

AFRICAN DIASPORA COMMUNITY FORUM—OTTAWA, APRIL 25, 2005  
REPORT OF THE PROCEEDINGS

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# **REPORT ON THE AFRICAN DIASPORA COMMUNITY FORUM**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **INTRODUCTION**

An historic African Diaspora Community Forum was held on April 25, 2005 at the National Library and Archives, in Ottawa. It was attended by more than 160 people including the diplomatic corps, academia, international relief organizations, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and other religious and community organizations.

### **AIM**

The aim of this Forum was to heighten awareness of the role the African Diaspora can play in improving the quality of life for African communities. As well, it was intended to mobilize much needed resources from the Diaspora, the Canadian Government and NGO's for the purpose of confronting challenges of development in Africa.

### **ORGANIZATION**

The Forum was co-sponsored by the South African High Commission in Ottawa, the Association for Higher Education and Development (AHEAD)—which consists of members of the Ethiopian Community in Canada, the South African Rainbow Association in Ottawa (SARA-O)—a non-profit association of South Africans and prominent Africans in the expatriate community who assisted at all levels of planning. Organizational tasks were carried out entirely by volunteers, operating either as members of, or under the guidance of an ad hoc committee.

A proposal and request for funding were submitted by AHEAD and SARA-O to the International Development and Research Centre (IDRC) in Ottawa on February 16, 2005. The proposal was approved and the applicants were provided a grant of \$CAD 10 140 on March 14, 2005.

## **OVERVIEW OF THE FORUM PROCEEDINGS**

The Forum included a keynote address, three panelist presentations and discussion and questions from the floor. The Forum concluded with a resolution from the floor calling for mobilization of resources and the establishment of a unified Canadian African Diaspora organization.

In his opening remarks Mr. Ezra Ncwana, Program Director, encouraged participants to cast aside any debilitating differences and focus on ways of combining their skills on behalf of African people.

The South African High Commissioner, Her Excellency Theresa Solomon, welcomed the participants and urged them to explore creative and inspiring ways to assist in the rebuilding of Africa and to reverse the brain drain to brain gain. She emphasized that the Canadian African Diaspora is a dynamic and vital link between Africa and Canada that can assist as a valuable intellectual, political and economic resource. Her Excellency explained that the role of the South African High Commission was purely facilitative in so far as the Forum was concerned. She introduced the keynote speaker Advocate Dumisa Ntsebeza as a distinguished South African lawyer and prominent political activist during the Apartheid era.

Advocate Ntsebeza noted that Africans can be found in every part of the world, and asserted that this ubiquity of Africans was both problematic and dynamic. Problematic, he observed, because it begs the question why Africans are everywhere but in Africa. Dynamic, he said, because the values they hold could be the bedrock of a solid and organized Diaspora that can help address challenges facing the Continent.

Advocate Ntsebeza likened the loss of Africa's priceless artifacts and works of art now in European and American galleries to a large scale trafficking of its intellectuals and elites into the bellies of the so-called 'first world'. He urged the African Diaspora in Canada to use the skills they have garnered for the benefit of Africa and ended with a challenge that has left the ball in their court.

A panel discussion followed.

Panelist Ms. Ainalem Tebeje, Vice President of AHEAD, provided statistical evidence that Africa is losing the very people it needs for development—up to 20,000 highly skilled professionals a

year. Of the estimated 3.6 million Africans outside the continent, 300,000 are educated professionals.

Ms Tebeje continued that Africa spends US\$4 billion a year on expatriate professionals hired to fill vacancies. This brain drain, she maintained is crippling universities, hospitals, other social services, and the science/technology sector. She also said that 38 of the sub-Sahara countries do not meet the minimum World Health Organization (WHO) standards for physicians and nurses per population. She also noted that there are more African engineers and scientists in the United States than on the whole African continent.

She reflected that one study had revealed that the African Diaspora had shied away from development efforts in Africa, in some cases to protest against dictators and the Apartheid system.

Since the African Union has identified the African Diaspora as the sixth region of the Continent, it should serve as a key partner in development. She proposed that Diaspora support could be effected through skills transfer, development investment and mobilization to institutions. She stressed that these efforts could not be left solely to volunteers nor could then be financed simply by donations.

