

# **THE ACCRA DECLARATION 2019**

## **SUMMARY STATEMENTS & AGREEMENTS TO ACCOMPANY THE DECLARATION**

**TOWARDS AN**



**DATE: NOVEMBER 5<sup>th</sup> 2019**

**VENUE: SONANT COURT HOTEL GHANA ACCRA**

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## **PREFACE**

### *The value of Pan Africanism*

The first Pan African Conference in 1900 in London set the Agenda for the entire 20<sup>th</sup> Century with regard to the liberation of the African Continent and its Diaspora. The concept of Pan Africanism was born in 1900. It remains the most powerful and mobilizing factor for Africans globally in this The 21<sup>th</sup> century. Amongst the pioneers of this movement were Henry Sylvester Williams, William E.B. Du Bois and B nito Sylvain. Sylvain, a Haitian, was the honorary consul of Ethiopia. The fifth Pan African Congress in Manchester, England in 1945 was a major turning point in the whole movement for the independence and liberation of the African Continent which began with the independence of Ghana on the 6<sup>th</sup> of March 1957. Kwame Nkrumah became the first Head of State. Thereafter several African Countries received their independence. As soon Nkrumah became the Head of State he issued a Call to all Africans in Diaspora to come home. Several African Diasporans responded to the Call.

Since the heyday of the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) of Marcus Garvey and the ACL (African Communities League) during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, several attempts were made to establish grassroots and community-based organizational communications systems between Africans on the continent and those in the Diaspora.

For decades, many Pan Africanists have been traditionally carrying for Africa and the Africans by seeking the support of the African Leaders or Head of states concerning their struggle in the western world against racism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance and institutional racism against African People outside the continent and their struggle for reparations for the injustice that have been done during the trans-Atlantic slave trade, slavery and colonialism. Therefore, the Sixth Region initiative and the invitation of the African Union was and still is a big challenge. The crime of the trans-Atlantic slave trade amongst others and its effects, as well the 'brain drain,' have affected Africa more severely than any other continent in the world`.

As social movement and ideological expression of African identity, Pan-Africanism was and is one of the most successful movements in modern history because it achieved its aim of freedom and self-determination of African peoples worldwide; people of Africa and African descent worldwide now recognise a shared history. They are separated by citizenship, but united by history and memory, market and cultural forces. The creation of the Sixth Region redresses a major historical wrong in reintegrating the Diaspora in the institutional process of unifying the African people. Let's remember that the Diaspora who is at the origin of the Pan Africanism, originally conceived as a black empowerment unified movement, has been arbitrarily "pushed" out of the organisation of the African Union for more than half a century. The original plan of opening a new area for the African renaissance is still needed even as of today.

*The practical implications of the 2003 invitation from the AU?*

Some of the strategic questions which led to the adoption of the African Union African Diaspora Declaration of May 2012 were:

- What are the practical implications of the 2003 invitation from the AU?
- Is it the implementation of the new Article 3 (q) of the African Union Constitutive Act?
- Or is it the impacts of the full participation of the African Diaspora as an important component to build the African Union?
- What is the nature and composition of the African Diaspora?
- What are the characteristics of the Diaspora living in the other continents of the world?
- How should the African Diaspora and the Africans leaving in Africa respond to the invitation of the African Union?
- What are the best effective strategies to interact, promote communication and co-operation between Africa, the African Union and its bodies (e.g. Parliament and related organs such as its strategic, economical, and cultural alliances and committees included NEPAD structures and the United Nations African bodies like the Human and Peoples Rights Commission, Unions for African Professionals, ECOSOCC and Civil Society Institutes?

### *Ghana Year of Return not in vacuum*

The Year of Return declared in September 2018 in Washington DC by the President of the Republic of Ghana, Nana Akufo-Addo, with reference to the 400-year remembrance of the trans-Atlantic slave trade and the enslavement of African people does not stand by itself nor is it a vacuum. The Year of Return must be considered as an event in the series of various instruments that have been established in the framework of declarations and resolutions on the People of African descent in the last twenty years such as:

- The several Resolutions and Declarations on Reparatory Justice commencing from the Abuja Proclamation of the First Pan-African Conference for Reparations for Chattel Slavery, Colonisation & Neocolonisation 1993.
- The Durban Declaration and the Programme of Action 2001.
- The installation of the UN Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent 2002.
- The UN Durban Review 2009.
- The UN High level Panel on the 10th year commemoration of the DDPA.
- The UN International Year for People of African Descent 2011.
- The UN International Decade for People of African Descent 2015-2024.
- The European Parliament Resolution on the Fundamental Rights of People of African Descent 2019.
- This year the CSW63 adopted a paragraph in the consolidated outcome in the sphere of the UN International Decade for People of African Descent.
- Regional Conferences on the UN International Decade for People of African Descent in cooperation with the African Union and the CIDO (Citizens and Diaspora Organizations Directorate).

