Supporting Africa's regional integration:
The African diaspora – prototype pan-Africanists or parochial village-aiders?

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1 Introduction

This concept paper is presented as a contribution to the debates to be held during the African Development Forum III (ADF III), "Defining Priorities for Regional Integration". The paper attempts to contribute to two of the five thematic areas, Institutional Arrangements and Capacity and Regional Approaches to Regional Issues. Specifically, it draws on the perspectives and experience of the London-based African Foundation for Development (AFFORD) to sketch out ways in which the African diaspora can support efforts towards increased regional integration in Africa. These issues are of central concern to AFFORD with its mission to expand and enhance the contribution that Africans in the diaspora make to Africa's development.

The paper first takes a brief look at the African diaspora in historical perspective and its relation with pan-Africanist ideas and ideals. Then the paper presents some data on the numbers and types of Africans in the UK as a way of contextualising the contemporary African diaspora. The next section focuses on African diaspora organisations in the UK, again to provide a frame for understanding contemporary diaspora issues. The following section provides an examination of the context for the current topic by focusing on the challenges presented to Africa by forces and processes of globalisation as well as failures of existing development co-operation. The paper then looks at a possible framework within which to consider diaspora engagement in policy arenas – from the UK and from Africa – as they pertain to Africa's development as well as potential contradictions to be addressed. Finally, the paper concludes with some pointers towards action agendas that we might pursue. The appendix contains background on AFFORD.

In sum, this paper makes the following points and arguments:
1. In spite of the growing diversity of the African diaspora in contemporary times, it is well placed to build on the long tradition and history of the African diaspora contributing effectively to pan-africanist ideas and struggles and contribute to Africa's regional integration.
2. Nonetheless, creating awareness among the African diaspora about the links between the local, the regional and the global is an urgent and ongoing political task.
3. The UK-based African diaspora has grown in diversity recently but is concentrated in one key centre of global power, London, and this gives it a potential for having greater impact than might be predicted from the numbers or resource base alone.
4. The African diaspora in the UK organises primarily on the basis of identity – ethnic, alma mater, region, etc, but these apparently parochial organisations house vast knowledge and operate as active, applied knowledge networks.
5. Although dedicated professional knowledge networks undeniably have important roles to play in contributing to Africa's development and to regional integration, a focus on these organisations must sit alongside a focus on the more diffuse and diverse diaspora organisations that enjoy broad support and legitimacy among members of the African diaspora.
6. African diaspora organisations have demonstrated their capacity to network together and collaborate in the furtherance of their specific aims, this bodes well for work towards their support for regional integration in Africa.

7. Globalisation presents both technical and political challenges to Africa and from the African diaspora demands both technical responses– marshalling of acquired knowledge and expertise for use by various groups and actors – and political responses – formation of a global African civil society – to hold key actors and institutions, African and others, to account.

8. The sense of marginalisation and alienation felt by probably a majority of the world's population raises the stakes in the creation of the African Union to ensure that the interests, welfare, and participation of mostly poor Africans drive the process.

9. On the basis of a shared vision and agreement on objectives we must explore the conditions under which the African diaspora might both support an enlightened and progressive African leadership and hold it to account on agreed agendas and actions.

10. Dedicated knowledge networks with the requisite expertise must address actors in Africa and the diaspora to build their understanding and capacity around the key issues in relation to regional integration.

11. In spite of uncertainties and contradictions, the UK policy framework converges significantly with the African-led agenda vis-à-vis globalisation, development and regional integration and thus creates a basis for the engagement of the African diaspora in working with and through UK institutions and mechanisms to support Africa's development.

12. Roles exist for the African diaspora – diverse organisations, specific knowledge networks, and individuals – to support efforts towards Africa's regional integration at the national, sub-regional, regional, and global levels.

13. An action agenda to take matters forward includes sharing the African vision; creating the African Union diaspora; institutionalising the diaspora's involvement; identifying diaspora players; creating an ICT and regional integration observatory; exploiting ADF 2001; championing the champions; driving the agenda from Africa; tackling the brain drain; lobbying the UK government; creating a pro bono volunteer force; creating the next generation of Africans in the diaspora; and tapping into "third-age" retiring African diaspora resources.

2 African diaspora and pan-Africanism

Given our interest in regional integration in Africa a brief historical sojourn helps to remind us of the important role that the African diaspora has played in the formation and execution of pan-Africanist ideas and struggles. Africans and people of African descent have a long history of settlement in the UK and a similarly long history of organising in the UK for Africa's development. Two examples from key moments in Africa's history illustrate the point. Freed slave, Olaudah Equiano (also known as Gustavus Vassa) was the first political leader of Britain's black community and a prominent anti-slavery activist who toured England, Scotland and Ireland in the eighteenth century to campaign for abolition. Indeed, arguably such activities gave birth to the modern civil society movement and the formation of the first non-governmental organisation (NGO), the Anti-Slavery Society[1]. In the 20th century, African activists' organisation of the fifth Pan-African Congress in Manchester in 1945 was a landmark in the history of decolonisation. It sounded the death knell of British colonial rule in Africa and the British West Indies and set the clock ticking for the break-up of that part of the empire.

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[1] Thanks to David Styan, University of London, for pointing this out to me.

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Today, the challenges may be more diffuse, but the commitment remains: Taking remittances and resource transfers via various organisations into account, Africans in the diaspora are, in effect, the largest "aid donors" to Africa today. Speaking at ADF 2000, President Musevini described Ugandans abroad as the country's "biggest export", given that they send home some $400m each year, more than the country was earning from its biggest export-earning crop, coffee. Similarly, an attaché with the Ghanaian High Commission in London recently reported that Ghanaians abroad send home between $350m and $400m each year.

Clearly, therefore, the commitment of the newer sections of the African diaspora to Africa and their connections with developments back home should not be in question. Indeed, the more curious fact is that the importance of the African diaspora to Africa's development is so surprising to many mainstream development practitioners and policy makers. Indeed, in its structure and approach, mainstream development is organised on the basis of a very different set of assumptions, not least the incapacity of Africans at home and abroad to transform their own reality and shape their destiny. That said, however, an immediate question might spring to mind. If Africans abroad are so busy supporting their immediate family and friends back home, what interest are they likely to have in efforts to achieve regional integration, processes that appear at least to be far-removed from their micro concerns at the level of individual households, and communities in towns and villages?

Of course, the relationship between regional integration and pan-Africanism of whatever hue and ideological tone is complex and we certainly should not conflate the two. Nonetheless, it seems fair to assert that at least some people with broad pan-Africanist sympathies will support regional integration policies as a means to a desirable end. The position that people who are either neutral or hostile towards pan-Africanism take vis-à-vis regional integration is more open to debate. As Prah (2000) quotes, "you never see Africa whole until you're out of it". In other words, one often becomes "African" in the process of leaving one's home, village, town, city, district, region, country in Africa and settling in the north, particularly in areas that have long histories of institutionalised racial discrimination against people of African origin. Cities such as London, New York or Paris have long played the role of meeting place and melting pot for Africans with differing backgrounds. Through shared experiences and collective struggles, new pan-African identities and sensibilities have been forged.

However, pan-Africanism and nationalism (or even "villageism") did not and do not necessarily sit in total contradiction towards or mutual exclusion of one another. Clearly, some activists saw pan-Africanism as a framework through which to achieve national independence. Similarly, it is conceivable that many members of the African diaspora, actively involved in supporting development in their regions of origin, can see regional integration as the most viable means by which their specific developmental goals can be achieved. Indeed, an important political task is to enter into dialog with the African diaspora about these important links between the local, the regional and the global.

