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Rev.III

**FIRST MEETING OF INTELLECTUALS OF AFRICA  
AND THE DIASPORA ORGANIZED BY THE AFRICAN UNION**

**GENERAL THEME: "AFRICA IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY:  
INTEGRATION AND RENAISSANCE"**

**6 – 9 October 2004**

**Dakar, Senegal**

**Draft Concept Paper (Rev.3)**

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**INTRODUCTION**

1. Although there is no discipline, no area or field of knowledge where Africans cannot be counted among the leading experts, the African intelligentsia seems to have a lot of difficulty influencing the course of African contemporary history. It appears as if the African intellectual development is in crisis. The demobilization of intellectuals after “independence” – which was the main focus of attention, the repressive nature of the political systems established in many States, the predominance of one party systems as the preferred form of political management, the apparent triumph of the neo-liberal model following the dismantling of the soviet bloc, etc are factors which explain the crisis or at least the lethargy into which the African intellectual thinking has fallen.

2. This diagnosis was contested by African intellectuals meeting in Dakar from 2 to 3 May 2004 at the initiative of the African Union. They pointed out, and rightly so, that the situation varies from one region of the Continent to another and from one discipline to another. With regard to discipline, they stressed that in History as in Philosophy, significant inroads had been made, which led Africans to reassess their non-material and material capital and regain self-confidence and self-respect, two prerequisites for any successful undertaking. However, although these inroads provide justification for us to fine tune this diagnosis, is it not true to say that the African intellectual production, in spite of its volume, richness and diversity, lacks visibility and that, with a few exceptions, it is neither known nor recognized? Is it not also true to say that the links between the African intellectuals and the policy-makers are tenuous, and that there is no way the much desired new paradigms could emerge without a strong alliance between the two categories of players? Is there no urgency in seeking ways to liberate the expression of the African intelligentsia in all its forms, an expression which today is stifled and marginalized both at home and abroad, in a market of ideas where Afro-pessimism is the order of the day, a market where the only ideas accepted are those of the dominant classes? Is there no urgency in ensuring that intellectuals of Africa and the Diaspora, who are today fragmented and scattered, come together as a veritable intelligentsia by

turning their struggle into the struggle for transformation and liberation of the Continent from the dictatorship of hastily crafted therapies and the logic of uncontrollable adjustments?

**3.** The answer of the African Union to these questions is an emphatic yes. Indeed, the African Union wants Africa to chart its development course through its own vision and programme. It must do so by tapping its own brains both within the continent and outside, and by giving primacy to the interests of its sons and daughters at home and in the Diaspora. To this end, it is imperative that the intellectuals of Africa and the Diaspora give vent to their thoughts, voice out their feelings and make themselves heard.

**4.** The African Union also plans to give African intellectuals the opportunity to express themselves and participate, through the power of their ideas, in the formulation/conception of a project which should arouse as much passionate debate as did decolonisation, a project of an Africa mobilized for its integration and renaissance. These two notions as highlighted in the theme of the Conference are not a novelty. Indeed, the notion of Renaissance gained currency in the 40s while, until the 80s, integration was high on the agenda. But these notions have a new connotation. The African Renaissance, as envisaged by Thabo Mbeki and others, is no longer only cultural as it was long believed, with reference perhaps to the European Renaissance of the 14<sup>th</sup> /15<sup>th</sup> Century after the bleak period of the Middle Ages. It is a political, economic and social renaissance. The integration we are referring to is no longer a matter for only States but rather a matter for the States and the peoples; it is no longer an integration only for the States and the peoples of the Continent but also for the Diasporas, irrespective of their legal status in the territories where they exist.

**5.** The intelligentsia of Africa and its Diasporas should speak out and energetically for that matter, over issues of integration and renaissance, as on many other issues. Any other attitude which might suggest a slackening or resignation on the part of African intellectuals would be paradoxical because there is today a globalized African intellectual elite which is expected to contribute very significantly to the efforts being made to carve out an African project in a changing world, a world in which the ball game has changed as far as intellectual thinking is concerned. Such an attitude would pose a serious threat for the future in that Africa's endogenous development process which we want to promote would be compromised should the intellectuals fail in their historic mission which consists, among other things, in projecting and developing the continent's cultural heritage.

