

Diaspora youth, global citizens

Mr. Karim Saafi, Board member African Diaspora Youth living in Europe

Action theme 3: Human development, diaspora action

I'm here today to represent 59 members of African, Latin American, wider European, Middle Eastern and Asian diaspora communities in Europe ... No pressure, of course!

Just last month we got together in Germany to exchange views, and we could all learn, once more, about the valuable contributions Diasporas can make to their countries of origin and residence.

The event was organized by the International Centre for Migration Policy Development, hosted by the German GIZ and CIM, and further supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and the ICMC.

Besides agreeing on the recommendations, the objective was to add new actors to the debate by bringing together highly active, dynamic and engaged diaspora players in Europe.

I'm one of these diaspora communities in Europe. I currently live in Belgium, was born and raised in France and from Tunisian heritage.

I'm also a board member at African Diaspora Youth Network in Europe, also known as ADYNE. ADYNE represents more than 40 European youth organisations where we advocate issues concerning development, social inclusion and African Diaspora participation in Europe.

All that said, you understand that I feel responsible for the message I was given the honor to deliver to you all, here, today.

The following recommendations have been carefully negotiated and reviewed by all mentioned diaspora members. It is the real voices of the Diaspora.

Therefore I urge you all today to turn these recommendations from ink on paper into actionable points. You will find a copy on that table. But let me quickly highlight some of these recommendations:

1. In light of the tremendous contribution the diaspora is making to global development, the role of Diasporas has to be recognised in all the post-2015 development objectives. Very concretely, governments should allocate a certain percentage of development aid to diaspora organisations development work.

2. States and intergovernmental bodies should partner with the diaspora in decision making processes, planning implementation and monitoring of development policies. Concretely they should assign an easily accessible focal point in these regards.
3. The misalignment of education systems to the labour market needs of a mobile world has to be addressed. And this means to really promote regional mobility and integration as well as equal access to labor market and social inclusion.
4. National and international laws and migration policies that put women at risk need to be changed. And the role that migrant women play in peace-building and conflict resolution needs to be strengthened.
5. It is crucial, Establish platforms for and by the diaspora. We, ADYNE, know from experience that creating a platform is what made our voice heard on all levels, including the local ones.
6. Professional common spaces should be Organized that bring together the diaspora, the private sector, the development agencies and the NGOs of countries of origin and destination for knowledge sharing.
7. Migrant entrepreneurs - women and men alike - should be empowered as drivers for economic and social development.
8. Capacity building has to be provided to grass root diaspora organisations.
9. Coming back to the importance of giving the migrants a voice, voting rights need to be provided to migrants at local level and upwards.

Those recommendations have been formulated also by the young leaders of the diaspora and often, when we talk about the Diaspora, we fail to recognize that over 60% of those are YOUTH.

The United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon himself leads by example by appointing an Envoy on Youth Ahmad Alhindawi.

So let us RECOGNISE the major role that Diaspora YOUTH can play to spearhead and act as a catalyst in every issue affecting the Diaspora. Let's give them the chance to bring forth some REAL and TANGIBLE change.

To prompt these changes, ADYNE will soon be launching a campaign called International Day of African Diaspora, in short IOAD, aiming to transform the image of the African Diaspora (AD) living in Europe and creating dialogue with policy makers.

Next to all the discussion we will be having today and the recommendation we will be taking forward to the HLD, I invite you all, on behalf of the Diaspora to make the YOUTH an instrumental element of every discussion that is held, every policy that is drafted and every project that is to be implemented.

We can no longer ignore the biggest OPPORTUNITY in the room. Thank you!