



The EU, the African diaspora in Europe and its impact on democracy building in Africa

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Executive summary and recommendations

Democracy-building in Africa through the mediation of the African diaspora in Europe has yet to become a priority on the agenda of the European Union (EU) as the issue has so far failed to capture political attention at that level. Indeed it has so far failed even to gain the political attention of those EU member states where diaspora organisations and institutions can be actively mobilised towards the efforts of democracy-building in Africa. This is primarily because the role that African diasporas play in democracy-building on the continent is an area which has not yet been sufficiently studied, despite its critical significance. As a consequence, the knowledge on the subject which is necessary for developing informed policy prescriptions is still very limited. Thus, the lack of a solid knowledge base on the subject hinders the EU and its member states in formulating appropriate policies that can be translated into feasible strategic interventions and realisable actions.

The human resources and strategic potential of the African diaspora in Europe have not been sufficiently harnessed to promote and advance effective, responsible, transparent, accountable and democratic systems of governance in Africa. Over the past five years, the aspect which has received most policy attention from the EU and its member states has been the size and impact of the financial remittances that diaspora transfer to their respective homelands. However, the African diasporas also transfer non-financial values which influence the development of their homelands, values that could make a significant contribution to improving the situation on the continent.

Fortunately, the newly formulated Joint Africa-EU Strategic Partnership presents a unique opportunity for the EU, its member states and their subsidiary development circles to align themselves with the African diaspora in the implementation of this ambitious programme. The successful execution of the programme will require the mobilisation of a broad spectrum of resourceful actors and stakeholders in the development cooperation circles and beyond, both in Africa and in Europe. There are great advantages to working with the African diaspora (as potential human agents) in the translation of the Africa-EU Strategic Partnership policy

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priorities into feasible interventions and realisable actions. It should be understood that the diasporas can contribute to democratic governance in much the same way that they currently contribute to economic welfare and development in their home countries. They can do so by making their knowledge, professional experience and expertise available for strengthening the capacity of political institutions in Africa. For the diaspora, democratic governance is critical in the creation of an enabling environment on the ground in the homelands. Creating an enabling environment in the home countries is, in effect, a precondition for sustainable development in Africa. It is also a precondition for engaging the diaspora in the overall development of their respective home countries.

Specific policy considerations:

- Widening development circles in Europe by incorporating the diaspora as active actors in the democratisation initiatives and processes in a more structured and formal manner.
- Realising that the African diaspora in Europe occupy a unique bridge-building position in which they can play a potential role in the promotion of democratic governance in Africa.
- Partnering the diaspora in the implementation of certain priority areas in the Joint Africa-EU Strategic Partnership, notably democratic governance and human rights, migration, mobility and development
- Generating knowledge that enhances our understanding of how the long-distance activities undertaken by the diaspora contribute to the promotion of viable governance and democratic political life in their countries of origin.
- Considering the establishment of *migration and development funds* earmarked to support initiatives such as good governance, democratisation, human rights and brain gain projects initiated by diaspora organisations and groupings.

Context

The policy of building sustainable democracy in Africa is one of the European Union's (EU) proclaimed objectives in contemporary development cooperation relations. This policy instrument has been adopted by the EU in order to rekindle a process which will promote a gradual integration of the continent into the world economy (European Commission 2006). Other related priority policy areas include the promotion of good governance, the rule of law, human rights protection and fostering peace and security, all regarded as preconditions for social stability, economic growth and sustainable development. Capacity building in these priority policy areas is what principally defines the EU's support to Africa. This commitment has been reiterated in the Joint Africa-EU Strategic Partnership and the Action Plan adopted in Lisbon on 8-9 December 2007 (African Union & European Union 2007).

