



### Communiqué on PAADN

#### Landmark: The Launch of the Pan African-Australasia Diaspora Network (PAADN), Melbourne, Victoria, 6 November 2015

The implementation of the Declaration of the Global African Diaspora Summit reached another objective landmark with the launch of the Pan-African Australasia Diaspora network by the African Union (AU) in Melbourne, Victoria, 6 November 2015.

This was in fulfillment of Article I A(F) of the Declaration that stressed the need to ***“create platforms for closer interaction, solidarity and effective cooperation between and amongst governments and civil society of African and its Diaspora including continuation of Regional Consultative Conference and consolidation of Regional Network as partners and interlocutors for the implementation of the outcome of the Global Diaspora Summit(italics). It was also in conformity with Article IA(k) of the same which “Encouraged the Diaspora to organize themselves in regional networks and establish appropriate mechanisms their will enable their increasing participation in the affairs of the African Union.”***

#### **The Launch of the Network**

The launch of the Network in Australia was a very colorful event which mirrored and even replicated the framework of Global African Diaspora Summit held in Sandton, South Africa on 12 May 2012. It brought together over 100 participants from about 20 nationalities drawn largely from Australia, Asia and Oceania but also including representatives and invited guests from the five different regions of the African continent. Specifically, this included important figures from the business sectors, academia, sports, entertainment, parliamentarians, police and security officials, public servants, the media, civil society, etc.

Present at the event were the key political figures from all shades of the Victorian political community. This included Hon. Robin Scott, MP, Minister for Multicultural Affairs who represented the Government and the Premier, Hon. Matthew Guy, MP

and Leader of the Opposition Party, Hon. Telmo Ramon Languiller MP, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly and Hon Bruce Atkinson MLC, President of the Legislative Council and Andrew Crisp, Assistant Commissioner of Police. Also in attendance were Members of the African Diplomatic Community in Australia, notably H.E. Mr. George Zulu, the High Commissioner of Zambia, Ms. Heide Goldeberg, Consul of Botswana and Mr. Trent Smith, Consul of Malawi, amongst others.

### **Celebrate African-Australian Event**

The launch was accompanied by a Celebrate Africa-Australia event at which awards were presented to African nominees in various categories that had distinguished themselves in critical areas of Australian social, economic and political life and citizens and representatives of institutions from the African continent that had similar accomplishments. Awards were also given to Australian luminaries that have done much to promote Africa-Australian relations. Some of the Award Categories include the African Community Female Leader of the Year Award, African Pioneer of the Year, African Australians Excellence Award, Business Model Leader of the Year Award, Champions Award, Emerging Footy Award, African Community Philanthropic Organization of the Year Award, the Outstanding Female Performance of the Year Award and Honorary Friends of the African Award.

The Launch dinner and Gala events included musical events, dances and cultural presentations from various parts of Africa. A special award was given to the Citizens and Diaspora Organizations Directorate of the AU Commission (CIDO) in recognition of its work and contribution to the cause of building a global community in the African Union that will help to consolidate the Australia-Asia-African relations and promotion of African interests worldwide.

### **Discussion and Presentations**

Speakers from various events from the AU, Victorian Parliament, civil society and Australasia highlighted the need to use PAADN and the Celebrate Australian African annual events as a framework for consolidating relations between Africa, Australia and Asia. This include the Minister for Multicultural Affairs who stood in for the Premier and the Leader of Opposition. A preceding meeting with the speaker of the Legislative Assembly and AUC staff ,led by the Director, Dr. Jinmi Adisa and attended by the Deputy Chief of Staff, Mr. Anthony Okara, underlined the significant contribution that Australians of African origin were making to the development of Australian society and the need to explore and strengthen the framework of relationship between Australia and the African Union. Specific areas for

collaboration were identified and this included Education, Mining, Agriculture, Science and Technology among others. Hon. Richard Marles, Federal MP and important figure in the Labour Opposition, who also interacted with the AU team, recalled his contacts with African Leaders and Africa's support for Australians successful demand for a Security Council seat. He stressed the need to build on this platform. He saw Africa as the present future for Australia just in the same way that Asia was its future in the 1940s. He urged the need to set the basis for getting things right in this perspective.

Mr. Sisay Dinku, the National Executive and Victoria State Coordinator stressed at the event that the objective of the Australasia Diaspora was to connect effectively with the African homeland to support Africa's development agenda. He observed the Australasia Africans were not out just to seek self-benefit. They thought much in terms of what can be done for African rather than what Africa could do for them. He thanked various sponsors drawn from within and outside Australia particularly from the African continent for supporting the event. Australians, he added, take very seriously the mandate of global Diaspora Summit that underscored the need for self-help in organization in adherence with the AU.

His sentiments were echoed by Mr. Nze-Bertram who underlined AU's global responsibility and noted that Diaspora groups would not set out to be burdensome in this context. What is required is meaningful collaboration with AU structures in a framework of common identity and mutual interests. Responding, the Director of CIDO, Dr. Adisa praised the PAADN network members for their integrity of purpose and the mutuality of their concern and interests. He observed that their strong ties with the cream of Victorian society and Australasia and Africans across the depth and breadth of the different layers of society places them at an advantage as effective interlocutors within the context of the implementation of the Declaration of the Global African Diaspora Summit. He noted that the launch of the Network was a crucial phase but one that simply sets the stage for the greater work to come in Africa's march towards integration and development.

The launch was concluded with the composition of the PADN Steering Community including the following:

- John Nze-Bertram - Founder & Facilitator; and Administering Chairperson PAADN's Diplomats Group, Entrepreneurs Group, and Youths Group
- Mr Sisay Dinku - Chairperson, PAADN's Human Rights and Immigration Group
- Mrs Maria Osman - Chairperson, PAADN's Women's Group
- Dr Apollo Nsubuga-Kyobe - Chairperson, Community Leaders Group
- Dr Chika Anyanwu - Chairperson, PAADN's Academics Group
- Mr David Malinda - Chairperson, PAADN's Professionals Group

- Mrs Eleni Bereded-Samuel - PAADN's Board Member
- Dr. Mimmie Claudine Ngum Chi Watts - PAADN's Board Member

**Pictures**