### *Diasporans as development bridge-builders and agents of change*

In 2020, we are on the eve of the 5 years mid-term review of the UN international Decade for People of African Descent; in 2021 20 years of commemoration the DDPA. And in the middle of those processes is the Year of Return. It had to be so. A Year at the crossroads of the transition to a new decade 2020. A Year whereby thousands of African Diasporans,

many in united partnerships accepted the invitation of the Ghana President. Each in its own way. This has more than ever, made it clear that the African Diasporans are ready for reunification. The required task to bring this engagement to fruition is to the ending of the slow pace of the implementation of the May 2012 Sixth Region African Union African Diaspora Declaration. The Year of Return has brought to light that what we already knew; that many Diasporans are living with a growing sense of responsibility to do something for the continent they were forced to leave behind physically, but not emotionally, and they remain concerned with the painful daily reminders that “while Africa”, so to speak “regresses the rest of the world progresses”. Many of the Diasporans also feel that they are now in strategic positions within their host countries to facilitate the process of transnational activities and networks to help Africa move forward, and to act as development bridge-builders between Africans abroad and Africans on the continent and agents of change.

With the Decade of Return we give the Ghana Year of Return a broader Face, a wider Perspective. It is an irreversible process. It provides a Global Instrument not only for the Africans abroad but for the Liberty & Reunification of all African people.

### *Spiritual Journey*

The Return to Ghana or anywhere on the continent can also be seen as a spiritual journey that is an autodidactic step towards self-repair. We individually, and our hosts, must take into account the matter of spiritual reparations that inform our renewed presence on the African continent. With a Decade of Return we Africans in the Diaspora make ourselves responsible for the effectuation of the Sixth Region Initiative. But we can never succeed without the so called African Union Support Systems. These must be put in place to facilitate our Return as a metaphysical phenomena/journey, as well as, a socio-political and economic reality. That means that there must also be traditional African spaces of worship as well as, mosques, churches, temples and their respective staff must be a part of the process of facilitating our Return to the continent. They are an integral part of the means by which People of African Descent are informed of the DDDPA and its importance to us as formerly enslaved and ‘formerly’ colonized peoples.

*Purpose of the Declaration*

In this ACCRA DECLARATION we have given insight into what has been discussed, concluded and agreed upon as well the issues of concern that ask for immediate attention and action by the African Union Commission; The African Union Head of States; The United Nations Member States; Head of Governments and other Stakeholders.

We Call on the United Nations Member States for the full implementation of The Durban Declaration and Programme of Action and The UN International Decade for People of African Descent and Programme of Activities.

We have given insight into the substances for the legitimization respectively adoption of the *African Diaspora Decade of Return* by the African Union Commission.

*We recommend* that the Programme of Activities for the implementation of the Decade of Return must be developed in close cooperation with an appointed “Technical Working Commission *Decade of Return*” with a consultative voice for the *Ghana Presidency Commission Year of Return*, because of the learning and experience aspects.

*We request* that a Secretariat for the implementation of the Decade of Return inclusive Knowledgeable and well-informed Diaspora Cadres should be placed under the Diaspora Department of the AU Commission. This Secretariat would have the mandate and responsibility to drive the entire process of the Decade of Return: 2020-2030.

On behalf of

The Initiative Group for the *AU African Diaspora Decade of Return*

The Global RootsSynergy Roundtable Organization and Planning Committee;

The Drafting Committee

The Interim Working Committee “Decade of Return” i.c, section African Diaspora

Dr. Barryl A. Biekman

Ambassador Global African Diaspora Union (EU)

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This Global RootsSynergy Roundtable was a total self-supported mission. We did not receive any financial support. All who participated during the vision making process and the Roundtable has done that from a dedicated perspective. Some at the forefront, some in silence. Some who were willing to physically participate during the Roundtable after the unveiling of the “Memorial Monument of Liberty and Reunification”. Unfortunately the building of that Monument is not finished yet so that the unveiling has not taken place yet. In this regards we thank Her Majesty Queen Mother Dòwoti Désir Hounon Houna II, Professor Dr. Julius Garvey, Dr. Doudou Diene and Dr. Mactar Ndoye.

