

**The African Diaspora in Australia and African Renaissance: Harnessing  
Diaspora Resources and Encouraging Diaspora Investments and Linkages with  
Africa.**

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**Abstract**

The question of the linkages between African emigration and African renaissance has never been more significant than it is today. Over 30.6 million Africans are living now in OECD countries with wealthier economies. Africans in Diaspora send more than US \$60 billion a year in remittances to relatives and friends in Africa. They also save tens of billions of dollars which they do not send home. Many of them, if not most, still maintain connection to their home countries. While Africa suffers as “brain drain” continues, the great beneficiaries of their skills, knowledge, and entrepreneurial capabilities are countries like Australia, Canada, Great Britain, France and USA. Given that Diasporas can be development partners, how can we tap into their resources, harness their networks and optimize their role in the African Renaissance vision. In this paper, special emphasis will be put on the conditions under which African Diaspora living in Australia can contribute to Africa’s economic, social, cultural and scientific development because ‘tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today’. The paper aims to suggest new strategies to tap into and harness the African Diaspora resources to help development efforts in Africa from both an economic and a social standpoint.

**Introduction**

*“Tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today” (Malcolm X).*

The question of the linkages between African emigration and African renaissance has never been more significant than it is today. Nearly ‘140 million Africans’ are living outside the continent (Kayode-Anglande and Spio-Garbrah 2012). Over 30.6 million Africans have emigrated from Africa in search of better life and “*ontological security*”, which in Giddens’ (1994, p. 375) definition, is the certainty that one belongs, the feeling that one is accepted, the sense of trust, confidence and fulfilment in social situations. Many of them, if not most, are living now in the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries with wealthier economies and have established roots in these countries. Advanced industrial economies such as Australia, Canada, Great Britain, Germany, France and the USA are the great beneficiaries of their skills, knowledge and entrepreneurial capabilities while Africa suffers from ‘*brain drain*’. Their migration to these places could be ‘*proactive*’ or ‘*reactive*.’ As Richmond (1993, p.10) postulates, migration motives fall on a continuum between the rational choice behaviour of *proactive* migrants seeking to maximize the benefits of migration and the *reactive* behaviour of those who are pushed out of their homes or who relocate involuntarily. Typical ‘*proactive*’ migrants are professionals, entrepreneurs, retired people and temporary workers under contract while typical ‘*reactive*’ migrants are those who meet the UN Convention definition of refugee by having a genuine fear of persecution and being unwilling or unable to return and those reacting to crisis situations like war, earthquakes, floods, drought and famine. From the “pull” perspective

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theory of migration, plausible reasons for African emigration include, but are not limited to, improving standard of living, better job offers, economic opportunities, more money, pursuing higher education, reuniting with family and friends, better health care, religious tolerance, and safety. “Push” factors such as political instability, war, earthquakes, floods, drought and famine or economic collapse may also propel Africans to migrate to the OECD nations. Modern transport, new tools of communication and the rapid expansion of information technologies have made migration easier and made it easier also for Africans in Diaspora to be better connected with families and friends in Africa than before.

Africans in Diaspora worldwide send more than US \$60 billion a year in remittances not to mention the tens of billions of dollars they do not send home but save outside Africa each year. The migration of African professionals today can be highly beneficial to Africa. It will be a vain hope to persuade Africans in Diaspora to return. However, a proper and diligent harnessing of their resources can give rise to various benefits to Africa which some members of the African Diaspora are willing to impart such as technology exchange, remittances and skills transfer. In this paper therefore, special emphasis will be put on the conditions under which Africans in Diaspora and their offspring can contribute to the economic, social, cultural and scientific development of Africa. The paper aims to suggest new ways and strategies to tap into and harness the skills and resources of the members of the African Diaspora in order to foster Africa’s development from both an economic and a social standpoint.