3 UK African diaspora in numbers

But who do we mean when we speak of the African diaspora today? We might crudely think of two "diasporas", the old and the new. The old diaspora refers to the African diaspora

produced by the Atlantic Slave Trade – African-Americans, Brazilians of African descent, people of Caribbean origin now living in the UK, etc. The new diaspora refers to those Africans who have left Africa in the post-second World War or even late post-colonial period to settle in the north. It is beyond the scope of this paper to explore or defend the conceptual distinction made here. Certainly, the fact that some Africans in the diaspora can identify specific points of origin and link in Africa makes for a different modus operandi vis-à-vis Africa's development. Without losing sight of the enormously significant contributions the wider African diaspora has made and continues to make to Africa's development, this paper focuses primarily on the newer sections of the African diaspora.

Taking the UK as a case study of the African diaspora, no one knows for sure just how many Africans live in the country today. The 1991 census is the most reliable source of data, and researchers generally combine this data with data produced by the authorities dealing with immigration and asylum applications (this section draws heavily from some figures produced by Dr Carolyne Ndofor-Tah in *An evaluation of AFFORD's work: 1998-2001* published by AFFORD). However, in spite of the new insights offered by the 1991 census, which for the first time included a question about ethnic origin (eg Black African), problems with interpretation and correlation of data place limits on what we can say for certain about the numbers of Africans in the UK.

The 1991 British Census revealed that just over three million people or 5.5% of the population could be classified as belonging to a minority ethnic group. Numerically significant groups identified in 1991 included Indian (nearly 28%), Black Caribbean (nearly 16%), Pakistani (nearly 16%), Black African (7%), Bangladeshi (5.5%), and Chinese (just over 5%). Over half (56.2%) the people of minority ethnic origin in 1991 lived in the Southeast, 44.6% lived in Greater London, 14.1% in the West Midlands.

Of the 210,000 Black Africans in the UK, the population in London identified in the 1991 census was 172100. In other words, just over 80% of all Black Africans living in the UK live in London, making up a 2.4% share of London's population, estimated to rise by 66% to 285,700 by the year 2001 (LRC 1996). This growth rate is the fastest of all the 10 ethnic groups in the census. African groups in the UK consist of:
- 36% Africans born in the UK
- 21% Nigerians
- 16% Ghanaians
- 14% Non-Commonwealth African countries, notably Ethiopians, Somalis, Eritreans, Congolese (Brazzaville and Kinshasa), etc
- 8% Ugandans
- 3% Sierra Leoneans
- 1% Kenyans, Zambians, South Africans.

The 1980s and 90s saw an increase in refugees/asylum seekers from areas in conflict or political unrest and tension such as Angola, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. These more recent patterns of migration are in marked contrast to previous settlements of Africans in the UK. Indeed, as scholars note, up until the 1960s and probably

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some way beyond, African settlement in the UK was generally the prerogative of educated African elites from Anglophone, West African colonies. The economic and social status of African arrivals began to shift in the intervening years, although they still came largely from Anglophone Africa.

Now, with the arrival of Francophone Africans starting around 1989 and continuing throughout the 1990s (although peaking round about the middle of the decade), we have a much more diverse cross-section of Africans in London (Styan 2000).

The concentration of such a large number of Africans in London gives them a significance beyond their absolute numbers. Indeed, the level of concentration is increased by the fact that one inner-city borough of south London is home to the largest number of Africans in the country.

As Styan notes, the more settled largely Anglophone West Africans tend to be highly educated (often with profiles that match or exceed other highly educated groups such as some classes of whites and Indians). And in spite of the all-too pervasive racial discrimination that continues to hamper Black people's progress, many of these more settled Africans have secured professional careers in the private sector, the public sectors of government, health and local authorities, as well as the media and arts. For instance, the 2000 labour force survey found that one out of seven of London's workers, or 482,000, are non-British, including 35,484 Nigerians, making up 7.4% of the non-British labour force.

Other groups, particularly the more recent arrivals face a plethora of problems in settling and establishing themselves in the UK. Those from non-Commonwealth African countries (ie non-Anglophone) face language barriers, difficulties getting their educational qualifications recognised, hostility from other groups in the inner cities where they live cheek by jowl, often competing for the same scarce resources and local authority services. Moreover, many more recently arrived Africans have irregular or undecided immigration status and this further hampers their integration within the host environment.

Given our focus on the relationship between the African diaspora and Africa, and indeed the need for a long-term perspective, it is worth considering the age distribution of the UK's African population. The estimated 66% rise of London's Black African population over the last 10 years is unevenly distributed between the different age groups.

Age (years)	Percentage increase
55 and over	168%
40-44	160%
35-39	151%
45-49	126%
50-54	91%
0-19	84%
30-34	47%
20-29	0-to-negative

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Table 1: Increases of London's Black African population by age

A relative baby drought in the 1970s apparently accounts for the absence or decline of growth of numbers of people in their 20s. But the cohort of Black Africans coming up behind this group is growing relatively strongly. We shall return to this demographic pattern later on. So much for growth rates, what about absolute numbers? The Black African London population is relatively young, people aged 0-19 account for nearly 40% share of the total. People aged 20-49 account for 53% of Black African Londoners, those aged 50 and above make up the remainder and are obviously in a minority, although of course growing fast.

All these factors add to the diversity of the African diaspora and the organisations they form and provide the context within which we will later consider how the diaspora can support regional integration in Africa.

4 UK African diaspora organisations

Now that we have a picture of the numbers and types of Africans in the UK today, what do we know about associational life? How do Africans socialise, network, and organise together? Here we are mainly interested in those African diaspora organisations with a development brief. However, it is worth noting that many African organisations have wide remits extending from welfare of members in the UK to welfare and development of the home region. It is not uncommon, for instance, for the priority of an organisation to start out at birth as being to address the welfare needs of members in the UK, eg vital information about services available, legal rights, advice on housing, health, education, etc; to provide cultural sustenance – a home from home – and to foster general information flows and good relations within the community. Later, as members are more settled and established, their attention might turn to supporting development back home.

The table below demonstrates the sheer diversity of African diaspora organisations operating in the UK today.

Organisation type	New diaspora?	Old diaspora?	Example
Individual	✓		Individual sending remittances home ($400m from Ugandans abroad – President Musevini)
Hometown association	✓		Nnewi Community Association of Great Britain & Ireland
Ethnic association	✓		Buganda Heritage Association Ebika bya Baganda
Alumni association	✓		SHESA UK (Sacred Hearts Ex-Students Association UK) Old Budonians Association

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Religious association	✓	✓	Mourides Ausar Auset Society Mission Ensemble Pour Christ
Professional association	✓	✓	Black International Construction Organisation (BICO) Society of Black Lawyers
Development NGO	✓	✓	ABANTU for Development Akina Mama wa Afrika
Investment group/business	✓	✓	African Caribbean Finance Forum
Political group	✓		Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People
National development groups	✓		National Association of Sierra Leonean Organisations Ghana Union
Welfare/refugee groups	✓		African Francophone Resource & Information Centre
Supplementary schools	✓	✓	Sankofa
Virtual organisations	✓	✓	Somali Forum Ghana Cyber Group
Research/think tank	✓	✓	ATTT (African Telecoms Think Tank Institute for African Alternatives (IFAA)
Arts/cultural groups	✓	✓	Tawakal, Heritage Ceramics
Women's group	✓	✓	Ogidi Women's Association East London Black Women's Organisation (ELBWO)
Development education centre	✓	✓	Inroads Africa/Anansi DEC

Table 2: Typology of African diaspora groups

On the face of it, the concerns and modus operandi of most of the organisations in the list seem to be far removed from high-powered knowledge networks addressing cutting-edge issues such as policy in the arena of Africa's regional integration. Yet these diaspora organisations often form the backdrop against which Africans in the diaspora fulfil their civic responsibilities as citizens. Those members of such organisations with professional skills and experience will often deploy those skills in the process of achieving the organisation's mission. So, for instance, members of the alumni association SHESA UK (Sacred Hearts Ex-Students Association UK) – who include among their rank a senior manager with IBM and an engineering professor at a London university – deploy their ICT knowledge and skills to organise seminars in Cameroon on the strategic importance of ICTs for the country's

development. One of the leading members of the Ogidi Women's Association – an organisation that provides support to the people of Ogidi region in eastern Nigeria – uses her skills as a health consultant to implement organisational projects in the home region. And the president of a US-based hometown association of people from Imo State in Nigeria is a professor of management at a US university and that forms the context for the skills deployment in his hometown association.