6. The First Meeting of Intellectuals of Africa and the Diaspora slated for Dakar, from 6 to 9 October 2004 is precisely intended to obviate this threat. Placed under the aegis of the African Union, this meeting should mark a reawakening of the intellectuals of the Continent and the Diaspora, a reawakening that is a *sine qua non* if Africa is to build a respectable place for itself in the comity of nations.

7. The result sought by the African Union Commission from this meeting is nothing less than a contract between the Continent and its intelligentsia, be it indigenous or from the Diaspora, to transform ideas into knowledge and knowledge into power. Such a contract should pave the way for a more substantial and better structured participation of intellectuals in the conduct of the Continent's affairs and the management of its relations with the world, generate a fresh interest in politics for the intellectual and build a new partnership between these two categories of players on solid foundations.

8. Significant efforts have been invested for the October 2004 meeting to be scientifically fruitful. In this regard, at the invitation of President Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal, a preparatory meeting was held in Dakar in November 2003, which enabled the hundred or so participants to voice a few concerns that deserve to be taken on board by the October 2004 meeting. These concerns include the importance that should be accorded the Diasporas. Earlier, during the two meetings organized in Addis Ababa in October and November 2003, Mr. Alpha Oumar Konaré, Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union, pleaded in favour of a more significant contribution by African intellectuals to the structuring of the African Union and ideas aired on the themes and issues which it may be interesting to delve into during the October 2004 Dakar Conference. Based on the ideas developed during the deliberations/meetings and the vision of the African Union, this document outlines six general themes which could be addressed and debated at the meeting of African intellectuals, namely:

- Pan-Africanism in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century;
- Contribution of intellectuals of Africa and the Diaspora to the deepening and strengthening of African integration in the context of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century;
- African identity in a multi-cultural context;
- Africa's place in the world;
- Africa's relations with its Diaspora;
- Africa, Science and Technology: stakes and prospects.

## **1. Pan-Africanism in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

**9.** Although African Associations came into being as far back as in 1897, although it was possible to see early signs of Pan-Africanism in some resistance movements of Black slaves in America, it is generally acknowledged that Pan-Africanism was born at the dawn of the last century, in July 1900 to be more precise, when Henry S. Williams, a lawyer from Trinidad, organized the First Pan-African Conference in London. Although, as Williams wrote, the purpose of the Conference was to bring together peoples of African descent throughout the world, the fact remains that Pan-Africanism was born outside Africa. It was also outside Africa that Pan-Africanism was more visible because the major events of this movement were staged in London, Rome, Paris and Manchester, and it was not until 1957 that a Pan-African Congress was held for the first time on the African Continent.

**10.** This is one of the paradoxes of Pan-Africanism. The other paradox is that for a long time, the torch bearers of Pan-Africanism originated from the Diaspora. These include Henry S. Williams, E. Blyden, Mr. Garvey, G. Padmore, W. Dubois who gave glamour and credibility to the movement, just like Césaire, Damas and Senghor who lit the torch of negritude in the 30s.

**11.** Although as far back as in 1947 Africans like Azikiwe and Nkrumah participated in Pan-African congresses, the proponents of those meetings, in other words their initiators, were Afro-Caribbeans and Afro Americans, and it was not until the eve of the independence of Ghana in 1957 that Dubois, then aged 90, passed on the symbolic mantle of “President of the Pan-African Congress” to Nkrumah.

**12.** These paradoxes are explained by the fact that at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, at a time when Pan-Africanism came into being, Africa was not an independent entity; it was carved into French, English, Belgian, Portuguese and German possessions, with the scramble for Africa launched in Berlin (1885 – 1886). Its children were colonial subjects; its cultures were debased, rejected as “primitive”, if not prohibited outright. Pan-Africanism therefore became a movement to combat the unjust and illegal oppression of Blacks which began in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century with the slave trade. This slave trade, which was violent and massive, extended into colonization and, with it, came into the continent soldiers, missionaries and traders, and strengthened the idea of white supremacy. In this context, Pan-Africanism became first and foremost the affirmation of the existence of an African identity which

colonialism and Trans-Atlantic slave trade had seriously distorted and compromised.