Next, panelist Dr. Buti Kale, a conflict resolution specialist who has worked with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) since 1992, dwelt on the phenomenon of forced displacement in Africa.

Dr. Kale said various factors had compelled three million Africans to flee their homelands, but that there are an additional 13 million displaced within the borders of their own countries. He said African Diaspora has a crucial role to play in consideration of the problems of forced displacement of populations and preventive measures that need the attention of important decision-makers.

Dr. Kale added that African refugees depend almost entirely on international humanitarian aid—which is often erratic. He said refugee recipient countries often cannot adequately address the employment needs of educated professionals, causing the brightest men and women to gravitate to Western countries. The African Diaspora could assist in repatriation when the situation

permits, said Dr. Kale; it could also contribute to the integration of African immigrants, providing material assistance, counselling, facilitating family reunification, and helping out economically.

Next, panelist Ms. Florence Chumpuka, legal counsel with Canada's Department of Justice, and a world-renowned expert on anti-discrimination legislation, policy and compliance, offered a five-point strategy for improving the lives of Africans in a holistic manner.

She called for effective lobbying of policy professionals, legislators and cabinet ministers; pressing for trade concessions, debt relief, more funding, and the resolution of conflict in Africa. She advocated forming strategic alliances and partnerships and suggested the Diaspora expand its role to create dynamic links with active successful organizations.

Ms. Chumpuka urged Africans abroad to be informed, enthusiastic and engaged in critical issues. She said they must collaborate with projects in business, education, energy, security, health, trade, investment and development. She labeled her approach "a roadmap to peace, progress and prosperity" and "a blueprint for a program of action."

Following Ms. Chumpuka's presentation, questions from the floor centered on how to go about mobilizing and facilitating African Diaspora leadership in Canada, and how to engage the Canadian Government to deal with African development as well.

Moderator, Mr. Vernon Jorssen, concluded the panel proceedings by saying he hoped the evening would prove to be a springboard for the development of a united front among African Diaspora. He added that human resources are the key ingredient in the development equation and that a skills database could be created as a tool for the United African Diaspora.

AHEAD President Mr. Temesghen Hailu, then proposed a resolution calling for the unification of African Diaspora groups in Canada, spearheaded by AHEAD and SARA-O, which would mobilize human resources and form a united front to champion Africa's cause.

The resolution was approved unanimously.

## **RESULTS OF THE FORUM**

The Forum engendered a greatly increased awareness of the seriousness of the African “brain-drain” problem and provided suggestions for counteracting it. It also indicated a clear need for the African Diaspora in Canada to mobilize human and other resources to form a united front that would ensure assistance would be most effectively directed towards improving the quality of life in African countries.

Furthermore, the Forum also resulted in the establishment of informal networking among interested parties in pursuing this goal. This is continuing and is expected to become more intensive and formalized when an umbrella organization is established.

## **FUTURE ACTIONS AND FINAL RESOLUTION**

The African Union has recognized the African Diaspora as the Sixth Sub-region of the continent capable of playing a significant role in the development of the continent.

- It recognizes that African Diaspora groups can significantly and effectively contribute to the development and poverty reduction of the continent;
- It recognizes that African Diaspora groups can play a role in the development of the continent only if it works together and presents a united front wherever it is established.

It has been requested of AHEAD and SARA-O to organize, as soon as possible, a meeting of the leaders of the various African Diaspora Associations in Canada with the aim of establishing the framework which would lead to the formation of a united front, including one single umbrella African Diaspora Organization.

The meeting will encourage various African Diaspora groups in Canada—especially businessmen and women, and African professionals—to:

- a) mobilize their human and other resources towards the development of African countries;
- b) form a united front to champion Africa’s cause to the Government of Canada and other interested organizations in Canada.

AHEAD and SARA-O will proceed shortly to organize a formal meeting or a series of meetings if necessary. Preparations are now being made to set up a preliminary planning meeting on May 25, 2005, to determine how this can be arranged.

## **THANKS**

The principal organizers extend sincere thanks to the South African High Commission for their inspiration and leadership, and to the members of the Ad Hoc Committee for their diligence and enthusiasm in planning the Forum, to the keynote speaker for a stimulating introduction to the proceedings, to the panelists for their perceptive and informative contributions, and to the many volunteers, particularly youths, for attending eagerly and efficiently to the many and varied tasks necessary to ensure a well-run event

Special thanks go to the International Development and Research Centre (IDRC) for their generous financial assistance and advice, without which this event would not have been possible.