### **The African Diaspora**

Africa is a continent of great complexity, diversity, history and civilizations with over 55 countries most of which are as a consequence of European colonialism (Jakubowicz 2010, p. 4). As a continent, Africa is endowed with abundant human and natural resources. Today, more than 30 million African migrants live outside Africa. Many of them if not most, share one thing in common: the desire to return home and contribute. The English word “diaspora” is from the Greek word “διασπορά” meaning “dispersion” or “scattering”. It refers to “the displacement or dispersion of members of an ethnic group from their country of origin to foreign lands” (Plaza 2013). It was first used in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to describe the scattering of Jews after their captivity in Babylonia in the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. A Diaspora is anyone who lives outside his or her country of origin and still maintains a connection to his or her homeland. Diasporas can be described as those migrant groups who share the following features:

- Dispersion whether voluntary or involuntary across sociocultural boundaries and at least one political border.
- A collective memory and myth about the homeland.
- A commitment to keeping the homeland alive through symbolic and direct action.
- The presence of the issue of return, though not necessarily a commitment to do so.
- A consciousness and associated identity expressed in Diaspora community media, creation of Diaspora associations or organizations, and online participation (Ratha and Plaza 2011, p.48).

The African Diaspora is very big. It includes all Africans and their children who live and have settled permanently or temporarily outside Africa and still maintain strong ties with their home countries in Africa. Globally, the estimated number of African Diaspora across the continents is: North America, 39.16 million; Latin America, 112.65 million; Caribbean, 13.56 million; and Europe, 3.51 million (World Bank 2012). In the African Union's definition, "The African Diaspora consists of peoples of African origin living outside the continent, irrespective of their citizenship and nationality and who are willing to contribute to the development of the continent and the building of the African Union" (African Union 2005, p.7) . This definition was informed by these four elements:

- *Heritage* – People whose ancestral roots are in Africa.
- *Migration* – People of African heritage living outside Africa before the slave trade, during the slave trade, after the slave trade or now.
- *Inclusiveness* - Ancient and modern Diaspora included.
- *A commitment to the African course* – Any person of African heritage willing to contribute to Africa's development.

A proper harnessing of our Diaspora resources can be a potent force for Africa's development. For instance, in 2012, members of the African Diaspora worldwide sent home US \$60 billion in remittances. According to the Sector Manager of the World Bank's Finance and Private Sector Development, Paul Numba, "Remittances are no longer a stand-alone agenda, but are related to a broader development agenda built around technology, financial literacy and microenterprise". Therefore, the link between migration and remittances is more than just financing consumption but it can be partially used for productive investment (Mahmoudi and Numba 2013).

### **Why are many Africans 'fleeing' Africa?**

Some African professionals and young people appear to be fleeing Africa. They appear to be running away from Africa as if they are running away from danger. This could be because people can hardly stay and sacrifice themselves when things are not in order, when available options are not favourable, when opportunities are rare, when violence is the norm, when corruption is endemic and when their leaders show more commitment to lavish lifestyles than their countries' development. I argue that without economic opportunities, political stability, law, order, efficiency, transparency and good leadership at all levels, the African Renaissance vision will be a mirage because the lack of these factors impact heavily on other efforts to achieve cultural, scientific, economic and social renewal.

The quest for Africa's rebirth began a long time ago. When Cheikh Anta Diop began championing the African Renaissance project in the late 1940s, he believed that language is a key to achieving this grand project - that African people and nations overcome the current challenges confronting the continent and achieve cultural, scientific, economic and social renewal (African Union Department of Social Affairs 2013, p. 2). In his book "*Towards the African Renaissance: Essays in African Culture and Development, 1940-1960*", he spells out

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clearly steps by which Africa can rediscover herself such as through linguistic consciousness, political education, economic independence and cultural unity. He argues that an African renaissance will only be possible the day Africans from all social strata unite and become conscious of the existence of a capitalist exploitation, - the cause of all our misery and the cause of our low self-concept, lack of cultural pride, loss of cultural identity and feelings of shame and inadequacy. He notes that an African political education is needed to enhance our chances of success and to eradicate all the sordid beliefs and negative constructs that have been methodologically dished on us by colonialism. He sees Africa as the energy centre of the world and calls Africans to oppose coalition with coalition – Western exploitation of Africa -, to seek economic independence from the West and to work towards the total annihilation of colonialism and neo-colonialism. Above all, Diop (2000) makes special plea for the development and promotion of African languages as the key and the prerequisite for a real African Renaissance. In Diop's view, the use of foreign languages as the media of instruction in African schools wherein the African is forced to make double efforts to assimilate the meaning of words and then through a second intellectual effort, to capture the reality expressed by the same words has some pernicious and detrimental effects.