We owe thanks and appreciation for their immense support (suggestions, advice, recommendations and promotion) towards the realization of the Roundtable to:

- Professor Dr. David Horne, Leader of the African Diaspora Sixth Region Community Council (WHS) and affiliated Pan-African Movements, Organizations, Networks, Experts and other Activists
- Nyahuma M. Obika, Former High Commissioner and Ambassador for Trinidad and Tobago
- Esther Stanford, PARCOE (Pan Afrikan Reparations Coalition of Europe)
- Dr. Roland Holou, Founder of DiasporaEngager and of Global Diaspora News
- Iman Drammeh, DRAMMEH Institute
- Her Majesty Queen Mother Dòwoti Désir Hounon Houna II, Co-Chairperson, NGO Committee for the. Elimination of Racism, Afrophobia & Colorism, Founder, AfroAtlantic Theologies & Treaties Institute
- Professor Dr. Kimani Nehusi, Temple University, Philadelphia, PA
- Line Hilgros, 'Sixième Region Diaspora Africaine'
- Mavis Biekman, Member of the African European Women's Movement “Sophiedela”
- Sirelda Jackson, Member of the National Platform Dutch Slavery Past
- Angela Sayles, Leader of the Global African Sheroes Union
- Barrister Jerry Egembe, Member of the African Diaspora Union
- Professor Dr. Antumi Toasijé, Leader of the Pan-African Center WanafriKa.org Spain
- Dr. Tumenta Kennedy, Leader of the African Business Information Bank (African BIB)

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- Dr. Marcelin Dabo, Coordinator Year of Return France
- Armand Zunder, Vice Chair CARICOM Reparation Commission; Chair National Reparation Commission Republic Suriname
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- Vincent Gambrah, Leader of the AfroEuro Hi Lite
- Mrs. †Nadia Raveles (posthume) National Year of Return Commission Suriname

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- Dr. Susan Alfred, President of the Ghana Caribbean Chamber of Commerce
- Dr. Khazriel Ben Yehuda, Leader of the Middle East African Diaspora Unity Council
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And finally words of thanks to director Diaspora Affairs at the Office of the Ghana President, *Mr. Akwasi Awua Ababio*. His invitation at his Office to share our vision and mission of being in Ghana for the Year of Return has been well appreciated. Director Ababio showed his commitment by attending most of the events that was organizing under the Flag of the Ghana Caribbean Chamber of Commerce and the Global African Union.



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## INTRODUCTION

Initiated by the Global African Diaspora Union, the Global Roots Synergy Roundtable (GRS-Roundtable) was an event organized at the 'closing' of the events that were organized in Ghana Kumasi by the Ghana Caribbean Chamber of Commerce in cooperation with the Ghana National Commission on Culture and the Global African Diaspora Union in perspective of the Ghana Year of Return. Meant for the historical Africans in the Diaspora, the Year of Return was declared in September 2018 in Washington DC by the President of the Republic of Ghana, Nana Akufo-Addo with reference to the 400-year remembrance of the trans-Atlantic slave trade and the enslavement of African people. It should not be confused with the Ghana Homecoming Events that is meant for the Ghana Diaspora and which is organized every two years.

### *Why the Global Roots Synergy Roundtable?*

Many Africans in Diaspora (e.g. Pan-Africanists and other Activists in the AU Sixth region) were approved that the Ghana Year of Return is an excellent opportunity to express both sides of their concerns regarding issues pertaining to fundamental human rights of African people worldwide and raising awareness within the ordinary civil society communities and other relevant stakeholders about the diverse instruments, resolutions and declarations to combat multiple forms of racism against African people.

Analyses have shown that many continental Africans and in Diaspora are not aware of the existence and or the background of the:

- Durban World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance that was held in Durban, South Africa, in 2001 and the affiliated instruments, resolutions and declarations.
- The UN International Decade for People of African descent and the Programme of Activities; and

- The May 2012 African Union African Diaspora Sixth Region Declaration, the Programme of Activities and the affiliated resolutions and instruments.

Ghana Year of Return offered important opportunities for focusing on these important historical Declarations and their affiliated resolutions.

#### *Why a Decade of Return? The Origin of the IDEA.*

In addition to negotiations for a new Declaration, during the 63rd session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW63) that took place at the United Nations Headquarters in New York on 11–22 March 2019, experts were selected to organize parallel events.

The CSW63 focused on the theme “Social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls”. Each parallel event/session added an opportunity for community stakeholders to participate with in-depth analysis of emerging trends effecting global women and the development of resolutions to these issues.

According to the UNCSW NGO, over 20,000 women attended the event as official UN Nation Member States delegations and civil society with the aim of improving the quality of life and social protections for women.

One of such parallel events was organized by ECOWAS Women Organization and the Global African SHEROES Union in close cooperation amongst others with The DRAMMEH Institute, Tiye International, the African European Women’s movement “Sophiedela”, the Afro Atlantic Theologies & Treaties Institute and the African Views Organization. The event entitled “YEAR OF RETURN: *African Union African Diaspora Sixth Region Declaration in Gender Perspective*” was held at the African Union Mission in New York City on March 20, 2019. About 160 participants including (African and young) women from all the continents of the globe. Some were professors, scientists, scholars, community leaders, traditional queens and chiefs, political leaders, UN specialists and entrepreneurs.