Mr. Temesghen Hailu  
President, AHEAD  
Ottawa, May 13, 2005



Mr. Vernon Jorssen  
President, SARA  
Ottawa, May 13, 2005

## APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Summary of Forum Proceedings

Appendix 2 - Forum Programme

Appendix 3 – Statement of Receipts and Disbursements (for IDRC only)

## APPENDIX I

### Summary of the African Diaspora Community Forum - Ottawa, April 25, 2005

An historic first African Diaspora Community Forum was staged at the National Library and Archives in Ottawa on April 25, 2005. More than 160 participants including the diplomatic corps, academics, international relief organizations, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), and other religious and community organizations attended.

The Forum, entitled ‘African Diaspora in Canada: Improving the Quality of Life for Africa – a Response to the Brain Drain’ was designed to heighten the awareness of the role the African Diaspora in Canada could play in improving the quality of life in African communities. Issues explored included the transfer of skills, mobilization of resources, investment in development projects and the exodus of educated and trained professionals from the continent.

The South African High Commission in cooperation with the Association for Higher Education and Development (AHEAD) and the South African Rainbow Association in Ottawa (SARA-O) organized the event, which included a keynote address, three panelist presentations, a discussion, and questions from the floor. The Forum ended with a resolution from the floor encouraging mobilization of resources and the formation of a unified Canadian African Diaspora organization.

Much of the Forum evoked John F. Kennedy’s classic admonition – “Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country.”

That sentiment pervaded every speech and also networking conversations that followed at a dinner following the Forum. Mr. Ezra Ncwana, Program Director, set the tone in his opening remarks. He encouraged those present to determine “the most effective way in which we can

contribute to the development of the land in which we were born, nurtured and matured.” He urged the attendees “to unite in common purpose... to help address the needs of our countries of origin.

“We as the African Diaspora have a major part to play in the development of our continent,” said Mr. Ncwana. “That requires that we unite in purpose and cast aside any debilitating differences and focus on combining our skills on behalf of our people.”

The South African High Commissioner, Her Excellency Theresa Solomon, welcomed the participants and several African High Commissioners. “This is not a South African event,” she noted. “The High Commission’s involvement is purely to facilitate.”

She hoped that the meeting would “be the start of something special in Canada.” Most African governments, she said, feel the Canadian African Diaspora is a dynamic, important and vital link between Africa and Canada that can assist as a valuable intellectual, political and economic resource. She noted that the African Union encourages the full participation of the African Diaspora “as an important part of our continent in the building of the African Union.”

Her Excellency added that there is an obvious need for unity among Canada’s African Diaspora communities in a spectrum of areas. “African governments also need to do more to work with and engage the Canadian African Diaspora, to help tackle the challenges of underdevelopment, environmental degradation, food security, energy supply, health and economic growth,” she said.

The brain drain, Her Excellency concluded, must be addressed in “an integrated and holistic manner,” at many levels – continental, regional, national, organizational and individual. She urged participants to explore “creative and inspiring ways to assist in the rebuilding of Africa,” and to reverse the “brain drain to brain gain.”

The High Commissioner then introduced the keynote speaker, Advocate Dumisa Ntsebeza, as a “distinguished South African lawyer and a prominent political activist during the Apartheid era.”

Advocate Dumisa Ntsebeza, the keynote speaker, then spoke.

The keynote address on this topic is an enormous challenge, observed Advocate Ntsebeza. “It is one that has engaged the African Diaspora everywhere in the world...The ubiquity of the African, is at once problematic and dynamic. It is a problematic because it begs the question ‘why are they everywhere, but in Africa where they should be?’

He described the Diaspora as an African fabric of diverse cultures and religions, sometimes archaic and outdated, and yet enduring and maintaining an unbroken unity in their diversity.

“All this rich tapestry of African humanity is everywhere but in Africa. They enrich culture and civilization everywhere,” said Advocate Ntsebeza. He then likened the loss of Africa’s priceless artifacts and works of art now in European and American galleries to large scale trafficking of its intellectuals and elites into the bellies of so-called ‘first worlds’. He said the panelists would soon put forth statistical evidence of just how many intellectuals were being lost.