Diop's model stands as the blueprint and may serve as a gauge to measure where Africa is now. Understanding Diop's model is one step towards the African Renaissance. However, in our today's interconnected world, the reality is, Africa may not achieve all her development goals all alone. Global partnership, coalition and collaboration are needed. Learning and acquiring a foreign language together with science and technological knowledge are important. Therefore, building on from Diop's model, I argue that Africa can rediscover herself and meet her Millennium Development Goals by, among other things, education, discipline, partnership with the West, tapping the benefits of emigration, fostering her Diaspora's sense of national allegiance, harnessing their resources, encouraging Diaspora networks and investment to reverse the '*brain drain*' of African professionals to '*brain bank*'. More importantly, as annual Official Development Assistance (ODA) and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) continue to decline as due to global financial and economic crises, I propose that a fresh and innovative focus on harnessing the skills and resources of Africans in Diaspora, who can be real catalyst and development partners, should underpin the quest for Africa's rebirth. I argue that the members of the African Diaspora represent a new hope for Africa to achieving Africa's Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), for cultural, scientific, economic and social development.

### **Migration of African Professionals and Human Capital Loss**

A nation's future is built on the capacity of its people. A study by UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and International Organization for Migration (IOM) indicates that between 1985 and 1990, Africa lost 60,000 professionals such as doctors, nurses, university lecturers, engineers to mention but a few. The hard reality is Africa loses her best and brightest to industrialized nations every year. For instance, between 1993 and 2002, 410 pharmacists, 630 doctors, 87 laboratory technicians and 11,325 nurses trained in Ghana went to the United Kingdom (The Atlas on Regional Integration 2006). In 2007, there were over 300,000 highly qualified Africans in Diaspora and over 30,000 have PhDs (Oyelere 2007, p. 114). About 70 per cent of Nigerian medical doctors working overseas were trained in Nigeria and

according to the President of Nigeria Medical Association, Dr Osahon Enabulele “out of 65,000 doctors registered in Nigeria, only 25, 000 are currently practising in the country” (as cited in Kehinde 2013). About 25 to 50 per cent of African-born and trained doctors are working in Australia, Canada, Great Britain and the USA (Marsh 2012). In Australia, the number of African trained doctors practising is amazing. The 2006 national census in Australia indicates that about 3,000 medical doctors and over 4,100 nurses working in Australia are of African descent while the 2011 national census indicates that about 13, 351 Health professionals and 7, 799 education professionals in Australia are from Sub-Saharan Africa (ABS 2011). The figures are quite staggering and the trend may continue to grow. Since 2000, African professionals’ emigration has soared together with the mass exodus of highly skilled African graduates searching for greener pastures. Ethiopia, Nigeria, Kenya and South Africa are among the top countries in Africa hard hit due to brain drain as highly qualified and skilled professionals search for work abroad. About 75% of Ethiopian skilled professionals are working and living overseas. The USA alone has over 2 million Nigerians with about 20,000 of them who are doctors and 10, 000 who are academics. Kenya has about 500,000 to 1.8 million Kenyans working overseas while about 70% of skilled South Africans are considering moving overseas (Wiyiyit 2013). The estimation can be that up to 75% of Africans migrating to OECD nations such as Australia, USA and Canada have completed university education or had equivalent technical training (Addy, Wijkstrom and Thouez 2003).

The emigration of African professionals has potentially serious consequences for critical sectors such as education, health and engineering. So long as a nation fails to address the pull and push factors that influence migration, the migration of African professionals will continue to soar. The human capital loss has significant negative impact on human resources, Africa’s capacity, health and social services and this can’t be overlooked because talented and enterprising Africans can create jobs and prosperity for others. They can set up businesses and companies and can spark off other talented people. They can train and mentor bright younger workers and boost the productivity of less skilled ones. But when they emigrate, as Legrain (2007, p. 181) argues, we lose not only their skills and experience but also their positive by - products of setting up business, sparking off other talents, mentoring and boosting productivity.