Participants during this CSW63 parallel event were in favor of the *Ghana 2019 Year of Return initiative* with wider attention of all AU Head of States and that all African Union Member States whose involvement is much needed. The *Ghana 2019 Year of Return initiative* must be used as a tool to record more progress in implementing the May 2012, African Union's Global Diaspora Sixth Region Declaration and Programme of Activities.

Furthermore, it was agreed to call on the African Union Commission to:

- Develop policies to implement the advancement of ownership in the agribusiness global food industry and supply chain for the International African Diaspora to create more trade between and within the Global African Diaspora.
- Develop policies to implement the acquisition, development and sustainability of lands for Global African Women.
- Recognize March 16<sup>th</sup> as the Global African Women's Day with the aim to honor and respect the rich diversity of women of African descent around the world, and to celebrate a shared vision of unity, despite historical separations by the global and intercontinental enslavement and colonialism of African people and nations.

In April 2019, a request letter was sent to the African Union Commission subsequently followed by a side conversation during an AU/UN Summit in Senegal in October 2019 with the Deputy Chairperson of the African Union Commission. To ensure that the request would receive serious attention, it was communicated with delegates of AU Member States during an AU/UN Summit in Senegal in October 2019.

#### *Participation at the Global Roots Synergy Roundtable*

Present at the GRS-Roundtable were high level Pan-Africanist and Activists: Scholars, Historians, Business & Media people, Rastafarian's and Reparation's movements, Students and others from: Africa, The United States of America, Central and South America, The Caribbean including the Dutch Speaking Caribbean, Europe and the Middle East.

## *Main Topics and Speakers*

**I** The Durban Declaration and Platform of Action 2001.

*18 years before and 2021, 20 years after and the way forward.*

**Professor Dr. David Horne**, Leader of the Sub Regional Diaspora (WHS) Community Council and on behalf of the Affiliated Pan Africanists Organizations, Networks, Experts and other Activists

The documentary film Durban 400, directed by Alfred Santana and produced by The DRAMMEH Institute, was shown to stipulate the important role of the worldwide Pan-African Community before and during the United Nations World Conference against Racism, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance in 2001 in Durban South Africa.

**II** The UN International Decade for People of African Descent 2015-2024.

*What happened before in 2009, 2011; 5 years after and the way forward*

**Dr. Barryl A Biekman**, Ambassador Global African Diaspora Union; AU AD Sixth Region Community Council (Europe) and affiliated Pan-African Movements, Organizations, Networks, Experts and other Activists

In 2014 Dr. Biekman was selected by the President of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) as the sole civil society speaker during the launching of the UN International Decade for People of African Descent.

**III** The Adoption of the AU AD Decade of Return 2020-2030

*In historical Perspective of the African Union African Diaspora Sixth Declaration 2012*

**Nyahuma Obika**, Former High Commissioner of Trinidad and Tobago to Nigeria, Former ambassador of Trinidad and Tobago to Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Cote d'Ivoire, Cameroon, Algeria, Guinea, Congo and Senegal.

The GRS-Roundtable was co-sponsored by the SONANT COURT HOTEL Ghana/Accra.

In his welcome address, on behalf of the owner of the SONANT Court Hotel, Mrs. Sonia Agyet-Kyem, *Michael Nkrumah* emphasized that an important mission of the SONANT Court Hotel is to provide a house for all the Diaspora. Not simply a house but a place where one can feel at home; where the Diaspora can enjoy the good amenities. The well-trained staff is ready to serve you.



# **I. The Durban Declaration and Programme of Action**

## **I.1 SUMMARY STATEMENT**

To stipulate the important role of the worldwide Pan-African Community before and during the United Nations World Conference against Racism, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance in 2001 in Durban South Africa, this Session started with the documentary film 'Durban 400', directed by Alfred Santana and produced by The DRAMMEH Institute.

The documentary was followed with a presentation by *Professor Dr. David Horne* who addressed several important aspects of the 2001 UN Third World Conference Against Racism (UN WCAR).

After questions and answers, the participants agreed that the adoption of Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (DDPA) and the acknowledgement of the trans-Atlantic slave trade as a crime against humanity were clearly the greatest victory during the UN WCAR 2001. This was also the result of the significant role of the Africans and African Descendants, from all over the world, who attended the UN WCAR in ensuring that many declarations of principle, key demands, and project proposals, fundamental to the nations and peoples of Africa and the African Diaspora, found a place in the DDPA. *Dr. Horne* also emphasized issues of critical importance to Africans and African Descendants highlighted in the Declarations and Plans of Action adopted by the NGO Forum respective the International Youth Summit, prior to the WCAR inter-governmental conference.