The EU and its member states translate these professed policy principles into practice by supporting different development circles within the development cooperation sector. These development circles include international organisations, national and local government institutions, mainstream development agencies and civil society entities among others. However, the African diaspora institutions and organisations in the EU member states have a minimal presence in development circles because they are not yet seen as 'mainstream' development agents. Nonetheless, a few exceptions can be observed, particularly in the area of community development projects which fall within the framework of 'co-development' schemes promoted by a few member states, notably, France, Italy and Spain, among others. The focus however is on the purely material development that the diasporas mediate and not on the non-economic aspects such as the promotion of democratic life in their home countries. Generally speaking, diasporas are less active in the traditional development cooperation sector which is the domain of governments. Diasporas are active in the migration and development field where they play a leading role. Therefore, the challenge that the EU and its member states have to address is how to mainstream migration and development into the traditional development cooperation sector. Merging these two parallel development processes would make it possible to capitalise the potential of the diasporas not only in the area of remittances and small-scale co-development community-oriented projects geared towards poverty reduction, but also in other areas such as the promotion of democracy in Africa where they are in a position to play a positive role.

The paper has five sections. The first section recaps the ongoing discussion of the nexus between migration and development and the key role of the diaspora in this context. The second section outlines the different dimensions of the migration and development field. The third section describes the changing attitude of African governments towards the diaspora. The fourth section explains the potential of the diaspora in democracy-building in Africa. The fifth section illustrates diaspora activities that help promote a democratic culture in their respective home countries and the limited impact of such endeavours. The sixth section examines the shortcomings of the EU policies in partnering the diaspora for the promotion of sustainable democracy in Africa. The final section discusses the role that the diaspora can play in democracy-building in Africa through the Joint Africa-EU Strategic Partnership.

The nexus between migration and development

The nexus between migration and development emerged as a distinct policy field in Europe and beyond in the last few years. It has also manifested itself as a new and growing

development cooperation sector which is largely driven by the diaspora. This is the result of the growing economic and human resources potential of the diaspora communities that needs to be tapped in to benefit the overall development of their countries of origin. In this regard, the topic will certainly play a crucial role with respect to relations concerning development cooperation policy between Africa and Europe in the foreseeable future.

The Africa diaspora are the key strategic agents making the nexus between migration and development a reality. Without their strategic intervention, the crystallisation of a nexus between these two fields would not have been possible. For example, until recently, migration and development has been a terrain in which diaspora groups and organisations have broadly operated in a quite informal and exclusive manner. It is also an area in which diasporas have already developed knowledge, expertise, and practical experience. Furthermore, it is an area in which diasporas have constructed pathways and transnational networks which give them a considerable advantage over traditional mainstream development organisations operating in the EU countries and elsewhere. More importantly, thanks to inexpensive transportation and rapid communication diaspora are now able to exert far greater influence on their homelands than ever before. This advantage enables diaspora communities to build up vast transnational networks (criss-crossing countries and continents) linking the process of globalisation to the local conditions of their respective countries of origin. Likewise, it enables diaspora communities to build up intersecting social, economic and political bridges that link their new places of residence with their original homelands. These modern resources equip the African diaspora in Europe with the capacity to play a significant role in promoting peace, democratisation and social stability in their respective countries of origin.

Within the migration and development sector, African diaspora institutions, organisations and individuals transfer all kinds of values from Europe to Africa. The contribution of the African diaspora to the development of their homelands is not confined to the transfer of financial remittances. Diaspora communities transfer information, innovative ideas, intellectual capacities, new technological skills, smart and innovative business and trade practices, peace-making tools and techniques, and democratic political habits and practices from the West to Africa. Eventually, these non-financial flows may have more profound impacts on the attitudes of society regarding the perception of freedom, tolerance of differences, human rights issues, governance and political practices in the homelands.