### **Migration and Development**

The emigration of African professionals and intellectuals does not necessarily need to be interpreted as a loss to Africa. It can give rise to various gains to Africa. As Samuel (2001) argues, “a logical consequence of migration is a reverse flow of remittances to support dependent relatives, repayment of loans, investment and other purposes” (as cited in Addy, Wijkstrom and Thouez 2003, p. 4). The World Bank notes that migration has enormous implications for growth and poverty alleviation in both origin and destination countries. Ratha and Plaza (2011) argue that migration can raise the domestic skill level by encouraging other citizens to study professional degrees while Legrain (2007) maintains that migration can be a “win win” if we harness properly the development potential of Diaspora resources. Hugo (2009) argues that Diasporas can provide new channels for the flow of information, technology, aids, goods and capital which will bring about other development

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changes. According to Addy, Wijkstrom and Thouez (2003, p.21), any output losses from emigration, can be offset, by remittances and positive network effects of trade and investment. The “network” effects specifically refer to the web of linkages migrants maintain to their countries of origin and which create beneficial feedback effects, such as, return migration, technology, knowledge and skills transfers, and of course, remittances. For instance, the migration of the Swedes to North America in the 19th and 20th centuries helped to catapult Sweden from economic backwardness to prosperity.

### **Diaspora Contributions**

Diasporas contribution should not be measured merely in financial terms or as input of skilled labour, but, more generally, by its ability to build bridges and bridge capital between countries of origin and destination which convey not only economic activity but transfers of benefits and standards as well (French Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2012, p.22). Diasporas are in a position to act as instruments of change and development through their remittances, but also, importantly, through their networks, donations; trade, investments, knowledge, skills and technology transfers.

#### **i. Remittances**

Study after study shows that remittances - the money sent home by migrants - can alleviate poverty, can lead to greater health and education access, can reduce child labour, can bolster a nation’s foreign exchange reserves, can improve a country’s creditworthiness, can foster longer term economic growth and investment by supporting small business start-ups and have positive net effects on the national economic and social development (Puri and Ritzema 1999, Addy, Wijkstrom and Thouez 2003, Legrain 2007, African Development Bank 2013a, African Economic Outlook 2013). According to Legrain (2007, p. 170), a 10% increase in official remittances per person can lead to a 3.5 % decline in the share of people living in poverty. Governments and international bodies all over the world have reached the following conclusions that: 1) Remittances have a positive effect on the economies and development prospects of countries of origin (home countries of migrants); 2) governments should proactively encourage remitting behaviour by establishing targeted incentive schemes and improving financial infrastructures and macro-economic environments, and 3) governments should seek to enhance the developmental impact of remittances by adopting effective policy tools and strategies (Addy, Wijkstrom and Thouez 2003, p. 3).

#### **ii. Diaspora Networks and Technology Transfers**

Studies have also shown that Diaspora networks can play a big role in knowledge, skills and technology transfer that can lead to national development. For instance, the Asian region has been transformed economically and socially by the members of the Asian Diaspora worldwide who have invested massively and transferred skills into their home countries. China is what it is today because Chinese Diaspora worldwide and their networks (the Bamboo Network) channelled their investment into China before multinational companies from North America and West Europe came. Between 1978 and 1994, China openly appealed and encouraged her Diaspora on patriotic grounds to invest in China

(Weidenbaum and Hughes 1996). The Indian Diaspora is central to the stunning growth of India's IT sector. Today, India has world-beating companies in Bangalore, thanks to the Indian internet entrepreneurs who returned from Silicon Valley and assisted in moving companies from bases in the USA to India. Nineteen of the top twenty Indian software businesses were founded by or are managed by Indian professionals in Diaspora. Therefore, a more optimistic assumption would be that African Diasporas can contribute in similar ways.

### **African Diasporas in Australia**

The African population in Australia is differentiated by physiognomy, language, history, religion and cultural practices (Jakubowicz 2010, p. 4). Africans started coming to Australia from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century before Australia's Federation in 1901. Eleven black Africans were part of Arthur Philip's First Fleet that landed in Botany Bay on 26 January 1788 (Pybus 2006). After the abolition of the White Australia Policy in 1973, Africans have arrived in Australia in a number of different waves. Majority of them arrived as migrants through Australia's skilled and family migration programs while a significant number from Ethiopia, Eritrea, South Sudan, Sudan, and Somalia has arrived as refugees through Australia's humanitarian program.

The geographical distance between Africa and Australia made transportation very expensive. However, after the federation in 1901 with its White Australia policy, the colour bar erected by Australia to protect her British heritage made migration to Australia difficult for Black Africans. Except for White South Africans, there was a lack of historical links between Black Africans and Australia (Hugo 2009). The dissolution of the White Australia policy enabled Black African migration to Australia. This has increased Australia's diplomatic relations with African states, including the new state of South Sudan. A 2010 memorandum of understanding between Australia and the African Union Commission sets out a solid framework for enhanced cooperation in trade and investment, peace and security, development cooperation, humanitarian assistance, food security, climate change, and governance and capacity building (Commonwealth of Australia 2012, p. 1). Since 2007, Australian development assistance across Africa tripled and will continue to increase. Australia has funded more than 4000 scholarships in Africa since 1960 and between 2011 and 2013; Australia offered an additional 2750 Australia Awards scholarships to Africans.