**13.** Two schools of thought had characterized Pan-Africanism. The first, which could be described as culturalist or pan-negrism, crystallized around Blyden and M. Garvey. The “minstrels” of negritude as Césaire, Senghor and Damas trio was known, belonged to this same school of thought. Also a proponent of this school of thought was Cheick Anta Diop who, with his Black Pharaonic Egypt thesis, repositioned Africa and inspired a revisit of Africa’s pre-colonial history. Another important figure in this Movement was Allioune Diop who founded “Presence Africaine” in Paris and passed himself off as an ecumenical unifier. This Movement organized the meeting of Negro Writers and Artists in Paris in 1956 and in Rome in 1959. Also identified with this Movement was the World Festival of Negro Arts staged by Senghor in Dakar in 1966. The agenda of this Movement consisted in rehabilitating the black person and celebrating his genius and his various forms of expression. A necessary step to achieving this objective was, for the Movement, a re-evaluation of black civilization and a re-appraisal of Africa’s pre-colonial history. Such an exercise culminated in the projection of African, black African; civilization and cultures which have no complex vis-à-vis the others. In a word, it was a question of effectively firing a riposte to the contempt in which the Continent and the black person were held, by highlighting and developing the difference.

**14.** However, the Pan-Africanism of that era was not only a matter for intellectuals who explored research avenues or launched literary movements. It was also a matter for political, social and economic players who wanted to develop, free themselves and build a more humane future where their identity as Africans either of the Continent or the Diaspora would be recognized and respected. This Movement crystallized around Dubois as a political thought, as a conquest of civic rights and of independence. Other major players of this Movement were George Padmore, Nnamdi Azikiwe and Kwame Nkrumah; it was this Movement which crafted the concept of “African personality” a concept rid of any racial connotation. It was also this Movement which organized the Manchester Congress, participated in the Bandung Conference that saw the birth of the Non-Aligned Movement, and played an active part in the Algiers Triad of 1969. Franz Fanon, Cabral, Mandela and Soyinka, through their writings, also belonged to this Movement which played a critical role in Africa’s political, linguistic, cultural and historical decolonisation.

**15.** These two trends have, at times, had a bumpy relation. One can recall, in this connection, Soyinka's hard words against the Senghorian Negritude, and Senghor's equally caustic statement directed against the organizers of the 1969 Algiers Pan-African Festival. It is also noteworthy that the culturalist Pan-Negrism Movement was primarily Francophone, even though Blyden and Garvey who inspired it were Anglophone; and that the de-racialized "African Personality" Movement was essentially Anglophone even though some of its ardent proponents were French-Speaking.

**16.** Was this split incidental to the differences in the colonial policies of France and Britain? It is not entirely unreasonable to see it this way. However, what is needed at this juncture, is to remember first and foremost, that these two trends catalysed a dual movement: the first for a re-conquest/re-appropriation/recasting of history from an African matrix on the one hand; and the second, for a renaissance, understood as a gamble with the future, on the other. The two Movements were obviously dialectically linked insofar as memory was to serve as the spring board to the future.

**17.** Is the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Pan-Africanism not in keeping with some continuity in relation to its predecessor? Today, as in the past, shouldn't the struggle to set the records straight also remain a priority for Pan-Africanists? Shouldn't this be an even more absolute priority since there is some measure of revisionism developing, particularly with regard to the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade? Shouldn't the struggle for African renaissance remain as much a priority as it was a century ago, if anything, for the fact that the future that the Founding Fathers of Pan-Africanism dreamt of, and the vision which inspired them, are far from being achieved? Indeed, the answer to all these questions by African intellectuals is a resounding "Yes". As a matter of fact, if political independence has become a reality, the freedom that should have come with it, is on the contrary, far from being so. For internal and external reasons, Africa, has not changed its position in the world, and remains a dominated Continent, highly dependent on the outside world. Consequently, as it did a century ago, Africa must take up the challenge of accumulating goods and services and upholding its social values without which the freedom expected from the "development" promised by independence, will remain purely official and elusive. After regaining the crown of political independence – granted or won by force of arms – Africa must now recover its jewels and, to borrow the words of Ali Mazrui, manage its resources to improve the well being of its children.

**18.** However, present-day Pan-Africanism falls within a radically different politico-ideological and geopolitical context. The collapse of the socialist camp, the rise of the Triad and the accelerated globalization have changed the stakes for Africa. Its room for manoeuvre has been eroded and curtailed, and its development has never seemed as problematic as it is today.

**19.** Consequently, because the context is different, the African Union which is organizing the Conference of Intellectuals from Africa and the Diaspora to infuse fresh impetus into Pan-Africanism, must devise its own founding concept, its own vision of Pan-Africanism! It must respond to the challenges inherent in managing a globalization which has led Africa to rethink integration and place it within a wider perspective, an integration not of States, but of the Continent and its Diaspora.