Indeed, the case study of the University of Hargeisa (see box 1 below) demonstrates that diaspora organisations can integrate the diverse skills and experience of widely geographically dispersed groups in the diaspora. Of critical importance to this project was the use of ICTs and the relative ease and low-cost of international travel. The Somaliland Forum in particular, effectively a "virtual organisation", exploited ICTs to great advantage. Arguably, these diaspora organisations represent knowledge networks in action.

In contrast to the United States, UK academic institutions offer a less conducive environment from which African intellectuals in the diaspora can mobilise their support for various aspects of Africa's development. In recent years, pre-eminent associations such as the Royal African Society have complained of the precipitate decline in UK funding for African studies. The result has been a drop in the availability of grants for research in Africa-related disciplines. African academics based in UK universities with Africa specialisms thus find themselves marginalised, given the emphasis that is placed on publication of refereed books and articles as the basis for rating quality in universities and hence academics' career progression. This situation partly explains why Africans in the UK have not formed the direct equivalent of an organisation like the US-based African Finance and Economics Association (AFEA) whose membership comprises mainly university professors born in Africa but working in the US. AFEA publishes a scholarly journal, organises workshops and seminars and is seeking collaboration with counterparts in Africa. However, the factors that led to AFEA's formation, such as the isolation, concerns over engaging in intellectual enquiry not relevant to Africa, "… the feeling of losing touch with the realities back home… a yearning to reconnect and indeed, if possible, to start working on problems relevant to Africa" (AFEA 2001) all equally obtain in the UK. The smaller numbers of African academics employed in the UK mean an absence of the necessary critical mass to sustain such efforts in large numbers.

But similar organisations do exist among the UK African diaspora. For instance, Perinet (Peri-Urban Research Network) brings together African academics based at Southbank University in London. Perinet is currently managing (out of Harare) a research project into food security in three southern African countries. The Black International Construction Organisation (BICO) also emerged from Africans working and studying at Southbank University, although the group now comprises more professionals outside of academia. BICO focuses on urban development and the built environment, with projects spanning the UK, Ghana and Cameroon.

The relatively unattractive conditions within British academia have fuelled something of an exodus of Africans in recent years. Some have proceeded to join or form civil society organisations. An example of the latter is the Centre for Democracy & Development (CDD).

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Over the past few years CDD's work has focused on contributing to the peace and security architecture in Africa, particularly the ECOWAS region.

The African Telecom Think Tank (ATTT) is more of a "virtual organisation" than one with a clear national identity, however, the secretariat is housed in the UK. The organisation comprises Africans in Africa and the diaspora and provides advice, comment and support to African telecommunications authorities. The ATTT could provide strategic advice to Africa's telecoms regulatory authorities as they seek enhanced regional integration and co-operation.

Other UK diaspora organisations combine a research and policy orientation with direct service delivery. Two organisations in this category would be ABANTU for Development and Akina Mama wa Afrika (AMwA). Both organisations approach development from a gender perspective. ABANTU seeks to influence policy makers to ensure that development policies are gender-sensitive. AMwA builds African women's leadership capabilities. Both organisations' work spans support for African women in the UK and in Africa. The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) commits African leaders to promote the role of women in social and economic development through a range of mechanisms including building their capacity and assuring their participation in the political and economic life of African countries. The cross-cutting nature of gender in the whole development process suggests that organisations such as ABANTU and AMwA will have key roles to play in the supporting Africa's regional integration.

The formation of the African Union and the renewed vigour with which leaders are pursuing an integration agenda in Africa are relatively new developments. Formation or orientation of civil society structures in the diaspora and Africa that interface with such formal political processes and structures is not necessarily inevitable and whatever forms emerge will likely lag these formal political processes. Factors that will shape the responses to regional integration efforts among diaspora organisations in the UK include diaspora awareness of those developments, evidence that such efforts are addressing core development problems in Africa, the capacity of diaspora organisations and individuals, and outreach efforts from Africa to the diaspora.

Specific and dedicated knowledge networks and professional African organisations in the diaspora potentially have important roles to play in supporting Africa's regional integration. However, we must not lose sight of the critically important roles that the apparently less intellectual African diaspora organisations play in the lives of Africans at home and abroad. They are likely to be the main vehicles via which the broad mass of the African diaspora engage with and involve themselves in Africa's development.

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Box 1: University of Hargeisa, Somaliland case study

The development of the University of Hargeisa in Somaliland was a project spearheaded by the UK Somali community from that region. Against all odds and to much national and international acclaim, the newly developed University of Hargeisa (UoH) in Somaliland opened its doors in 2000 to the first batch of access course students in preparation for a full start in September 2000. Initiated in mid-1997, this effort united Somalis in Somaliland itself with Somalis in the diaspora as far-flung as Australia, Sweden, Kuwait, the United States, and Britain. The project enjoyed support by the government of Somaliland, a territory still without international recognition. A steering committee in London that combined Somali expertise and leadership with British know-how and experience worked in close collaboration with an interim council in Somaliland. Local businesses in Somaliland took full responsibility for rehabilitating the government-donated dilapidated old-school building that was in fact home to over 500 returned Somali refugees. Somalis in Sweden provided 750 chairs and tables; Kuwait-based Somalis sent computers. In the project's second year, the Somaliland Forum, a cyberspace-based global network of Somalis formed taskforces to tackle specific elements, raised money, maintained email groups, and hosted real-time e-conferences.

The steering committee in London consulted back and forth with the interim council in Somaliland – made up of elders, government ministers in formal and personal capacities, local business people, and local mayors – to identify the priority academic areas to receive immediate attention based on local needs. The steering committee drew on its expertise to write a curriculum for these academic areas, a charter for the university and the business plan.

UoH threw a brain drain into sharp reverse. One-third of the students on the access course returned from the Gulf, the UK and Canada to attend. High school students who would either have had to leave Somaliland to pursue further studies or drop out now have the option to stay. The university's first vice chancellor, an eminent Somali scientist who worked in Canada for a number of years, took up post to work pro bono to oversee UoH's crucial first few years.