The 2006 census indicates that there were more than 248,699 Africans in Australia. White South Africans made up 42% of all African-born residents followed by Egypt (13.5% in 2006) and Mauritius (7.3% in 2006). The 2011 census reveals that there are more than 337, 825 Africans in Australia. About 272, 000 are Sub-Saharan Africans (ABS 2011).

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**Table 2: Africans in Australia, 1861-2011**

<b>Census</b>	<b>South African %</b>	<b>African Population</b>
1861	56.6	1,590
1871	55.3	1,767
1881	47.5	1,986
1891	47.2	3,044
1901	53.0	2,869
1911	79.3	4,958
1921	80.5	6,775
1933	79.5	7,821
1947	78.3	7,537
1954	37.9	15,826
1961	27.7	28,559
1966	23.3	41,605
1971	20.4	61,935
1976	22.1	70,510
1981	29.9	90,237
1986	34.1	108,547

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1991	37.2	132,548
1996	37.7	147,876
2001	43.1	184,180
2006	41.9	248,699
2011	43.1	337, 825

**Source: ABS Population censuses**

The African Diasporas in Australia live all over Australia and are strongly concentrated in the capital cities of Sydney, Perth, Melbourne and Brisbane. Sydney is home to 24% of Australia’s Sub-Saharan Africa-born. Sydney is followed by Perth and Melbourne. Hugo (2009, p.63) argues that “the Indian Ocean Connection” is one of the most distinctive features of the historical settlement of Africans in Western Australia. The Africans in Australia are making significant contributions in finance, sports, medicine, entertainment industry, journalism and engineering. Their remittances and donations can play significant roles in Africa’s development because if one in every 5 African living in Australia could be persuaded to invest \$1,000 in Africa, Africa could raise millions of dollars a year for development financing.

**African Diasporas in Australia and Roles in the African Renaissance**

The African Diasporas in Australia can be important sources of trade, capital, technology, and knowledge transfer to Africa. While humanitarian needs have brought many Africans to Australia, the rapid expansion of information technologies has increased the mobility of African students as well as African skilled workers and professionals to Australia. Apart from the heavy remittances they send to their home countries to build more homes, set up small business enterprise or send poor children to school, Africans in Australia can be key players in trade links between their countries of origin and Australia.

Generally, the remittances of Africans in Diaspora may offset some of the adverse effects of Africa’s ‘brain drain’. African remittances currently account for 2.6 per cent of the continent’s Gross Domestic Product. Remittances are an important source of revenue and lifeline for millions of Africans in their day-to-day needs (AEO 2013). In 2010, recorded and traceable remittances flows to Africa reached US\$40 billion. In 2011, they amounted to US\$56.9 billion. In 2012, remittances reached US\$60.4 billion far exceeding Africa’s FDI and Official ODA. Remittances to Africa represented 11% of global remittances in 2012, compared to 8% in 2001. About 75% of remittances to Africa are sent informally and cannot be tracked, however, it is projected that recorded remittances to Africa will increase by 6% to US\$64 billion in 2013 (AEO 2013).

The money Africans in Australia send home can support an increase output growth and help ease foreign exchange shortages and it can be more efficient aid than official foreign aids – a lot of which fails to benefit needy people. Unlike foreign aids, their remittances end up directly in the pockets of the people they are designed to help and can be used to invest in agriculture or set up small-scale businesses.