**20.** The challenges are huge but, for at least three reasons, there have never been such great opportunities to rethink and renovate Pan-Africanism, thereby making it an instrument for the liberation of Africa:

- 1) The failure of nationalist/nationalism projects has once again brought to the fore, the imperative need to steadfastly move towards not only economic but also political integration: “Africa must unite” wrote Nkrumah. Current events have proven him right. An African State that transcends distinctive national identities in favour of the common interest is a must for Africa in the face of the huge entities that are taking shape and/or are taking root in Europe, America and Asia.
- 2) Africa, whose construction is currently on the agenda, transcends geographical borders as well as cultural or racial barriers: it extends from both sides of the Sahara; it is white and black, Arab and African, continental and insular; it is a cultural meeting point where successive strata of cultures of Eurasian origin intermingle with indigenous cultures born in the Continent of Africa (Mbeki’s Speech: “I am an African” epitomizes these assertions in that it recognizes all the above assets).
- 3) The concept of identity fluidity has now become imperative; it is informed by President Abdoulaye Wade’s proposal that the African Diaspora should be made the sixth region of the African Union, and be fully incorporated in the reborn Pan-African movement, a point that will be discussed later.



**21.** In other words, the reflection on the current nature and significance of Pan-Africanism should necessarily take account of the transition from the quest for unity to the quest for union, which finds expression in the replacement of the OAU with the African Union. It should ensure that this semantic and institutional evolution creates new realities marked by:

- acceptance of diversity: we recall, on this score, President Chissano's statement on the occasion of the opening of the first session of the Pan-African Parliament on 20 March 2004. To the Parliamentarians meeting that very day in Addis Ababa, he assigned the task of building a sense of belonging to the same family, a sense of a common destiny. He also reminded them about the existence, in Africa, of different families and a variety of democratic processes;
- gradual eradication of all borders between Africa countries.

**22.** This vital reflection should also focus on the ways and means of achieving Africa's political unity through the United States of Africa. Of course, progress in this direction will be quicker and easier in a more peaceful and stable Africa. This emphasises how important it is to provide Africa's highest representatives and the various elites of the Continent with ideas on the conditions whereby lasting peace and stability could be fostered in Africa.

**23.** In short, are the questions raised about contemporary Pan-Africanism not fundamentally different from those raised by the initiators? Isn't it a question of knowing who Africans are? Where they come from? Where they want to go? The new Pan-Africanism must provide clear answers to these difficult questions in a new context characterised by such profound changes that our traditional points of reference, tried and tested by time, have become confused and have lost their clarity, in the same way as our former borders have lost their significance.

**24.** The challenge is even greater in that these answers must be part of a comprehensive approach that has not yet been fully worked out, but which, we feel, should avoid the dual pitfall of identity introversion and unconditional international integration.

## **2. Contribution of African Intellectuals and the Diaspora in the Deepening and Consolidation of African Integration in the Global Context of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

**25.** The ambition to build a United States of Africa, in the more or less short term, has re-emerged in debates on the African Union. It will be recalled that the idea strongly defended by Nkrumah in the early 1960s was not greeted with much enthusiasm by his peers, the Heads of State. Without rejecting the principle of federalism as a strategic option, the latter preferred a more classical institutional structure, namely, development in <<concentric circles>> based on linguistic and geographical affinities including some aspects inherited from the colonial era. In this regard, the intangibility of the inherited borders was a strong referent.

**26.** With the inception of the African Union, the prejudices of the 60s faded away, although they have not completely disappeared in all areas. The Vision adopted by the Commission of the African Union specially demonstrates that Nkrumah's generous ideas are henceforth receiving a huge response from the African elite and the masses. But, how could this United States of Africa be attained? Could a multinational, federalist model State be thought up? Could or should this federal State derive from the existing States or, rather, from the five regional groupings formed by the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), bearing in mind that, with this second option, the territorial issue should be reviewed from scratch, and with it, the sacrosanct respect for the borders inherited from colonialism? But, how can we reconcile the new citizenship that must be established, or re-established in some cases, with the "multi-citizenship" of Africans, as the prevailing feeling of numerous Africans from many spheres of citizenship could be called? Are there lessons to be drawn from the model used in the great pre-colonial empires, particularly the Mali Empire, as advocated by some intellectuals such as Ki Zerbo who emphasize that this model made it possible to concurrently establish vast spaces – Sub-continental, continental or even transcontinental – and withdraw into a specific space where there was autonomous management? How could we simultaneously integrate regionalism, federalism and decentralization, and reconcile the exigencies of a strong central authority and grassroots autonomy?