The next section will consider the challenges posed to Africa by globalisation and the much-needed response of regional integration. Before proceeding, however, it is worth commenting briefly on the nature of the African diaspora in other parts of Europe. As researchers have observed (eg see Al-Ali, Black and Koser: 1999) the host conditions within which the diaspora find themselves influence both their capacity and desire to engage in activities supportive of their home region. More centralised states that constrain voluntary activity and the registration and/or funding of groups; restrictive citizenship laws and regulations; wider dispersal of smaller numbers of Africans; and differing patterns of ethnic minority struggle for social justice, rights and recognition are all factors that hamper African diaspora activity in many European countries. Nonetheless, based on partnerships that AFFORD has with African diaspora organisations in five other European countries (Belgium, France, Italy, Netherlands, and Portugal) activities in support of Africa are widespread and vibrant among

such groups. Libercier and Schneider (1996:38) make an interesting case study of Malians in France:

> "In concrete terms, the impact of emigrants' transfers is all the more visible when it is concentrated in a single region. This is the case for the Kayes region of Mali, the home region of the great majority of Malian immigrants in France. The region benefits from the actions of immigrants' associations, which have managed, moreover, to energise the beneficiary villages: 39 of the 42 development associations in France are also present in the villages. They have understood the need to federate, to be able to act on a larger scale in the district or regional level. Many associations have been formed, grouping all the 15 to 40 villages of a district. Among other things, they contribute to the development of hydraulic networks to improve agricultural production. Seventy per cent of the immigrants in France who stem from the Kayes region are active members of their village associations. Over a period of about ten years, they financed 146 projects, for a total budget of 19.4 million French francs; they contributed 16.6 million francs from their savings, the remainder 2.8 million francs being contributed by NGOs with aid from international donors. Thus, 64 per cent of the infrastructure in the villages of the Kayes region are attributed to the migrants."

More recently, anecdotal evidence has emerged that Senegalese groups in France stemming from nearby regions of the country have similarly recognised the need to collaborate to achieve greater impact and leverage from their work for their home regions. Thus the idea of regional integration and pan-African collaboration are not alien even to quite small, locally focused diaspora organisations.

5 Globalisation and Africa's development

It is certainly beyond the scope of this concept paper to delve too deeply into this complex, contested, and much-debated subject. However, some suggestive remarks should help to focus our attention on the context within which the African diaspora might support Africa's regional integration. The key point to be advanced here is that it is indeed true that processes of globalisation do present policy makers in Africa with a more complex environment within which to make choices, thus necessitating the application of knowledge – more rapidly generated and deployed – from increasingly inter-related domains. However, we must be careful not to construct or see the challenge in purely narrowly technocratic terms, as a requirement for better informed policy- and decision-makers making better choices. We must also be mindful of the political challenges thrown up by globalisation, most notably the need for formation of a global African civil society able to plug the emerging democracy gap.

Positions vis-à-vis globalisation abound and we will not review them all here. Debate has generally centred around "what's new" and what can be done about it? Some argue that what we now describe as globalisation is merely the latest phase of global capitalist expansion and exploitation that has long chewed up and spat out regions such as Africa and Africans with little more than a belch from indigestion. Such a view would hold that Africa has more or less been allocated a marginal place in the global scheme of things, joined in this latest epoch by peoples and regions actually in the heart of the north itself that also now find themselves surplus to requirements of capital accumulation. Thus we now have a "south" within the "north" and a "north" within the "south". This view often leads to a call to resist or reverse processes of globalisation in favour of a world system more conducive to balanced and just development.

The view that "there is no alternative" (TINA) espoused by world leaders such as then British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher has now evolved into a more nuanced position that while

there is still no alternative to a neo-liberal economic regime, some room for policy manoeuvre does exist to ameliorate some of the destabilising effects of globalisation. It is worth noting, however, that in the wake of the September 11 attacks on the United States a range of regulatory controls and policy options to reign in the free market previously considered undesirable or unworkable were implemented (Elliot 2001).

Another view is that there is much that is new, in spite of the undeniable continuity, in globalisation. Wealth creation depends far more on the application of technology and knowledge, even the most powerful are now largely subservient to the logic of the inter-connected and hypersensitive global system.

That some benefits can accrue even to the relatively weak and vulnerable as a result of globalisation processes is accepted. However, we should not lose sight of the fact that these processes of globalisation sit astride unprecedented levels of social and economic polarisation between haves and have-nots. Poverty and social injustice remain colour-coded in the north and in the south. If, as WEB Du Bois – one of the forefathers of pan-Africanism – asserted in 1900 that "the problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the colour line", what evidence do we have at the beginning of the 21st century that this problem has been solved? The nature of the challenges posed to Africa and Africans by globalisation behove us to consider broader political questions in relation to the African diaspora's role in supporting Africa's regional integration.

The current world crisis in the wake of the attacks on New York and Washington suggest some of the challenges Africa must confront in this era. Leaders of the world powers and some commentators, at least initially, presented the September 11 attacks as evidence of a clash of civilisations. President George W Bush spoke of the coalition in support of the US as being made up of "freedom-loving people". And no less an authority on the current crisis than Osama bin Laden himself described it in apparently Huntingtonian terms as a clash between believers and non-believers, even as he in classically modernist terms advanced claims for the rights, dignity and security of the Palestinian people and marginalised Muslims everywhere.

But this attack came from within the global system. For good reason commentators have described bin Laden as a jihad venture capitalist, a jihadi dot com, almost. The al-Qa'ida network used advanced organisational techniques to mobilise and deploy supporters in maybe as many as 50 countries while initially evading detection. They allegedly communicated by encrypting messages within graphics files and exchanging them via websites that deal in pornographic pictures. Lax regulatory controls on the movement of capital are such that they were able to move money around, largely without trace. Indeed, it is even alleged that they used their advance insider knowledge of the attacks to profit on the stock market from predictable movements in shares in the wake of the attack. Any system or tool is dangerous in the wrong hands but a system that produces global inequalities, desperate, frustrated and dangerously destructive people, and such an inter-connected means of destruction contributes to a highly unstable world.

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The September 11 attack was greeted with near-universal condemnation, sympathy for the victims and horror at the inhumanity of the act. The fault line in this crisis was not between civilised and uncivilised people, or between believers and non-believers, or between Muslims and non-Muslims. Many "freedom-loving" people – millions of Africans among them – find themselves excluded from enjoying the benefits of a global system that is supposed to deliver not just freedom, but equality, justice, security, opportunity, well-being, even proper meals each day. Such people – arguably a majority of the world's population – are sceptical about the terms of reference for the "war against terror". Indeed, many of the governments corralled into the coalition against terror support the campaign in the face of opposition from a majority of their citizens. In short, the global order is facing a crisis of legitimacy.

And given the means and methods suggested by this new paradigm of terror, now available to any group with the will, determination and resources to undermine the global order we face dangerous times.

The illegitimacy of the global order comes not just from social and economic inequalities but also from the political and institutional arrangements that have seen a transfer of power to global fora such as the World Trade Organisation (WTO) without a concomitant increase in accountability and democratic access to citizens of the world and indeed weaker states. The anti-globalisation protests now overshadowed by more recent events were often contradictory and misguided in their objectives and they raised questions about whose interests they were serving and in whose name they were acting. Nonetheless, these protests were another symptom of growing disaffection with the global order and a further sign of a need for fundamental change.

According to the ECA's concept paper on ADF III, "propelled by globalization, the age of economic nationalism is over… The key lesson to be learned from these efforts [of economic integration] is that regional integration is a politically driven process underpinned by the recognition that sovereign interests are best advanced through regional actions. Sustained political commitment is therefore a necessary first step towards regional integration." However, while there is an essential and legitimate place for leadership in this process of regional integration it is vital that it not be a top down process that fails to bring people along. As an apparently largely successful experiment in new supranational political formation, the European Union (EU) offers many lessons to the fledgling African Union (AU). But we should not forget that recently, at every opportunity they have been given (most recently in the Irish referendum), European citizens have consistently shown their hostility towards further European integration as they perceive it.