Dimensions of the migration and development field

It is important to emphasise here that migration and development is a field with many different aspects. Yet, over the past five years, the aspect which has received most of the policy attention from the EU and its member states has been the size and impact of the financial remittances that diaspora transfer to their respective homelands. It is also an issue which still largely dominates the development cooperation debates between Europe and Africa. More importantly, the study on the remittance behavior is the aspect that dictates the research agenda commissioned by the EU and most of its member states within the field of migration and development. The countless publications and reports that have been produced and numerous workshops, expert meetings and conferences organised on the topic is a clear testimony to this.

However, most remittance flows from the rich world to developing countries go to Latin America and the Caribbean, followed by Eastern and Southern Asia. Sub-Saharan Africa receives only 1.5 percent of remittance flows (DESA 2004). This figure illustrates the limited

financial resources that the African diaspora collectively generate in comparison with the huge sums that other diasporas send home. It can thus be concluded that the meagre remittances transferred by the African diaspora would not have a substantial impact on the overall economic development in Africa. This reality validates the need to study and investigate other values that the African diaspora in Europe transfer which could make a difference to the situation in their respective countries of origin, or, for that matter, to the continent as a whole.

The fact of the matter is that, in the long run, the influence and impact of the social capital that the diaspora transfers will be more enduring than that of their financial remittances. The prime reason is that in many African countries, the lack of development and economic growth is not due to the absence of exploitable resources, but is a consequence of weak social and political institutions: Liberia and Sierra Leone represent obvious cases. The active participation of experienced and highly qualified diaspora in the Europe in the democracy-building processes in the homelands in a more structured manner could indeed contribute to political transformation on the ground. The dilemma is that Western donors insist that African governments put in place a democratic system of governance. However, this task can never be simple, even where there is the political will, as long as a large part of the professional class who would have been in a position to design good policies and bring about social change is absent from the continent.

For example, in some countries in Africa such as Liberia, Sierra Leone, Somalia and Mozambique, more than 50 percent of the trained professionals have migrated and remain abroad. The simple fact is that the educated class that has the skills, professional capacity and experience to draft appropriate constitutions, identify policy priorities for social, economic and political reconstruction and formulate strategies for implementation is not present. Similarly, the educated class that could have influenced public opinion through debates, writings and cultural input aimed at nurturing and inculcating democratic political habits in the minds of political society and thereby help to gradually neutralise the prevailing authoritarian tendencies in politics is also largely absent. Thus, the absence of this critical educated middle class from the domestic theatre in many African countries removes the internal pressure that is the main force for change in any society. This critically important aspect is ignored by donor countries while formulating policies regarding the promotion of good governance in Africa. It is for this reason that a policy-oriented analysis of the non-financial transfers for which the diasporas are responsible is now urgently required. This is also needed in order to improve understanding of the other aspects of the field of migration and development. The availability of sound policy analysis on this aspect will enable the EU and its member states to formulate appropriate policy instruments that can be adopted to galvanise the African diaspora in Europe to invest their social capital in democracy building and in strengthening governing institutions and policy-making apparatus in their respective homelands. The efforts of enhancing the capacities of the domestic political institutions could perhaps help the negligible remittances that the homelands receive to become more productive.

African governments' changing attitude towards the diaspora

Over the past five years there has been a significant change in African governments' perception of their overseas diaspora. Whereas in the previous three decades, diasporas had been regarded as enemies of the government, this is no longer the case. Instead, diasporas are increasingly seen as positive actors: as countrymen abroad who can contribute to development

efforts in their homelands. As a result, old animosities have now mostly been buried and a new era of comradeship has taken their place. In practical terms, this has meant that many African governments have initiated diaspora-friendly policies which are creating an enabling environment on the ground. For instance, there are now 15 African countries that have set up diaspora-related institutions and Ministries in order to deal more professionally with diaspora-led development-related issues. Examples include Ethiopia, Ghana, Mali, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania and Uganda, among others. In addition, the African Union Commission has created the African Citizens Directorate (CIDO) to deal with overarching issues in the relationship between overseas diasporas and homeland governments. This step is indeed a precondition for engaging the diaspora in the overall development of their respective home countries of origin.