**Table 4: The 15 Top African Countries Recipients of Officially Recorded Remittances as a percentage share of GDP for the period 2005 - 2011**

Countries	Average share of GDP (2005 – 2011)
Lesotho	35.4%
Nigeria	10.4%
Senegal	10.4%
Cape Verde	10.4
Togo	10.3
Gambia, The	9.0%
Liberia	7.9%
Morocco	7.7%
Egypt	5.3%
Guinea-Bissau	5.1%
Tunisia	4.4%
Mali	4.4%
Uganda	4.3%
Benin	3.6%
Sudan	3.6%

*Nigeria and Egypt were the top recipients of officially recorded remittances in 2012. Nigeria alone received US \$21 billion in remittances which is equivalent to 10% of Nigeria’s GDP.*

**Source: African Economic Outlook 2013**

The roles of the African Diaspora living in Australia goes further than remittances, they can raise and donate hundreds of thousands of dollars to their respective home countries to address development related issues like health and education. They can influence trade and initiate thriving commercial links between investors and their countries of origin. The Africans in Australia are well positioned to promote trade between Australia and their countries of origin and can provide the critical contacts and information needed. They can facilitate understanding of transport documents, procedures and regulations; and can provide as well, the cultural know-how that link dynamic economies with African economies.

The African Diasporas in Australia can act also as reputational intermediaries and as credibility enhancing mechanisms that may be particularly important in economic sectors where knowledge of quality is tacit. They can act as catalysts for the development of capital markets and transfer of new ideas, skills and technologies through professional associations

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and networks. They can diversify investors' base, provide more information on investment opportunities in Africa; introduce new financial products and provide reliable sources of funding. More importantly, they can play a significant role in influencing and strengthening Australia's policies and renewed engagement with African states. For instance, just as the Jewish Diaspora and the Chinese Diaspora played important roles in influencing US, Canadian, European and Australian policies towards their countries of origin, Africans in Australia can play a similar role in influencing Australian trade, aid, investment, technology and strategic policies towards Africa and their countries of origin .

### **Barriers to African Diaspora Contributions**

Diasporas are development partners. Any government that engages with their Diasporas proactively gains. The quest for Africa's rebirth demands collegiality and coalition of resources. A major challenge is how Diasporas' contributions and resources can best be mobilised to optimize their impact and foster development. Though, Africans in Diaspora are hybrids with multiple allegiances, yet, a majority of them still maintain strong ties and hold Africa so dear to their hearts. A majority are willing to give back through remittances and donations to development projects, or as visiting scholars. A recent study by Jacana, a pan-African private equity firm that invests in Small-to-medium sized enterprises (SMEs) to deliver social and financial returns indicates that 70% of African graduates in Diaspora are willing to return and set up their own businesses (Jacana Partners, 2012). As with other potential investors and trading partners, Africans in Diaspora willing to invest or trade with Africa are often constrained by the prevailing economic, social and political conditions in Africa such as: adversarial relationship between them and their governments, huge technological gaps, trade barriers, excessive red tape, inefficient banking system, customs delays, political instability, bad governance, bad infrastructure, corruption and unfavourable business environment.

### **Strategies to Harness Diaspora Resources and Encourage Diaspora Contributions**

Concerted effort should be made to appeal and tap into Diasporas or migrants' wealth. Worldwide, Africans in Diaspora save an estimated US\$53 billion yearly which could be invested in Bonds to finance development projects (Ratha and Plaza 2011). Harnessing their resources and the money they save in foreign bank accounts could contribute to Africa's development and renewal. Therefore, to properly harness and encourage Diaspora investment and contribution:

1. African governments need to establish good relationship and maintain strong ties with their Diaspora communities through active collaboration and dialogue. Governments should see them as development partners from whom they can receive remittances, donations, investment and technology.
2. Diasporas achievements should be recognized by governments in order to foster their sense of national allegiance and make them feel wanted. For instance, Mexican Diasporas in the US are called 'heroes' or 'VIPS' in recognition of their huge financial contribution to the national economy. Twenty outstanding and

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exemplary Filipino workers in Diaspora are given special awards – the “Bagong Bayani Awards” (modern-day-hero awards) - every Christmas by the Filipino President (Legrain 2007, p. 161). It is therefore important for African governments to scout for their Diasporas, create active networks, and develop specific activities and programs to engage them.