The reasons for the wary or hostile stance by EU citizens are complex and an exhaustive examination is outside the scope of this paper. The rapid pace of change; feelings of loss of control; the sense that an unaccountable, inaccessible bureaucracy in Brussels was taking over their lives; and challenges to core elements of their identities may all be factors worth paying attention to. Here again, the democratic deficit is in evidence.

In broad terms, the challenge to Africa in this age of globalisation is twofold, framed in this context as political and technical. In protecting the interests of Africans and advancing their

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chances of wellbeing and prosperity, as they commit themselves to in NEPAD, African leaders and policy makers must ensure that the push towards regional integration translates into tangible benefits felt by ordinary Africans in terms of improved life-chances. Evolving political structures that ensure democratic accountability will be crucial to the long-term success of this venture. This means translating the local into the regional and translating the regional into the local, and making appropriate connections between the two, and between them and the global environment. Even if continent-wide civil society structures evolve and adapt in response to Africa's new political landscape as we may hope, the challenge of political adaptation will not end at Africa's borders. Arguably today we need to see a global African civil society emerge, not least because some of the critical decisions that will affect the transition and adaptation of Africa's regional institutions are taken in global fora such as the WTO.

The African diaspora has a role to play in constituting this global African civil society in solidarity and partnership with counterparts in Africa. In political terms, bearing in mind the ultimate goal of transforming the life-chances for Africans, the question arises as to whether and under what conditions this global African civil society might support an enlightened African leadership in pursuing a regional integration agenda. The role for this global African civil society will be to hold this leadership to account when it fails to pursue these goals, eg in international fora. Similarly, this global civil society grouping has a role to challenge non-African power interests and institutions when Africa's interests are thwarted.

Here, we need not envisage the creation of whole new structures but the weaving together of existing local civil society organisations – in Africa and the diaspora – to address the challenges that Africa now faces. As the above examples of Senegalese and Malians in France and our own limited research suggest (Ndofor-Tah 2000), when they can see the strategic benefits in terms of their organisational missions Africans in the diaspora do co-operate and form wider networks to achieve their strategic objectives. The African diaspora must also channel efforts through appropriate institutions and mechanisms in the host countries in which they have settled. So for instance, the African diaspora in the UK must work with and through the British government as well as the EU to support Africa's regional integration. We need to give more attention to creating the conducive environment that will enable the emergence of institutions among Africans in the diaspora to support Africa's regional integration.

However, this global African civil society cannot just lobby and advocate on the global issues affecting Africa, it must also provide tangible technical support and advice to African governments, regional institutions, and other key actors that influence decision-making that in some cases have the political will but lack the technical capacity to function effectively. In any case, an ill-informed global African civil society will lack the credibility to act politically and will be more of a liability than an asset. The dedicated knowledge networks and expertise of Africans in the diaspora have important roles to play in this capacity building for Africa's leaders, policy-makers, and the emerging global African civil society.

The next section will look at the framework within which and through which the African diaspora can channel support for Africa's regional integration. It focuses primarily on the UK.

6 Framework for diaspora action

Outbound migration from Africa looks set to continue for some time yet (see AFFORD 2000). Thus the mechanisms via which the African diaspora maintains and sustains transnational relations with Africa and the rest of the diaspora will become more important with time. In thinking about these transnational links, Pires-Hester has proposed the concept of "bilateral diaspora ethnicity", defined as "the strategic use of ethnic identification with an original overseas homeland to benefit that homeland, through relations with systems and institutions of the current actual homeland" (1999:486).

We have already seen that the African diaspora has strong identification with regions of origin, although particularly with newer sections of the diaspora this identification tends to operate at the micro level. As already noted, joining up the micro and the macro – the African village to the African continent – is a key, though not insurmountable, task. But what about the host environment, what is the policy framework and through which institutions might the African diaspora operate in, say, the UK?

On the face of it, the UK government policy appears to make the country a good host from which the African diaspora can be part of initiatives in support of Africa's development. For a start, in its November 1997 White Paper on International Development, *Eliminating World Poverty: A Challenge for the 21st Century*, DFID committed the British government to "build on the skills and talents of migrants and other members of ethnic minorities within the UK to promote the development of their countries of origin". Although DFID is still consulting on what this commitment actually means in practice, it does provide a starting point for an engagement with the African diaspora vis-à-vis Africa's development.

Second, UK Prime Minister Tony Blair has declared development and positive change in Africa to be a cornerstone of foreign and development policy during his second term in office. This is rather exceptional, as Prime Ministers have not prioritised Africa in recent years. Speaking at the United Nations Millennium Summit in September 2000, the Prime Minister declared:

> "There is a dismal record of failure in Africa on the part of the developed world that shocks and shames our civilisation.
> Nowhere are more people dying needlessly from starvation, from disease, from conflict. Deaths caused not by fate but by acts of man. By bad governance, factional rivalries, state sponsored theft and corruption.
> Nowhere are more people being left behind on the wrong side of a growing digital and educational divide, children being denied the opportunities that will transform the lives of their contemporaries elsewhere in the world.
> We need a new partnership for Africa, in which Africans lead but the rest of the world is committed; where all the problems are dealt with, not separately but together in a coherent and unified plan.
> Britain stands ready to play our part with the rest of the world and the leaders of Africa in formulating such a plan."

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Speaking at a public meeting in January 2002 on the British government's Africa policy, Baroness Valerie Amos, a government minister in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and spokesperson on development in the House of Lords recently indicated strong government support for NEPAD.

Third, as we have seen most notably in Sierra Leone, UK foreign policy now has a more interventionist bent, with interventions justified by a commitment to internationalism, protection of human rights, and to a moral imperative.

Fourth, when it entered office in 1997 the government created a new state department, DFID under Clare Short who remains Secretary of State for International Development, to deal specifically with development, thus removing responsibility for the development brief from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), where it had had the status of an autonomous department with its own minister. Development has long been used as a tool for the wealthier countries to achieve foreign policy objectives and not an end in its own right. The UK government has taken the lead among Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) partners in loosening the ties between aid and trade. (However, increased British aid to Afghanistan in the wake of the US-led and UK-supported bombing campaign against the Taliban regime suggests that aid remains linked to wider political objectives in Britain as in other northern countries.) The then-new government also signalled that its foreign policy would have an ethical dimension, a commitment that generated much interest at the time of its announcement but that subsequently proved to be something of an Achilles Heal.

The then-new Labour government also signalled its intention to engage in what it dubbed "joined-up government" (Ero 2001). The aim was to usher in a new era of more coherent, strategic and inter-related policy development and implementation in recognition of the growing complexity and inter-connected nature of the problems that governments must solve these days. In practical terms, joined-up government meant increased co-operation between DFID, the FCO, the Ministry of Defence, and the Treasury. It also meant increased co-operation with multilateral partners such as the UN and the EU. More intriguingly perhaps, the UK is also working in partnership with France on Africa policy. This partnership, framed by two declarations in St Malor and Cahors and based on a sense of shared interests and responsibilities, has so far featured joint ministerial visits, co-funding of peace-keeping exercises and agreements to co-operate to bring peace to the Democratic Republic of Congo and Sierra Leone.

As Ero (2001) notes, Africa is often seen as non-strategic, uncontroversial and the area where experiments such as joined-up government have more prospects of success given the lower level of interests at stake. But even so, tensions, conflicts and contradictions within government have arisen, allegedly between the FCO and DFID on various elements of the Sierra Leone initiative, for instance. Even less "joined-up" is the contradiction between the UK's commitment to conflict prevention and maintenance of peace and its status as a major arms supplier.

