



## POSITION PAPER On Diaspora

The Diaspora are increasingly able to promote transnational ties, to act as bridges or as mediators between their home and host societies, and to transmit the values of pluralism and democracy.”<sup>1</sup> In line with this, the African diaspora have become strategic partners in the development of the continent contributing to Africa’s sustainable social and economic development. Through knowledge transfer, innovation and outreach networks, the diaspora are taking their love for Africa and using it for good. Going beyond the vast remittances that have become the mainstay of some households and communities, diaspora investment, entrepreneurship and philanthropy are increasing enabling employment creation, growth of industry and ultimately effecting improved political stability and socio-economic wellbeing. The commitment of the African diaspora to the continent is also seen in the context of humanitarian emergencies where diaspora serve as are a crucial lifeline to for those in need, by key information sharing and delivering help.

By celebrating and sharing their heritage diaspora are dispelling myths and breaking stereotypes. The diaspora are also helping to shape foreign policy agendas of their host countries. “New advocacy groups, civic associations and diaspora networks have also flourished in the West, particularly around conflict resolution, networking and economic trade with the continent. Assuming diaspora apply effective advocacy strategies, they can help shape foreign policy priorities and shift analyses for Africa’s betterment.”<sup>2</sup>

Several African-led organizations, such as Villages in Action, Akili Dada, and Global Somali Response to name a few, are contributing to improved well-being for communities in their respective countries of origin. The UN’s [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs) sets out to end poverty around the world by 2030. The SDGs are at the core of diaspora advocacy and engagement in development. Four of the 17 SDGs are top priority goals in Kenya and other African countries. The goals in question are: i) end poverty in all its forms everywhere (Goal 1); ii) achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls (Goal 5); iii) promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all (Goal 8) and; iv) promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels (Goal 16).<sup>3</sup>

The road towards attainment of the SDGs will require innovative partnerships and participation at multiple levels. This will require traditional partners to work with non-traditional traditional actors such as the diaspora. Through coordinated and integrated policy and programme interventions that make use of the comparative advantage of stakeholders such as the African diaspora, great milestones can be made towards poverty reduction, gender equality, peace and prosperity in Africa. Based on these facts, Wezesha

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<sup>1</sup>Shain, Y. and Barth, A.2003.*Diasporas and International Relations Theory*. International Organization, Vol. 57, No. 3 (Summer, 2003), pp. 449-479

<sup>2</sup>Araia, Semhar. "African Arguments." African Arguments. N.p., 12 Jan. 2012. Web. 27 June 2016.

<sup>3</sup> "Five Talents | U.N Sustainable Development Goals." Five Talents UK. N.p., n.d. Web. 27 June 2016.

believes that a well coordinated Diaspora effort using the empowerment model can hugely impact on development potentials of the African continent. Wezesha will work in solidarity with other international key development actors and will mobilise the Africa Diaspora in Ireland, Europe and Internationally.