“I said earlier that the presence of the African *crème de la crème* is also a dynamic. Our values include humanity, humaneness, kindness, nobleness, considerateness, humility or humbleness, ability to forgive, understanding, ability to empathize, ability to sympathize, ability to grieve with someone in their moment of grief and pain, sharing brotherhood, sisterhood, compassion, and so many values that go with that.”

Those values, he averred, will be the bedrock upon which to build a solid and organized Diaspora that can help solve the challenges facing the African continent.

Advocate Ntsebeza urged the African Diaspora in Canada to look at things that have made a difference in their lives since they have been here and share those skills in a way that is productive for Africa. “If those things are things that you think are beneficial to the advancement of mankind, you will want those things to be shared by others...The ball is in your court. Mine was just to be provocative. I hope I have succeeded,” he concluded.

## **PANEL DISCUSSION**

Panelist Ms. Ainalem Tebeje, Vice President of AHEAD and a former journalist, provided statistical evidence that Africa is losing the very people it needs for development, at an alarming rate. “Of the estimated 3.6 million Africans who are believed to be outside the continent, 300,000 are highly skilled professionals,” she said.

Since 1990, Africa has been losing 20,000 highly skilled professionals every year, including scientists, engineers, professors, doctors, IT experts, entrepreneurs and senior managers, she said. The cost of higher education is almost without return because graduates leave before giving back to their countries. Doctors in many countries leave within seven years of graduation.

“Africa spends four billion US dollars every year on expatriate professionals who are hired to fill the vacancies that are created by brain drain,” said Ms. Tebeje. Of the total Official Development Assistance (ODA) that goes to Africa, Ms. Tebeje says 35 percent is spent on expatriate professionals. African universities and hospitals are increasingly dependent on foreign expertise and thus brain drain is having a real affect. Ms. Tebeje also said 38 of the sub-Sahara countries currently do not meet the minimum World Health Organization (WHO) standards for physicians and nurses per population—rural populations are especially affected.

It was also noted by Ms. Tebeje that Africa is lagging behind in science and technology mainly because of brain drain. There are more African engineers and scientists in the United States than there are in the whole continent, she said. According to some reports Africa is dying a slow death by brain drain and in 25 years will be empty of brains.

“It took us a long time to realize it because we were told that brain drain is good for Africa,” said Ms. Tebeje. “We were told that if highly skilled professionals leave the continent, they could work in prestigious institutions, earn decent income and send money back home. This is good for Africa, it brought in hard currency and gave families purchasing power...But it doesn’t do much for the economy. Families have money but they cannot use it when they get sick because the hospitals do not have enough doctors. So remittances may have created wealthy families but brain drain is weakening African institutions.

“By the time we realized what was going on, Africa had lost one third of its human capital. We did try to find some solutions but there was only one strategy, which was to bring back those who have left. Unfortunately, needless to say, the results were discouraging.”

Ms. Tebeje reflected that one study had revealed that the African Diaspora had shied away from development efforts in Africa because of differing priorities and in some cases to protest against

dictators and the Apartheid system. Diaspora would only respond to emergencies like famine and civil war but otherwise lacked development orientation.

The African Diaspora stayed away from development, she said, as a sign of protest against dictators and the Apartheid system. “We felt if we supported them we would give them legitimacy. So, we kind of adopted a strategy of disengagement. But even if we wanted, we were not welcome in Africa. We were seen as traitors who received expensive educations all paid for by the poor people of Africa and then we ran away to richer societies seeking comfort and wealth.”

The study, she continued, reveals a growing recognition among the African Diaspora of a moral responsibility to pay back the investment in education. Today, the African Diaspora has accumulated intellectual, material and social capital. “Our collective potential is tremendous and it can be used for the development of the continent,” she said.

“Today the African Diaspora is no more the resented runaway, but the valued partner. NEPAD (New Partnership for Africa’s Development) has recognized the African Diaspora as a key partner in development. The African Union (AU) has named the African Diaspora the sixth region of the continent.