**27.** How do we articulate the different levels of power and provide them with appropriate resources? How do we make the current borders – which will not disappear overnight – as flexible as possible? How do we operationalize the concept of "border countries", and transform belligerent structures into citadels of prosperity and the driving force

behind new socio-economic, socio-political and socio-cultural configurations? Coupled with this first set of questions is another which concerns the internal dynamics of each State or federal entity. The question arising at this level consists in knowing on what such a State should be based. What will be the place of the ethnic groups in such a construction? What content should be given to citizenship? On what linguistic bases should this multinational and federalist State be established? What place will be given to regional languages, and what place to national languages? While it should be recognized that these questions are not the easiest in the world, efforts should be geared towards addressing these issues and tackling them head-on if the United States of Africa is not to become a pious wish, but rather a collective, coherent, intelligible and legible project, a response to the challenges of the moment and of the future.

**28.** Fortunately, on this and other pertinent issues, there is no dearth of quality reflections carried out in relatively contrasting scenarios. Such reflections emanate from personalities (whose names it would be fastidious and risky to list out) as well as from centres and institutions like CODESRIA, AAPS, FTM and AERC, to mention but a few regional institutions.

**29.** To take advantage of such reflections, three operations become necessary. The first consists in carrying out a comprehensive diagnosis of the issue. This stage is an imperative for those intent on scaling up the contribution of intellectuals to the deepening and consolidation of African integration. We need to know the on-going research undertakings on this subject, who the researchers are and the research network in which they operate. How are they inter-connected at continental level? What are their linkages with the research networks of the Diaspora?

**30.** The second vital and urgent operation is to evaluate the impact of these reflections and initiatives on the process of African integration. We need to appraise the quality of the African intellectual input into past and current efforts in the area of integration, and more especially evaluate the impact of such efforts. In this endeavour, we can usefully take on board the intellectuals of the Diaspora and focus particularly not only on their contribution to the integration project, but also, in general terms, on the understanding of the project in their respective societies.

**31.** The third operation will consist in formulating new research themes, based on the identification and analysis of certain trends, certain seeds of change which will impact on the development of African

economies and societies and on integration, and think out a new relationship between intellectuals and decision makers with regard to policy, in order to promote greater interaction.

**32.** This is the price to pay for a more significant contribution from intellectuals to the brainstorming on integration and more fruitful reflection, based on dialogue between the latter and the decision makers. A brainstorming from which the AU, particularly the African Union Commission, should benefit in its efforts to formulate an African project, but also a brainstorming which should be useful to all those who, like the Global Coalition for Africa (GCA), are mobilizing themselves at continental level to make Africa's voice heard and protect its interests through lobbying and other actions.

### **3. Africa's Identity in a Multi-Cultural Context**

**33.** The 20<sup>th</sup> Century Pan-Africanism was meant to be a global project in the sense that the Pan-Africanist demand encompassed all aspects of Africa and the black world that needed to be established or rehabilitated. Africa was to exist as an economic entity and its immense natural wealth was to be developed; Africa was to exist as a political force by freeing itself from the yoke of colonialism and apartheid; Africa was, above all, to recover or forge a cultural identity and assert it fully: therein lay the problem of African personality whose major themes were: African languages to be promoted, history to be revisited, the environment to be protected, and the image of Africa and Blacks in the world to be built and restored.

**34.** For various reasons, the Pan-Africanist project of the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century was subsequently somewhat fragmented and the responsibilities for its implementation mitigated because they were shared among several organizations. The results achieved were uneven from one sphere or field to the other. Without trying to draw up a balance sheet, it must be acknowledged that Africa gained its independence from the political standpoint; the Continent has been completely free in this regard since 1994, with the first democratic elections organized in South Africa.

**35.** In the economic field, the situation is far from encouraging, although Africa's announced death is more of a fantasy than a reality. In this regard, it should be pointed out that Africa is relatively more present in the markets than China and India and that its marginalization is not as inevitable as some would make us believe, for indeed Africa could benefit greatly from the increase in oil income, envisage a manufacturing

industry and even organize itself in a way as to manage the uncertainties of exporting agricultural products.