The African governments' changing attitude towards their diasporas is due to the recognition of the diaspora's potential for contributing to the overall development of the continent. In recent years, diasporas have strategically positioned themselves as critical development actors in development cooperation relations between Europe and Africa. This has been the key factor for major international institutions such as the World Bank and the United Nations (UN) among others to increasingly acknowledge diaspora communities as the 'fourth development aid actors', along with international organisations, governments and mainstream development agencies.

The positive rapprochement between the homeland governments and the diaspora in the past five years has transformed the context of the old political landscape for the better. It has opened up a window of opportunity for effective cooperation between the two entities. There is now a growing realisation among the African diaspora in the West that they have a responsibility to do something for the continent they have left physically but not emotionally. It is this emotional attachment that prompts the diaspora to maintain ties with their countries of origin which is in turn translated into obligations and thereby into concrete commitments, actions and activities. Diasporas also feel that they are now in a strategic position to facilitate the process of trans-national activities and networks and to act as development bridge-builders between the West and Africa. For instance, they hold the view that this strategic position enables them to forge innovative patterns of 'globalisation from below' in which individual and group players rather than mega-corporations, benefit and make use of the opportunities offered by globalisation (Mohan & Zack-Williams 2002). More importantly, the limited results of the official donor development aid over the past 40 years is compelling the diaspora to become part of the development circles in Western countries and thereby widen the development constituency with regard to Africa so as to produce better results in the future. In fact, the contribution of the diaspora to the development efforts in Africa is now more indispensable than ever. Furthermore, African diasporas are now ready and willing to participate in the positive changes they wish to see in their respective countries in Africa (Chikezie 2002; Mohamoud 2003).

The potential of the diaspora in democracy building in Africa

The African diaspora currently living in the EU countries is estimated to be around 3.3 million of whom 1 million are from sub-Saharan Africa (Eurostat 2008). The number of the African diaspora is even greater when those living in other European countries are taken into account. In this regard, the diaspora is Africa's greatest offshore asset because of the potential of their considerable human and financial capital that needs to be exploited for the benefit of Africa. Furthermore, the African diaspora now occupy an indispensable strategic position that

links the developed North with Africa in a more connected manner. For example, the African diaspora are now in a unique strategic position in this ever-globalising world in that they are scattered across different economic and power centres around the globe. The proactive participation of the Europe-based African diaspora in democracy-building in Africa is indispensable now more than ever. This therefore makes it important to partner and join forces with the diaspora in democracy-building efforts geared towards Africa.

Diasporas are potential actors that can add value to the efforts undertaken by other players involved in the promotion of democratisation processes. The advantages of working with the African diaspora in democracy-building in their respective home countries are indeed considerable.

A few aspects are highlighted here. The first advantage is that diasporas understand local contexts in their respective homelands much better than other external actors as they combine both internal and external knowledge and experiences, which is a valuable comparative advantage. External actors, such as the staff of the international organisations and donor agencies normally need a considerable amount of time in order to understand the socio-cultural and historical complexities in any local context. For this reason, the inclusion of diasporas in democracy-building initiatives can help resolve this critical challenge and effectively bridge the gap. So far, the considerable potential of the African diaspora has been insufficiently harnessed for the promotion of democratic governance in Africa. The second advantage is that the African diaspora due to their exposure to democratic political transactions and practices are able to introduce new ways of dealing with political challenges in the homelands which can contribute to widening the horizon and world-view of local political elites. The third advantage is that the African diaspora located in Europe are in a better position to mobilise substantial financial resources, extensive transnational networks, powerful international forces, and political connections that span the globe. The African diaspora can galvanise the considerable resources to which they have access, and thereby contribute to democracy-building in Africa in a meaningful way. Finally, some of the African diaspora organisations in different EU countries are now involved in various long-distance activities geared towards promoting democratisation processes in their respective homelands. This was not the case some years back when democracy-building had yet to become a priority.