After a discussion session, participants agreed that the Durban Declaration is indeed one of the most extraordinary proclamations of the new millennium. Yet, such a Declaration is useless unless responsible UN Member States and all other relevant stakeholders and people of good will competence strategically work together to execute its plan of action. The execution of the DDPA must be facilitated by implementing the objectives of the DDPA vision and by empowering those who are the inspiration of this movement.

Nearly two decades after the Durban World Conference Against Racism in 2001, no significant progress was made on the DDPA. As committed the Member States of the United Nations, the bureaucracy, mismanaged priorities and, in some unfortunate circumstances, careless attitudes have only produced mediocre advancement for the DDPA. This is unacceptable considering the highly advanced administration organization which exist in the UN. Therefore, we must insist that the 74<sup>th</sup> session of the UN General Assembly discuss and take decisions for a 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary with the same sense of excellence as the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Durban Conference Against Racism in 2011. We must begin preparing for this anniversary no later than January 01, 2020.

The following were adopted

## **I.2 DECLARATION AND AGREEMENTS**

### **I.2.1 WHEREAS**

The Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (DDPA) adopted by consensus during the Third "World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance" in 2001 in Durban, South Africa, constituted the most comprehensive international framework against racism.

The DDPA provided a profound analysis of the historical roots of modern racism as it emerged from the trans-Atlantic slave trade with lasting consequences for a significant proportion of the world's population who are people of African descent and constitute today's global African Diaspora. Issues of critical importance to Africans and African Descendants were also highlighted in the DDPA.

The trans-Atlantic slave trade, slavery and colonialism were a crime against humanity and provides the basis for our calls for reparatory justice and self-determination becoming even more important in our struggle everywhere.

The Durban Review 2009 has reaffirmed in its article 1 of the Review outcome document the DDPA.



2021 will mark the 20 years anniversary of the DDPA

### **I.2.2 CONSIDERING**

The slow pace of the implementation of the DDPA, the ongoing undermining and marginalization of the DDPA is a hostile act against the African Continent, its people and all people of African descent.

### **I.2.3 WE, PARTICIPANTS**

Strongly reject and condemn the ongoing undermining and marginalization of the DDPA evidenced by certain Member States within the United Nations.

### **I.3 CALL ON**

#### *1. The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)*

To affirm and take a decision at its 74<sup>th</sup> session to commemorate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the DDPA in 2021 at a high-level meeting at the level of heads of state and government as was the case for the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2011. To do otherwise would further undermine the DDPA and deprive people from their strength of the most important tool in the struggle against racism.

#### *2. The United Nations General Assembly and the Human Rights Council*

To act swiftly and decisively to set up an effective Outreach Programme by the UN to inform and mobilize the global people for the implementation of the DDPA and in this regard take into immediate account:

The recommendations of the May 2019 session of the Group of Independent Eminent Experts on the Implementation of the DDPA (appointed by the UN Secretary General) wherein it is stated that, the lack of public knowledge about the real content of the DDPA has constituted a serious obstacle towards generating political will for its full and effective implementation. And that the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary can be used as an important opportunity to enhance public understanding about the comprehensive nature of the DDPA and invitation to all relevant stakeholders, including member states, international

and regional organizations as well as non-governmental organizations, the media, academia and other interested parties, be invited to organize high-visibility initiatives to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the DDPA.

### 3. *The African Union Member States*

For their immediate support of the aforementioned recommendations of the Group of Independent Eminent Experts on the full and effective Implementation of the DDPA during the UNGA 74<sup>th</sup> session.

## **II. The UN International Decade for People of African Descent 2015-2024**

### **II.1 SUMMARY STATEMENT**

This Session of the GRS Roundtable started with a brief presentation *by Dr. Barryl A. Biekman* about the aim, mission, objectives of and what has been achieved until today about the Decade. *Dr. Biekman* paid much attention to the many UN Office of The High Commissioner for Human Rights meetings and regional conferences devoted to the evaluation of the Decade. In cooperation with the African Union and the CIDO, two meetings were organized: one in Ghana (September 2018) and the other one in Senegal (October 2019).

*Dr. Biekman* explained and talked about the Durban Review in 2009, the High-level Panel in 2011 and the adoption of 2011 as the International Year for People of African Descent.

After the presentation, participants unanimously agreed that the UN International Decade for People of African Descent is an important tool to use for the implementation of the DDPA. However, if the DDPA is not implemented properly, it is evident that the implementation of this important Decade will fail since the DDPA is the Centre of the UN Decade Programme of Activities. One cannot be implemented without the other.

A Decade as such has no value unless its Programme of Activities are executed by responsible UN Member States and all relevant and competent stakeholders. The Decade Programme of Activities must be facilitated according to the existing resolutions and by empowering those who are the inspiration of this movement. We are at the fifth year of the Decade, but many Member States have not even launched it yet, and no significant progress in implementing its three pillars (Justice, Recognition and Development) has been achieved yet.

