The Transformational Power of the African Diaspora - Celebrating 30 Years of AFFORD & Diaspora Action in Africa

Friday, 7 July | 4.30pm - 7.00pm
Chatham House, 10 St James’s Square, SW1Y 4LE
Background

Beginning with the organised activities of Olaudah Equiano’s ‘Sons of Africa’ against the trafficking of enslaved Africans at the end of the 18th century, to the role of various Pan-African conferences in the anti-colonial struggles of the 20th century, diaspora interventions in Africa have proved to be hugely influential and often decisive.

The 21st century continues this tradition of the diaspora as the agents of important change in Africa. ‘The Transformational Power of the African Diaspora: Celebrating 30 Years of AFFORD & Diaspora Action in Africa’, the 23rd African Diaspora and Development Day (AD3), on Friday 7 July 2023, extols the huge contribution the diaspora are currently making to Africa’s development in the 21st century. A line-up of leading diaspora transformers and changemakers come together to share their inspirational stories that continue to inspire and rebuild a continent. These will include contributions from Farah Jirdeh- Fonkenell, in community development and social enterprise, Dr Justina Mutale and Tom Ilube in education, and Chief Bimbo Folayan and Willy Munteza, in direct diaspora investment.

They are not alone. Ordinary diaspora contributions: including the remittances and investments made, the skills and knowledge transferred and shared, the policy changes brought about by successful advocacy, the cultural exchanges and interventions which have created huge markets for heritage tourism, African music, films and fashion, create a study safety net, that also quietly integrates Africa into the global economy.

The African remittance economy was worth over $80 billion in 2022, financing education fees, healthcare costs, day to day living expenses, investment in SMEs, job creation, construction and real estate projects.

Diaspora contributions are also counter-cyclical, often increasing when others flee the continent due to instability and humanitarian catastrophes. The recent Covid pandemic highlighted the resilience of diaspora remittances, philanthropy and finance, which continued to finance livelihoods, irrespective of the strained circumstances of the African migrants and diaspora themselves.

Established in 1994, AFFORD has been in the forefront of championing the diaspora cause. The charity became a pioneer and innovator in the field of policy and practice of ‘diaspora and development’. Today, it continues to act as a catalyst and exemplar in the sector, its advocacy work contributing to UK and international recognition of the role of the diaspora in African and international development, and in the subsequent initiation of new policies, programmes, funds and schemes, which have unlocked over £100 million for diaspora causes and activities.

Join us for this 23rd edition of AD3, a double celebration of our distinguished diaspora transformers and AFFORD’s role and impact in the sector. Learn about what has been achieved over the last 30 years, and the priorities and focus that will drive the next 30 years of diaspora activism and its contribution to the AU’s 2063 Agenda for a brighter, sustainable African future and renaissance.
### AD3 2023 Topic:
‘The Transformational Power of the African Diaspora: Celebrating 30 Years of AFFORD & Diaspora Action in Africa’

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<td>Short Film – 30 Years of AFFORD’s Impact</td>
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AD3 2023: AD3 is now in its 23rd year and is recognized as an influential space bringing together the African diaspora and policymakers to learn, share and enhance the prospects for investments into key African sectors. It also serves as a platform for influential voices in Africa such as former keynote speakers, Nobel Laureate, Professor Wangari Maathai and Dr James Ndahiro of the Rwanda Stock Exchange to inform and mobilise these audiences in the UK for significant action.

For more information, please contact: Richard Leigh – richard@afford-uk.org
Bios (in order of appearance)

Tighisti Amare – Assistant Director, Africa Programme (Chatham House)

Tighisti is the deputy director of the Africa Programme at Chatham House. She has over ten years’ experience of designing and managing a range of research projects, events with senior political figures, international conferences and roundtables relating to the political economy, international relations and governance and accountability of sub-Saharan African countries. Her research interests include Africa’s agency in international relations, Africa-EU relation and the African Union. Tighisti’s responsibilities also include oversight and quality control, fundraising, team development and management, outreach and stakeholder engagement.

Ndidi Njoku – Chair, African Foundation for Development (AFFORD)

Ndidi Njoku is the current Chair of AFFORD. Ndidi works in the Global Banking and Markets division at a global investment firm, where she has held several global and regional roles. Having held a number of high profiled positions, Ndidi began her career as a regulatory specialist at the UK utility regulator Ofgem, a DIFID consultant, she worked on Migration and Development issues, including the role of the Diaspora, and Branchless Banking as part of the Financial Sector Team; which included monitoring the impact of MPESA. Between 2011-12 Ndidi was seconded to HM Treasury (HMT) to lead the MIFID II review of the commodities derivatives; negotiating the UK’s position in Europe. From 2007 to 2014 at the UK Financial Conduct Authority (FCA), Ndidi worked on the FCA’s wholesale conduct agenda, leading the FCA’s supervisory review of MIFID. Ndidi has held several other advisory positions and is the MD of Markets4Development (M4D), a philanthropic company which facilitates entrepreneurs, market development and trade to African countries.