“There’s a flourishing civil society movement in Africa that we did not see when we were there. This civil society has told us that they are waiting to work with us, that we are welcome. Diaspora engagement is necessary. There is an emerging movement in Canada, the US and Europe. Africans everywhere are saying ‘I would like to be more active in the development of Africa.’ There’s a growing recognition in the international community that brain drain has become a serious problem to Africa and the African Diaspora can contribute to solve some of these problems. So to come back to one of my questions; does the African Diaspora have a role in the development of the continent? Yes, definitely.”

Three areas Ms. Tebeje said the Diaspora could contribute to include: skill transfer, development investment and resource mobilization to institutions. She spoke of the work of AHEAD in sending 10,000 books and medical journals to three medical facilities in Ethiopia; a bursary program supporting 72 university medical students for three years; and an equipment project that provides diagnostic tools for medical internships.

Ms. Tebeje expressed that she felt the physical return as a solution to brain drain is outdated and irrelevant. She advocated Diaspora support through “virtual participation”, using information technology to contribute to the knowledge economy of African countries and support for educational institutions with funds, expertise, tools and ideas.

Brain drain is huge, she said. It cannot be left solely to volunteers, nor financed by donations. The engagement needs organization, structure, resources, leadership and partnership. The African Diaspora must be involved. Development is not easy. It’s not quick. You will not see overnight results. There are no shortcuts, said Ms. Tebeje.

She warned the audience that their 20 or 30 years in Canada have changed them. “Your perspectives are not necessarily African. So be prepared to listen, to dialogue, to negotiate.” She also advised that the Diaspora must be prepared for the whole journey, and if not, she warned not to even start the journey.

“There will be good days and bad days; there will be pain and pleasure; there will be days when you are in doubt and days when you are convinced that you are doing the right thing. They are all worth it. You owe it to Africa.”

Dr. Buti Kale’s speech proceeded. Dr. Kale is a conflict resolution specialist who has worked with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) since 1992. In his speech he dwelt on the phenomenon of forced displacement in Africa. “No region or sub-region of Africa has been spared. Out of a total refugee population of 9,670,000, there were 3,135,000 refugees in Africa on January 1, 2004,” said Dr. Kale.

Various factors have compelled Africans to flee their countries of origin but the three million in Africa does not even include the estimated 13 million displaced within the borders of their own countries, said Dr. Kale. The effects of forced displacement have been disastrous.

In the 50 years between the refugee crisis in Algiers (1950s) and the current crisis in Darfur, Sudan, “waves of Africans in mind-boggling numbers” have fled their countries, said Dr. Kale. Over 1.7 million people have fled from Mozambique and 1.3 million from Rwanda alone.

The African Diaspora has a positive role to play in terms of early warning, preventive measures and in bringing these issues to the attention of decision-makers at intergovernmental levels—AU, UN, EU, Commonwealth, Francophonie and others. The recognition by the AU of a special region for the Diaspora is also an important step in the right direction.

The African Diaspora should exert the same energy toward conflict prevention and resolution as it did in the struggles against colonialism in Africa and settler colonialism in southern Africa, according to Dr. Kale. It could also seek support for African countries that host thousands of refugees when their own people are faced with economic and often armed conflict situations. “The least developed countries are the ones that bear the brunt of hosting thousands of refugees in Africa,” and some are both refugee-hosting and refugee-producing nations.

Refugees depend almost entirely on international humanitarian aid, which is often erratic, said Dr. Kale. He said in most cases legal and physical protection is provided but many countries struggle economically and cannot adequately address employment needs of educated professionals whose exile status is often protracted—in some cases for decades. Other barriers faced by exiles include language problems, confinement to refugee camps and transfer to economically inactive locations.

Many young refugees miss the opportunity for education because of inadequate infrastructure and needed resources. Durable solutions might include resettlement communities although the “brightest” people usually gravitate to Western countries. The African Diaspora could assist in voluntary repatriation when the situation permits, and the third possible solution is local integration, said Dr. Kale.

The Diaspora could also contribute in the integration and settlement of African immigrants, providing material assistance, counselling, facilitating family reunification, and dissemination of information on economic opportunities in Africa.

“The African Diaspora, if organized, can play a crucial role in preventing refugee situations as well as in alleviating the hardship faced by those who have been uprooted from their countries,” concluded Dr. Kale. “I am convinced that I am addressing myself to a significant number of people who were also forced to leave their countries. Most of us know what it is like to be a refugee, an exile, a stateless person, to live in limbo and anxiously await the determination of

one's status in a western country. We have at times been compelled to start afresh because our credentials are not recognized in our host countries. We, or our friends, have had the experience. Individually and/or collectively, there is a role to play.