This has now changed. There is therefore a need for a policy instrument that stimulates African diaspora organisations and associations to redouble their efforts in promoting democratic governance on the continent.

Limited impact of the diaspora efforts in democracy building in Africa

The African diasporas in Europe have long been active contributors to the promotion of democratisation processes in Africa, but the impact of their efforts has been limited. The chief reason is that the African diasporas have been pushing isolated democratisation processes in Africa as their initiatives rarely received support from development circles in Europe. More strikingly, the initiatives undertaken by the diaspora in this area are not structurally integrated into the existing democratisation processes exclusively implemented by mainstream donor development agencies, EU governments and institutions, international and regional organisations and UN bodies active in their countries of origin.

Generally, the activities of the African diasporas in their respective homelands are concentrated in the area of civil society. For example, through civic-oriented activities, diaspora organisations directly contribute to enhancing the capacities and organisational structures of the civil society networks and promoting community-oriented development, social emancipation, empowerment, grassroots political participation, etc. The impact of this civic-oriented diaspora involvement in domestic development can be better observed at the sub-national, local and village rather than national levels. Nonetheless, the transformative effect of these civic-oriented activities on social and political structures is not yet recognised. It is however, a process which if it is effectively supported can nurture a democratic governance culture and inculcate democratic political habits in the minds of political society on the continent.

Although the impact has been limited, the African diasporas in Europe have provided several forms of support to democracy-building in Africa. Firstly, the African diasporas have been played a role in forming pressure groups devoted to influencing political developments in their respective homelands. In this regard, they actively promote through their forged transnational networks, radical political change geared to reshaping the political thinking and expectations of the people on the continent. For example, they demand democratic and well-functioning public institutions that are accountable to the people, transparent, and respect freedom of expression. However, this long-distance engagement in the political processes in the homelands has not always been a success. Secondly, the African diasporas have helped positive political forces at home to make contact with important and powerful political networks abroad. For example, some individuals are members of established political parties in the host country. This strategic position enables them to facilitate valuable networks for the political parties in the homeland through the established political parties with which they are affiliated in the EU countries. This is a tangible process through which the African diasporas can contribute to international efforts which impact positively on their respective homelands in terms of democracy-building in Africa. Thirdly, the African diasporas have played a very important role in the area of capacity building. In this aspect, they have contributed to democracy building in Africa by making their professional skills and expertise available to the government and to political parties in their respective home countries. A concrete case is the Eritrean diaspora which made their expertise available for drafting the country's first constitution after its separation from Ethiopia in 1993. In turn, the diaspora were given voting rights in the future elections of the country. They have also been successful to a certain extent in influencing the political processes at the sub-national and local levels. At these lower levels, there are sufficient political, societal and institutional spaces where the diaspora can play a tangible role in the advancement of the democratisation processes in the homelands. However, where their influence is very limited is at the national level because of the prevailing power politics that the ruling elites exercise as a zero-sum game. Fortunately, this is not the case in every country. Nevertheless, it is at this higher level where the EU and its member states, as well as others, can play a complementary role in influencing the political processes.

EU policies in partnering diasporas on democracy building in Africa

Democracy-building in Africa, through the mediation of the African diaspora in Europe, is not yet a priority for the EU as the issue has yet to capture political attention at that level. It is not even an issue that has gained the political attention of the EU member states where diaspora organisations and institutions can be actively mobilized towards the efforts of democracy building in Africa. One preliminary explanation is that the EU and its member states operate

within the policy framework prescribed by the principles of the traditional development cooperation relations. The traditional development aid framework was instituted in the 1950s. In practical terms, development aid (also *development assistance* or *technical assistance*) is traditionally given by the rich donor countries in Europe and elsewhere to support the economic, social and political development of developing countries. The implementation of development aid has been the responsibility of the donor countries and their subsidiary agencies, be they governmental or development agencies, etc. The African diasporas have not been part of that development circle and are not involved in the implementation of development aid projects in their countries of origin. There are two reasons for this. The first reason is the very recent emergence of huge numbers of African diaspora communities in Europe. The second reason is that in contrast to the EU and its member states, the African diasporas operate within the migration and development sector. This is diaspora-driven development assistance. It is a sector which diasporas have created in order to support the overall development of their countries of origin.