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Moreover, where UK policy on Africa goes from here is unclear for now. Commentators believe that success or failure (or perceptions thereof) in Sierra Leone will be a key determinant. Although the intervention is popular with many Sierra Leoneans, critics have complained of de facto recolonisation. As the UK now effectively runs Sierra Leone's army, police and has significant influence over public finance, anti-corruption drives, local government reform, and the judiciary it certainly seems fair to assert that the UK has got itself deeply enmeshed in Sierra Leone. In this respect, it is unclear what lessons we will be able to draw from the country's Sierra Leone adventure for wider application vis-à-vis UK Africa policy. For now, Sierra Leone is certainly a symbolic indicator of the UK's determination to get something right in Africa. The government expects pay-offs for the UK to include wider global influence, justification for its continued status as a permanent member of the UN Security Council and perhaps renewed public faith in the international system following debacles such as Rwanda and Somalia.

Significantly from the perspective of the African diaspora and its relationship with Africa's development, the gap between UK domestic immigration, refugee and asylum policy directed by the Home Office and the DFID/FCO agendas is glaring. Commenting on the previous Conservative government's policy Styan (1996) had already observed a "false dichotomy between domestic and foreign policy concerns". Whether increasingly tight laws and regulations restricting Africans' entry to the UK since the 1980s were implemented with any consideration as to their likely long-term effect on Africa-UK relations is unclear, for instance.

In response to current and expected skills shortages in the UK, the Home Office has signalled a softer stance on immigration of skilled and unskilled migrants (see Glover et al, 2001[2]) and indeed a more aggressive campaign of active recruitment of teachers, nurses, etc from Africa and other developing regions. By contrast, in its second major policy White Paper, *Eliminating World Poverty: Making Globalisation Work for the Poor* (2000:43) DFID signalled its tentative disquiet with the likely damaging effects of migration of expensively educated and trained talent from south to north.

Arguably, both departments are missing the main point. DFID must recognise the centrality of migration to the history of human existence and the many actually and potentially positive outcomes from migration. And given that much migration has already taken place, the Home Office could take major steps to end the discrimination, hardship and abuse of human rights by legalising the many Africans and other immigrants without properly recognised legal status in the UK. This would in turn enable more well-educated and trained Africans to compete for jobs in the professional domains in which they have competence. And this would in the long term contribute to the pool of human resource in the African diaspora potentially available to contribute to Africa's development.

Regularisation of so-called illegal immigrants' status is just the first step. The longer term goal will be the freedom of movement of all citizens of the world and the abolition of

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[2] The views expressed in this report reflected those of the authors and not necessarily the Home Office or government policy.

immigration controls in the wake of people's growing need and desire – fuelled by globalisation – to move in search of work, peace and security. As Harris (2001) notes "it is only the imposition of border controls in the 20th century that has tried to stop workers migrating to work, earning and returning home – and forced those who wish to work to settle in order to escape the problems of crossing borders. Most people have no wish to go into permanent exile, they want to work in order to improve their position in their home." A key focus of any campaign to ensure that migration and development operate in harmony will be to lobby for DFID and the Home Office to co-operate on how to make migration work for sending and recipient countries as well as the individuals concerned and their families.

Having looked at the general UK policy environment vis-à-vis Africa, let us now turn to specifics as they may relate to regional integration in Africa and the diaspora's contribution to this. This section gives special consideration to ICTs. The ECA has already identified ICT policies and strategies – at national, sub-regional and regional levels – as being important elements of Africa's toolkit to respond to the challenges of globalisation and to usher in the African information society.

Box 2 below highlights some recent policy commitments drawn from the UK government's most recent White Paper on development, *Eliminating World Poverty: Making Globalisation Work for the Poor*. Critics do not share the UK government's confidence that globalisation can indeed be made to work for the poor, rather than exacerbate misery and marginalisation. Furthermore, many lament the UK government's embrace of the neo-liberal economic paradigm at the heart of its policy. Nonetheless, the White Paper demonstrates evidence of policy convergence with African policy-makers. For instance, reflecting on the lessons from the collapse of the Seattle trade talks, the UK government draws two lessons. First, "developed countries must give greater weight to the needs of developing countries whose agreement would be needed if another Round is to be launched. Second, developing countries, who now make up a majority of [the 140] WTO members, could make significant gains from a new Round if they can exert their influence more effectively". Moreover, the White Paper later argues that an urgent priority for the creation of a fairer multilateral trading system is to strengthen the capacity of developing countries to participate effectively in the WTO and the international trading system. Some "23 least-developed country members of the WTO have no representation in Geneva, where there can be more than 40 meetings a week across a diverse range of subjects." The paper also identifies a similar need for strengthened negotiating capacity in international environmental fora. The paper sees a role for regional organisations to act as advocates, especially for smaller developing countries.

Civil society in both the south and north has an important role to play in the context of globalisation and development, according to the UK government. And the government does not equate civil society with NGOs, but looks to a broader range of actors, including human rights and women's organisations, trade unions, and co-operatives, and arguably organisations of minority ethnic peoples, including African diaspora organisations. For NGOs and other civil society organisations in the north, the government wants to improve the transparency and accountability to the people in the south on whose behalf they speak.

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This last point is particularly relevant for an African diaspora likely to become more involved in international development. A key failing of existing development co-operation is the concentration of power in the hands of actors in the north at the expense of the people in south facing hardship and struggle. We will be taking worse than a step backwards if the African diaspora simply steps in to replicate (and benefit from) the dysfunctional nature of existing development co-operation paradigms. Indeed, AFFORD's experience is that if the African diaspora is to make significant, long-term, lasting, and positive contributions to Africa's development then an absolute sine qua non is a break with current development practices and attitudes and the ushering in of a new era of African-led and owned development. Key elements of this new paradigm include solid belief in the abilities of Africans to solve their own problems; real power in the hands of the people in Africa (not just leaders in capital cities) facing the challenges to determine the nature of initiatives, their pace, what constitutes success, etc; more effective mobilisation of African controlled and managed resources (Aidoo, undated); and support for continent-wide development-oriented African institutions and mechanisms.

Box 2: Regional integration in Africa, movement of people and ICTs: UK government policy commitments

The UK government will:
- Work to ensure that a development perspective is included in international agreements affecting telecommunications and new technologies, and for a stronger voice for poorer countries in setting these rules in international institutions.
- Seek to ensure that the entry and work permit rules and other policies of developed countries do not unfairly restrict the ability of developing country service suppliers to sell into developing country markets, whilst taking into account the need not to worsen skill shortages in developing countries.
- Support the inclusion of agreements on investment and competition as part of future multilateral trade negotiations in the WTO, and work in parallel to help developing countries to build capacity and encourage closer regional co-operation on these issues.
- Work with others to strengthen the capacity of developing countries to participate in international negotiations and to take advantage of new trading opportunities, including through improved infrastructure and transport links.
- Increase assistance to least developed countries to help them participate more effectively in the negotiation of multilateral environmental agreements, and benefit from their implementation.
- Introduce a new International Development Bill to replace the outdated Overseas Development and Co-operation Act (1980), to consolidate a poverty focused approach to development, and to broaden the range of activities that the Government can support.
- Work with civil society to strengthen the capacity of poor people to hold governments and international institutions to account for progress on poverty reduction.

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Thus we must next consider the emerging policy consensus within Africa itself that should frame what actually happens on the ground. The ECA-led African Information Society Initiative (AISI) provides a framework for enacting the policies and actions that will ensure utilisation of ICTs to achieve development goals such as (ECA undated, a):
- the improvement of the quality of life of every African;
- African regional economic integration; and
- improved trade and other linkages with the global community.