The following were adopted

## **II.2 DECLARATION AND AGREEMENTS**

### **II.2.1 WHEREAS**

The UN International Decade for People of African Descent produced an important instrument and Programme of Activities with the aim to realize political will in the sphere of justice, recognition and development towards amongst others the strengthening of actions to dismantle the many obstacles encountered by millions of peoples of African descent in every region of the world.

In 2020, the mid-term review of the IDPAD will take place.

### **II.2.2 WE, PARTICIPANTS**

Reaffirm our commitment regarding the full and unconditional implementation of the IDPAD Programme of Activities.

Regret that the implementation of the IDPAD in its fifth year in many Member States is still at its beginning. Hold accountable governments on all levels of society and all other relevant actors.

Welcome and support the UN Programme of Activities (POAD) for the IDPAD adopted by the UN General Assembly which implementation is an integral part of the full and effective

implementation of the DDPA and which requires partnership and contribution of people to work together with people of African descent.

Welcome the exchange of ideas for the preparation of a fifth year's mid-term review of the IDPAD. The deliberation will take into account the process for a Permanent Forum on People of African descent and the state of the development by the United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Favor the opinion that the implementation of the Forum on People of African Descent agreed in the POAD should take place immediately and not be further delayed by the ongoing process for the Permanent Forum. Nevertheless, our vision regarding the Permanent Forum is that the modalities and format of a coming Permanent Forum require detailed discussion and even more important discussion that need to take place is whether the Permanent Forum should be placed under the Human Rights Council or under the Economic and Social Council, which is the case for the Indigenous Forum. This is really an utmost important matter to be fully discussed and considered

### **II.2.3 CALL ON**

#### *1. The United Nations*

To publish the Programme of Activities for the International Decade in printed form as is normal for programs of other international UN decades. It is important for a serious mid-term review of what has been done to implement the Programme of Activities.

#### *2. All governments and parliaments on all level of society and other stakeholders*

To demonstrate their political will for the full implementation of the IDPAD with involvement of *the voices* of the civil society of African descent (CSPAD).

It is important for a serious implementation to create awareness and realize national campaigns towards all people of society.

#### *3. To support CSPAD organizations and networking*

In projects by means of all the necessary forms in the field of organizational development, building and institutional reinforcement.

#### *4. Treasure and welcome*

the increased recognition of Afrophobia(Afriphobia) as the term for the special and unique form of discrimination faced by people of African descent and calls for it to be fully utilized in the fight against racism and at an equal level internationally with recognized terms for discrimination of other groups.

### **III. The Decade of Return 2020-2030**

#### **III.1 SUMMARY STATEMENT**

This Session started with a statement of *Nyahuma Obika*. The statement led to a presentation about the May 2012 African Union Sixth Region Declaration from the starting point of the realization of the Organization of African Unity in 1963 to the African Union in 2002. He mentioned:

- The consolidation of the Diaspora in article 3q of the Protocol on the Amendments of the Constitutive Act of the African Union of July 2003;
- About the forthcoming giants who were at the forefront to bring the Diaspora home. Amongst them he mentioned Henry Sylvester Williams, George Padmore as leading Pan Africanists; Kwame Nkrumah, Marcus Mosiah Garvey, William E.B. DuBois, Franz Fanon, Dudley Thompson and many more such as Amy Ashwood, Amy Jacques the (first and second wife of Marcus Garvey), Queen Mother Moore who were at the forefront on Policies of Return.

*Obika* emphasized not to believe that the Diasporans are not organized. He mentioned the issue of Unity as a big obstacle. He showed the evidence of what has been achieved since 2012 until to date.

*On political, economic and academic level:*

- Agreements between the AU and CARICOM.
- The opening of African Embassies in Brazil, CARICOM and other Countries in South America and vice versa; Haiti as example which became an observer Member State of the African Union. He mentioned the opening of a Republic Suriname Embassee in Ghana. And there will many more important developments to come as the Sixth Region AU Policies seeks to operationalize it's relevance to the growth and development of the African Continent and for the benefit of Africans globally.
- He mentioned the States visits from Diaspora Countries to Africa and vice versa.
- The linking of Trustee Institutions; Universities such as the University of Johannesburg and the West Indies.
- The existence of the Ghana Caribbean Chamber of Commerce and the process towards the realization of the Ghana Suriname Chamber of Commerce.
- He stipulate the hundreds of small business Diaspora projects in African Member States and the cultural exchange activities.

At the level of the Diaspora Civil Society, *Obika* emphasized that there is a world to win. On issues of reparations, repatriation, visas, and direct flights. He agreed that the Commission and Project driven Programme of Action mentioned in the Sixth Region Declaration is the Key to the success of the Sixth Region development. In this sense he agreed with the vision of Bishop Dr. Chidiebere Anelechi Ogbu, who call for the immediate operationalization of the Commissions. The promised Legal and Political framework and structure is more than ever needed. The 20 ECOSOCC Seats for the Diaspora are waiting.