In comparison with the decades-old, donor-driven development cooperation model, the migration and development sector has a very recent origin. The sector started blossoming in the late 1990s due to the huge increase of the diaspora population in rich western countries. Since 2003, the sector has been capturing the attention of policy makers both at the EU and at the member states level. Within the remittances framework, the EU and its member states have supported a number of co-development schemes that African diaspora organisations have implemented in their countries of origin. Yet, most of the co-development schemes implemented thus far were undertaken within the economic realm and not within the domain of political institutions and democratic governance. The objective was poverty reduction and improving livelihoods in the receiving communities. Therefore, there was no interest from the EU beyond the remittances aspect in the field of migration and development. The exception is the current discussion regarding circular migration and related issues such as the ‘Blue Card’ which is devised to attract highly skilled immigrants outside Europe. In short, the EU and its member states have not yet developed policies that are targeted at mobilising the human capital potential of the diaspora for the promotion of democratic political cultures in Africa.

Three main reasons explain this. The first is the limited understanding of the concept of development within the context of migration and development. For instance, the notion of development within this framework is narrowly viewed from the point of view of remittance transfers and community-oriented projects that the diaspora implement on the ground. However, as already noted, financial remittance is but one of the values that the diaspora transfer to the homelands. In this regard, there is a need to broaden the conceptual understanding of what is meant by development in the context of migration and development. In this field, development should be conceptualised so as to encompass economic, social, transnational networks and contacts and political dimensions, etc, with which diasporas interact vis-à-vis the domestic situation in the homeland. In addition to this, the contribution of diaspora institutions, organisations and individuals to peace building, improving human rights conditions, advancing institutional knowledge, upgrading and strengthening governance institutions, deepening democratisation processes and facilitating knowledge transfer (brain gain) should all be considered to be forms of development and be widely examined. There is therefore an urgent need to address the development potential (beyond remittances) of the huge African diaspora resident in Western countries.

The second reason is that the non-financial values that the diaspora transfer such as contributing to the promotion of democratic governance is an area which has not yet been

studied despite its critical significance. As a consequence, the existing knowledge base on the subject necessary for policy considerations still remains very limited. Thus, the current lack of a solid knowledge base on the subject hinders the EU and its member states from formulating appropriate policies that can be translated into feasible strategic interventions and realisable actions.

The third reason is the selected focus on a few of the various aspects of the field of migration and development. This is due to the lack of fully integrating migration and development into mainstream traditional development cooperation relations. Both development sectors have now evolved as two parallel fields; one being formal and the other being informal. They also operate side by side, although their ultimate goal is the same -- eradicating poverty in the long term. The complete amalgamation of the two development sectors would enable them to complement one another and increase their impact on the development of the targeted beneficiaries in developing countries. It will also facilitate the full incorporation of the diaspora into the established development circles in donor countries. This however will require vigorous policy and research attention for its realisation.