3. Cheaper, affordable, faster and more secure means of sending remittances in order to augment their development impact should be introduced. For instance, about 12% of money sent to Africa through formal channels is swallowed up by bank fees. Efforts should be made to cut the average cost of sending money to Africa down to 5%. Smaller financial organisations such as retail outlets, micro-finance institutions and post offices can be involved to offer remittance services because as more organisations offer the service, competition will increase, the supply and demand laws will kick in and the high bank fees will drop, which will in turn, enhance government’s ability to leverage remittances for development purposes. The M-PESA program in Kenya may be a good example.
4. Transparency should be increased by providing cost information to members of the African Diaspora and Diaspora organizations and communities to stimulate private capital flows for investment in Small-to-medium sized enterprises (SMEs) in Africa. Incentives for investment through small discounts on land purchases and tax-free investment programmes should be offered to any Diaspora who wants to invest. Diaspora-friendly policies and procedures should be designed to encourage Diasporas to invest.
5. African governments are in a good position to encourage members of their Diaspora to contribute voluntarily for national development. Excessive red tapes should be cut down. Diasporas should be proactively encouraged to invest by supporting business and trade forums. A favourable business environment may induce Africans in Diaspora to remit and invest in productive domestic projects.
6. Diaspora networks should be encouraged in order to provide valuable sources of expertise and business contacts, to create new trade and investment links. Networks of African scientists and engineers can transfer technology and skills faster and more flexibly than foreign corporations. For instance, to take advantage of their populations in Diaspora, countries like Taiwan and South Korea have focused on organizing networks of professionals overseas and linking them. Taiwan organizes national development conferences with panels on all areas involving Taiwanese Diaspora at the government’s expense. South Korean Ministry of Science and Technology organizes professional associations of Korean Diaspora as a pool for expertise and future ‘return brain drain’ (Kapur 2001). Networks like African Professionals of Australia, the South African Network of Skills Abroad (SANSA) to mention but a few are needed.
7. ‘Diaspora bonds’ can also help to tap into migrants’ wealth. Lessons from Diaspora Bond issuances in Israel, Ethiopia and India have shown that Diaspora

bonds can be an effective means of funding development. For instance, Israel has tapped Jewish Diaspora since 1951 raising nearly US\$30 billion; annual issuance US \$1.0 to 1.5 billion in recent years (Ketkar and Ratha 2011). India issued bonds in 1991 and 1998. Ethiopia issued its bond to address their national electricity crisis and with the 2011 bond, Ethiopia single-handedly built its 5,250MW dam on the Nile River. Likewise, other African states should consider issuing ‘Diaspora Bonds.’ A diaspora bond is a bond (a debt security instrument with an original maturity of more than 1 year usually tradeable in the financial markets) issued by a country to its own Diaspora to tap into their assets in the destination country (Kayode-Anglande and Spio-Garbrah 2012). The World Bank estimates that Diaspora Bonds could raise as much as 5 billion to 10 billion USA Dollars annually for Sub-Saharan African countries (Shimeles 2010). To complement the traditional ODA, issuance of Diaspora Bonds might help to raise new funds for development.

8. Travel should be made easy for the members of the African Diaspora to encourage greater Diaspora participation and continued investment. Dual citizenship ought to be allowed so that the members of the African Diaspora will have access to public services and social benefits.

## **Conclusion**

As we search not just for solidarity among Africans across the African continent and the globe, but for a vision of a new, rebuilt and progressive Africa, Bob Marley’s song in the late 1970s reminds us of the urgency of that vision: “Africa unite! Unite for the benefit of your people! Unite for it’s later than you think!” The good news is that migration does not always represent a loss. Rather, it can give rise to various gains, including technology transfers, remittances and other skills for development. Members of the African Diaspora have continued to strengthen bilateral relations between their destination countries and with their origin countries in Africa. Members of the African Diaspora in Australia and elsewhere are both entrepreneurial as well as professional. The African presence in Australia presents a veritable context through which Australia can credibly join with African institutions to inspire collaboration between Africans and Australians and assert the African Renaissance and opportunity for a concerted effort be made to appeal to the African Diaspora in Australia to contribute to African needs. The call for Pan Africanism - the feeling of being descended from or belonging to Africa and of longing for the progress of Africa and her people – is more urgent than ever. African unity is deemed crucial for African renaissance. Given that Africans in Diaspora both in Australia and elsewhere can be development partners, I am convinced that their resources can be tapped into and their skills harnessed in order to optimize the flows and benefits of investment from them. To be successful in doing so, every effort should be made to steadily cherish and harness their skills and hold on to what they can contribute. Every effort should be made to fully exploit the development potential of their remittances and resources and to encourage them to think big, start small and act now. Beyond the money Africans in Diaspora send home to their families and relatives, I contend that they can still play significant and key roles in Africa’s cultural,

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scientific, economic and social renewal. The members of the African Diaspora represent a new hope and vision for Africa.

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