A world-renowned African-American neurosurgeon once wrote: 'We may not have come on the same boat, but we are in the same boat.'"

Next, panelist Ms. Florence Chumpuka, legal counsel with Canada's Department of Justice, and a world-renowned expert on anti-discrimination legislation, policy and compliance, offered a five-point strategy for improving the lives of Africans "in a holistic manner."

She called for effective lobbying of policy professionals, legislators and cabinet ministers; pressing for trade concessions; debt relief; more funding, and the resolution of conflict in Africa.

She advocated forming strategic alliances and partnerships and suggested the Diaspora expand its role "to create dynamic links with active and successful organizations. Strong, viable partnerships don't just happen. They are created and advanced by committed, energetic people, she said.

"We must ensure Africans abroad are informed. We want to get them enthusiastic. Get them engaged. Get them into productive discussions on critical issues. Get them collaborating on real projects. Projects in education, energy, security, health, trade, investment, development, etc..."

She urged exploitation of opportunities in business. "The public and private sectors need to work together to create a climate which mobilizes the entrepreneurs in Africa, generates employment and encourages individuals and firms—domestic and foreign—to invest," said Ms. Chumpuka.

Lastly, Ms. Chumpuka called for unity in action. "The foundation for unity lies in how we define ourselves and in commitment to unifying factors. But we have a problem: We are saddled with the connotation – the meaning – of Diaspora as 'scattered'.

"We must stop being defined by others. We know ourselves to be African or Afro-descendants, living in places like North America, Latin America and the Caribbean. We have a common history. Unity in action means we must define ourselves around what we share: Our common

descent and origin, our common heritage and identity, our common struggles as former colonies, and most essentially, our common victories.

“Informed, determined, committed members of Diasporas will indeed come together in associations, unions, clubs, political parties and other movements, to promote a common cause – the common cause of Africa,” said Ms. Chumpuka.

She called her approach “a roadmap to peace, progress and prosperity” and “a blueprint for a program of action.”

Mr. Vernon Jorssen, President of SARA-O and panel moderator, then summarized the panel presentations as follows:

“Before we take questions from the floor, let me quickly summarize what has been said here this evening. We have heard from Ms. Tebeje on the research project that she participated in showing that Africa is having difficulty retaining its human capital, that it has already lost one third of its skilled workers. Each year 20,000 highly skilled Africans leave the continent, and the resulting human resource gap costs Africa about four billion dollars per year to employ expatriate professionals.

“We have heard from Dr. Kale. He has explained the effects of forced displacement of persons across the length and breadth of Africa. He explained what positive roles the African Diaspora could play. He has shown that refugees are most needed to develop the countries from where they come.

“And, finally from Ms. Chumpuka, we have heard a five-point strategy of practical and pragmatic approaches for moving forward. Ms. Chumpuka explored the foundations for unity and capacity, strategic engagement and alliances, and an expanded role for the Diaspora including participation in global economic-led opportunities.

“So with that, let me go to the floor.”

Questions from the floor centered on how to go about mobilizing and facilitating the leadership in the Canadian Diaspora in order to engage the Canadian Government in dealing with African development.

“It is a pity the question period is so short,” noted one questioner. “The speeches might have been a little shorter so that there would be more time for discussion from the floor. Having said that, I would like to congratulate the organizers, the Honorable High Commissioner and the Chair [for this event].”

It should be mentioned that not all governments, unlike the South African Government, do welcome the many Africans outside. And I say this with good evidence. It’s good to be inspired but it’s good to be truthful before you make the wrong mistake. There are governments that have policies which do not include people outside their boundaries, no matter where born. That needs to be taken into account.”

Mr. Vernon Jorssen, then concluded the proceedings as follows:

“Let me conclude this. We do not wish to leave this Forum with a notion that it was an interesting evening with interesting presentations, questions and answers. Instead, we would like this evening to be a springboard to the development of a united front among the African Diaspora. I would refer to it as the UAD – United African Diaspora. This is what needs to be done.