After questions and answers *Obika* conclude with a statement in which he promotes the adoption of a Decade of Return by the AU Commission and all AU Member States. We must spare no effort to advance the importance of Pan Africanism, its practicality and its timeliness he emphasized. The Decade of Return is an excellent opportunity to give fully attention to the implementation of the DDPA, the International Decade for People of African Descent as well the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and the AU Agenda 63.

The following were adopted

### **III.2 DECLARATION AND AGREEMENTS**

#### **III.2.1 WHEREAS**

*The African Union*

Has invited the African Diaspora in article 3q of the Protocol on the Amendments of the Constitutive Act of the African Union of July 2003, in which the African Union invites the African Diaspora to join the African Union as voting members followed by the African Union Declaration and Program of Activities of May 2012, in which the African Union:

*'Encourages the Diaspora to organize themselves in regional networks and establish appropriate mechanisms that will enable their increasing participation in the affairs of the African Union as observers and eventually, in the future, as a Sixth Region of the continent that would contribute substantially to the implementation of policies and programmes'.*

*The African Diaspora*

Has accepted the invitation and dedicate itself by organising and mobilizing the people and, internally organize itself and demonstrate its own unification in order to most effectively accept that invitation. This in perspective of their historical obligation to follow-up on the long-time efforts of the pioneers and veterans of Pan Africanism.

#### **III.2.2 WE, PARTIPANTS**

*Driven* by the strong desire to develop sustainable connections between the African Union, its organs and the Sixth Region of the African Diaspora.

*Enchanted* by the endeavor of creating sovereign, resilient, community respective project driven and involved institutions.

*Motivated* by the need to end and direct mechanisms of exclusion.

*Enlightened* by the spirit of kinship and family ties.

*Putting a stop to a process of take-overs, invalidation, abuse and misuse of power, respecting community involvement as protected by the Rule of Law.*

*Creating a pathway towards mutual respect and non-violent communication.  
Protecting self-determination, independency and sovereignty.*

*Honoring the cultural heritage of the African People.*

*Promoting Africa's gift to the world while safeguarding its ownership.*

*Reaffirming our agreement to accept these Rules of Procedures as guidelines in the proper functioning of the institutions of the Sixth Region Organizations.*

*Aware of the pivotal role of the African Diaspora to contribute to a peaceful, strong, rich, self-reliant, sovereign and united African continent and move towards the African Renaissance while promoting Africa's contribution to the world and safeguarding its ownership.*

*Convinced of the necessity of Pan African solidarity to achieve effective participation of the People of the African Diaspora in the activities of the African Union.*

*Reaffirming that the African Diaspora consists of People of African descendant and heritage living outside the continent, irrespective of their citizenship and nationality and who remain to contribute to the development of the continent.*

*Emphasizing the development of this definition is for African Diaspora an ongoing process.*

*Emphasizing the importance of a strong, coherent, united and globally organized African Diaspora - as defined by the African Union.*



*Recalling the Abuja Proclamation of the First Pan-African Conference for Reparations for Chattel Slavery, Colonisation & Neocolonisation 1993.*

*Recalling Article 3(q) of the Protocol on the Amendments of the Constitutive Act of the African Union of July 2003, in which the African Union invites the African Diaspora to join the African Union as voting member.*

*Recalling the outcomes of the efforts of various African Union organs and member states and others African Union Regional Consultation Conferences; the African Union Ministerial gatherings; the African Diaspora & Technical Workshop Meetings organized globally and regionally by the African Union in cooperation with the South African Government.*

*Expressing our firm hope for large substantive contribution by the African Diaspora worldwide to realize a peaceful and prosperous African continent for all its people and with particular attention to vulnerable groups.*

*Considering*

The slow pace of implementing the 2012 African Union African Diaspora Sixth Region Declaration and affiliated resolutions.

The African Union African Diaspora Decade of Return 2020-2030 as a tool to realize concrete steps forward.

### **III.2.3 CALL ON**

*The African Union Commission respective AU Head of States*

To adopt its next session the AU Decade of Return 2020-2030 with the aim to invite the 'historical' Africans in particularly, to 'Return to their Continent'.

To use this Decade of Return as a tool to *end the slow pace of the implementation of the May 2012 African Union African Diaspora Sixth Region Declaration* as far it concerns the Legal and Political Framework and Structure with the aim:

Sustainable Integration of the Diaspora Legalization in the diverse political, socio-economic and social organs and bodies of the African Union.

For Policies for the International African Diaspora Return. This includes the issuance of permanent visas to persons of African descent and right to obtain residence with no fees and ease of entry to African States if there is no disqualifying element on the African claiming the “right to return” to the ancestral home Africa.