Consensus on the continent has been achieved around addressing the following inter-related policy challenges (ECA undated, b):
- extending access;
- applying ICTs to solve development problems;
- collaborating to build market size and exploit economies of scale;
- building public understanding of information society issues; and
- articulating an African vision in international negotiations on information society issues.

Box 3 below summarises a number of recommendations to have emerged from the ECA's first ADF in 1999 (ECA undated, b).

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Box 3: Summary of recommendations to achieve AISI aims and objectives

- **At the national level,** *initiate the policy process within the framework of African Information Society Initiative and establish***:**

  - *A **Rural Access Task Force on ICT Innovation** to test experimental approaches to the extension of networks to rural, under-served areas*

  - *A **National Forum for Co-operation between Civil Society and Government in Global ICT Governance,** to promote informed public debate and effective negotiation*

- **At sub-regional and regional levels***, maximise the benefit of national policy initiatives and build African capacity through:*

  - *A **Community of National Regulators in Africa,** to build capacity and define models appropriate for Africa*

  - ***Policy research on market integration**, to identify ways and means to realize subregional and regional integration*

  - *A **Regional Information Society Exchange Network,** to share national experiences and best practices*

  - *A **Regional Task Force to provide policy, legal and regulatory advice,** to advise African governments on exploiting ICTs for development*

- **At global level,** *influence global decision making on ICT issues through:*
  - **A**n ***African Community of Practice on ICT Global Governance,*** *to make Africa's participation in global fora more effective*
- **At global level**, key ICT policy issues include:
  - *Influencing the shape of the future Accounting Rate Regime*
  - *Implementing Genuine Compulsory Licensing in place of restrictive Intellectual Property Rights*
  - *Broadening WTO/GATS Agreement of Telecommunication and Universal Service*
  - *Participating in ICANN (the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers) and Internet Governance.*

We can envisage roles for the African diaspora – both the diverse range of diaspora organisations and specific professional knowledge networks – in supporting and implementing these recommendations.

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At the **national level:**
- Public awareness raising should also target the African diaspora, those diaspora networks with specific knowledge and understanding should play a role in this awareness-raising and capacity building of diaspora groups. Helping diaspora groups to understand the links between their local concerns and the national, sub-regional and regional dimensions will be important. Moreover, efforts will be required to ensure that diaspora groups integrate effective use of ICTs into their existing support programs and assist their counterparts to benefit from ICTs at the local level in Africa.
- As individual countries develop and implement their national information and communication infrastructure (NICI) plans, those with skills among the African diaspora have important roles to play in temporarily filling skills gap on the continent to both implement specific areas of work and train counterparts in the individual countries in order to reduce external dependency. These assignments will likely operate on both voluntary and paid consultancy bases.

At the **sub-regional and regional levels:**
- Expertise gaps can be filled by those in the African diaspora with the necessary skills and experience.
- Reluctance of governments to give up sovereignty is a political question upon which the African diaspora working in concert with counterparts in specific regions and countries must lobby the appropriate authorities.

At the **global level:**
- Those among the African diaspora with the necessary expertise, contacts and access must contribute to the formation of appropriate African perspectives on key upcoming issues and raise awareness of these issues among the African diaspora.
- Members of the African diaspora with the necessary technical expertise must support negotiators and participants at global meetings to build their capacity to pursue African interests in debates and decision making.

7 Time for action – pan-Africanism for the information age

If we are to see positive results any time soon all the key actors must work in concert towards agreed and clearly specified goals.

Sharing the African vision

Leadership – at community, national, sub-regional, and regional levels – must come from Africa with the African diaspora following this lead and working in support of counterparts on the ground in Africa. The vision already exists and has been articulated by Africa's leadership, it is in effect a call for a new brand of pan-Africanism for the information age. Now attention must turn to sharing the vision with Africans in the diaspora and agree in broad terms what the division of labour between various actors is to be. Key players such as the ECA, African governments, etc must collaborate with African diaspora networks and organisations to engage in outreach to raise awareness about regional integration, the AISI and specific activities to achieve Africa's long-term, sustainable development. Although Africans in the diaspora have important roles to play, Africa-based actors such as the ECA, governments, etc must communicate clearly to their overseas development co-operation

partners the important role they see for the African diaspora. This creates a new framework of development co-operation in which northern donors, policy makers, and NGOs end the marginalisation of the African diaspora but rather see it as a strategic resource available to contribute to Africa's development.

Defining and refining African positions

Achieving agreement on broad vision is much easier than sustaining commitment all the way through to achieving specified objectives. It is necessary to identify and agree basic principles that underpin common positions. These should build on the concept of the public interest to guide positions in negotiations in international fora. It is important for key actors to encourage debate about and support for this public interest-based approach to create the basis for advocacy that the African diaspora can support. We should expect to learn as we proceed and positions should evolve and grow from our deeper understanding of how Africans actually use ICTs in their everyday life – in business, leisure, interacting with governments, etc. This sets an ongoing research agenda for universities and think tanks to help inform and influence policy in the future.

Creating the Africa Union diaspora

While celebrating the diversity of the African diaspora our task must be to weave a rich tapestry of African civil society organisations – in Africa and the diaspora – passionate about and supportive of regional integration efforts. We need to create mechanisms of communication, collaboration and co-operation between the global African civil society and between the global African civil society and authorities and policy makers in Africa and elsewhere. We need to set up the accountability mechanisms that extend articulations of visions to definitions of success and identification of short- and medium-term indicators of progress.

Institutionalising diaspora involvement

We need to create the institutional arrangements to harness the African diaspora's talent, commitment and resources. As part of the Nigerian government's commitment to Nigeria's development and in recognition of the skills and expertise of Nigerians abroad, the president has set up the office of the Special Assistant to Mr. President on Diaspora Activities to attend to matters relating to Nigerians in the diaspora. In 2001 the Ghanaian government held a Home Coming meeting with the Ghanaian diaspora to encourage their involvement and support in the country's development. These are all encouraging signs of African governments' long-overdue recognition of the important actual and potential roles that their diasporas have in developing their countries. The ECA has also played a significant role in recent years to involve the diaspora in Africa's development processes. Given the ECA's pivotal role in supporting African-led and owned development initiatives and regional integration, the ECA should give serious thought to the strategic institutional arrangements that would best enable it to harness in a sustained and effective way the involvement of the African diaspora in all aspects of its work. From the diaspora's viewpoint, it would be valuable to be able to interact with a dedicated individual with cross-cutting responsibilities to act as the key interface on all diaspora-related issues.

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Identifying diaspora players

Following on from the Regional Conference on Brain Drain and Capacity Building in Africa held in Addis Ababa in 2000 the ECA and partners had already identified the need to create a database of diaspora human resource. The ECA is working in partnership with AFFORD and other agencies to create this database. This database must be dynamic, demand- and needs-driven as well as user- and task-oriented. We must first identify the likely users of the database and specify their needs very carefully. Efforts in the first instance must be targeted at priority needs, eg building the capacity of regional institutions or building the capacity of negotiators in the global fora. Simply capturing names and details in a database with no clear strategy for the use of this data runs the risk of creating a static file that quickly becomes outdated and fails to exploit the enthusiasm and commitment with which individuals will likely provide their details in the first place. A dashing of the initially high expectations will also undermine the credibility of the initiative and make subsequent follow-up all the more difficult. Awareness raising about regional integration, the AISI, etc should be integral to the actual data capture process in order to create synergy between activities and gain maximum return on investment. As the diaspora is constantly under construction we should maintain ongoing outreach efforts to key sectors, for instance to African students pursuing their education in the north. AFFORD has already begun exploring how to interact with UK-based African development studies students in order to tap into their knowledge of Africa and facilitate their ongoing contributions to Africa's development.