“So what is it that needs to be done? Well, as we have heard, human resources are the key ingredient or factor in the development equation. As shown in the presentations, appropriate skills are a scarce resource in Africa. Therefore, how do we facilitate Diaspora engagement? That seems to be the main question that has been asked this evening. We will need to develop linkages among all the African Diaspora in Canada. We need to register available and appropriate skills in these organizations. We will need to link all these skills to a central database. This database will become one of the tools of the United African Diaspora. We would eventually want to be linked to UADs elsewhere, such as those in the UK, U.S., Caribbean, etc. We would want our UAD to be a resource for decision makers, to assist them with their foreign policies surrounding Africa and to assist them with their development projects in Africa—including conflict prevention and conflict resolution.

“The African Diaspora is multi-cultural, multi-lingual and non-denominational. Yes, there are many differences but the differences are small in comparison to what unifies us—that is a common desire to improve the quality of life for all Africans. Given that as it is, we will seek a path of unity among the Diaspora in order to have an effective network to muster our own resources and dialogue with the powers that be. This dialogue will be based on mutual interest and responsibility to issues that confront Africa.”

The following resolution from the floor, proposed by Mr. Temesghen Hailu, President of AHEAD, was approved:

### **RESOLUTION**

The African Union has recognized the African Diaspora as the Sixth Sub-region of the continent capable of playing a significant role in the development of the continent.

- It recognizes that African Diaspora groups can significantly and effectively contribute to the development and poverty reduction of the continent;
- It recognizes that African Diaspora groups can play a role in the development of the continent only if it works together and presents a united front wherever it is established.

It has been requested of AHEAD and SARA-O to organize, as soon as possible, a meeting of the leaders of the various African Diaspora Associations in Canada with the aim of establishing the framework which would lead to the formation of a united front, including one single umbrella African Diaspora Organization.

The meeting will encourage various African Diaspora groups in Canada—\*especially business men and women, and African professionals—to:

- c) mobilize their human and other resources towards the development of African countries;
- d) form a united front to champion Africa’s cause to the Government of Canada and other interested organizations in Canada.

\* An amendment from the floor from former Somalia Ambassador to Canada, Mr. **Abdinur Yusuf** that was accepted, added the phrase “especially businessmen and women and African professionals.”

APPENDIX 2

**Program of the African Diaspora Community Forum**



**PROGRAM FOR THE AFRICAN DIASPORA COMMUNITY FORUM**

*With invitation only*

**“The Role of the African Diaspora in Canada in Improving the Quality of Life for African Communities: A Response to Africa’s Brain Drain”**

**National Library and Archives Canada**

**395 Wellington Street, Ottawa**

**Monday, April 25, 2005**

**18H00 – 21H00**

**ORGANIZED BY:**

***South African High Commission***

***Association for Higher Education and Development (AHEAD)***

***South African Rainbow Association - Ottawa (SARA-O)***



<b>PROGRAM DIRECTOR:</b>	Mr. Ezra Ncwana
<b>MODERATOR:</b>	Mr. Vernon Jorssen
<b>18H00 ARRIVAL OF GUESTS</b>	Coffee and Tea
<b>18H20 MUSICAL ITEM: SOLOIST</b>	Ms. Sandra Griffith-Bonaparte
<b>18H30 OPENING REMARKS</b>	Mr. Ezra Ncwana
<b>18H40 WELCOMING REMARKS AND INTRODUCTION OF THE KEYNOTE SPEAKER</b>	H.E. Theresa M. Solomon
<b>18H50 KEYNOTE ADDRESS</b>	Advocate Dumisa Ntsebeza
<b>19H25 PANEL MODERATOR</b>	Mr. Vernon Jorssen
<b>PANELISTS</b>	Ms. Ainalem Tebeje Ms. Florence Chumpuka Dr. Buti Kale
<b>20H00 QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION</b>	<i>30 Minutes</i>
<b>20H30 COMMENTS AND SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS</b>	<i>Mr. Vernon Jorssen</i>
<b>20H45 MUSICAL ITEM:</b>	<i>Harmonia Choir</i>
<b>21H00 REFRESHMENTS</b>	<i>Refreshments</i>

***THIS WORK WAS CARRIED OUT WITH THE AID OF A GRANT FROM THE  
INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH CENTRE OTTAWA, CANADA***