Moderator:

Prof. Gibril Faal, Visiting Professor in Practice, LSE & Director, GK Partners & AUC Lead Consultant

Prof. Gibril Faal is a multi-disciplinary business and development executive, and visiting professor in practice at the Firoz Lalji Institute for Africa (FLIA), London School of Economics (LSE). He is the co-founder and director of GK Partners, specialising in socially responsible business models, sustainable development and programme implementation. He is a member of the advisory council of the Carnegie African Diaspora Fellowship Program; the founder of RemitAid™, a programme to transform remittances into sustainable development finance; and international consultant to several governments and international institutions across the world. Prof. Faal previously served as vice chair of Bond, the platform of UK NGOs working on international development; chairman of African Foundation for Development (AFFORD), which pioneered concepts and practices on diaspora-development; and the founding director of Africa–Europe Diaspora Development Platform (ADEPT). He served as technical expert on negotiations for the UN Agenda 2030 and the Global Compact for Migration, and delivered keynote addresses at the UN General Assembly at the 2013 High Level Dialogue and the 2016 UN Summit for Refugees and Migrants. He previously served as co-chair, grand rapporteur and common space moderator at summits of the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD), and chaired the Entrepreneurship Committee of the GFMD Business Mechanism.
Speakers

Thomas Ilube CBE - CEO, Crossword Cybersecurity plc

Tom Ilube CBE is CEO and founder of London based Crossword Cybersecurity plc, a Non-Executive Director of the BBC. Previously he was Managing Director of Consumer Markets at Callcredit Information Group, founder/CEO of Garlik, a venture capital-backed identity protection company, sold to Experian and Chief Information Officer of Egg plc, the pioneering British internet bank. His career has included Goldman Sachs, PwC and the London Stock Exchange. Tom led Crossword in its successful admission to AIM, the growth market operated by the London Stock Exchange in December 2018. Tom is Chair of the education charity, African Gifted Foundation and launched the African Science Academy, the first girls' science and technology school on the continent. He is an Advisory Fellow of St Anne's College, University of Oxford and has been awarded Honorary Doctorates by City, University of London and the University of Wolverhampton. He was named as Britain's most influential Black person in 2017 and was appointed a Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) in the 2018 Birthday Honours for services to Technology and Philanthropy.

Willy Mutenza - Chairman and Founder Uganda Convention – UK

Willy Mutenza is a successful entrepreneur, ethnic marketing consultant and community activist who turned his hobbies into a successful business. Willy has lived and worked in London for the last 29 years. He graduated from the University of West London in 2000 with a BA in Digital Arts and Multimedia Computing. The UCUK Forum is now the largest focused forum on Uganda that attracts the largest number of industry leaders, SMEs, exporters, bankers, Ugandans in the Diaspora, political decision-makers and media representatives, coming together behind the Ugandan growth story, its potential and its ambitions to become a middle-income country by 2030. Explore financing options, investment opportunities, network with end investors looking for opportunities in Uganda.

He is also the Founder and Managing Director of the award winning The Promota Africa Ltd: A multi-cultural marketing agency that specialises in financial companies offering not to mention financial services like money transfer to the ethnic community targeting the ethnic audience in the UK, Nordic countries and Germany. To date he has the privilege to serve the top Fintech companies including: Western Union, MoneyGram, WorldRemit, Lebara, Pockit, Brussels airlines, as the only exclusive contract/consultancy.

Farah Jirdeh-Fonkenell, Pharo Foundation

Farah Jirdeh-Fonkenell moved to London in 2009 to focus on setting up Pharo Foundation where she served as CEO, Trustee and Chair until 2016. She is currently serving as a Trustee of Pharo Foundation, which seeks to achieve economically vibrant communities across Africa by investing in human and physical capital as well as infrastructure, in the Agriculture, Education, Health, and Water sectors. Since 2019, the Foundation has also been focusing on establishing social enterprises with the objective of job creation.

Farah focuses her time exploring potential investments into companies, organisations and funds in order to generate the greatest positive social impact. She travels throughout the year visiting projects in Ethiopia, Somaliland, Uganda and Kenya. She is also involved in numerous
personal charitable endeavours around the world with a keen focus on Africa. Prior to setting up the Foundation, Farah worked from 1992 to 2008 as an executive at one of the leading retail companies in the USA. She holds a BA Degree from Macalester College in Minnesota.