Democracy building through the Joint Africa- EU Strategic Partnership

The Joint Africa-EU Strategic Partnership (JAESP) and the Action Plan adopted in Lisbon in 2007, opened a window of opportunity for the EU and its member states to partner with the diaspora in democracy building in Africa. The new partnership was launched to reinvigorate and elevate the cooperation between Africa and Europe in the fight against poverty, injustice, human rights violations, lawlessness, insecurity, political and social instability and disregard for the principles of democratic rights. The JAESP sets out priorities around eight themes: peace and security, democratic governance and human rights, trade and regional integration, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), energy, climate change, migration, mobility and development, and science, information society and space. It is expected that this new and ambitious programme will strengthen the Africa-EU political partnership and also enhance cooperation at all levels. The priorities for the JAESP programme have been devised so as to be implemented through “successive short-term Action Plans and enhanced political dialogue at all levels, resulting in concrete and measurable outcomes in all areas of the partnership” (European Union & African Union 2007: 2). Furthermore, the Joint Strategy document clearly states that the implementation of the programme will be guided by the principle of “a broad-based and a wide-ranging people-centred partnership, Africa and the EU will empower non-state actors [such as diaspora] and create conditions to enable them to play an active role in development, democracy building, conflict prevention and post-conflict reconstruction processes” (European Union & African Union 2007: 3). Finally, the document explicitly stresses that both Africa and the EU will pursue and implement policies and programme that help facilitate the active involvement of diaspora/migrant communities in the successful implementation of the strategy.

Today, the African diaspora in Europe are in the right position at the right time and in the right place. The African diasporas have now positioned themselves as critical development actors in development policy circles. This is because diasporas are becoming increasingly involved in the development of their respective homelands on a larger scale. They are contributing huge resources to the social welfare and economic growth to their respective homelands which remarkably exceed the level of official development assistance (ODA). Furthermore, in addition to their considerable human and financial capital, the African

diaspora in Europe occupy a vital strategic position that links Europe with Africa in a more connected manner.

The proactive participation of the African diaspora in Europe in the JAESP programme is now more indispensable than ever. And if they are galvanised, the African diaspora can play a role as valuable strategic actors in the process by adding tangible values to the strengthening of the JAESP which may not be covered by CSOs both in Europe and Africa. There are therefore great advantages in working with the African diaspora in the translation of the JAESP policy principles into feasible interventions and realisable actions.

Thus, if the African diasporas are incorporated as valued partners into mainstream development circles in the EU, they will certainly play a significant role in the promotion and deepening of democratisation processes in several aspects. The first aspect is that the African diaspora can contribute to the promotion of a culture of dialogue between the political and societal institutions in both continents, by skilfully using their bridge-building position. They can also engage in long-distance activities through internet dialogue, writing and cultural input which would directly influence political debates and public opinion within Africa. Furthermore, the African diasporas in Europe have experience of elections and democratic processes for a long period of time. They can share this democratic experience with the political elites in Africa through dialogue and the exchange of skills and expertise.

The second aspect is that the African diaspora can contribute to democracy-building in Africa by making their knowledge, professional experience and expertise available for strengthening the capacity of political institutions in Africa. This is to create effective, responsible, transparent, accountable and democratic systems of governance on the continent. Improved capacity of the governing institutions in Africa will boost the capability of the state to maintain the rule of law, social order and stability and deliver adequate social services to the people in all sectors and at all levels.

The third aspect is that the African diaspora in Europe can contribute to democracy-building in Africa by undertaking lobbying, campaigning and advocacy activities aimed at influencing EU policies towards Africa.

For instance, the African diaspora can lobby for the cause of positive forces on the continent who are doing their utmost to break from the past and construct a better Africa for themselves and their children. These are human rights activists, journalists, civic-minded community associations and constructive political elites, among others. Lobbying for the cause of these positive forces at the host country or at the EU level will give them the necessary power and a political clout with which to counterbalance and neutralise the negative activities of the destructive forces in the homeland.

The lobbying, campaigning and advocacy potential of the African diaspora is an area where mainstream development agencies and civil society institutions in Europe can considerably benefit if they link up with diaspora groups in their campaigning and advocacy activities. Similarly, the lobbying potential of the African diaspora is a source which can be skilfully and creatively harnessed for the implementation of the JAESP programme. For example, the African diaspora can be engaged in serving as positive bridge-builders and goodwill ambassadors mandated to strengthen and advance the relationship between Africa and the EU.

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