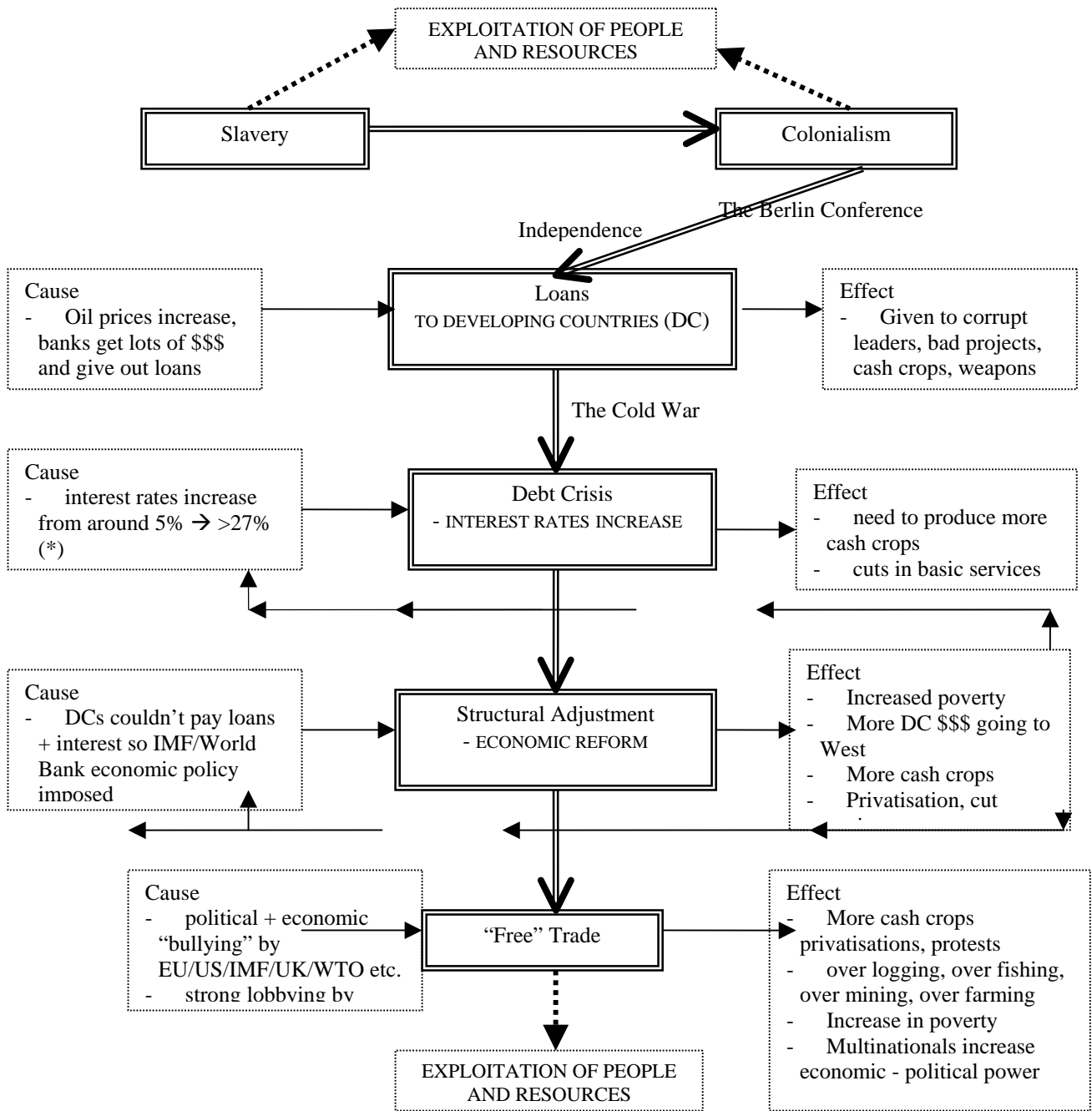
In the UK the African Diaspora are not heard or consulted and are often misrepresented, even on important issues such as Abolition 200. When they are asked to participate it is usually into development education, Global Citizenship and public activities for "beads, beans and beats" only. This highlights the need for African Diaspora communities to be organised and have the capacity to participate, have a voice and lead on global justice campaigns and popular education.