Creating an ICT and regional integration observatory

The African diaspora's vantage point in the north must be harnessed for the benefit of Africa. As we have seen, policies enacted in the north may have direct relevance or implications for Africa. Similarly, issues arise in global fora that require proactive action in Africa by Africans to secure the continent's interests. Diaspora networks need to scan the horizon, pool intelligence, digest it and target it at key decision-makers in Africa. This observatory would also analyse past African experiences of successfully and unsuccessfully strategising in global fora to advance Africa's interests. The lessons learned should be widely disseminated and discussed and used as the bases for future campaigns. This observatory could in the first instance be an informal network of existing knowledge networks with specific areas of expertise and interest along with other organisations with comparative advantages. The observatory would operate in partnership with a similar institution in Africa to ensure that insights were correctly targeted at the right actors.

Championing the champions

We need to put more effort into raising the visibility of African diaspora efforts in the context of regional integration and the African information society. This will build momentum as success breeds success. Perhaps an annual award scheme can be considered. Such an award scheme for diaspora efforts would be part of a general effort to highlight, celebrate and reward continent-based efforts at regional, national, local levels including a range of actors from civil society, small and medium sized enterprises, etc. Criteria for the search for champions would include visibility, credibility, inspiration, leadership, leverage, knock-on benefits, sustainability, impact.

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Driving the agenda from Africa

We must cultivate a network of advocates among the African diaspora to hold donors better to account in their headquarter cities in the north in their dealings with African authorities and agencies vis-à-vis the continent's development. The aim should be to increase transparency and accountability to ensure that Africa owns and manages her own development, with outside support. We should start with one or two issues around which mobilisation of the diaspora is feasible, learn the lessons and proceed from there.

Tackling the brain drain

African authorities need to endorse a "3Rs" brain drain strategy: They must first work for the Retention of skilled Africans in Africa by implementing the necessary institutional reforms to value them, reward them, develop and challenge them. Second, they must look to Reversal by encouraging and supporting those Africans in the diaspora who do wish to and are able to return in the short-term, for instance, through the use of International Organisation for Migration (IOM) schemes, etc. Third is Retrieval in which African authorities tap into the knowledge, resources, contacts, networks, ideas, etc of those Africans in the diaspora unable or unwilling to return to Africa permanently. African governments must continue to place their concerns about the brain drain on the agenda when negotiating with overseas development co-operation partners. They must argue for specific schemes that enable the African diaspora to participate more actively and effectively in Africa's development. For instance, harmonisation of immigration and development policies is essential, and this harmonisation should lean towards fewer not more restrictions on the movement of people. At the same time, African governments should not be overly nationalistic in relation to concerns about the brain drain. Regional integration means that any African in the diaspora should be considered part of the valuable pool available to contribute to Africa's development. Given the continued failure of northern NGOs to work strategically and effectively with the African diaspora, African governments should also pursue negotiations with NGOs and multilateral agencies to explore how best they can make more effective use of the African diaspora's human resources. Where NGOs have genuine reasons for posting expatriate staff to Africa – these should be very rare these days – they should take more seriously their responsibilities to help build Africa's human resource capacity by looking to reconnect the African diaspora living on their doorsteps with Africa's development.

Lobbying the UK government

Given the UK government's stated intention to present a new International Development Bill before parliament and the attention the government is now giving to Africa, African authorities must work in concert with the UK-based African diaspora to advance key policy issues of concern to the continent in terms of regional integration. The apparently imminent nature of this legislative development suggests that collaboration between the African diaspora and appropriate Africa-based authorities could be a useful starting point for translating words into action. Furthermore, initial activity in one such area as this will create valuable lessons to inform future Africa-diaspora collaboration.

Creating a pro bono volunteer force

In recognition of their responsibilities as good corporate citizens, many companies create schemes that enable their employees to work among deprived communities to share their

skills and know-how. Many Africans in the diaspora work in a range of ICT fields and we should work with northern governments (such as the UK government) to create a scheme that will provide incentives to companies that allow and encourage their African staff to volunteer on projects and assignments that assist Africa's efforts at regional integration and implementation of the AISI.

Creating the next generation of Africans in the diaspora

As we saw from the data on demographic trends among the African diaspora in the UK, those Africans in the diaspora with direct, lived experience of Africa will gradually disappear leaving behind generations with no direct experience of Africa and varying commitments to the continent's development. Development education that continually creates global citizens among younger generations of the African diaspora who understand Africa's development challenges and are motivated and committed to addressing them is vital. As time progresses these younger generations will identify not with specific towns, villages and ethnic groups in Africa but with the continent as a whole, thereby making the regional integration messages in the development education agenda all the more important.

Tapping into "third-age" retiring African diaspora resources

Demographic data from the UK suggests that a generation of Africans in the diaspora with a wealth of valuable experience is now available or will soon retire and search for a continued productive live, perhaps in the service of Africa. Significantly, many among this older generation of the African diaspora have memories and experience of previous efforts towards promoting regional integration and pan-Africanism. They have wisdom and valuable lessons to teach younger generations. We need schemes that tap into this knowledge base and create programs to which retirees among the African diaspora can contribute.

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Appendix A: Background on AFFORD

AFFORD is a small registered not-for-profit organisation formed by a group of London-based Africans in 1994. The prime concern that led to the organisation's formation was the realisation that mainstream development policy makers, practitioners and donors tended to overlook the considerable and diverse efforts made by Africans to contribute to Africa's development and certainly made no effort to harness or maximise this effort. Hence AFFORD's mission is to expand and enhance the contribution that Africans in the diaspora make to Africa's development.

The organisation achieves this mission through three inter-related substantive work programs. First is support for UK-based African[3] civil society organisations (UKBACSOs) concerned in some way with Africa's development. Second is promotion of the African diaspora's input to mainstream development thinking and practice – in Africa and in the north. Third is promotion and facilitation of linkages between the African diaspora and counterparts actually in Africa. As with AFFORD's first *Survey of African organisations in London*, action-research continues to underpin the organisation's work and interventions.

Over the past few years AFFORD has supported over 100 UKBACSOs by providing advice on funding; providing access to donors; by helping organisations with start-up procedures; by raising the visibility of African diaspora-led development efforts; by connecting organisations with counterparts in the diaspora and in Africa. Through research, lobbying and participation in conferences AFFORD has contributed to the thinking of mainstream institutions such as the Department for International Development (DFID) on its 2000 White Paper on globalisation and development (see *Globalisation and development: A diaspora dimension* at http://www.afford-uk.org) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) on strategies for converting the brain drain into a brain gain. AFFORD has recently embarked on a pilot program to facilitate linkages and partnerships between the UK-based Ghanaian, Nigerian and Sierra Leonean diaspora and counterparts in those three countries. In all the organisation's work, information and communications technologies (ICTs) are both important tools to facilitate better communications and collaboration between Africa and the diaspora and important areas of policy and action to facilitate Africa's overall development in the information age.

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[3] In this report we use the term Africans to refer to two broad categories of people. First, so-called continental Africans, ie those born and bred in Africa who can identify a specific location in Africa as "home" and identify themselves as Africans. Second, people of African descent one or multiple generations removed (whether via the Caribbean, USA, south America, etc or directly from Africa) who although they have a more distant relationship with the continent still identify it as an important part of their heritage and identity and act on that basis.