For active partnering in the implementation of the claims for Reparatory Justice for Africa and African peoples, taken in consideration amongst others all the Declarations from Pan-Africanist Movements: The

- Programmes and Manifestos of the Europe-wide NGO Consultative Council for Afrikan Reparations (ENGOCCAR);
- Stop the Maangamizi: We Charge Genocide/Ecocide!’ Campaign (SMWeCGEC);
- International Network of Scholars & Activists for Afrikan Reparations (INOSAAR);
- National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America International Affairs Commission;
- National African American Reparations Commission;
- Platform of the Dutch Slavery Past in cooperation with ENGOCCAR the ‘*Civilians Initiative For Apology and Reparations*’ ;

And

- The Abuja Proclamation 1993, The Gambia, Libya, Caricom Declarations;
- The UN Resolutions on Reparations;
- The EU Parliament Resolution on the Fundamental Rights of People of African Descent.

In this regards all AU Member States should have their constitutions amended to acknowledge the vile nature of the continuum of the Maafa/Maangamizi, including the so-called Trans-Atlantic, Trans-Saharan and Indian Ocean slave’s trades, as crimes against humanity that should have never occurred against fellow Africans.

Assist in a cost effective, sustainable development and sourcing of major projects by first

considering resources of the International African Diaspora in African, Caribbean and Pacific Programs and other agreements.

#### **III.2.4 RECOMMEND**

That the Programme of Activities for the implementation of the Decade of Return must be developed in close cooperation with an appointed “*Technical Working Commission Decade of Return*” with a consultative voice for the Ghana Presidency Commission Year of Return, because of the learning and experience aspects.

#### **III.2.5 REQUEST**

That a Secretariat for the implementation of the Decade of Return consisting of Professional Diaspora Cadres should be placed under the Diaspora Department of the A.U. Commission. This Secretariat would have the mandate and responsibility to drive the entire process of the Decade of Return: 2020-2030.

### **IV. The Year of Return Evaluation Strategies**

This session focused on strategies to propose to the Ghana presidency for the evaluation of the Ghana Year of Return.

During the GRS Roundtable, the Participants had a strong need to speak out about their experiences in Ghana in the context of the Year of Return. Most of them agreed that Ghana has made a great achievement to declare 2019 as the Year of Return. Because no other AU Member State could have imagined this, Ghana deserves an applause. Participants unanimously asserted that these steps should be carried out by Ghana to evaluate the Year in its various aspects including the organization, communication and coordination as well in economic, social and cultural affairs without forgetting the expected sustainable development.

Are the Ghana people ready to welcome the Diaspora home? Why should they invite the Diaspora to come home if the Ghanaians living in their home country, Ghana, especially in the rural areas needs amenities in the sphere of education, employment, healthcare, and

good housing? What Ghana was looking for? Rich African Diasporans investors? African Diasporans who are seeking for their ancestral connection and a permanent home?

It was unanimous that a half-structured survey must be done to better evaluate the impact and all relevant aspects of the Year of Return and ways to improve similar future Years of Return. The survey can also allow the participants of the GRS Roundtable to express their assessment of the Event. If well done, the official survey can give the Ghana authorities a better insight into many things and forward developments.

*Questions in the categories of:*

Ages: How old are you?

Gender: What is your gender?

Expertise: what is your areas of expertise?

Income: How much do you make per month or per year?

Birthplace: Where were you born?

Employment/profession/branch: What is your profession?

Residence: What is your country of residence?

Nationality: Which country are you a citizen of?

Reasons to visit Ghana.

Is this your first visit to Ghana?

Is it because of the Year of Return?

If yes, what did the Year of Return teach you or offer you?

Questions regarding the expectations and first impressions.

Did the invitation of the President of the Republic Ghana contribute to your awareness about Africa as well as the love for Africa?

What are your most important impressions and experiences?

What events have you attended which were convened under the Event of the Year of Return?

What went well for you during that event?

What were the main issues and challenges?

How the below aspects are valued?

*Immigration:* How do you think the immigration aspect of the Year of Return can be improved?

*Information & Communication:* What do you think needs to be done to improve the information and communication aspect of the event?

*Coordination:* What can be done to improve the coordination of the event?

*Transportation:* What do you think needs to be done to improve transportation aspect of the Year of Return?

*Accommodation/Housing:* What do you think needs to be done to improve housing aspect of the Year of Return?

*Facilitation and Sanitation:* What do you think needs to be done to improve facilitation and sanitation aspect of the Year of Return?

How the Organization of Year of Return can be improved?

General recommendations

What do you recommend to improve the overall success future years of return?

**At the same time all participants agreed, by voting, that the Ghana Year of Return has to transform in the 'Ghana Decade of Return' as the first AU Member State under the Flagship of the 'African Union African Diaspora Decade of Return 2020-2030'.**



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