African Voices in the South West (UK)

This project will strengthen and support Bristol based African Diaspora communities and related organisations in Bristol and the South-West to raise awareness and understanding and be active on African diversity, context and issues. Supporting African diaspora to will do this:

- Deliver "Africa in the Curriculum" - a Global Citizenship project in schools and colleges that challenges stereotypes and increases the understanding and profile of Africa
- Participate, have a voice and lead in global justice campaigns, awareness raising and lobbying e.g. Abolition 200, African Voices conference in Black History Month (October 2007).
- Increase understanding and profile of Africa in non-formal and community sector; and
- Understand the links between slavery and current trade policies. See the pictorial representation overleaf.

**FROM SLAVE TRADE TO FREE TRADE:
THE HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL-ECONOMIC CONTEXT OF AFRICA**



(*) One of the main causes of the hike in interest rates was the collapse of the US economy in the 1980's due to:

- The high financial cost of the war in Vietnam
- Very expensive Star Wars project
- The Cold War and military expenditure
- Bad Reagan financial policies

Annex 3: Recommendations to the EU-Africa Joint Strategy

By Musa Hersi

The EU has a pivotal role in the future development of Africa for a number of reasons, including, but not confined to, the past colonial role and as a major donor to the continent at present. There is more need to work with and nurture emerging NGOs and the civil society in general as the major players in development at grassroots level. Especially for countries like Somaliland which does not have a recognised government.

The EU should consult the African Diaspora, civil society groups and private sector in order to better engage the continent in a holistic way. The EU should avoid confining itself to involving governments only, and should encourage a diverse range of opinions on how to do things in an African context. The EU should fund good governance practices at both local and national levels so as to move away from outdated postcolonial approaches to a more modern partnership working if genuine headway is to be made in fighting poverty in Africa.

The EU should correctly recognise the contribution and role of the African Diaspora as a modernising force and a true advocate of disadvantaged communities in all parts of Africa. Thus the EU needs to recognise it as the equivalent of the voluntary and community sector for Africa. The EU should take note that African Diaspora led charities based within the EU jurisdiction are already linking and networking with indigenous NGOs active and operational on the ground in Africa, and thus mentoring them to adopt quality methods in their service deliveries.

Annex 4
For Positive Relationship Between Europe, Africa and CfD.

By Dr. Eshetu Wondimagegne. Norfolk African Community Association (NACA)

CfD is the only UK- based Diasporas or Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) network that gives a platform for UK based groups and individuals that are involved in development work and to those who aspire to play a major role in the life improving projects at grassroots level in Africa.

CfD is the right organisation 'invented by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) at the right time so that BME Diasporas are able to generate ideas and take part in development policy consultations that impact on poor regions of the world.¹⁰ This process has motivated Diaspora individuals and groups to contribute suggestions towards advancing sustainable development efforts in the UK and abroad. It is important that the practice continues to help improve the lives of people in African countries. One big area in which some CfD members are actively working at present is in education during this UN decade of Education for sustainable development (2005-2014). Therefore, the EU has all the reasons to look at African Diasporas as credible partners during this Joint EU-Africa Strategy consultation. Above all, CfD is a credible framework for Diaspora engagement and should continue to support us.

"In our opinion CfD is capable of creating a pool of experts who can be mobilized for suitable placement in African countries". This would support skills circulation, sharing and transfer for Africa's development. In order for a development project to succeed the EU-Africa strategy should support CfD and UK government efforts in mobilising Diaspora resources (including skills/ intellectual capital and finances) among the BME networks for development. At NACA we are confident that this will give our volunteers a sense of fulfilment and ownership of their contributions. It would also be a great push to the social and economic development of host African countries. We think this should be one element for a happy EU-Africa relationship.

¹⁰ See www.cfdnetwork.co.uk for publications related to DFID 2007 consultations and others.