**36.** In the cultural field, however, despite the significant progress made, the battle is far from over. The issue of African identity is a powerful stake for intellectuals from Africa as well as those from the Diaspora. This is because identities and citizenships are many and the process for establishing them is complex. Thus, without trying to over-simplify, one can at least distinguish between an African continental identity and a Diasporic, extra-continental identity. One can also, by going down to another level, observe that the question of identity is posed in relatively different terms from the sociological standpoint. Consequently, for the youth who constitute the majority of a continent's population, identity stems from a complex relationship with African traditions and Western modernism, which lends credence to the theory of a certain cultural cross-fertilization, particularly in the cities. Reconciliation with the past, a strong assertion of one's identity, receptiveness and openness are interwoven among the urban youth, who have little inclination to give way to exclusivism, clear-cut opposition and the anathemas of their seniors, «adepts in the exclusive cultural africanity».

**37.** The evolution of these flourishing urban cultures constitutes a major uncertainty for the future. The erosion of local cultures to the point of eradication is a possible development; it would be in line with a globalization that imposes the Western model through the media. In reaction to this globalization/westernisation, identity reflexes could crystallize and take the form of an introversion generally acknowledged, to be neither desirable nor in keeping with the African spirit. On the other hand, it is agreed that no population ever developed exclusively from the outside, that one develops by drawing from within the elements of one's own development. The most desirable path today is the dialectic of entrenchment and openness to which Césaire gave poetic expression in extolling the virtues of an Africa entrenched but open to all currents. It is the path already trodden upon by a few creators, which will enable Africa to give full vent to its creativity and contribute to a constructive dialogue between cultures and peoples for a more stable, just and responsible world, in short, a more humane world.

**38.** Granted that there is a strong will to tread this path, it would still be necessary to formulate and implement real cultural policies. These policies should also take into account the multiplicity of identities and the complexity of the process of establishing these identities. These policies should make it possible to enshrine the respect for the human person. In this regard, measures should be taken to rid the Continent of

all forms of racism and discrimination, as well as slavery where it is still practiced. It would subsequently be necessary to buttress these policies by solid material and logical bases which are sorely lacking today, when there is a need for «infrastructuring» culture. Real cultural industries should be created and developed in Africa; many of them should have a regional character not only to survive but also to carry African messages to other continents/markets, where it is even more difficult to assert Africa's cultural presence than its economic presence.

#### **4. Africa's place in the world**

**39.** After a glittering past, Africa is currently going through a difficult present. What does its future hold? To this question, Afro-optimists and Afro-pessimists continue to provide diametrically opposed answers in debates which often bring to mind a rat race. To the latter, Africa has been neglected and will continue to be so because it is insignificant and, above all, it is killing itself with the aid it receives from its partners. To the former, Africa will save the world because it is a reservoir of spirituality, etc. For some time now, a new trend has been developing around two key ideas, the fact that:

- 1) the future is being prepared and planned, in reaction to the credo of the invisible hand or «free for all market»;
- 2) Africa's future will depend on what Africans will or will not do now. It is therefore not predetermined; on the contrary, it is largely uncertain.

**40.** This trend in favour of what is sometimes referred to as Afro-responsibility has inspired many initiatives, the most recent of which are «African renaissance» embodied by President Mbeki, and the African Union, which came into being at the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. However, an immense task awaits the inspirers of these initiatives.

**41.** Indeed, for this renaissance to become a reality, three conditions must be met.

- 1) First, it is necessary that the vision of the world underpinning the said renaissance and the scenario thereof are coherent and feasible, that is to say within the realm of possibilities. But what is this realm of possibilities? The theme «Africa 2025: what possible futures for Sub-Saharan Africa?» provides basic answers to this question in the form

of scenarios. These scenarios should be evaluated and developed until they are deemed to be desirable.

- 2) Secondly, the largest possible number of social and political stakeholders must embrace the scenario adopted. There is a need for collective imagination that will transform people linked by the vagaries of history and geographical constraints into inter-dependent societies in their efforts to build a future characterized by freedom, desire and action. It is in African brains that another idea of Africa's place in the world must be formed through education, culture and the media. African societies must be convinced that African renaissance is within their reach; that notwithstanding the real difficulties it faces, Africa has indisputable assets. Among these many assets, the following can be mentioned:
  - the awareness of African political leadership, for the Continent has no future without a real and total integration process;
  - the possibility of making maximum use of the key positions held by Africans and the diasporan Africans in the international civil service, the academic world, the private sector and in the civil society;
  - the critical mass of resource person (from the Continent, the Diaspora and the international civil society) capable of and willing to contribute to Africa's development;
  - convergence among the forces behind the global social movement in their advocacy for greater justice, ethics and solidarity in international relations;
  - the Continent's strategic position in the cultural dialogue for a more stable, just and responsible world.
- 3) Finally, there is a need to create the conditions for genuine partnership, especially since Africa has decided to henceforth promote this type of cooperation after the "aid-grant binomial has shown its limits. The major expression of this strategic option consists in the creation of NEPAD, whose implementation, like that of the African Union, must be addressed at the Conference of Intellectuals.