Dr Justina Mutale, Justina Mutale Foundation

Dr Justina Mutale is the Founder & President of the Justina Mutale Foundation and its Scholarship Programme for underprivileged African Young Women. She is also Founder of POSITIVE RUNWAY: The Global Catwalk to Stop the Spread of HIV/AIDS. Named as one of Africa’s most respected names, well-known faces, and influential voices, Justina is listed in various Who’s Who Lists, Named as one of Africa’s most respected names, well-known faces, and influential voices, Justina is listed in various Who’s Who Lists, Power Lists and Influential Lists, including the 100 Most Influential Creatives; Black Women in Europe Power List; Global Women Leaders Hall of Fame; and the Black 100+ Hall of Fame, an Exhibition & Legacy of the top 100 Black Achievers in modern Britain. She is also a Distinguished Member of the Royal Biographical Institute and the Global Institute of Human Excellency.

Justina has been honoured for her outstanding and phenomenal leadership qualities as a National and Regional Stateswoman; as well as Global Leader of the Year, and Iconic Woman Leader of the Decade. She serves on the Board of the World Leaders Forum and is Global Ambassador and Spokesperson of the International Women’s Think Tank. A civil society delegate to the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (UNCSW) and the African Union High Level Panel on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment, Justina serves as President, Patron, Ambassador, Trustee, Board Member, Advisor and Mentor to various humanitarian, charitable and community organisations in the UK and overseas. Prior to founding her own organisations, Justina worked in the Commonwealth Secretariat in London.

Bimbo Folayan, Nigeria Diaspora Direct Investment Summit (NDDIS)

Chief Bimbo Roberts Folayan is the Executive Director of J Williamz Limited, promoters of the Nigerian Diaspora Direct Investment Summit (NDDIS), an organization which mobilises Nigerians in the Diaspora and other British and international investors to invest Nigeria and help facilitate trade and business development between British (and other foreign) companies and Nigeria. He sits on the advisory board for the creation and development of the Nigerian Diaspora Investment Trust Fund inaugurated in Abuja in August 2020.

He was a past Chairman of the Central Association of Nigerians in the United Kingdom, (CANUK) a position he held for two terms. He is a Fellow of the Institute of Information Management (FiIM) and holds the British Computer Society (MBCS) Chartered IT Professional (CiTP) and Assessor status amongst several other qualifications too numerous to mention.

His IT consultancy has seen him participate in several bank and telecommunication merger projects across Europe. Bimbo has a clientele portfolio which includes Nationwide Bank, Ulster Bank, IBM, Tesco, Sainsbury, Marks & Spencer, Royal Bank of Scotland, NatWest Bank, Halifax Bank, the Bank of England and Luminor Bank, amongst several others. He was part of the team that completed the harmonization and re-branding of NTL, Telewest, and Virgin Telecoms (Virgin Media) and also the merger of Nat West Bank with other financial institutions with the Royal Bank of Scotland brand.
Onyekachi Wambu - Co-Executive Director at AFFORD

Onyekachi Wambu is a Co-Executive Director at AFFORD, a pioneer and innovator in the field of policy and practice of ‘diaspora-development’. AFFORD’s advocacy work under his leadership, has contributed to UK and international recognition of the role of the diaspora in African and international development. Since 1990 Onyekachi has taken a leadership role on issues of African cultural heritage, especially focusing on the impact of slavery and colonialism, by making high level presentations and recommendations to the UN and African Union on the issue. He currently coordinates AFFORD’s Return of the Icons Programme for the restitution of human remains and African artefacts. He is also a former newspaper editor and television producer for the BBC and PBS. He holds degrees from the University of Essex and Selwyn College, Cambridge. Onyekachi has written widely on Africa and its diaspora. His latest book, the anthology, Empire Windrush: Reflections on 75 Years & More of the Black British Exepreince was published on 22 June 2023.

Stella Opoku-Owusu

Stella Opoku-Owusu is a Co-Executive Director at AFFORD. Stella has over 20 years’ of experience in the development sector at community, national and international levels, working with diaspora and migrant communities. She has solid experience and knowledge of diaspora, migration and development, in policy and practice and is responsible for overseeing AFFORD’s work on Diaspora & Migrants Investment and their contributions to Enterprise and Employment including managing the AFFORD Diaspora Finance Portfolio, to a value of £2.5 million. She also oversees AFFORD’s engagement with Diaspora & Migrants,