**42.** Partnership has its exigencies, and one of them is to remove all artificial barriers between the so-called African problems and the world or global problems. Admittedly, debt, HIV/AIDS, economic integration or subsidies to farmers are of prime concern to Africa, which must definitely have a say on these issues that hamper its development. Nevertheless, it cannot shy away from topical global issues such as environment, the war against terrorism, and human rights. There is a need to forge strategic partnerships on all these issues. It behoves the Conference to consider how such partnerships can be forged, with whom and on the basis of which guidelines.

**43.** It is quite logical that diasporan Africans should be taken on board, and indeed be allowed to play a leading role in the establishment of such strategic partnerships.

## **5. Africa's ties with its Diaspora**

**44.** The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade depleted the African continent of its most youthful populations. It also created large black communities across the Atlantic, in North America, in the Caribbean and in South America. At thousands of kilometres from its cradle, one discovers in this part of the world the presence of an African culture embodied by men and women uprooted from Africa, oppressed and exploited as slaves, who, despite the hardships in the plantations, had succeeded in preserving precious components of their cultures over generations. The term "Diaspora" refers to this population.

**45.** Some of them, like Marcus Garvey, George Padmore and William Dubois, had played a leading role in the Pan-African struggle. Their descendants will be very delighted to contribute to a new Pan-African momentum for, as in the past, only a strong and resolute Africa can facilitate their struggle. However, a common paradigm and a common understanding of the stakes in this relationship must be established between the African communities of the Continent and the Diasporas. In this regard, there is still a long way to go. Indeed, despite the affirmed solidarity, despite the emotional burden of relationships between the two communities, Africa and its Diasporas have relatively little knowledge of each other. Important issues such as the slave trade, reparations, discrimination and manifestations of racism and xenophobia against Africans are understood in relatively different ways on both sides of the Atlantic. A certain frustration is developing following what is perceived as equivocations on the AU's part with regard to the proposed establishment of a 6<sup>th</sup> region which would represent the Diaspora. On



the other hand, many Africans are quick to stress that the Diasporas are demanding a lot, but have rarely succeeded in organizing or managing their relationships with the Continent other than on an emotional level. Without being so harsh, some point out the diversity of legal statutes of the communities comprising the Diaspora, not to mention its geographical heterogeneity.

**46.** What is certain is that a brainstorming on Africa-Diaspora relationship is essential, because it is complex, with multiple aspects: political and diplomatic, economic and commercial, cultural and institutional.

**47.** In the common language, however, “Diaspora” is increasingly used to designate migrants who chose to live outside the Continent for a more or less long period of time: workers of all categories, intellectuals, sportsmen and women, as well as artists. There are millions today who cannot remain indifferent to Africa’s plight.

## **6. Africa, Science and Technology: Stakes and Prospects**

**48.** In the industrialized countries, science and technology today constitute a major variable with the dawn of the era of dematerialization of production – an expression which simply means that the grey matter has become a more significant production factor than natural resources. This characteristic of production is evidenced in global trade whereby the products considered as having high value added are those which combine information and artificial intelligence.

**49.** This trend towards production dematerialization is an intrinsic element of present day globalization; and it is, without doubt, a powerful trend. For, whereas progress may stagnate in other areas of human endeavour, it is unthinkable that advances in science and technology will ever come to a halt. Besides, broad consensus is emerging that, if there is any area of human activity in which tremendous progress will continue to occur, it is that of science and technology. Specifically, and in the view of many experts, information and communication science and technologies, the science of life and space exploration will register development of such magnitude as can hardly be imagined; development which it is felt, will impact considerably on many human activities, both economic, social and indeed political.

**50.** Current investments geared to boosting scientific and technological research have given rise to the strong conviction that, in future, competitiveness of economies and improvement in people’s living condition will, every where in the world, be predicated on increased mastery of science and technology. And yet, it is observed that, of all the Continents, Africa invests the least in research and

capacity building in the area of science and technology. It is therefore not surprising that Africa is also the Continent with the least number of creativity/innovation patents in the world, a Continent credited with just one Nobel laureate in the Sciences – in the person of Ahmed Zewail, an Egyptian, the 1999 Nobel Prize Laureate in Chemistry. If the current trend is allowed to continue, the gap between Africa and the other Continents would only widen, thereby further exacerbating the Continent's marginalization.

**51.** To reverse this prospect – and we hasten to add that there is nothing inevitable in it – several approaches deserve to be explored.

**52.** The first will be to re-establish balance in the educational curricula and beef up the quota of scientific and technical disciplines. At the moment, these disciplines occupy a relatively marginal position in our educational systems which, it must be remembered, were designed by colonial authorities more intent to create executive-level technical and administrative cadre than to develop scientific and technical expertise.

**53.** The second approach that deserves to be explored is how the scientific spirit could be inculcated and developed in Africa's societies, bearing in mind that “development is equal to Science become Culture” to paraphrase the words of R. Maheu former Director General of UNESCO. A society in which critical rationality, as against metaphysical logic, would hold sway, cannot come about just at one go. Such a society can come to being through painstaking preparation which includes identification of the possible key elements, the most appropriate means to consolidate such elements and the most action-oriented messages that could be brought to bear.

**54.** The third approach worthy of interest is building research capacities in the scientific and technical fields. The obvious weakness of these capacities is a reflection of the meagre investment in research institutions. However modest the existing capacities, they should nevertheless be positioned in optimal operational conditions, thereby enabling their products not only to be known, but also to be recognized and, as far as possible, developed and enhanced. Without such an effort at recognition of, and adding value to, the results of scientific and technical research, there is the fear that brain drain - a phenomenon more pronounced in the pure sciences than in the social sciences – would persist and perhaps even intensify.

**55.** This risk brings to focus a fourth approach, namely: development of close links of partnership between the scientists operating in Africa and their counterparts in the Diaspora, be it the Diaspora arising from the slave trade or the Diaspora incidental to colonialism and independence. Despite such programmes as the Transfer of Knowledge Through Expatriate Nationals (TOKTEN), the massive return of renowned African scientists working in the industrialized countries is, clearly, not on the agenda, and, on second thoughts, may even not be desirable. It is today common knowledge that African expatriates in the North, and this is even more so for Africans of the slave trade

related Diaspora, have contributed in no small measure to some of the contemporary significant advances in the global scientific and technological development. However, the impossibility or the rather bleak prospect of their return to the Continent should, in no way, become a stumbling block to the development of this African human capital currently located in the North. As a matter of fact, contacts and exchanges between African scientists in the Continent and their opposite numbers in the Diaspora could be maintained and even scaled up, thanks to the new information and communication technologies. Proof of this resides in the existence of computerized data banks as well as tele-medicine, distance learning and other disciplines which are currently widely practised, however unevenly, in the countries of the Continent. Thus, to the extent that the NICTs are expected to make rapid advances, as indicated earlier on, the prospects of collaboration with the Diaspora with a view to entrenching the scientific culture in Africa, offer great promises, provided political and diplomatic ways and means could be found to take the Diaspora on board in future or in already functional scientific and technological development policies and programmes in Africa.

**56.** Thus, to occupy its rightful position in the international arena, Africa must not only develop its immaterial wealth but also its effective entry into modernity; hence the need for promoting science and using research results based on a sound correlation between research and development. In this regard, it would be advisable to revisit the conclusions of the Conference that the Men of Science held in Brazzaville in 1987.

### **Expected Results**

**57.** As regards the expected results of the Conference, it could be proposed that the Conference provide ideas that could contribute towards ensuring:

- 1) the remobilization and renewed commitment to a really operational “Global Coalition for Africa”;
- 2) the mobilization of leaders and decision-makers at the level of governments, the private sector, as well as the scientific community of Africa and its Diaspora, to promote science and technology for development;
- 3) the establishment of peace, democracy, good governance and respect for human and people’s rights on sound foundations;

- 4) the political organization and integrated economic development of Africa, based on the institutional foundations of the African Union, NEPAD and the Regional Economic Communities;
- 5) the definition of the underlying factors of shared identity that will provide a sound basis for African references, symbols and representations as well as the intellectual springboard to moral recovery and re-armanent (UNESCO 1995).